

Carissa Delgado  
Pahola Paugh  
NEH Institute

## Food Voices--Connecting Cultures

Food Voice-Connecting Culture is a text set prepared for secondary students. The goal is to foster cultural identity while comparing their food and other cultures to promote empathy and connections. Food is always to preserve their culture even if they move places.

### Guiding Questions:

- How can food connect cultures/ diverse groups of people?
- What literature depicts foods as its main subject?
- How does food preserve culture?
- How does food evolve culture?
- How has food changed to those who immigrate?
- Where are traditional immigrant foods going now?

## High School Text Set Bibliography

Arellano, G. (2013). *Taco USA: How Mexican food conquered America*. Scribner.

Gustavo Arellano's book discusses the evolution of el taco and how taco differs around the United States. He examines the history and culture of Mexican food in this country by tapping into great stories and mapping the cuisine's popularity in el Norte.

*Cafeteria workers at Bowie cafeteria, Cecilia Ramona Bustillos, left. Location was El Paso, Texas.* (2019). photograph, EL PASO.

The El Paso Museum/History's archive has a section where El Pasoans can upload images. In particular, this image of cafeteria workers at Bowie HS. Bowie HS is located in Segundo barrio along the U.S.-Mexico area.

Chávez Leyva , Y. (2019, July 29). Reclaiming Ancestral Foods with Attention and Intention. <https://sway.office.com/ziZPddEaBZQcU7wl?ref=Link>.

Yolanda Chávez Leyva is a professor of public history who works at the University of Texas at El Paso. As a historian, she examined how food re-connects people emotionally, physically, and spiritually. El Paso Food Voices can be located in the university archives.

*Cocina Con Rosalba.* Facebook. (n.d.). <https://www.facebook.com/rosalbamiranda63>.

Cocina Con Rosalba is a native of Chihuahua, Mexico, and currently resides in Juarez. She cooks live on Facebook, where she sells food plates (platillos). During her live feed, she cooks, and about 2.4 million of her followers connect with her daily. Her recipes join millions of people worldwide in companionship.

While she is cooking, she answers questions about her recipes.

El Paso History Alliance. (n.d.). *CHICO'S TACOS*. Facebook.

<https://www.facebook.com/elpasohistoryalliance/posts/chicos-tacos-established-july-4-1953-at-4230-alameda-avenue-by-joe-morachicos-ta/2676653589026799/>.

Chico's Tacos restaurant was established July 4, 1953, at 4230 Alameda Avenue in El Paso, Texas, by Joe Mora. This restaurant is a well-known small local chain-based restaurant that serves rolled tacos in "special" tomato soup-like sauces at a low price. Chico's Tacos is a well-known small restaurant that serves rolled tacos at a low price. It's a local meetup/bonding place or midnight food after *la fiesta*. This website provides more information about the history of the restaurant.

Esquivel, L. (1992). *Like water for chocolate*. Doubleday.

The novel "Like Water for Chocolate" begins each chapter with a recipe in Tita's cookbook, which the narrator inherited. The recipes teach the protagonist life lessons based on the context of the stories.

Joaquin. (2019, July 29). *Reclaiming Ancestral Foods with Attention and Intention*. Molcajete. <https://sway.office.com/ziZPddEaBZQcU7wl?ref=Link>.

Joaquin, an eleven-year boy, wrote the poem inspired by spending time in the kitchen with his grandmother Yolanda Chávez Leyva. This poem can be located in the El Paso Voices archives. This poem is important because young adults can relate to the idea of making food with a grandma or a family member.

lasemillafoodcenter. (2021, May 22). *Life Origins Mural Unveiling at Bowie High School*. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jlmuC8bFqi0&t=5s>.

La Semilla Food Center and local artist Al Woody - a Dine/Navajo origin decent painter-illuminate the El Paso foodways during the pandemic. The mural is at Bowie High School in El Paso, TX. It is titled "Life Origins," Its inspiration is a combination of stories from people across the Paso del Norte region and Al's experience as an Indigenous person and artist. The mural depicts how people grew, purchased, or shared food during the pandemic; shared recipes orally to future generations. The mural is important since it promotes culture preservation for young adults with stories from their community.

Mendoza, J. (2019). *An indigenous peoples' history of the United States for young people*. Beacon Press.

The content presented in this book represents perspectives not often addressed in young adult literature. The authors build a strong understanding of the historical perspective through a conceptual frame: land, corn, conquest, religion, genocide, warfare, resistance, colonization, water, racism, etc.

Rodríguez Roberto Cintli. (2014). *Our sacred maíz is our mother = nin tonantzin non centeotl: indigeneity and belonging in the Americas*. Univ. of Arizona Press.

Roberto Cintli Rodriguez investigates the origins and migrations of Mexican peoples in the United States. He adds that understanding where you come from is essential, so this book suggests that you should follow the maíz. Corn or maiz becomes essential as it operates as an expression of cultural identity.

Shadrack Smith, D. (2020, June 18). Taste The Nation- Burritos at the Border. *Taste The Nation* . episode, Hulu.

Taste The Nation-"Burritos at the Border" depicts the people of El Paso through

their food. Padma Lakshmi visits and gets a taste of the borderland, discovering the origins of America's most loved foods. The episode illustrates how even a burrito is a form of love and provides comfort even under challenging circumstances.

## Middle School Text Set Bibliography

Baucum, E. Breakfast Taco Mural. <https://twitter.com/EmilyBaucum/status/1163075211618607104>

This mural is based out of my hometown in San Antonio on the west side. It shows the cultural significance breakfast tacos have in this particular region of Texas. Breakfast tacos themselves are a fusion of two cultures and that fusion is celebrated through this artwork. In this mural, I see the parts of my culture that have come together to make something delicious and new.

Bell, J., & Haley, J. (1932). A Log of the Texas-California Cattle Trail, 1854, I. *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, 35(3), 208-237. Retrieved July 18, 2021, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30237292>

This log gives a historical account of life during the cattle trail in 1854. In this log, Bell writes about his encounters with the Mexican people and their ways of life. He annotates their daily life and what they eat. Through his observations he is able to document the first sighting of the breakfast taco in New Mexico! Thus, locating the origin of this delicious food.

Bellow, H. DuBois Mural Draft. [https://www.berkshireagle.com/archives/du-bois-honors-increasing-in-great-barrington-bucking-past-controversies/article\\_3548eb7b-52f0-541a-83a6-685c3af77294.html&sa=D&source=editors&ust=1626655780527000&usg=AOvVaw0Jh5hFZfZP1-XaMm6F5z8N](https://www.berkshireagle.com/archives/du-bois-honors-increasing-in-great-barrington-bucking-past-controversies/article_3548eb7b-52f0-541a-83a6-685c3af77294.html&sa=D&source=editors&ust=1626655780527000&usg=AOvVaw0Jh5hFZfZP1-XaMm6F5z8N)

I chose this quote and artwork because I really felt that it went well with the overarching theme of identity and duality through food. W.E.B. DuBois advocated for people of color to be treated equally as their white counterparts. This quote cements that. It signifies that the way the south handles the diversity of its particular region will be the standard for how the rest of the nation chooses too.

Ferrera, A and E. Cayce Dumont, et al (2018). *American like Me*. Gallery Books.

In this multicultural anthology, America Ferrera and her friends speak about their stories of navigating between two different cultures in the U.S while growing up. Oftentimes they are dealing with two languages, beliefs systems, and traditions. These conflicts render them feeling as if they are “American” enough. Through their stories, we see how they struggled to develop a sense of self, belonging, and being seen.

Herrera Ramos A., B. Mejia, D. Almonte, and D. Gomez (Host). (2019- present). Nuestro South [Audio podcast]. <https://www.instagram.com/nuestrosouth/>

This podcast speaks to the experience of being latinx in the U.S. southern region. They have multiple speakers who speak of their experiences with growing up in the South along with what current work they are doing to improve the latinx community. This podcast also seeks to promote more pride among the latinx community by encouraging members from all latinx backgrounds to share their stories and exploring the historical context to which latinx immigrants came to the southern region of the U.S.

Hernandez, E. and S. Puckett (2018). *Turnip Greens and Tortillas: A Mexican Chef Spices up the Southern Kitchen*. Houghton Mifflin Publishing Company.

Eddie Hernandez, a James Beard nominated chef, has fused together traditional Mexican cuisine and Southern food (aka Sur-Mex) and created his rendition of Sur-Mex cuisine in this cookbook. This type of cuisine is born from Mexican immigrants adapting to the Southern region of the U.S. They have to learn how to take what they know about their traditional foods and work with local ingredients around them. Thus showing that just as tacos have evolved, so too has Mexican food.

Hernandez, M. 2019. *Aventura, Amor, y Tacos*. Independent Publisher

*Aventura, Amor, y Tacos* chronicles the author's experience of getting in touch with her Mexican roots. Hernandez is a first generation immigrant whose parents have immigrated from Mexico and she yearns to understand the culture and space that her family leaves behind in order to create a better life for her. Even though Hernandez's parents take her on yearly road trips back to Mexico to reconnect with her parents' families it is not enough. Hernandez struggles with her bicultural identity and yearns to learn about the other part of her. This yearning makes Hernandez quit her job and travel to Michoacan, Mexico to spend time with her abuelos to learn about the life her parents left behind and why they chose to.

Ralat, J. 2020. *American Tacos: a History and Guide*. University of Texas Press.

This book captures the evolution of tacos in the U.S. as they were brought with Mexican immigrants further into the U.S. It shows how the tacos have adapted based off of the region that the immigrants settled in. Thus, showing that Mexican immigrants had to

adapt their culture and food to their new surroundings and the resources in them.

Regalado, A. 2021. "Traditional Flour Tortillas". #flour tortillas#easyrecipes#mexican food #food#foodTikTok#tortillas#tortillasdeharina#homecooking. TikTok.  
<https://www.tiktok.com/@saltycocina/video>

These TikTok videos about flour tortilla recipes are oral accounts about Mexican food. These different recipes symbolize the different strategies that these cooks use to change the texture of the flour tortilla. Although, the flour tortilla itself is a fusion of Middle Eastern and Mexican Native American food, it still continues to change. These changes represent the adaptations that Mexicans/ Mexican American cooks make to preserve their personal stories/ culture.

Weise, J. (2015). *Corazón de Dixie: Mexicanos in the U.S. South since 1910*. University of North Carolina Press. Retrieved July 19, 2021, from [http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5149/9781469624976\\_weise](http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5149/9781469624976_weise)

This book gives a detailed account of Mexicans and Mexican Americans in the South from 1910. It is meant to showcase the long history that Mexicans and Mexican Americans have in the South and sets to debunk the myth that Mexicans are recent immigrants to this area. It chronicles the wave of immigration of the Mexicans in the South and their experiences as they arrived in states such as Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, Georgia, and North Carolina.