



Classroom Guide for
YUM! ¡MMMM! ¡QUÉ RICO!
AMERICAS' SPROUTINGS
 haiku by Pat Mora
 illustrated by Rafael López

Reading Level

* Reading Level: Grade 3
 Interest Level: Grades K-6
 Guided Reading Level: Q
 Accelerated Reader® Level/Points: 5.1/.5
 Lexile™ Measure: AD970

*Reading level based on the Spache Readability Formula

Themes

Food, Indigenous Plants of the Americas, Cultural Diversity, History, Poetry (Haiku)

Synopsis

This vivid collection of haiku describes edible plants native to the Americas. The haiku call forth the five senses as they describe foods from blueberries to vanilla in mouth-watering ways that young readers can understand. Informational text accompanies each haiku, offering etymology, history, geography, and other interesting background for the featured food. The poems are further reinforced by fanciful, and often humorous, illustrations in dazzling colors.

Background

Pat Mora is fascinated by diversity and the variety of foods, music, and traditions found in indigenous cultures. One summer while teaching a class in poetry to adults, she was intrigued when a student brought in a haiku. She began thinking about using this 17-syllable poetic form in a book about native foods of the Americas. The result was this book—her first of haiku—focusing on foods grown for centuries in the Western hemisphere long before the land was divided into countries.

BEFORE READING

Prereading Focus Questions

Before introducing the book to students, you may wish to develop background information, tap prior knowledge, and promote anticipation with questions such as the following:

1. What are your favorite foods? Why do you like them? How would you describe them?

2. What do you think is the origins of these foods? Where do you think these foods come from (what region or country)? How do they grow?
3. What do you like about poetry? What are your favorite poems? What are they about?

Exploring the Book

Show the front cover of the book. Read and talk about the title. Ask students what they think the title means. What do you think the story is about?

Review the parts of the book including the title page, copyright page with Spanish words defined, map page with dedications, poetry spreads with the haiku and nonfiction boxes, and author's letter on the last page. Also draw students' attention to the vibrant illustrations.

Setting a Purpose for Reading

Have students read to find out how the author feels about the plants and foods included among the poems. Ask students to think about what they might learn from this book.

Vocabulary

The book includes etymological, linguistic, and historical information about the names of the foods featured. Have students work with partners or in teams to find (in the nonfiction boxes and in other resources) information about the origins of the following words:

chili	chocolate	corn
cranberry	papaya	peanut
pineapple	potato	pumpkin

AFTER READING

Discussion Questions

After students have read the book, use these or similar questions to generate discussion, enhance comprehension, and develop understanding of the content. Encourage students to refer back to the text and photographs in the book to support their responses.

Literal Comprehension

1. What senses does the poet call on in describing a blueberry?
2. How does a chili make your mouth feel?
3. What are some foods made with chocolate?
4. What food is used to make grits and tortillas?
5. Why does the poet say papaya has the taste of a "leafy jungle"?
6. How does the poet feel about peanuts?
7. In what kind of environment does a prickly pear grow?
8. Why does the poet call a pumpkin "autumn's orange face"?

Extension/Higher Level Thinking

1. Why do you think Pat Mora, the poet, wrote poems about these foods? Overall, how does she feel about these foods? What makes you think so?
2. How do some foods tell us about the past?
3. How do foods tell about different cultures?
4. How are foods related to the seasons?
5. What are some things all the foods mentioned in the book have in common?
6. How do the poems give you “a taste of the foods”?
7. Give some examples of how the illustrations add to your appreciation of the foods and the poems.

Literature Circles

If you use literature circles during reading time, students might find the following suggestions helpful in focusing on the different roles of the group members.

- The **Questioner** might use questions similar to the ones in the Discussion Question section of this guide.
- The **Passage Locator** might look for information that tells about the plants from which the foods come.
- The **Illustrator** might draw pictures showing students eating some of the foods, or of dishes made with some of the foods.
- The **Connector** might find other poems about food and plants.
- The **Summarizer** might provide a brief summary of what they learned about each food.
- The **Investigator** might find additional books by Pat Mora.

*There are many resource books available with more information about organizing and implementing literature circles. Three such books you may wish to refer to are: *GETTING STARTED WITH LITERATURE CIRCLES* by Katherine L. Schlick Noe and Nancy J. Johnson (Christopher-Gordon, 1999), *LITERATURE CIRCLES: VOICE AND CHOICE IN BOOK CLUBS AND READING GROUPS* by Harvey Daniels (Stenhouse, 2002), and *LITERATURE CIRCLES RESOURCE GUIDE* by Bonnie Campbell Hill, Katherine L. Schlick Noe, and Nancy J. Johnson (Christopher-Gordon, 2000).

Reader's Response

Use the following questions and writing activities to help students practice active reading and personalize their responses to the book. Suggest that students respond in reader's journals, essays, or oral discussion. You may also want to set aside time for students to share and discuss their written work, if they wish to.

1. Which poem(s) made you hungry or made you want to have some of the food very soon? Why?

2. Have students write a haiku expressing their response to the book or to another food. Explain that a haiku has three lines and a total of 17 syllables. The first line has five syllables, the second line has seven syllables, and the third line has five syllables. Suggest that students study the format used for the poems in the book before attempting their own haiku.
3. Students might also write a letter to the author expressing how they feel about the poems.
4. Have students choose one of the foods featured in a haiku and write a paragraph describing the food.
5. Point out that parts of the illustrations are exaggerated and very fanciful. Why do students think the artist did this? What do they think he wanted to accomplish?
6. Have students write a conversation they might have with one of the foods in the book.
7. Ask students to create a menu of dishes that incorporate several of the foods featured in the book.

ELL Teaching Strategies

These strategies might be helpful to use with students who are English language learners.

1. Assign ELL students to read the poems aloud with strong English readers/speakers.
2. Have each student write three questions about the poems. Then let students pair up and discuss the answers to the questions.
3. Depending on students' level of English proficiency, after the first reading:
 - Review the illustrations in order and have students summarize what is happening on each page, first orally, then in writing.
 - Have students work in pairs to retell either the plot of the book or key details. Then ask students to write a short summary, synopsis, or opinion about what they have read.
4. Have students give a short talk about what they especially like about a food in the book.

INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

Use some of the following activities to help students integrate their reading experiences with other curriculum areas.

Social Studies

1. Have students use a map or globe to identify the countries on the unlabeled map at the beginning of the book.
2. Have students make labels for the places where the foods in the book grow and/or originate. Then let them attach the labels to a large classroom map.

- Discuss how the foods get from the places where they grow to markets. Have student teams explore questions such as: Who harvests the plants? How are they transported? What is the travel time? Do they need to be refrigerated? Are they prepared or processed in some way before they are sold? Students might display their findings on flow charts.
- Students might work cooperatively to assemble a chart using information about the foods from the book. Point out that most of these plants are used in many ways besides food. For example:

Food	Who Uses/Used It	How It Is/Was Used	Another Fact
<i>blueberries</i>	<i>worldwide, Native Americans, Europeans</i>	<i>food, spice rubs, medicines, gray paint</i>	<i>official berry of Maine</i>

Language Arts

- Poetry offers excellent opportunities to teach students about figures of speech. You might introduce and discuss the following examples:
 - **Metaphor:** Explain that poets use metaphors to make unexpected comparisons. For example, the metaphor “scarlet fireworks” is used to describe cranberries in the poem “Cranberry.” Ask students to find other metaphors that appear in the book.
 - **Personification:** In personification the poet gives human characteristics to a nonhuman thing. Ask students to find an example of personification in the poem “Pumpkin.”
- Expand students’ experience with haiku by having them read and discuss the works of seventeenth and eighteenth-century poets such as Bashō, Jōsō, Ryōta, Buson, or Sanpū.

Science/Health and Nutrition

- Review the five senses—sight, touch, hearing, taste, and smell-- with students and point out that many of the haiku evoke these senses. Ask students to find examples for each of the senses among the poems in the book.
- If possible, bring in examples of the different foods for students to try. Display the foods and conduct a taste test. Have students record and compare their findings. Follow up by asking students to bring in recipes that include the foods. Discuss the nutritional value of these foods. If cooking facilities are available, one or more of the simpler recipes can be prepared as a class cooking project.
- Conduct a mini lesson on the trees and plants from which the foods in the book come. Collect and display photographs and scientific drawings for students to observe. Talk about where and how the foods grow –in the ground, on bushes or trees, on vines, etc.

Art

Students might design food-related calendars. Point out that many foods are associated with seasons, holidays, and special observances. For example, tell students that July is

National Blueberry Month and March is National Peanut Month. Encourage students to search out these food connections and include them on their calendars.

About the Author

Pat Mora is a well-known Mexican American poet and author. She has received numerous awards and fellowships including the National Endowment of the Arts Poetry Fellowship, the Kellogg National Leadership Fellowship, and three Southwest Book awards. Mora, a native of El Paso, Texas, grew up in a bilingual home where books were always important. "Family, Mexican-American culture, and the desert are all important themes in my children's books as well as in my poetry and nonfiction for adults," says Mora. In addition to writing, Mora often speaks publicly about multicultural education and leadership. Her other books for Lee & Low include *Confetti*, *Love to Mamá*, and *Gracias~Thanks*. Mora is also the founder of the family literacy initiative *El día de los niños/El día de los libros* (Children's Day/Book Day) celebrated on April 30 each year.

About the Author and Illustrator

Rafael López grew up in Mexico City, and his art is strongly influenced by the work of Mexican muralists. His work includes large murals for public spaces, including the Urban Art Trail Project in downtown San Diego, and U.S. postage stamps in 2011 celebrating Latin music legends Celia Cruz, Carlos Gardel, Carmen Miranda, Tito Puente, and Selena. López's first book, *My Name Is Celia*, won an Américas Award and a Pura Belpré Illustrator Honor. His illustrations for Pat Mora's book, *Book Fiesta!* in 2010, won the Pura Belpré Illustrator Award. López divides his time between San Diego and San Miguel de Allende, Mexico.

Book Information

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RESOURCES ON THE WEB

Learn more about *Yum! ¡Mmmm! ¡Qué Rico! Americas' Sproutings* at:

http://www.leeandlow.com/books/363/hc/yum_mmmm_que_rico_brotes_de_las_americas

Order Information

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<http://www.leeandlow.com/order> (general order information)

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