ARTES de MÉXICO en UTAH

FOOD, LAND, POWER

Introduction

The Born from Corn series seeks to increase cultural understanding and foster a deeper appreciation of the main agricultural crops, traditions, and indigenous knowledge. We aim to share the meaning of corn to the Indigenous peoples of the Americas, specifically the Maya, with our entire community. We acknowledge that this land which we now know as the state of Utah, is the traditional and ancestral homeland of the Ancestral Puebloans, the San Juan Southern Paiute, Dine (Navajo) Nation, Ute Mountain Ute-White Mesa Community, Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah, Ute Tribe, Northwestern Band of Shoshone, Skull Valley Band of Goshutes, and the Confederated Tribes of the Goshute Reservation. We recognize and respect their relation with this land as the original people of this place. We acknowledge and amplify the true history of the Indigenous peoples of this continent and their resilience against colonizer efforts to eliminate indigenous cultures, languages, traditions and beliefs. Through these lessons we hope to increase cultural understanding and foster a deeper appreciation of the main agricultural crops, traditions, and knowledge that many original peoples of this continent share.

7th-12 Grade Standard

Time Period: (1914 C.E. - 1989 C.E)

World History Standard 6.3: I can explain the political ideas at the heart of decolonization, independence movements, and the formation of new political systems, such as liberation theology, civil disobedience, autonomy, separatist movements, and pan-Africanism.

ARTES de MÉXICO en UTAH

TRADITIONAL STREET FOOD

IF YOU COULD HAVE YOUR OWN FOOD TRUCK, WHAT WOULD YOU SELL, WHY?

Share Your Food Truck Ideas

Vocabulary

- ## Indigenous

  Indigenous means to be native or occur naturally in a particular place. Indigeneity is then applied to groups of people that lived in the Americas before the arrival of the Europeans. **>>Watch the video<<**

- ## Cosmovision

  A cosmovision, or worldview, is the way we see the world and how nature, and everything around us, like animals, the universe, stars, air, and earth, are connected and related to us, humans.

ARTES de MÉXICO en UTAH

Maya vs. Mayan

The term "Mayan" is only used by scholars when referring to the languages spoken by the Maya. There are many Maya languages and many Maya peoples. The term "Maya is used when referring to people, places, and culture, without distinction between singular or plural.

Example: "It was written in a Mayan language." "The Maya harvest corn."

Vocabulary

- **Exchange**

  to give or take one thing in return for another

- **Mesoamerica**

  A geographical region sometimes also known as "Central America". This word is used when talking about peoples and cultures before the Spanish Colonists. The countries in this area includes: **Northern Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Belize, and central to southern Mexico.**

La Milpa

'The Milpa" is a field used to plant corn, along with beans and other crops. This word is used in Mexico and Central America.

ARTES de MÉXICO en UTAH

Identity

Identity is who you are, the way you think about yourself and the way the world sees you. Think about the things that make you special and different than everyone else.

Colonization

When a country or a nation takes control of other lands, regions, or territories outside of its borders and turns those other lands, regions, or territories into a colony.

Are we what we eat?

What do you think about the phrase "we are what we eat"?
Do you agree? Why?

Food is Culture

Food is the easiest way for one culture to understand another. Food is an important part of creating a social identity. Food is a brilliant carrier of culture, because it's so closely tied to the land that a culture grows up in, the particular geography, nature and immigration patterns.

Cultural Connection

Food brings people together! Think of the moments when you go into a restaurant, when you offer someone food or you're cooking for them, when your family cooks for you and you're being nurtured and cared for... how does that feel?

ARTES de MÉXICO en UTAH

Earth Connection

Humans have planted and harvested food for thousands of years.

Farming is an example of a nature-human relationship.

ARTES de MÉXICO en UTAH

Born from Corn

We've learned in previous lessons that for the Maya, a cosmological perspective refers to a way of understanding social relations with nature through the significance of corn.

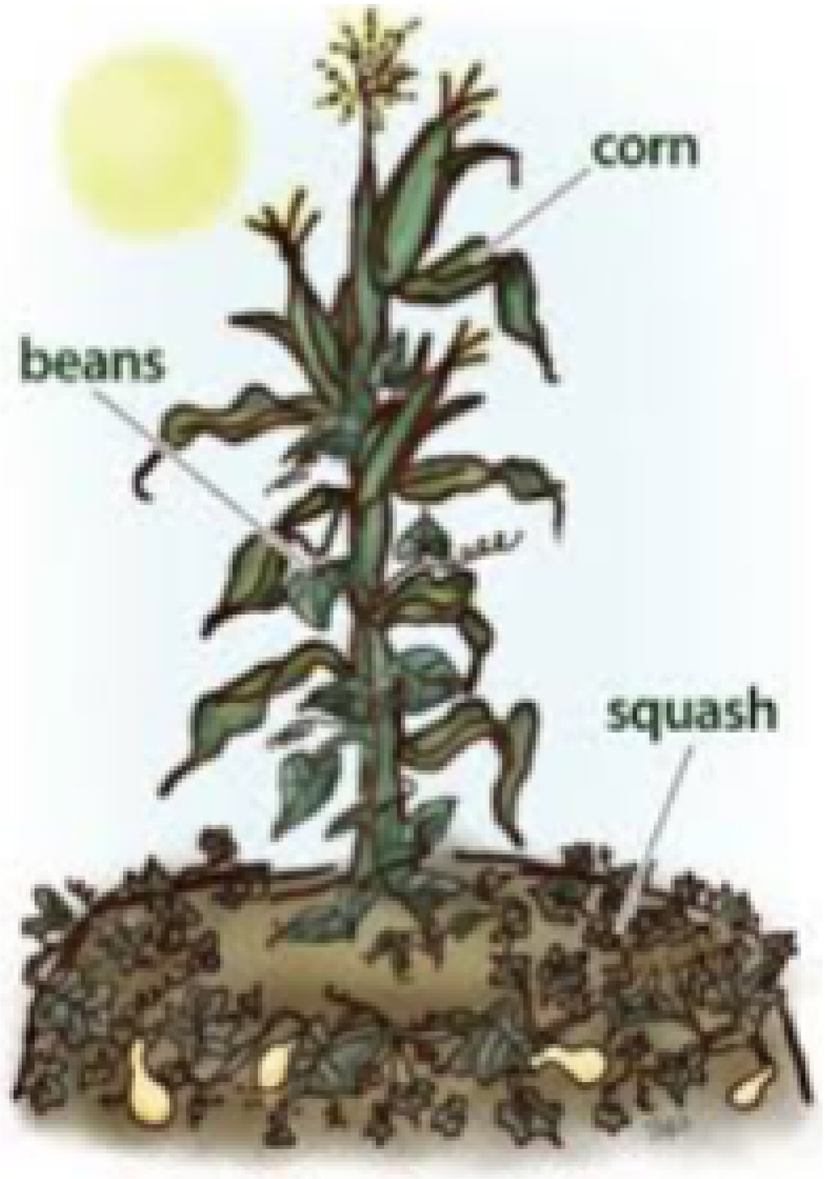
For many people corn is sacred because of the symbolic value of food. Indigenous people have conceived corn as the cycle of human existence. Food is present in death and at birth, planting and in harvest.

La Milpa

We've also learned in previous lessons that La Milpa is a technique or crop growing system created and implemented by indigenous cultures in the Americas.

The Milpa is still utilized today by many native people of Mesoamerica.

ARTES de MÉXICO en UTAH



The Three Main Crops

The three crops benefit from each other. The maize provides a structure for the beans to climb, eliminating the need for poles which are more commonly used today. The beans provide the nitrogen to the soil that the other plants use, and the squash plant spreads along the ground, blocking the sunlight, helping prevent the establishment of weeds. The squash leaves act as a shade.

Within this system pumpkins, flowers, pigweed, corn, mushrooms, herbal medicines, animals and people live thanks to it.

Community

Think of Milpa as our community, everyone benefits of everyone's talents, efforts.

"The strength of the MILPA or Three Sisters (as known among many North American Indigenous peoples) is not in the productivity of corn or bean or squash or chile or tomatillo measured separately. Its virtue lies in the synergic harmony of the whole. Its effectiveness does not come from the parties but from its intermingling, from its variegated symbiosis "

Given the abundance of food, birds, mammals and insects that arrive at the Milpa this provides a rich bio diversity.

The main benefit of growing a Milpa is the diversity of vegetation which satisfies a nutritional balanced diet.

AGRO-ECO-SYSTEM

Based on polyculture. The rotation of crops maintains soil fertility and reduces erosion. Milpas provide food that is balanced and nutritious for all of our bodies.

- Nixtamalized corn: - Provides calcium / niacin precursors are released - rich in leucine but deficient in lysine and tryptophan
- Bean: - Source of protein, fiber, carbohydrates
- Squash - Pumpkin - Low calories, high fiber and vitamins
- Pumpkin seeds: Protein , antioxidants and phytosterols - complements the vitamins of beans and corn
- Chili - Vitamins, minerals, capsaicin - Color, flavor, spiciness - It favors the assimilation of corn and beans
- Oilseeds: Chia, amaranth, peanuts, pine nuts - Protein sources

ARTES de MÉXICO en UTAH

Nitrate Contamination

Milpas can also be the solution to the challenges within our modern societies such as nitrate contamination in our waters. With a milpa, beans naturally provide the nitrogen to the soil that the other plants use and eliminates the use of nitrogen and fertilizers therefore keeping our waters clean for drinking.

"In many instances, the milpa represents order and balance, as opposed to the threatening chaos of the surrounding wild bush. In Maya mythology, the cosmic art of creation is compared with making milpa": - The Gods and Symbols of Ancient Mexico and the Maya, Miller & Taube

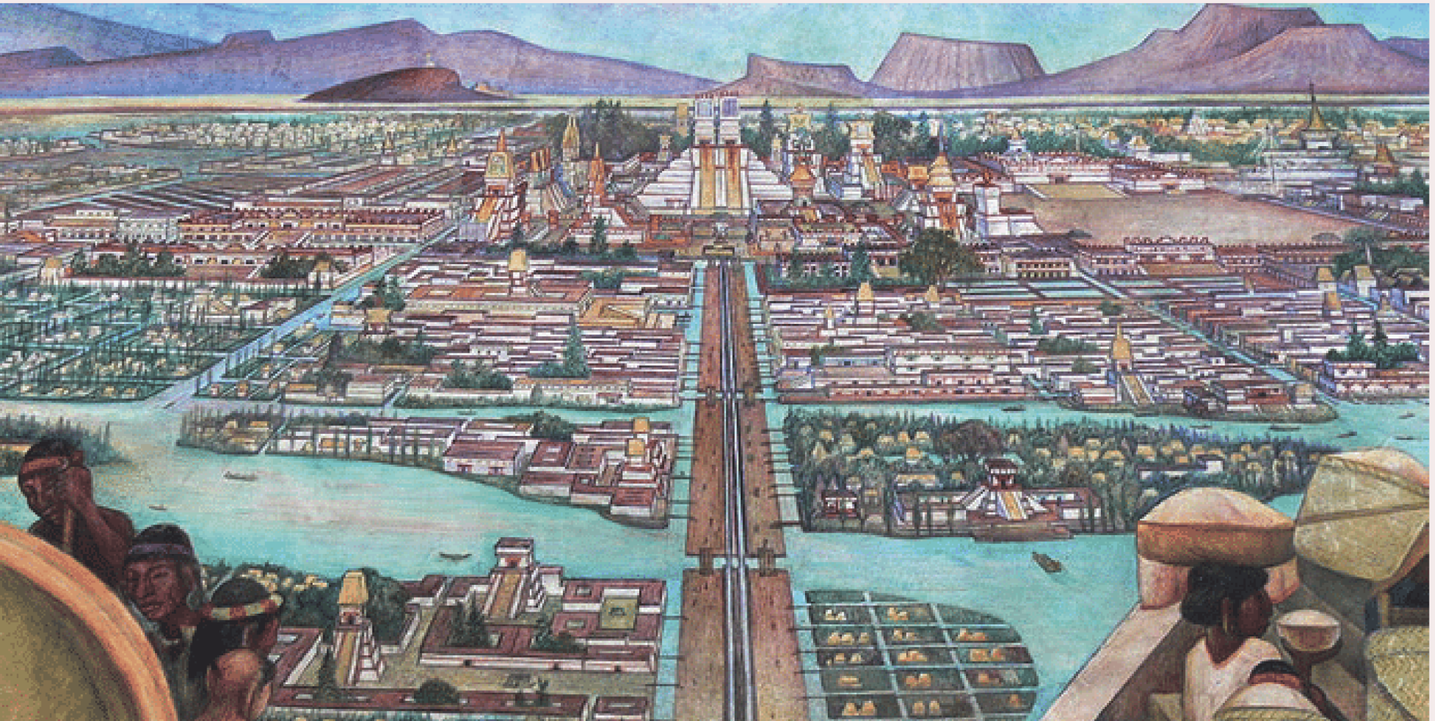
Milpa in Mayan

Milpa in all its various forms has been practiced for millennia in the Maya region and is still a central activity in traditional Maya management of environmental sustainability. Milpa systems are found in sea levels and highlands, home gardens and larger sites.

La Milpa is so significant that Maya people use the word as part of their identity. For example: Chol is the name of a Mayan language in Mexico. Ch'orti' is the name of a Mayan language in Honduras.

In these communities the word for "Milpa" is “chol” and “chor”.

ARTES de MÉXICO en UTAH



The Word Milpa

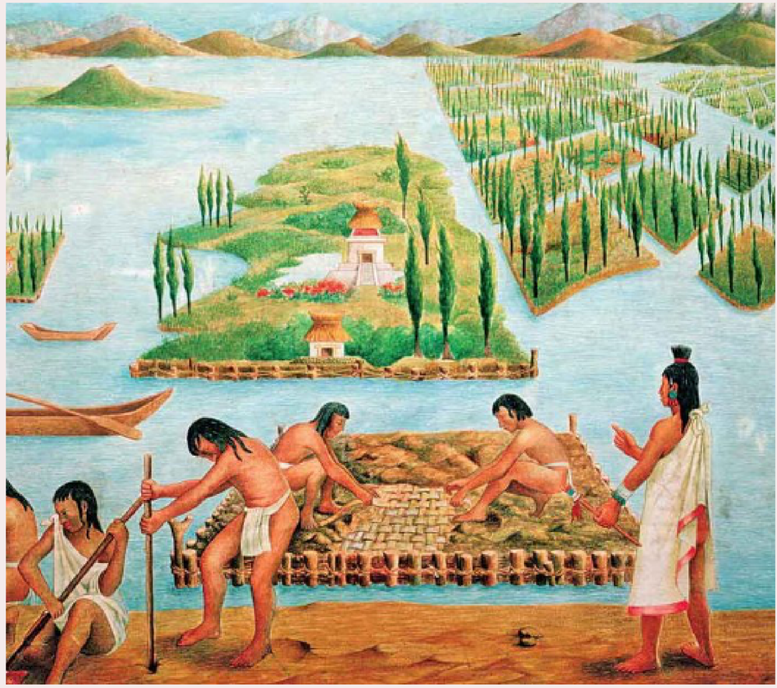
The word Milpa comes from the Aztec Nahuatl word "milli" which means planted pot and "pan" which means on top. Translated "milpa" would literally translate "on top of planted plot" or "in the cultivated field".

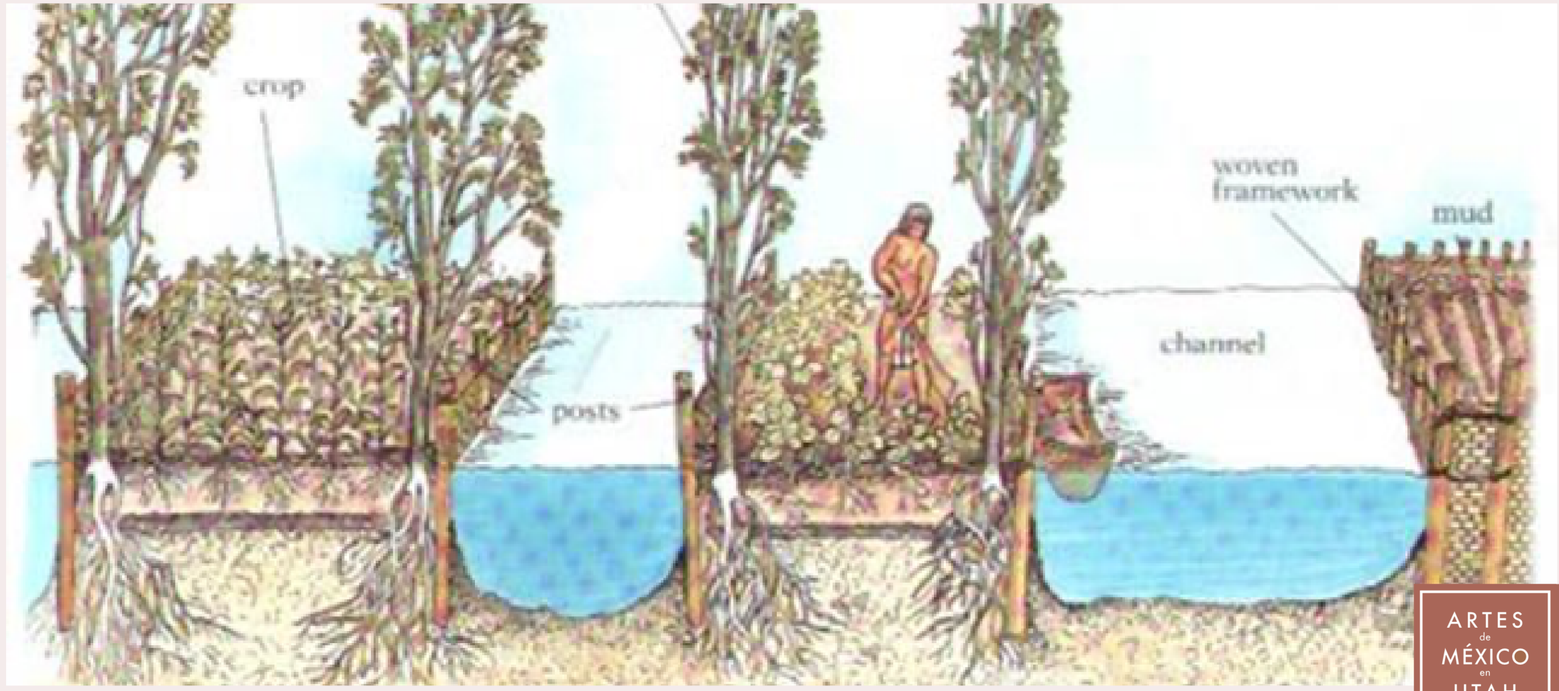
The Aztecs built their capital city, Tenochtitlan on top of lake Texcoco by creating two artificial islands above the water line. Within the city, floating gardens existed, these are called **Chinampas**.

Chinampas

Milpas can also grow on Chinampas. Chinampas are long narrow garden beds separated by canals. The garden land is built up from the wetland by stacking alternating layers of lake mud and thick mats of decaying vegetation.

The benefits of a chinampa system are that the water in the canals provides a consistent passive source of irrigation, where natural water is constant and of slow flow.





ARTES de MÉXICO en UTAH

Recall

What is the name of the sustainable planting system used in the Americas for thousands of years?

ARTES de MÉXICO en UTAH

Share

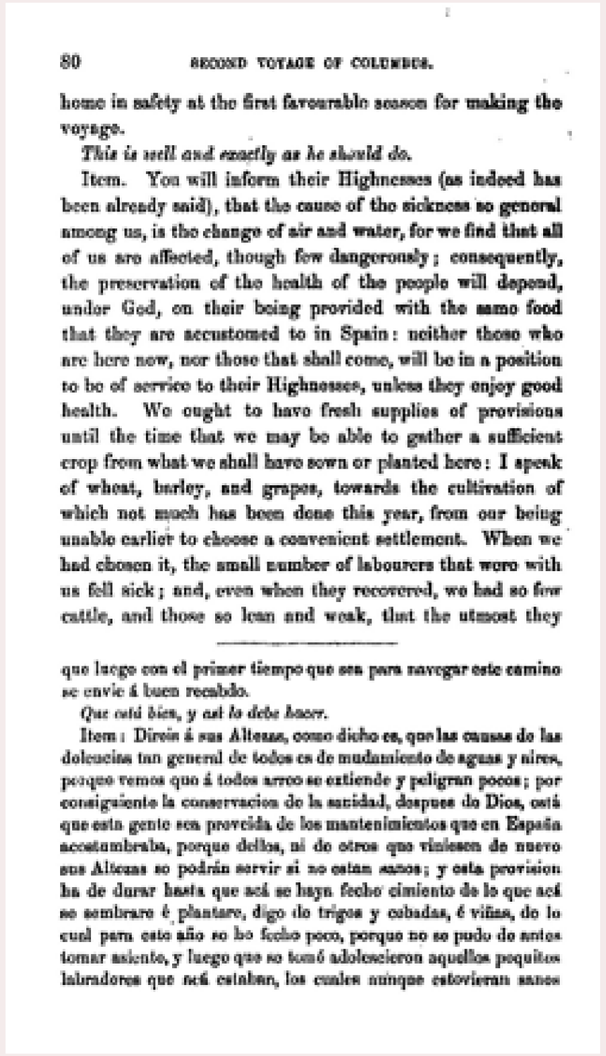
What have you learned about Indigenous planting systems?

Food is Movement

After 1492

Corn is an indigenous crop cared by indigenous people for time immemorial, (according to According to scientist ,9,000 years ago) in Mesoamerica and then spread throughout the entire continent through trade.

After European contact, corn and other crops spread massively around the world. Food is still constantly moving today through exportation.



80 SECOND VOYAGE OF COLUMBUS.

home in safety at the first favourable season for making the voyage.

This is well and exactly as he should do.

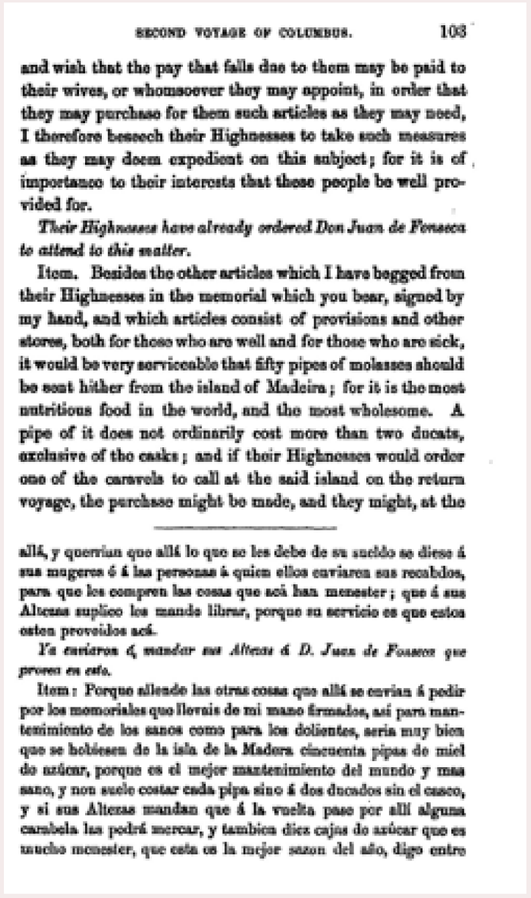
Item. You will inform their Highnesses (as indeed has been already said), that the cause of the sickness so general among us, is the change of air and water, for we find that all of us are affected, though few dangerously; consequently, the preservation of the health of the people will depend, under God, on their being provided with the same food that they are accustomed to in Spain: neither those who are here now, nor those that shall come, will be in a position to be of service to their Highnesses, unless they enjoy good health. We ought to have fresh supplies of provisions until the time that we may be able to gather a sufficient crop from what we shall have sown or planted here: I speak of wheat, barley, and grapes, towards the cultivation of which not much has been done this year, from our being unable earlier to choose a convenient settlement. When we had chosen it, the small number of labourers that were with us fell sick; and, even when they recovered, we had so few cattle, and those so lean and weak, that the utmost they

---

que luego con el primer tiempo que sea para navegar este camino se envie á buen recabdo.

Que está bien, y así lo debe hacer.

Item: Dirán á sus Altezas, como dicho es, que las causas de las dolencias tan general de todos es de mudamiento de aguas y aires, porque vemos que á todos arreo se extiende y peligran pocos; por consiguiente la conservacion de la sanidad, despues de Dios, está que esta gente sea provcida de los mantenimientos que en España acostumbraba, porque dellos, ni de otros que vinieseu de nuevo sus Altezas no podrán servir si no estan sanos; y esta provision ha de durar hasta que acá se haya fecho cimiento de lo que acá se sembrare é plantare, digo de trigos y cebadas, é viñas, de lo cual para este año se ha fecho poco, porque no se pudo de antes tomar asiento, y luego que se tomó adolescieron aquellos pequitos labradores que acá estaban, los cuales aunque estuvieran sanos



SECOND VOYAGE OF COLUMBUS. 103

and wish that the pay that falls due to them may be paid to their wives, or whomsoever they may appoint, in order that they may purchase for them such articles as they may need, I therefore beseech their Highnesses to take such measures as they may deem expedient on this subject; for it is of importance to their interests that these people be well provided for.

Their Highnesses have already ordered Don Juan de Fonseca to attend to this matter.

Item. Besides the other articles which I have begged from their Highnesses in the memorial which you bear, signed by my hand, and which articles consist of provisions and other stores, both for those who are well and for those who are sick, it would be very serviceable that fifty pipes of molasses should be sent hither from the island of Madeira; for it is the most nutritious food in the world, and the most wholesome. A pipe of it does not ordinarily cost more than two ducats, exclusive of the casks; and if their Highnesses would order one of the caravels to call at the said island on the return voyage, the purchase might be made, and they might, at the

---

allá, y querrian que allá lo que se les debe de su sueldo se diese á sus mugeres ó á las personas á quien ellos enviasen sus recabdos, para que les compren las cosas que acá han menester; que á sus Altezas suplico los mande librar, porque su servicio es que estos esten proveidos acá.

Ya enviaron á mandar sus Altezas á D. Juan de Fonseca que provea en esto.

Item: Porque allende las otras cosas que allá se envian á pedir por los memoriales que llevais de mi mano firmados, así para mantenimiento de los sanos como para los dolientes, seria muy bien que se hobiesen de la isla de la Madera cincuenta pipas de miel de azúcar, porque es el mejor mantenimiento del mundo y mas sano, y non suele costar cada pipa sino á dos ducados sin el casco, y si sus Altezas mandan que á la vuelta pase por allí alguna carabela las podrá mercar, y tambien diez cajas de azúcar que es mucho menester, que esta es la mejor sazon del año, digo entre

Food in the Americas

While European colonizers had difficulty adjusting and understanding the new food culture of the Americas.

Columbus himself was convinced that Spaniards were dying because they lacked “wholesome European foods.” Herein began the colonial discourse of “right foods” (superior European foods) vs. “wrong foods” (inferior Indigenous foods).

ARTES de MÉXICO en UTAH

Misperceptions

Fray Bernardino de Sahagun in 1577 wrote a misconstrued description of the Aztec selling cacao, corn, and beans in it he describes the process of preparing them using water and earth:

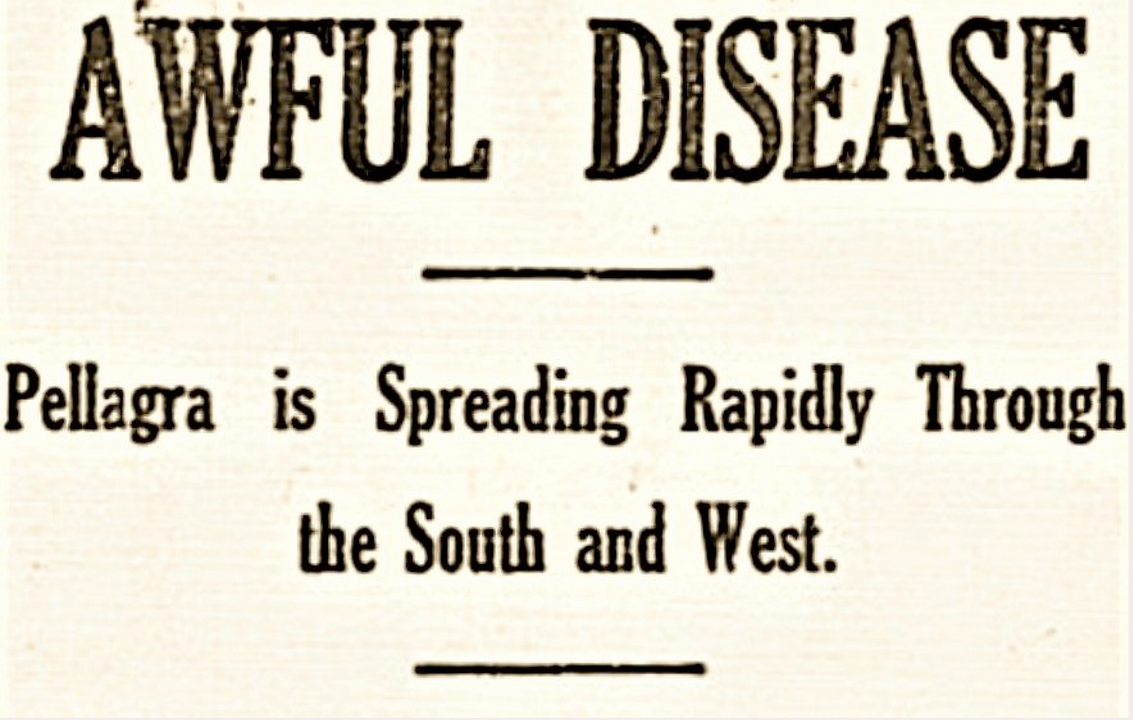
"The wrongdoer sell them fake, because he cooks them and even toasts them so that they look good, and sometimes they also put it in the water so that they look fat. And make them look ashen or brown which are best for almond shapes in order to deceive. They also have this method to marinate or to season: that the ones that are new, so that they look fat, have them toasted in the hot ash, and then surround them with clay or with moist earth so that the ones that looked small appear fat and new.... "

DE LOS QUE FENDEN

cacao, maiz y frisoles

Fray Bernardino de Sahagún,

Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España.


AWFUL DISEASE

Pellagra is Spreading Rapidly Through the South and West.

Pellagra

Because Fray Bernardino de Sahagun believed the process of NIxtamalization was a deception, Europeans did not nixtamalize their corn. eventually many people in both Europe and the U.S fell ill with a sickness called Pellagra, it was also known as Mad de Rosa. In 1909, an outbreak spread in the southern part of the United States. Dr. Joseph Goldberger discovered that it was a lack of essential nutrients in the diet of pellagra patients. Specifically Vitamin B3. Corn that was nixtamalized didn't have this problem because the basic solution broke down the cell walls allowing the nutrients to be released and processed in the body.

Bottom Image: Saggio di ricerche sulla pellagra / Di Vincenzio Chiarugi. Chiarugi, Vincenzo, 1759-1820

Top Image: 1909 headline from the Orangeburg, South Carolina, Times and Democrat. Library of Congress/

ARTES de MÉXICO en UTAH

Food is Language

Just like food; language and words also cross borders.

The word Guacamole is Nahuatl.

āhuacam**ō**lli, from **ā**huaca-, "avocado", and m**ō**lli, "sauce”

And the word guacamole is now used all over the world!

Elote – Elo-tl

Tejocote – Te-xolo-tl

Jitomate – xix-toma-tl

Guajolote – wueh-xolo-tl

Atole - a-tol-li

Chocolate – chocola-tl

Chile – chilli

Moli - Mole

Nojpal - Nopal

Chilakil -> Chilaquiles

Kilitl -> Quelite

Guacamoli -> Mole de aguacate

ARTES de MÉXICO en UTAH

ARTES de MÉXICO en UTAH

See, Think, Listen: Food and Land

While we enjoy many foods today, food commodity comes at the price of many indigenous people who have suffered and are suffering hunger, inequality and discrimination. During the period of colonization food was not the only change taking place. Land ownership has also changed. Today the original people of the Americas still fight for the right to their lands. A violent struggle that has lasted 500 years and continue to this day.

Many Indigenous communities don't have access to their land, to water, and to their food.

Indigenous agricultural values must be preserved and protected, many of these are threatened in the context of global trade, monopolies, environmental deterioration, impoverishment of rural areas, the declining development of local cultures and the threat to small scale agriculture.

Indigenous Farmer from Chiapas

“Señores, you don’t seem to understand. I am a farmer. My father was a farmer and his father was a farmer as far back as we know. You don’t seem to understand that we don’t want your welfare handouts, your political positions are meaningless to us, and your factory jobs are what we oppose – we want our sons and daughters, their sons and daughters to continue to be farmers on our own lands with our own languages and our own cultures and our own traditions. This is what we are fighting for - this is what we are willing to die for.” - SchoolsforChiapas.org

ARTES de MÉXICO en UTAH

The Zapatista Movement

Indigenous Farmers in Chiapas México have organized and created The Zapatista Movement also known as the EZLN, they are a social movement made up of Indigenous activists/warriors.

The EZLN led an uprising on January 1, 1994 to address the Mexican government's indifference to the poverty and marginalization of indigenous communities.

They are the first revolutionary movement to declare war not only on a government but on **NAFTA, an international trade agreement.**

Who Are The Zapatistas?

Share

Watch on YouTube

ARTES de MÉXICO en UTAH

What do you know about NAFTA?

North American Free Trade Agreement

United States, Canada, and Mexico

Effective January 1st, 1994

Eliminated and reduced barriers for trade and investment between North American Countries.

NAFTA

In April 2020, the three countries implemented a new agreement. The new trade agreement involved only small changes.

Reorganizing NAFTA would affect jobs and economic growth reductions. The most affected country would be Mexico.

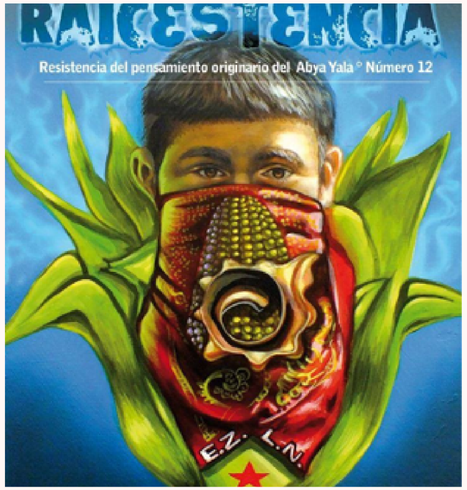
There have been tensions and disputes about employment, the environment, and economic growth.

NAFTA benefited North American economies and average citizens, but damaged small minorities of workers in economic areas exposed to trade competition.

Tierra Y Libertad: Land and Liberty

Through art people have found a way to share their struggles and preserve their traditions. For the indigenous people of the Americas, nature is not something to be obtained or sold, it is family.

Why is corn used in these images?



“During the last five centuries while our people have withstood suffering – enormous sufferings – our corn has allowed us to survive. Now our corn is suffering and we must give back to the corn what it has given us…we must help the corn withstand its suffering from the transgenic infections brought on by the greed of the transnational corporations and the bad governments. That way corn, and the people of the corn, will both be able to survive together.”

– TZOTZIL MAYA ELDER, CHIAPAS, MEXICO

ARTES de MÉXICO en UTAH

Comandante Ramona

This is Comandanta Ramona holding in one hand the earth, and in the other a seashell in which a flower grows and a hummingbird drinks its nectar.

The spiral found on a seashell and snail is a pre-Columbian symbol that represents infinity, continuation and origins. The spiral is without a beginning or ending. You can start at any point, but it never ends. The snail and seashell is now used as a symbol of resistance for the Zapatista Movement that originated in Chiapas, Mexico.

ARTES de MÉXICO en UTAH

Community Gardens

We see family, we see unity, and we see nature.

"Making milpa is an expression that invites us to reflect on how we interact in our environments. “- Mariana Castillo

ARTES de MÉXICO en UTAH

Explain

Who are the EZLN (Zapatistas) and what are they fighting for?

Group of Tzeltal women in the Zapatism resistance movement, south of México Source: Lobo suelto (2019)

Connect

How are the ideas of the ELZN connected with decolonization?

Reflect

What is the relationship between the environment, Indigenous communities and/in your community?

ARTES de MÉXICO en UTAH

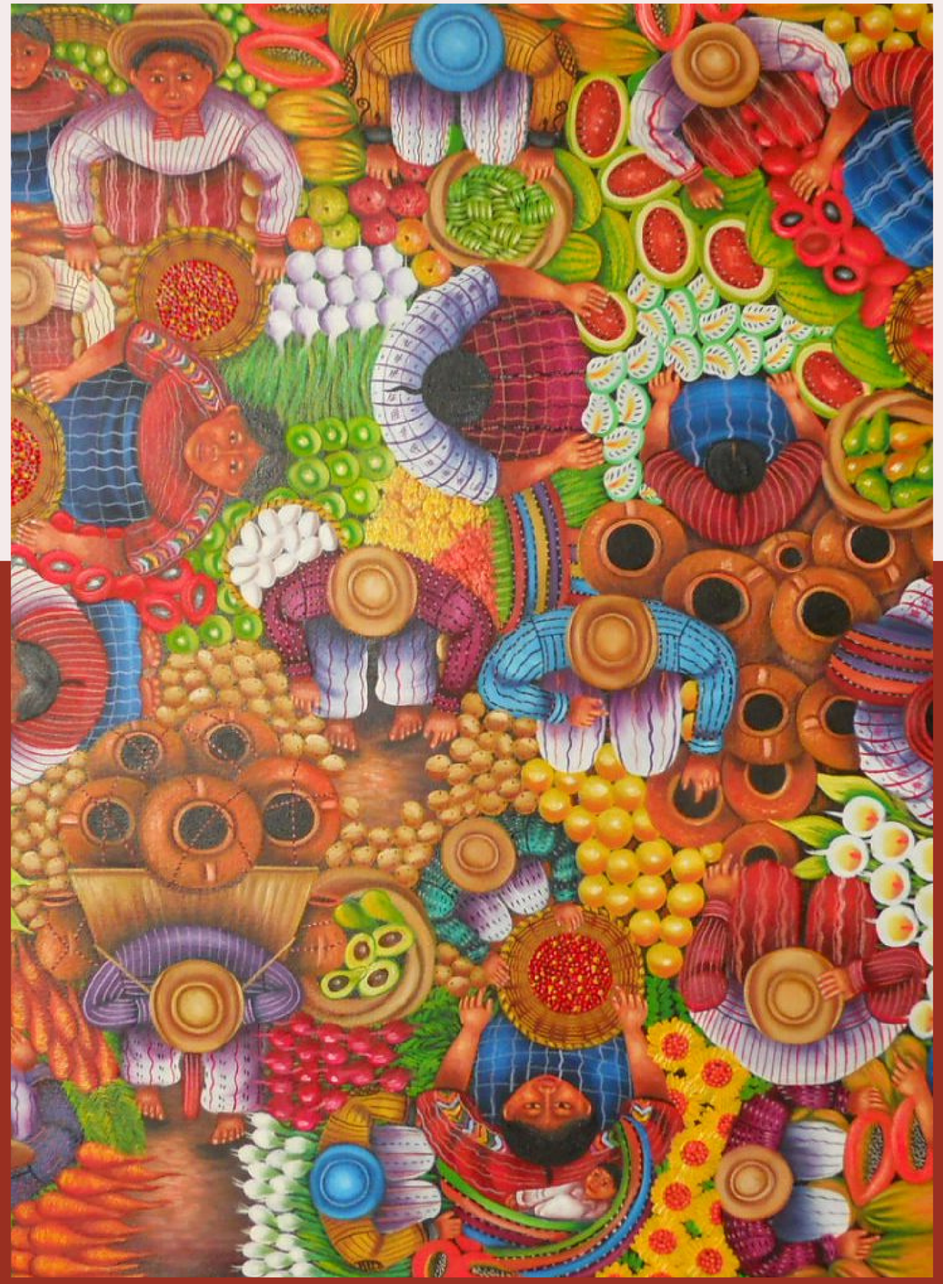
TRADITIONAL STREET FOOD

THINK ABOUT YOUR FOOD TRUCK AGAIN

WOULD YOU CHANGE THE THEME OF YOUR ORIGINAL FOODTRUCK?

WHERE DOES YOUR FOOD GROW?

WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?



Food is Power

Food choices are influenced and linked by cultural values and are an important part of the construction and maintenance of social identity. In that sense, food has never only been about the simple act of eating—food is history, it is culturally transmitted, it is identity.

Food is power.

ARTES de MÉXICO en UTAH

Get Involved!

- Advocate for increased access to farmer's markets and community gardens for underserved populations.
- Develop interventions to increase access to healthy foods in areas with little or no access including food deserts.
- Partner with worksites to implement healthy food policies that increase access to fruit and vegetables for employees.
- Partner with schools and daycares to implement healthy food polices that increase access to fruit and vegetables.
- Increase access to healthy foods.
- Encourage the use of space for community gardens and farmer's markets in underserved areas.
- Partner with community supported agriculture (CSA) programs to increase access to locally grown foods.

ARTES de MÉXICO en UTAH

In Partnership with Community Gardens

Growing community and flavors of our homelands here in Utah! Maria Elena and Rosita teaching our community how to make Milpa together!

Respect
Educate
Amplify
Listen

CONTRIBUTERS:

Fanny Guadalupe Blauer, Vicky Lowe, Diana C. Rose, Ph.D. , Bonnie Jean Knighton, Catherine Aviles

ARTES de MÉXICO en UTAH

A SPECIAL THANKS TO:

UTAHHUMANITIES
Ideas in Action