

# **WETLAND GOURMET**

Dear Presenter,

This activity is 20 to 25 minute presentation and HANDS-ON cooking lab activity with approximately 24 ten year olds. You will need a minimum 6 helpers (one for every station). The students will be preparing and sampling a variety of foods from wetlands. You and your helpers **MUST** prepare the recipes at home **BEFORE** presenting this activity at the Water Festival. When you and the helpers practice, make sure to visualize 3-6 kids doing what you're doing - this will help you verbalize difficult or complex instructions.

As each new group of students arrive, introduce yourself, and let the teacher know this is a hands-on lab activity and you will need assistance from him/her. If you do not ask for assistance, the teacher will assume that **YOU** are the expert and they are the observer. Plan when you will ask the teacher for assistance. Do not hesitate to call the teacher by name and get him/her involved.

As each session begins, introduce yourself to the students. "Good morning, my name is.....and I work for., I am a ....., or simply I am happy to be here today." Make sure to introduce your helpers. Then introduce the topic of the presentation. Each step of this presentation is explained in this packet. These are recommended guidelines and do not have to be followed exactly word for word. However, you may present this material just as written. Feel free to personalize the presentation to suit you.

Thank you for volunteering to present "Wetland Gourmet." Have fun, enjoy yourself and we hope you will consider volunteering again next year.

Big Sioux Water Festival

# ***WETLAND GOURMET***

## **Background**

A wetland is a great market place of food sources. The vast number of plants growing in a healthy wetland form the basis of this food web (a food web is a complex system of many food chains). Resident and visiting animals can find a wide array of food choices in a wetland, whether they eat plants, animals, or both. A wetland with a great diversity of plant life will attract higher numbers and more species of animals.

Plants are called primary producers because they supply food at the lowest level of the food chain. It takes an enormous number of individual plants to support the other parts of the web. Wetland habitats are extremely productive in terms of plant life.

At the next level of a food chain are primary consumers: plant eaters (herbivores). Primary consumers include rabbits, mice, deer, and certain other mammals, some insects and fish, and ducks, geese, and certain other birds.

Primary consumers are eaten by secondary consumers, or carnivores (meat-eaters). This group includes predators such as birds of prey, some snakes, foxes, wild cats, and people. Secondary consumers are eaten by tertiary consumers, which may be predators or scavengers such as turkey vultures, crabs, and sometimes people. Note that these categories are very broad and general. Many animals fit into more than one group, and there are more complex levels of the web.

Many items that end up on the dinner table originate in wetlands. Wetlands offer many foods that provide humans and other species with essentials for survival. Even salt, a necessary food preservative in Colonial times, used to be “mined” from salt marshes. People can find a wide variety of edible plants in wetlands, as well as fish and game. Ducks, geese, deer, muskrats, and numerous species of fish and shellfish such as crabs, shrimp, and crayfish abound in wetland settings. In the South, even alligator has become a delicacy.

Many regional economies depend upon wetland foods. Are you a seafood lover? Oysters, shrimp, bluefish, flounder, and other popular, commercially important fish and shellfish are produced in wetlands, especially coastal marshes. Waterfowl, deer, and other game species that visit wetlands provide a source of food and income. Wetland mammals such as beaver, mink, and muskrat are valued for their fur - and muskrat is even becoming a popular gourmet dish. Cattail shoots, wild rice and many other wetland plants that grow in wetlands are edible.

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## **MATERIALS LIST**

**(FOR 6 STATIONS PER SESSION / 6 SESSION WITH 24 STUDENTS PER SESSION)**

### **CONSUMABLES:**

- 6 cups of flour
- 1 jar Miracle Whip
- 1 garlic salt
- 5 pound bag of sugar
- 18 cups Harvest Blend rice
- 2 boxes Club Crackers
- 2 jars chili sauce (12 oz.)
- 1 parsley
- 1 oregano
- 1 cinnamon
- 2 Lawry's Seasoned Salt
- 1 baking powder
- 2 salt
- 1 Worcestershire Sauce
- 2 cans cooking spray
- 1 box toothpicks
- 200 disposable plates
- 6 boxes aluminum foil
- 6 rolls of paper towels
- 2 bottles of dish detergent
- 1 large Real Lemon juice
- 6 cups cranberries
- 6 pounds bacon
- 6 lemon rind
- 24 cups blueberries
- 1 gallon milk
- 1 pound margarine
- 12 ounces finely shredded mozzarella cheese
- ½ dozen eggs
- mint leaves
- 6 cans baby shrimp
- 6 pounds of duck or goose
- 6 cream cheese (8 oz.)
- cattails
- Copies of menus for students
- Paper serving platters
- 200 disposable spoons
- 200 mini-muffin pan liners
- 6 containers of Wet Wipes
- Large trash bags

### **NON-CONSUMABLES:**

- 6 laminated recipe cards
- 10 mixing bowls
- 10 mixing spoons (combination of wooden and spatulas)
- 6 sets of measuring cups
- 6 serving spoons
- 4 mini-muffin pans
- 4 broiler pans (or cookie sheets)
- 4 large, heavy sauce pans
- 2 small sauce pans
- 6 small serving trays
- Miscellaneous silverware
- 2 large cooking pots
- 6 large trash cans
- Several dish washing cloths for clean up

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## **ROOM REQUIREMENTS**

Room set up will be dependent upon the layout of the kitchen.  
Best case scenario is 6 kitchen stations

## **PRE-PREPARATION:**

Pre-preparation can include any or all of the following:

- Locate kitchen
- Enlist and assign volunteer helpers a station and menu item
- Purchase supplies
- Do a “run through” of all the menu items with volunteer helpers
- Make copies and assemble menus to hand out to students

## **PREPARATION: Approximately 1 ½ hours to set up**

- Set up room with cooking utensils
- Place laminated recipe cards at each station to be used by the students during food preparation (1 card per station)
- Prepare first batch of food for your first session (all the following sessions will prepare food for the class that will follow that session - ie., Session #1 will prepare the food for Session #2, Session #2 will prepare the food for session #3, etc.)
- Lay out all ingredients at each station. See presenter cards or menus for station needs
- Make sure plates and eating utensils are in a central location accessible for all students
- Preheat ovens

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## **THIS IS A 20 - 25 MINUTE PRESENTATION (Presenter cards for this presentation are included)**

This hands-on activity is active and loud. To best explain and supervise this activity, it is suggested that you do this activity prior to presenting it.

### **INTENDED STUDENT OUTCOMES**

By completing this activity, the students should be able to:

- Appreciate wetland environments as incredible food sources
- Tune up their cooking skills

### **PROCEDURE**

1. Introduce yourself and your volunteer helpers with enthusiasm to your students
2. Divide students into groups. One group per station - no more than 4 students per station. You may wish to ask the teacher to assist you with this step.
3. Have students wash their hands
4. Explain general concepts of wetlands and their environments
5. Explain recipes and indicate laminated recipe cards at each station. Explain that each group will be making one food item from an entire menu
6. Have students prepare food
7. Students need to clean up work area
8. Have students sample food.

### **SET UP FOR NEXT SESSION**

1. Have students and volunteer helpers set out ingredients and cooking utensils for next session.
2. After sampling food, have students dispose of their used plates and eating utensils
3. After students have completed room clean up and trash disposal, thank them for participating, compliment them on their good behavior and excellent cooking skills, then distribute menus to the teacher.

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## **FINAL CLEAN UP AFTER LAST SESSION**

**Approximately 45 minutes**

- Wash any dirty dishes, pots, pans, etc.
- Replace any unused consumables that do not need to be refrigerated into storage container. Any items that need refrigeration, place in a grocery sack or other bag and return with kit. Make sure to let the presenter chair know that you have items that need refrigeration.
- Return all non-consumables to storage container
- Replace all presenter cards, laminated recipe cards and instructions in folder
- Clean up all work surfaces
- Return any undistributed menus to storage container for use next year