

Bearthday Celebrations: How Baking At Home Takes You Around The Globe

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Birthdays are celebrated in a variety of ways across the globe. Each culture has unique and delicious baked goods that help individuals celebrate another year around the sun. In response to the Covid-19 Pandemic, millions of Americans were staying in, baking at home, and celebrating birthdays alone, so this lesson gives students the opportunity to bake, celebrate, and experience multicultural foods, all while staying home.



Objectives:

1. Briefly explain the history of birthday celebrations and cakes.
2. Identify and describe birthday traditions celebrated in various countries and cultures around the world.
3. Research and select a baked birthday dessert to prepare and plate in an aesthetically pleasing way.
4. Photograph and describe the birthday traditions to peers.
5. Prepare a baked birthday dessert for family member or friend for their birthday.
6. Form connections with others during the pandemic, using a baked good.



Emphasis	Pre-Evaluation	Post-Evaluation	Community Service
» Baking, Photography, Geography, History, & Culture	» Think-Pair-Share Questionnaire	» Baked Good Rubric & Reflection	» Social Media Post » Bake Birthday Cake for Family & Friends

Day	Objectives	Materials
Day 1: History of Birthdays & Birthday Cakes	» Discuss birthday traditions and previous knowledge about birthdays » Describe the history of birthday cakes and birthday celebrations » Persuade the importance of baked goods in birthday celebrations	» <i>Think-Pair-Share</i> questionnaire » <i>History of Birthday Cakes</i> reading & questions
Day 2: Birthday Traditions Around the Globe	» Identify where different birthday traditions occur in the world » Explain how birthday traditions and celebration baked goods vary across cultures » Research a specific culture and their birthday celebration customs & cakes	» <i>Birthdays Around The Globe</i> slideshow » <i>Birthday Traditions Around The Globe</i> worksheet » <i>Birthday Traditions & Cake Lab Guide</i> worksheet » <i>Cake Recipe Selection Lab Preparation</i> sheet
Day 3: Food Presentation & Food Photography	» Define food photography and food presentation » Identify characteristics of well-plated foods » Describe why food plating is important	» <i>Food Photography & Presentation Guide</i> slideshow » white paper, colors
Day 4: Baked Birthday Dessert Lab	» Prepare cultural baked good cooperatively in lab groups » Plate birthday cake in a visually appealing way and photograph » Evaluate baked goods and peers' baked goods based on sensory characteristics	» <i>Baked Good Evaluation</i> sheet » camera
Day 5: Present Birthday Cake: Food Photography	» Present your cultural birthday cake to the class » Briefly summarize the cultural baked good and its birthday customs in post	» <i>Food Photography: Social Media Post</i> sheet » <i>Extra Credit: At-Home Lab</i> sheet

National Standards for Family and Consumer Sciences Education leadfcsed.org/national-standards.html

14.0 Nutrition and Wellness

14.1.2 Investigate the effects of psychological, cultural, and social influences on food choices and other nutrition practices.

8.0 Food Production and Services

8.5.10 Prepare breads, baked goods and desserts using safe handling and professional preparation techniques.

8.5.12 Demonstrate professional plating, garnishing, and food presentation techniques.





**Make your cake baking skills
and cupcakes count!**
bakesale.nokidhungry.org/

Baking Glossary of Terms, Techniques homebaking.org/glossary

Best Baking Guides from Domino and C&H Sugar Test Kitchen Pros with links to baking basics, frosting, sugar, and cake decorating homebaking.org/selecting-the-perfect-sweeteners/

Best Cake Tips from C&H Sugar chsugar.com/baking-tips-how-tos/best-cake-tips

Cakes and Cupcakes Recipes

homebaking.org/recipe-type/cakes-cupcakes/

Cake Making Learning Track

10 self-directed lessons with Chef Baker Bettie bakerbettie.com/cake-making-learning-track/

Flour 101 – What flour is best for cakes?

Flour 101 texaswheat.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Flour-101-final.pdf

Types of Flour sdwheat.org/new/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2014/11/wfc-web-flour-booklet.pdf



Frosting Guide – Give your cake the finish it deserves

dominosugar.com/baking-tips-how-tos/how-to-bake-a-perfect-cake/tips-for-frosting-cakes

Leavening – The Difference between Baking Powder and Baking Soda

homebaking.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/bakingsodavsbakingpowder.pdf

Sugar in Baking – Its Many Roles

sugar.org/blog/sugar-in-baking-what-bakers-need-to-know/

Top Tips for Cakes

Cake videos with Chef Gemma Stafford

biggerbolderbaking.com/cake-recipes/

Why Bake in Glass? Cake Baking Infographic

homebaking.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/HBA_WHY-USE-GLASS_INFOGRAPHIC_FINAL.pdf



In-a-Pinch Cake Baking Hacks

How to make powdered sugar at home

sugar.org/blog/in-a-pinch-make-powdered-sugar-at-home/

How to Make Cake Flour

1. Spoon, heap, level off 1 cup all-purpose flour.
2. Remove 2 Tablespoons flour and add 2 Tablespoons cornstarch.
3. Whisk until light or sift. Store in airtight container.

Ingredient Substitution Chart

chsugar.com/baking-tips-how-tos/substitutions-ingredients

Think-Pair-Share



Name: [ANSWER KEY](#)

Instructions: Using your prior knowledge and past experiences, answer the following questions relating to birthday cakes and birthday celebrations. Be prepared to share your answers with the class.

THINK: Answer the following questions independently.

How do you celebrate birthdays in your household?

What are some common birthday traditions that you have heard of family or friends celebrating?

Sketch a picture of a birthday cake below.

Referring to your sketch, how much do you think the presentation or appearance of a birthday cake matters to the cake?

What visual characteristics make a birthday cake appealing? How important is a visually appealing birthday cake?

Where do you think your birthday cakes and birthday traditions originated?

(continued)

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History of Birthday Cakes



Name: [ANSWER KEY](#)

Date: _____ Points: /10

Instructions: Read about the history of birthday cakes. Answer the questions relating to the text.

Birthdays are celebrated all around the world in a variety of ways with each culture having unique traditions that help individuals celebrate another year older. Baked goods are commonly used as a celebratory custom. Customs, traditions, and baked goods have evolved over time, but historians are unsure of the exact location where the origin of celebratory cakes first started.

Historians believe that Ancient Egyptians were the first to celebrate birthdays, because Egyptians believed that pharaohs became gods when they were crowned. Coronations were considered the "birth" of a god and celebrated. Food, drink, and festivities occurred when each new pharaoh was born, similar to "birthday parties" today.

Cakes were also common celebratory foods in Ancient Greece and Ancient Roman. Ancient Romans typically served cakes at birthdays and weddings. The circle cakes were made from flour, nuts, leavened years, and honey. Ancient Greece celebrated birthdays with cakes, specifically the sixth day of every lunar year with moon-shaped cakes that included lit candles. The cakes were offered up for Ancient Greece's goddess of the moon, Artemis. The lit candles represented the moon's shine. Artemis' candles were considered the first "birthday candles." Cake candles continued to be used in other ancient, Pagan cultures. Pagan cultures believed that fire from the lit candles scared away evil spirits and the smoke from candles carried prayers to the gods. People made noise and lit candles to ward off evil spirits on a person's birthday.

In the early 1400's, German bakeries first started selling sweet cakes, specifically marketed for birthday parties of young children. The birthday parties were referred to as *Kinderfest* and the cakes



were called *Geburtstagarten*. These cakes were designed for the wealthy, but by the Industrial Revolution, the birthday cakes were considered widespread in Germany.

By the 1700's, German children were greeted on their birthday with a cake that included candles, multiple layers of cake, icing, and decorations. The candles totaled the child's years in age plus one, to represent hope for another healthy year. In Switzerland in 1881, the first account of blowing out candles is recorded. Switzerland used candles on birthday cakes and each candle represented a year of life, then blew the candles out one by one.

The tradition of using decorating cakes and candles has continued for many Americans, with European descent, as customary for birthday celebrations. The cakes have evolved to include multiple layers, fillings, and flavors. Also, cake variations, such as, cupcakes are commonly used in the US. Other cultures celebrate with different types of cakes, but some variation of the birthday cake has become a staple in almost all cultures across the world. Celebratory cakes continue to evolve from their sweet history, dating all the way back to Ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome. (continued)

Sources:

Blog, D. (2013, January 13). Kinderfest. Retrieved March 30, 2021, from <https://delicioushistoryblog.wordpress.com/tag/kinderfest/>

Nowak, C. (2020, August 14). What is a birthday cake? Retrieved March 30, 2021, from <https://www.d.com/article/origin-of-birthday-cake/>

University, C. (2017, April 28). The real reason we eat cake on birthdays. Retrieved March 30, 2021, from <https://spoonuniversity.com/lifestyle/origin-of-birthday-cake/>

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Think-Pair-Share (continued)



PAIR: Share your birthday traditions with a partner.

Write down two things you learned from your partner.

SHARE: Discuss as a large group.

Write down two things you learned from your classmates.

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History of Birthday Cakes (continued)



Questions:

1. Where were the first birthdays celebrated and why?
Ancient Egypt, celebrating a the sun god as indicated by another year around the sun (birthday)
2. How did Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome vary in the celebratory cakes prepared?
Ancient Romans typically served cakes at birthdays and weddings. The circle cakes were made from flour, nuts, leavened years, and honey. Ancient Greece celebrated birthdays with cakes, specifically the sixth day of every lunar year with moon-shaped cakes that included lit candles. The cakes were offered up for Ancient Greece's goddess of the moon, Artemis.
3. Why did Pagan cultures light candles and sing?
The lit candles represented the moon's shine.
4. What role did German bakeries play in the development of birthday cakes?
In the early 1400's, German bakeries first started selling sweet cakes, specifically marketed for birthday parties of young children. The birthday parties were referred to as Kinderfest and the cakes were called Geburtstagarten. These cakes were designed for the wealthy, but by the Industrial Revolution, the birthday cakes were considered widespread in Germany.
5. Where did people start blowing out the candles?
Switzerland in 1881
6. What traditions discussed in the text relate to your own birthday cake and celebration experiences?

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Birthday Traditions Around The Globe



Name: [ANSWER KEY](#)

Date:

Points: /20

Instructions: Label on the map where each tradition originated.



- 1: United States of America
- 2: Egypt
- 3: Greece
- 4: Germany
- 5: China
- 6: France
- 7: Japan
- 8: India
- 9: Norway
- 10: Mexico

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Birthday Traditions and Cake Lab Guide



Name: [ANSWER KEY](#)

Date:

Points: /15

Instructions: Research a specific culture or country of your choice and the birthday traditions most typically celebrated. Then, select a recipe that incorporates the tradition.

Country or Culture Selection: I am selecting _____, because...

Geography: Describe the location and mark on the map below where the tradition started.



History: How did the tradition first begin? Describe in detail.

Food Presentation: What makes the celebratory dessert unique? How is the food presented in a visually appealing way?

Any additional notes on the tradition or cake:

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Birthday Traditions Around The Globe (continued)



Instructions: As you listen to the slides, record the birthday traditions and type of celebratory baked good used at birthdays around the globe in the boxes below.

United States	Egypt
Greece	Germany
China	France
Japan	India
Norway	Mexico

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Cake Recipe Selection Lab Preparation



Name: [ANSWER KEY](#)

Date:

Points: /10

Instructions: Search the online and print sources for a recipe for your cake. Identify the yield, source, and ingredients. Describe the recipe procedures below and identify who is going to complete each step.

Yield: _____

Recipe Source: _____

Ingredients:

Procedures	Lab Member Indicated

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Baked Good Evaluation



Name: [ANSWER KEY](#)

Date:

Points: /10

Instructions: After preparing the baked good, evaluate based on the sensory characteristics. Sample and compare your baked good to your peers' cultural baked goods.

Culture	Appearance	Aroma	Texture	Flavor

- Overall, which was your favorite tasting and why?
- Which was the most visually appealing and why?
- Which baked good had the best texture and why?
- Which was your favorite aroma and why?
- How does sampling all of the different baked goods change your view of birthday celebrations?

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Extra Credit: At-Home Lab



Name: [ANSWER KEY](#)

Date:

Instructions: Select one of the birthday cakes and prepare for a family member or friend. Evaluate the cake below. Include a photograph of the cake.

Insert photo here:

- Which cultural cake did you choose to prepare and why?
- What was the person's reaction to receiving a traditional birthday cake?
- Would you prepare a traditional birthday cake again?
- What was the most difficult part about preparing the cake?
- What was the most rewarding part about preparing the cake?
- How did preparing the cake help you bond with the person you prepared the cake for?

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Food Photography: Social Media Post



Name: [ANSWER KEY](#)

Date:

Points: /20

Instructions: Take a photograph of your birthday cake in a visually appealing way and write a caption that briefly describes the cake, culture, and traditions. This post will be hung around the classroom, so others can see your traditional cake. *Optional: You can post this on social media to see other's reactions.*

Your post should include:

- Country
- Food prepared
- Description of ingredients and food
- Brief history of the food



Caption: "Khak" is a traditional Egyptian sweet cookie that is commonly used to celebrate birthdays.

The Khak has been used since Ancient Egyptian times and is imprinted with "Ra," the sun god, to celebrate another year around the sun. The cookie is prepared with flour, butter, sugar, nutmeg, vanilla, cinnamon, and milk. Nuts are also sometimes used. "Khaks" are popular Egyptian treats.

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Perfect Birthday Cake Recipe



Ingredients for the cake

1 ½ cups (3 sticks) butter, softened
2 ¼ cups granulated sugar
4 large eggs
1 Tablespoon pure vanilla extract
3 cups all-purpose flour
¼ cup cornstarch
2 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon kosher salt
1 ¼ cups milk
½ cup sprinkles, plus more for garnish, if desired

Ingredients for buttercream

1 ½ cups butter, softened
6 cups powdered sugar
¼ cup sour cream
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
¼ cup heavy cream
pinch of kosher salt



Instructions

- Make cake: Preheat oven to 350° and line three 8" cake pans with parchment paper. In a large bowl using hand mixer (or in the bowl of a stand mixer), beat together butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition. Add vanilla and mix until combined.
- In another large bowl, whisk together flour, cornstarch, baking powder, and salt. Add half of the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients, beating until just combined. Pour in the milk and mix until fully incorporated. Add remaining dry ingredients and stir until just combined. Fold in sprinkles.
- Divide batter evenly between prepared cake pans. Bake until slightly golden on top and a toothpick inserted into the middle comes out clean, about 30 to 35 minutes. Let cool completely.
- Meanwhile, make buttercream: in a large bowl using a hand mixer, beat butter until light and fluffy, 2 to 3 minutes. Add powdered sugar, sour cream, vanilla, heavy cream, and salt and beat until smooth.
- Assemble cake: Place the bottom layer of the cake on your serving platter and spread with buttercream; repeat with the second layer of cake. Place the last layer of cake on top, then frost the entire cake with buttercream. Garnish with more sprinkles, if desired.

Source: Perfect Birthday Cake by Lena Abraham

Abraham, L. (2021, November 1). Get festive with this dreamy birthday cake. Delish. Retrieved January 26, 2022, from <https://www.delish.com/cooking/recipe-ideas/23120595/funfetti-cake-birthday-cake-recipe/>

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