

Focus on Food

Food is such a fundamental part of our lives that it makes an excellent subject for a shared learning activity. The topic of food connects with many areas of the curriculum and is an easy doorway to encourage pupils to investigate and explore their own lives and the lives of the pupils in their partner school.

Aims:

- Pupils explore their own lives and habits and think about the diversity that exists locally and globally
- Pupils use a variety of methods to produce informative displays for their partners
- Pupils compare their own likes and dislikes with those of pupils in the partner school
- Pupils gain awareness of similarities and differences with food in another culture
- Pupils explore why people in different countries cook in different ways and eat different things
- Pupils develop a relationship with children from another culture

Ethiopia Food Facts

- The staple of the Ethiopian diet is a flat pancake called 'Injera', made from an endemic grain called 'Tef'. Growing in the fields, it looks just like a wild grass. 'Tef' is fermented for several days before cooking.
- Injera is accompanied by a variety of 'wots' (stews), usually spicy and often involving meat. 'Tibs' (fried cubes of lamb in spices) is a common favourite, as is 'shiro', a dish made from ground-up chickpeas.
- Orthodox Christian Ethiopians observe a fast on Wednesdays and Fridays, during which no meat is served. At this time, dishes of spinach, carrots, cabbage and lentils are enjoyed. Ethiopians also fast for an extended Lent period of fifty-five days before Easter (Fasika).
- Meal times are very social affairs, with people eating from a shared plate. Feeding handfuls of injera to your guest (a practice called 'gursha') indicates a blessing. Lunch is usually the main meal of the day, often eaten around 2pm.
- Many Ethiopian households brew their own drinks, such as 'tella', a weak beer made from leaves and grain and 'tej', a delicious honey wine, similar to mead, traditionally drunk at festival times.
- Traditionally men and women would eat separately, but nowadays, especially in the towns, both sexes eat together.
- An average Ethiopian office worker earns 45 birr per day (about £1.60). A cup of coffee costs an average of 1 birr, a main dish may cost 10-15 birr. A beer costs 5 birr.
- Many parts of Ethiopia are historically prone to drought. In recent times, the price of tef and other staples has increased hugely, putting strain on many households.
- The average Ethiopian consumes fewer than 2000 calories a day. The average consumption per person per day in UK is over 3000 calories.