Florida Heritage Foods and Religion



A Research Project

for World Religions, Hebrew Scriptures, and New Testament Courses

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Florida Heritage Food Project

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Section 1—Materials for the Instructor:

Heritage Foods and World Religions: Instructor's Notes

Heritage foods may be defined as foods with social, historical, and cultural significance. These are foods that human beings have been putting on the dinner table for hundreds—even thousands—of years. There are usually good reasons why these heritage foods have remained so popular for so long. These foods are often believed to have unique nutritional value. In addition, the plants that produce these foods play an important role in the ecosystem. Heritage plants frequently offer critical support to a variety of local plant and animal species. In this course, students will be invited to learn more about one of the seven heritage foods with strong historical ties to Judeo-Christian religions and cultures: fig, olive, grape, date palm, mint, mustard, and pomegranate.

Lesson Outcomes & Objectives

- 1. In a quiz taken at the beginning of the course, students will show how much they know about heritage foods at the start of the semester. The same quiz will be retaken at the end of the course to determine what students remember about heritage foods after a semester of study.
- 2. In a research report, students will accurately define a biblical heritage food that may be harvested in Florida, and will accurately describe its cultural / religious importance and possible nutritional value.
- 3. For a final class project, students will create a research poster which explains the importance of the chosen biblical heritage food to a wider audience.
- 4. In course discussions, students will reflect on the ways in which a chosen food takes on religious and cultural meaning, thereby situating it within the context of unique social and historical circumstances in order to interpret the diverse ways that religious ideas are expressed.

Resources for Educators

<u>Print</u>

Lytton, John Musselman, A Dictionary of Bible Plants. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

Moldenke, Harold N., and Alma L. Moldenke, *Plants of the Bible*. New York: Dover Publications, 1952.

Neel, Douglas E., and Joel A. Pugh, *The Food and Feasts of Jesus: The Original Mediterranean Diet, with Menus and Recipes*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012.

Vamosh, Miriam Feinberg, Food at the Time of the Bible. Herzlia, Israel: Holy Land Experience, n.d.

Zohary, Michael, *Plants of the Bible: A Complete Handbook*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.

<u>Online</u>

Charles Sturt University "Plants of the Bible Garden," url:

https://www.csu.edu.au/special/accc/biblegarden/plants-of-the-garden

• Gives short entries on the place of most of our heritage plants in the Bible.

Florida Memory, url: https://www.floridamemory.com/

• Treasure trove of digitized public domain images from Florida history, including many pictures of the plants mentioned in this project.

IFAS at the University of Florida, url: https://ifas.ufl.edu/

• Contains helpful information on how our heritage plants can be grown in Florida, their place in the ecosystem, their nutritional benefits, and in some cases how they can be used in meal preparation.

Lawrence W. Tyree Library at Santa Fe College, url:

https://sfcollege.libguides.com/ld.php?content_id=67634563

• A "sacred food matrix" listing any number of sources on the subject with links and entries on our specific seven heritage foods.

Library of Congress, url: https://www.loc.gov/pictures/

• The prints and photographs online catalogue contains numerous copyright-free histocial images of our heritage foods, both as growing plants and also as prepared for human consumption.

Oldways, url: https://oldwayspt.org/

• Gives recipes, nutritional, and cultural information about world heritage foods.

Lesson Outcomes (Pre and Post) Quiz tied to project and course description

Note: It is recommended to give this quiz a first time at the beginning of the semester and a second time at the end of the semester. Our suggestion is to put both quizzes into the same category in your grade-book, and have the lower of the two scores drop. (Images courtesy of floridaheritagefoods.com)

Questions for Students:

- (1) What is a heritage food?
- (2) List at least two possible benefits of eating heritage foods:
- (3) State one reason why farmers in Florida farmers markets face difficulties selling heritage foods:

(4) True or false—The biblical book of Genesis suggests that Adam and Eve may have eaten only fruits and vegetables before leaving the Garden of Eden.

(5) True or false—Jesus mentioned the mint plant in his teachings.

Matching (Questions 6-10)

Below you will see the names of seven heritage plants mentioned in the Bible. Below that you will see images of five of these plants. Match each image with its correct name, using the options from the list. Use each name only once. You will not use all the names on the list.

- A. fig
- B. olive
- C. grape
- D. date palm
- E. mint
- F. mustard
- G. pomegranate



(6)



(7)

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(9)



(10)

Answers for Instructors:

(1) Heritage foods may be defined as foods with social, historical, and cultural significance.

(2) Eating heritage foods helps local farmers who grow the plants in the first place, helps the ecosystem of which these plants are a part, and can help us put tastier and healthier meals on our kitchen tables.

(3) Farmers may have difficulty selling heritage foods because customers don't know what they are, how to cook and eat them, or what nutritional benefits they have.

(4) True. "God said, "See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food." Genesis 1:29, NRSV.

(5) True. Jesus reportedly said, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill, and cumin and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith." Matthew 23:23, NRSV.

- (6) F. mustard
- (7) A. fig
- (8) B. olive
- (9) G. pomegranate
- (10) C. grape

Section 2—Materials for the Student

Lesson Overview

The religious landscape in Florida is comprised of a wide range of historical and contemporary communities throughout the state. Catholicism was introduced to the Floridian peninsula by the Spanish in the 16th century and Jewish people fleeing the Spanish Inquisition represent some of the earliest immigrants to the area. Today, the state is also home to some of the largest Jewish populations in the world along with some of the oldest and newest Protestant Christian communities.

In this course, students will be invited to learn more about one of the following seven heritage plants: fig, olive, grape, date palm, mint, mustard, and pomegranate. Well-suited to cultivation in Florida, each of these plants has rich ties to history, culture, and specifically to Judeo-Christian Scripture and spirituality.

Lesson Outcomes & Objectives

- In a quiz taken at the beginning of the course, students will show how much they know about heritage foods at the start of the semester. The same quiz will be retaken at the end of the course to determine what students remember about heritage foods after a semester of study.
- In a research report, students will accurately define a biblical heritage food that may be harvested in Florida, and will accurately describe its cultural / religious importance and possible nutritional value.
- For a final class project, students will create a research poster which explains the importance of the chosen biblical heritage food to a wider audience.
- In course discussions, students will reflect on the ways in which a chosen food takes on religious and cultural meaning, thereby situating it within the context of unique social and historical circumstances in order to interpret the diverse ways that religious ideas are expressed.

Lesson / Instruction

Heritage Foods / Plants: What are They?

Heritage foods may be defined as foods with social, historical, and cultural significance. These are foods that human beings have been putting on the dinner table for hundreds—even thousands—of years. There are usually good reasons why these heritage foods have remained so popular for so long. These foods are often believed to have unique nutritional value. In addition, the plants that produce these foods play an important role in the ecosystem. Heritage plants frequently offer critical support to a variety of local plant and animal species.

Despite their importance, heritage foods are sometimes neglected in today's grocery-shopping and mealpreparation. Although our ancestors ate these foods for generations, sometimes we've neglected them in favor of highly processed meals out of a box or a can. Getting reacquainted with heritage foods helps local farmers who grow the plants in the first place, helps the ecosystem of which these plants are a part, and can help us put tastier and healthier meals on our kitchen tables!

Heritage Foods and World Religions

In this course, students will be invited to learn more about one of the following seven heritage plants: fig, olive, grape, date palm, mint, mustard, and pomegranate. All of these plants grow in Florida. Each one of them is

also marked by strong historical ties to religion and culture. To be more specific, each of these plants flourished in the ancient Middle East, and each one of them is mentioned in the Bible (the Jewish Tanakh / Christian Old Testament and Christian New Testament).

Official Summary Statement on the Florida Heritage Foods Project

These Instructor's Notes conclude with the official summary statement on the reasons for, purpose, and goals of the Florida Heritage Foods Project.

Executive Statement on the Florida Heritage Foods Project (by Sarah Cervone)

Heritage foods represent one of the fastest growing sectors of the food industry in Florida as an increasingly diverse population is fueling demand for foods that embody social, cultural and historical value. Yet, farmers in Florida farmers markets face difficulties selling heritage foods because current customers are usually unfamiliar with new food varieties, and knowledge barriers prevent customers from accessing heritage foods for sale at farmers markets.

Farmers market customers need information about heritage foods, and farmers markets need inclusive multicultural outreach to the diverse population of consumers driving the heritage food industry in Florida.

<u>The purpose</u> of the *Florida Heritage Foods Initiative: Connecting Local Food with Local Culture in Florida Farmers Markets* is to stimulate the heritage food economy in Florida farmers markets by providing education about heritage foods for consumers and providing farmers markets with tools to reach culturally diverse communities already purchasing heritage food.

<u>The goals</u> of this project are to: 1) increase access to heritage foods in farmers markets with educational marketing materials for farmers, consumers, and K-12 students that provide information about the cultural, historical, nutritional and culinary value of heritage foods, 2) expand direct-to-consumer marketing opportunities with a Multicultural Heritage Food Event Planning Tool-Kit for farmers markets, and 3) provide training and education on heritage foods to farmers, market managers, and local food stakeholders through three virtual and on-site symposiums.

Assignment Descriptions

Assignment #1: Icebreaker Discussion

Participants in Florida Farmers' Markets often find it difficult to sell so-called "heritage foods" to customers. Even though these foods have rich historical significance, nutritional value, and ecological importance, customers won't buy them if they don't know how to cook and eat them.

An anthropology professor at a Florida college once shared an anecdote about this problem. She described meeting a Florida farmer who had devoted a lot of his land to growing so-called "heritage plants." When he got his vegetables to market, however, nobody would buy them because customers didn't even know what they were, much less how to cook or eat them. Reluctantly, this farmer had switched over to growing (pardon the expression) "garden variety" bright-red tomatoes. They lacked the nutritional value and ecological benefits of the heritage crops, but at least customers knew what they were!

Research done by students at this college could eventually help raise awareness about heritage foods among Florida consumers. Maybe we can help people like that farmer sell more diverse crops, and help customers connect with healthier food!

Questions for Icebreaker Discussion

Part I: First Discussion Post

Think about a time when you tried cooking and/or eating an unfamiliar food, especially a food from another country or culture. Was it a good experience or a not-so-good experience? If good, what helped make the experience positive? If not-so-good, what might have made the experience better? Make a first discussion post in which you answer these questions. (Note: Let's keep our comments **about other countries and cultures** respectful, even if our experience at a particular meal was awful!)

Part II: Second Discussion Post

After making your first post, read the other students' discussion posts. Respond to at least one in a friendly and courteous manner.

Discussion Rubric:

- In the initial submission—creativity of thinking, accuracy of information, clarity of argument and expression (50% of grade)
- In the response to the other students' comments—civility, evidence of genuinely trying to engage the other student's point, even if disagreeing with it (50% of grade)

Assignment #2: Research Report

Research and write a 750-1500 word report about one of the following:

- 1. fig
- 2. olive
- 3. grape
- 4. date palm
- 5. mint
- 6. mustard
- 7. pomegranate.

The report should be structured as follows.

I. INTRODUCTION. The report should start with an introductory paragraph. It should include a thesis statement: a sentence stating what the report will show or prove.

II. BODY. In the body of the report, please cite the sources where you learned information. You may use footnotes, endnotes, or parenthetical notation.

Cover these topics:

A. YOUR HERITAGE PLANT: WHAT IS IT?

B. YOUR HERITAGE PLANT IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST AND THE BIBLE.

- C. POSSIBLE HEALTH BENEFITS OF YOUR HERITAGE PLANT.
- D. MEAL PREPARATION IDEAS.
- III. CONCLUSION.

IV. BIBLIOGRAPHY. Include a complete list of all print and online sources used in completing your research report. Make sure that a majority of your online sources are from websites ending in .edu, .gov, or .org.

Research Report Grading Rubric		
Introduction with Thesis		
The paper begins with an introductory paragraph. This paragraph	30 pts	
contains a thesis statement: a sentence or sentences explaining what	50 pts	
the paper will show or prove.		
Body: Plant/Food Defined		
The body of the paper includes sentences defining what the heritage	25 pts	
food/plant is.		
Body: Biblical Reference		
The body of the paper includes sentences which cite at least one	25 pts	
reference to the heritage food/plant from the Bible and which	25 pts	
mention how the food/plant was used in the ancient Middle East.		
Body: Health Benefits		
The body of the paper contains sentences describing possible health	25 pts	
or environmental benefits of the heritage food/plant.		
Body: Growing/Eating the Plant/Food		
The body of the paper contains sentences explaining how the heritage	25 pts	
plant can be grown in a garden and/or eaten as food.		
Conclusion		
The paper ends with a concluding paragraph that sums up what was	30 pts	
learned.		
Sources, Citations, Bibliography, Word Count		
The paper is approximately 750 - 1500 words.		
	30 pt	
If online sources are cited in the paper, a majority of the websites end		
in .edu, .gov, or .org.		

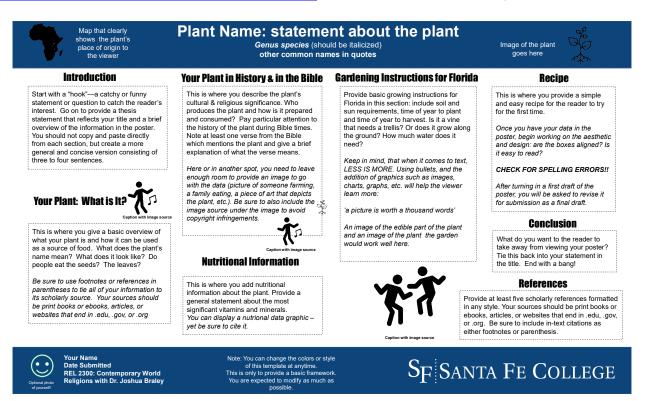
Direct quotes in the paper are put into quotation marks and sources of information are cited in the text, using footnotes, endnotes, or paranthetical notation.	
The paper ends with a bibliography listing all sources cited.	

Assignment #3: Poster Project

For the second part of our Florida Heritage Foods project, we will be producing a poster on an edible heritage plant.

The starting point for your poster will be your completed Florida Heritage Food Research Report. Take the information included in your report and "boil it down" into a streamlined, focused format suitable for inclusion on a poster.

The poster should be submitted in the form of an electronic file rather than as a physical object. It should be formatted in a style appropriate for college-level research. A template can be found here: https://www.sfcollege.edu/rue/poster-resources/index See also the embedded template below:



Here are tips on poster design: <u>https://colinpurrington.com/tips/poster-design/</u>

At a minimum, your poster should include the following elements:

I. An Introduction telling the reader what your project is about and hooking his or her interest.

II. A Results section sharing basic information about your Heritage Food, for example: what the plant is, how it is grown, its possible benefits for human health and the ecosystem, how it can be cooked or eaten, and its importance in history and the Bible.

III. A Conclusion/Discussion section summarizing why your findings are important.

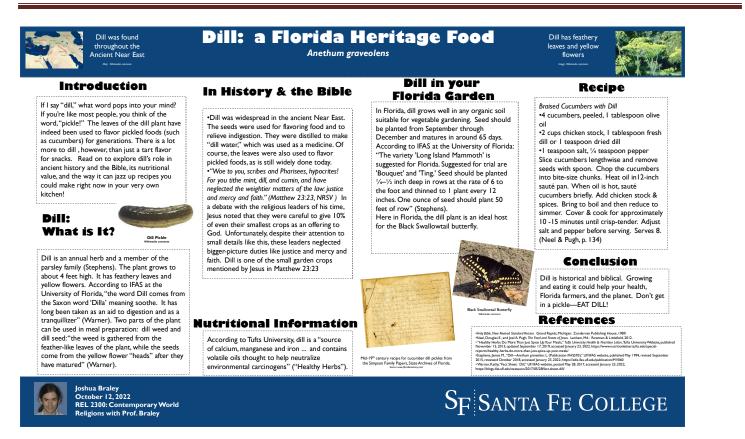
IV. A References section listing all the sources (print and online) which you used and giving credit for any images included. Except for images, online sources should be limited to websites ending in .edu, .gov, or .org

V. At least one image helping to illustrate your project.

At your discretion, your poster may also include an Abstract section giving an overview of your project and/or an Acknowledgements section thanking any faculty, staff, or other people who helped you with the project, if relevant.

Poster Rubric		
Introduction		
Your poster includes an Introduction section telling the reader what your project is	40 pts	
about and hooking his or her interest.		
Results Section		
Your poster includes a Results section sharing basic information about your Heritage		
Food, for example: what the plant is, how it is grown, its possible benefits for human	40 pts	
health and the ecosystem, how it can be cooked or eaten, and its importance in		
history and the Bible		
Conclusion / Discussion		
Your poster includes a Conclusion/Discussion section summarizing why your findings	40 pts	
are important		
References		
Your poster includes a References section listing all the sources (print and online)	40 pts	
which you used and giving credit for any images included. Except for images, online	40 pts	
sources should be limited to websites ending in .edu, .gov, or .org		
Image		
Your poster includes at least one image helping to illustrate your project. A source	40 pts	
for the image should be given. Unless you took the picture yourself, the source	40 pts	
should be open use or copyright-free.		

Here is a sample poster created by an instructor, dealing with a plant that is not covered in the course:



Assignment #4: Reflective Discussion

Instructions for student: In a first post, explain to the class what heritage food you wrote about and what you have learned about its importance in sacred Scripture and religious practice. Then try to answer these questions: What spiritual or symbolic meanings has this food developed? Why did this particular food develop these particular meanings? What does this tell us about the way concrete objects in the world take on larger spiritual meaning? After making a first post, please respond to at least two other students' posts in a friendly and courteous manner.

Discussion Rubric:

- In the initial submission—creativity of thinking, accuracy of information, clarity of argument and expression (50% of grade)
- In the response to the other students' comments—civility, evidence of genuinely trying to engage the other student's point, even if disagreeing with it (50% of grade)

Project Development Activities

Research Report (200 points):

Students will be asked to pick a topic for the research report by the end of the first week of class (10 points). An annotated bibliography is due the 3rd week of class (10 points). The completed research report is due the 6th week of class (180 points). Further instructions for the research report, along with a grading rubric, will be posted in the online assignment for this project.

Digital Poster (200 points): After completing the research report assignment, students will be asked to use information from the report to create a college-level digital poster. The poster will be due as an online submission during the last week of class. Further instructions for the digital poster, along with a grading rubric, will be found in the online assignment for this project.

Resources for Students

<u>Print</u>

Lytton, John Musselman, A Dictionary of Bible Plants. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

Moldenke, Harold N., and Alma L. Moldenke, *Plants of the Bible*. New York: Dover Publications, 1952.

Neel, Douglas E., and Joel A. Pugh, *The Food and Feasts of Jesus: The Original Mediterranean Diet, with Menus and Recipes*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012.

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