



Cook what you love, love what you eat PUTTING RACE ON THE TABLE

Grades 7 - 9
Week 4



Stop! Have you watched our training video yet? This workshop series covers subject matter that requires basic knowledge of anti-oppression and anti-racist concepts. Facilitation of these workshops must be undertaken with thoughtful consideration of the content. Before you start, make sure you've watched our training video and read through the lesson plan in its entirety.

Learning objective:

Participants will learn about the interconnections between food justice and racial justice. This workshop will dive deeper into how systemic racism plays out in our food system, disproportionately impacting BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour) communities.



Workshop length:
2 hours



Recipe: Jamaican patties



Curriculum links: Health and Physical Education; Language; Geography; Social Studies



Topics covered

- Introduction to food justice initiatives in Toronto
 - Defining food justice
- Cultural and political connections of food.
- What's race got to do with it?
 - Impact of systemic racism on food security.
 - BIPOC experiences of food access.



Workshop materials

- Chart paper
- Sticky notes
- BIPOC food insecurity fact sheets
- Sharpies or other markers



Cooking materials

Tools

- Cutting boards
- Knives
- Large saucepan
- Wooden spoon
- Measuring cups
- Mixing bowl

- Forks
- Rolling pin

Ingredients

- Refer to **supporting documents** for recipe details

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Key Reminders



Group & Land Acknowledgement

FoodShare acknowledges that the sacred land in which we operate is situated upon the traditional territories of the Wendat, Haudenosaunee (Ho-den-oh-sho-nee), the Anishinabeg (Ah-nish-in-nah-beg), and the Mississaugas of the Credit. This territory is covered by the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Anishinabeg and Haudenosaunee allied nations to peaceably share and care for the lands around the Great Lakes. FoodShare recognizes the many Nations of Indigenous People, who presently live on this land, those who have spent time here and the ancestors who have hunted and gathered on this land known as Turtle Island.



Equity, Diversity & Social Justice

Notes:

Brainstorm ways in which you can avoid marginalization due to participants' race, ethnicity, sex, age, physical or mental ability, culture, ancestry, language, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic background or due to stereotypes. How can you make space for all learners?

Key Terms

Food justice – Recognizes the systems of oppression that shape our food system (e.g.: capitalism, poverty, racism, colonialism, etc.) and works to dismantle them to create a just and equitable system. Food justice work identifies the structural and systemic causes of food insecurity, and builds solutions that respond directly to those barriers.

Systemic changes – Systemic change fundamentally affects how an entire system functions – it recognizes the failures of a system and its structures at a macro-level, addressing the root cause. This differs from individual change, which addresses the impacts of the system's failures at a micro-level.

Systemic racism – Refers to how racism is embedded in the systems and structures that organize our society, and can be felt all over society – from government policy, to schools and hospitals, to the media.

BIPOC – Stands for “Black, Indigenous, People of Color.”

Colonialism – A systematic process in which settlers use force to take over land inhabited by Indigenous groups. Colonialism is ongoing, continuing today here in Canada in many forms – both visible and subtle.

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Food justice league (20 minutes)

Begin the workshop with participants' mini-presentations on the food justice initiative they researched (see *Week 3 outline for detailed activity instructions*). Aim for 3-5 minutes per group.

- After each presentation, prompt a critical discussion of the initiative as a large group.
- Use the critical questions provided to guide the discussion: What is this initiative seeking to change? What do they view as the root cause of food insecurity? Is it poverty? Race? How do they respond to it?
- Ask the presenters: Did anything you learned while researching surprise you? Did you learn something new about food insecurity?

Once all groups have presented: Discuss the similarities and differences between the initiatives as a large group.

- Ask: What do they have in common?
 - Use this question to segue into a conversation about how food justice initiatives recognize the *systemic* and *structural* causes of food insecurity, instead of looking only at the individual effects.
- Ask: Which initiative resonated with you most? What inspires you about these projects?
 - Discuss the importance of community leadership and ownership – highlight how grassroots projects can have meaningful impacts on the lives of many.



What is food justice? (10 minutes):

Use the previous activity to segue into a discussion about defining “food justice.” You can use a large sheet of chart paper to facilitate the conversation popcorn-style in a large group, or hand out sticky notes for participants to write ideas on individually first, followed by a group conversation.

Modification: If you don't have time for the first part of this activity involving participant-directed research, you could start this session by introducing a few profiles of local food justice initiatives that participants can explore.

Here are a few quick videos you could play to get the conversation going:

- [Black Creek Community Farm](#)
- [Afri-Can Food Basket](#)
- [Sundance Harvest](#)

Prompt: Think about the initiatives we just learned about. What do they focus on? Who is involved? What kind of work are they doing?

Ask: Based on these initiatives, all of which fall into the category of ‘food justice’ work, what do you think ‘food justice’ means? How would you define it? *Share participants’ ideas and responses on chart paper.*

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To deepen the conversation, share FoodShare's definition of food justice:

Food insecurity is complex. It's more than geographic and economic barriers to food access. That's why at FoodShare, food justice means working to dismantle systemic forms of oppression that exist in our food system and in our food movement.

It means acknowledging that colonialism, capitalism, white supremacy, and patriarchy are some of the organizing principles embedded in our current food system, and work together to shape who gets a seat at the table, and who experiences the most food insecurity.

For FoodShare, being a food justice organization means that we are aligning and evaluating our work to ensure that it drives at dismantling sites of exploitation within the food system and our food movement. We use an equity lens to seek justice, and food security, for everyone.

Ask: Based on this interpretation, what do you think are the key points in defining food justice?

Key points for defining FJ:

- Systemic and structural causes – poverty, race, ability, gender, etc.;
- Oppression (link this back to discussion of intersectionality);
- Community-driven and collaborative;
- Bottom-up instead of top-down;
- And, food justice is an action word! It takes a lot of work!

Together, write a short (2 or 3 sentence) definition of food justice. Avoid using jargon or words that are difficult to understand; participants should take the lead here in crafting a definition that reflects their understanding of the concept.



Putting race on the table (20 minutes)

It's likely that at least one of the food justice initiatives presented by participants will have interacted with race as a factor in food security. Drawing on this, engage the group in a focused conversation on the realities of systemic racism and food access.

Begin by handing out the fact sheets on Indigenous and Black food insecurity in Canada (*found in supporting documents*). Have participants work in small groups to read over and discuss the information.

As a large group, prompt a conversation about the fact sheets.

- Depending on your group, you might ask about how they are feeling having learned this information. This might be new or surprising for some participants; however, it's important to remember that some participants might be BIPOC and have first-hand experience of food insecurity. As you continue with the conversation, be mindful of this.
- Focus the conversation on how these statistics relate to broader systems and structures, instead of on individual experiences.

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- Ask: What do you know about systemic racism?
 - **Take-away point:** Racism is embedded in the systems and structures that organize our society – it impacts the ways that BIPOC people move through the world, including access to food.
 - To guide this conversation, you might use this [word bank](#) or this “[7 ways we know systemic racism is real](#)” blog post.
 - Depending on the group’s level of engagement with the news, you might connect this to recent conversations about the Black Lives Matter movement and the Wet'suwet'en land defenders.
 - To keep the conversation hopeful, circle back to the food justice initiatives previously discussed that engage with race. Discuss the ways that communities are responding to this ‘big’ problem in hands-on ways.



Let's cook! (1 hour)

Refer to supporting documents for “Jamaican patties” ingredient list and recipe.

Once in the kitchen, review any safety rules that apply to that space:

- Hairnets/gloves;
- Handwashing;
- Knife handling;
- Cross-contamination;
- And, how to use stovetops, ovens, and other appliances.

Divide the class into small teams. Hand out the recipe and show each team their prep station. Ask participants to organize who will complete each prep duty and help by demonstrating. Duties could include: reading the recipe, measuring, washing, cutting, mixing, etc.

Tip: Hand out a sign-up sheet for cleaning duties now to expedite the clean-up at the end.

Why did we pick this recipe for today? **Talking points for Jamaican patties include:**

This dish is a reflection of culture and race.

- A history of colonialism: The pastry used for patties was brought into Jamaica during British colonization and slavery.
 - Jamaicans added spices and flavours to the pastry which reflected the Indian (curry) and African (cayenne pepper) cultural traditions to create the Jamaican patty.
 - The Jamaican patty is an example of resilience in the face of colonization; it also shows us the ways in which the project of colonialism permeates every part of people’s lives, including what they eat (*colonialism will be covered more in-depth in Week 5*).
- The Jamaican patty also has a very rich history here in Toronto, which has been called “North America’s Jamaican patty capital.”

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- [“The Patty Wars”](#) – In 1985, Canadian government food inspectors served notices to Jamaican patty shops across the city – the reason being that the beef patties they sold did not meet the Canadian standard definition of a ‘beef patty’ (a burger patty).
- The shops were told to rename their products, otherwise they would be forced to pay a fine of \$5000 (closer to \$10,000 today).
- Jamaican shop owners pushed back, and the Jamaican consulate got involved, which eventually led to a settlement that allowed them to continue selling them as “Jamaican beef patties.”
- The Ontario Opposition leader at the time [said](#), “The federal government’s unilateral decision to force West Indian Canadians to rename their national snack food, the beef patty, is inane.”
 - Of course, it was “inane” (absurd or silly), but it is also important to think critically about how the government’s use of power over Jamaican-Canadians reflects the inequitable distribution of power that fuels systemic racism.
 - Food is often used as a political and cultural tool!
 - It also shows us how the Canadian state is resistant to, or afraid of, anything ‘other’ that threatens to disrupt the norm, particularly if that ‘other’ is associated with Blackness (i.e.: changing the standard definition of what a patty is).

Patties around the world. The basic formula for a patty (pastry dough + savoury filling) is one that almost every culture has their own special version of. Think samosas, empanadas, borek, knish. **Invite participants to share any versions of patties that exist in their own culture(s)!**

- Food can be unique to each culture or community, but still connect us across differences through these universal experiences.

Ask: Can you think of any other types of foods that exist across cultures like this? (examples include *pickles* – kimchi, sauerkraut, pickapeppa, etc.; or *dumplings* – momos, ravioli, bao, etc.)

You can do it! People are often intimidated by the thought of making their own pastries at home.

- We chose this recipe to show that it’s really easy! It takes some practice, but anyone can do it.
- It’s fun to make your own dough to learn about what is going into your food – when we buy a patty at a shop, we often don’t know what’s in there. Learning how to do this at home gives you an insider scoop on what ingredients go into this snack.
- Once you get comfortable with making this type of dough, the possibilities are endless. With just a couple small tweaks, you could be making empanadas or samosas at home like a pro!



Conclusion and consolidation:

Enjoy your meal together! Serve the Jamaican patties warm out of the oven (with coco bread, of course). Set up a space where everyone can eat together and chat during the meal. To prompt conversation while you eat, you could ask:

- Have you had a Jamaican patty before?
- What filling is your favourite? Can you think of any new filling ideas you’d like to try?

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- *Debate:* Which shop has the best Jamaican patties in Toronto? Or, which TTC station has the best Jamaican patties?
- What was your favourite part of being in the kitchen today?



Taste of tradition (5 minutes)

This is a take-home activity!

The goal of this activity is to encourage participants to *connect with* and *share* their own food knowledge and experience.

Prompt: What is a meal that you share with your family? What do you cook together? Is there a recipe that has been in your family for generations?

What is a food tradition that has been passed down to you? Invite participants to ‘interview’ one (or more) of their loved ones (i.e.: parents, siblings, aunts and uncles, caregivers, friends, etc.) about a food tradition or practice that they have ‘inherited.’

Encourage participants to think about how this food tradition is connected to culture. **Ask:** Does this food represent something special in your culture? Does cooking/eating this food make you feel more connected to your family?

In Week 5, there will be time allocated for a sharing circle about these traditions. Participants will be invited to share their food tradition and the connections it has for them at that point.

Options: You might also give participants two more options for the activity. This will be helpful to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to participate in a way that they feel comfortable.

First, you could ask them to share a tradition they would like to start and pass on to others in the future. Some prompt questions to ask here would be: What is special about this tradition for you? Why is it important to you to pass it on? What does it make you feel connected to?

Second, you could invite participants to research a food tradition that might not be their own, but that they find interesting. Some prompt questions to ask include: What do you find interesting about this tradition? Why were you drawn to it? What do you think makes it meaningful?

Take-home messages:

- End the session with a quick group debrief. You can either do this as a large group (popcorn style) or in smaller teams (with reporting back).
- Ask participants to list the three most important or interesting things they learned during the session, and then invite them to share this with the group.
- Review responses as a large group, adding in any key take-home messages from below that might have been left out:

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- Food justice is driven by communities.
- A food justice lens recognizes the systemic and structural roots of food insecurity.
- BIPOC communities are disproportionately impacted by food insecurity.
- Systemic racism is embedded in our food system.
- Food reflects our cultures and histories. It is also political!
- **Option:** have participants complete the [Kahoot quiz](#) now, or provide them with the link to complete after the session.

Clean up! Using the sign-up sheet handed out at the beginning of cooking, have everyone help out with the basic cleaning duties (clearing tables and plates, loading the dishwasher, putting foodstuff away).



RESOURCES

Resource:

[Karen Washington 'Kitchen Vignette'](#)

Activist Karen Washington discusses the meaning of food justice.

Resource:

['Patty Wars' Video](#)

Short video featuring Jamaican-Canadian patty shop owners.

Resource:

[Black Foodie 'How to Eat Ethiopian Food'](#)

Toronto-based food blogger, Eden Hagos, discusses Ethiopian food customs and traditions at a local restaurant.

Resource:

[Kids Try Dumplings from Around the World](#)

Video featuring kids taste-testing four different types of dumplings from across the globe.

Resource:

['Dismantling Racism in the food system,' FoodFirst](#)

Educator resource with background information on the embeddedness of systemic and structural racism in our food system.

Resource:

[New food insecurity research says it's black and white and not pretty, rabble](#)

Educator resource identifying barriers to Black food access in Canada and exploring solutions.