Learning A–Z	level **R**	Multi-level	N/A
Grade	3	Word Count	1,011
Lexile	1100L	Nonfiction • Informational	

Refer to the Focus Question on page 2 of this title to guide discussion and support additional learning connected to the text.

Dinnertime is a time for families to come together to enjoy delicious food, but the food on the table looks very different from country to country. **Dinner Around the World** provides readers with a look at cuisines from around the world. Colorful photographs and detailed maps help readers learn about traditional plates from different countries. The book can also be used to teach students how to compare and contrast information in a text and how to use commas to make a list.

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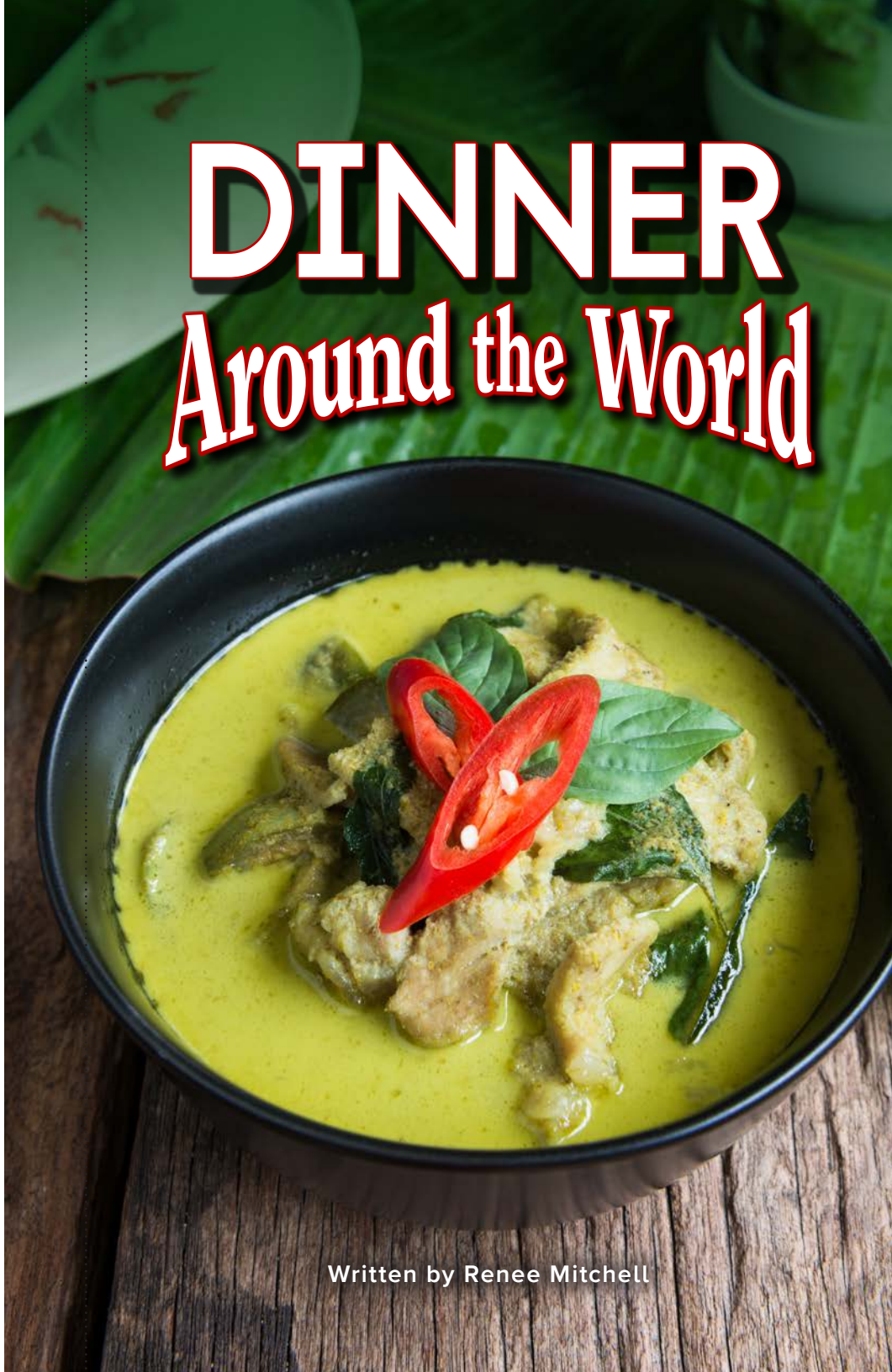
DINNER
Around the World



Written by Renee Mitchell

Glossary

colonized *(v.)* page 7
controlled and brought under the rule of another country

culture *(n.)* page 4
the ideas and customs of a certain group of people

flaky *(adj.)* page 7
able to be broken into thin, flat pieces

legumes *(n.)* page 5
plants with seed pods, such as a bean, lentil, or pea

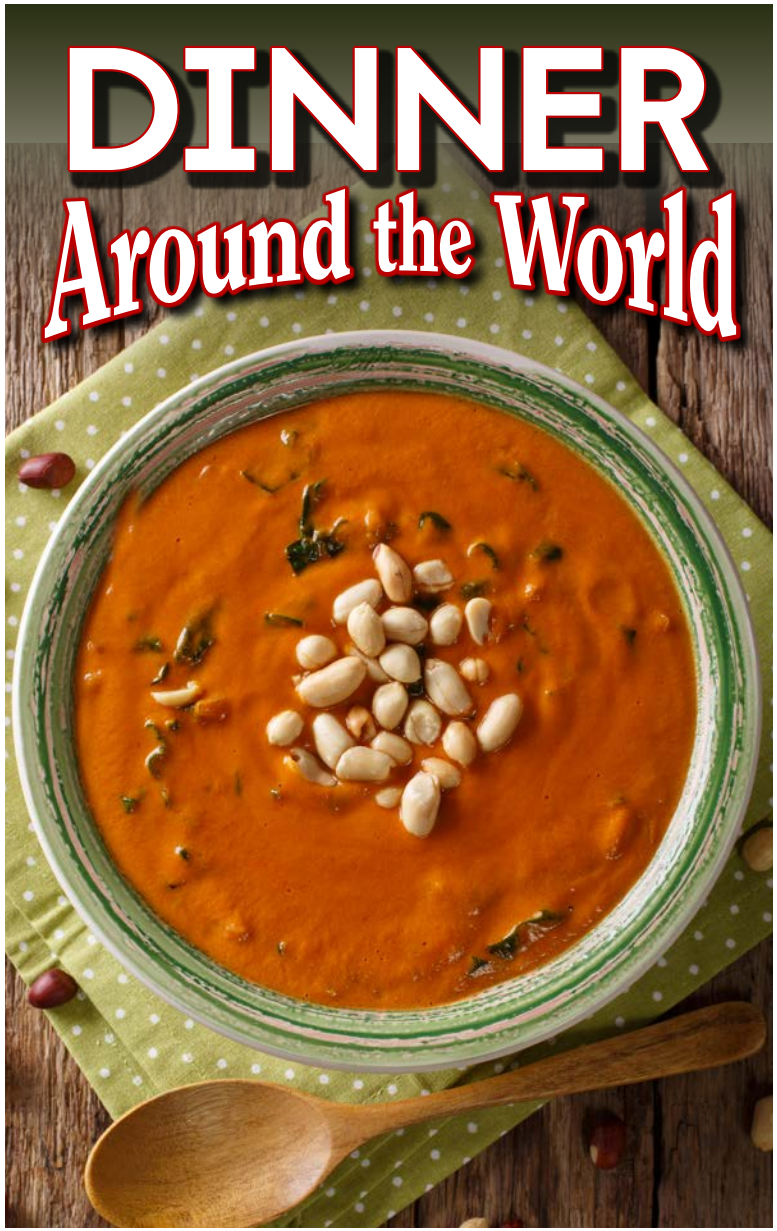
mild *(adj.)* page 6
not hot, harsh, or strong in taste

pickling *(v.)* page 9
preserving in salt water or vinegar

spices *(n.)* page 4
flavorings for food made from the root, flower, fruit, seed, or bark of a plant

staple *(n.)* page 5
a common food that is an important part of a diet

stew *(n.)* page 11
a dish usually made of meat and vegetables cooked slowly in liquid

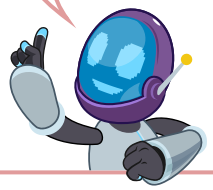


Written by Renee Mitchell

Page 3: A woman serves Shisanyama, a traditional South African meat.

Focus Question

What can be learned about a country on the basis of its cuisine?



Words to Know

colonized
culture
flaky
legumes
mild
pickling
spices
staple
stew

Connections

Social Studies

Pick one country and research to learn more about its cuisine. Create a poster with your findings to share with your class.

Writing

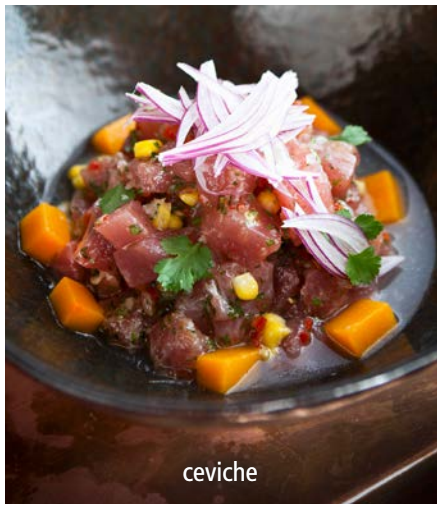
Write a poem describing your favorite meal. Share your poem with your class.

Conclusion

Today, foods from a particular country can often be found all over the world. You might see a French restaurant in China, an Ethiopian restaurant in Brazil, or an Italian restaurant in Australia! Discovering new foods is like visiting another country for a couple of hours. A country's cuisine can help you learn about its history, culture, landscape, and even weather. Trying new foods and flavors from different places can be fun. Maybe you'll find a new favorite dish!

A family in Indonesia sits down for dinner together.

In the northern country of Peru, coastlines, rainforests, and mountains provide a diverse landscape to grow many fruits, grains, and vegetables. Peppers, corn, tomatoes, plantains, mangoes, avocados, and potatoes are just a few of the many crops grown here. *Ceviche* (seh-VEE-cheh)—raw fish served with fresh lemon or lime juice—is a popular dinner dish.



ceviche

A World of Food in the United States

The cuisine of the United States is just as varied as the cuisine of any other country. The diverse landscapes and climates across the country help shape the cuisine in different regions. Throughout history, Native peoples, enslaved peoples from Africa, colonizers from Europe, and immigrants from all over the world have also influenced regional cuisines. Mexican cooking influenced cuisine in southwestern states like Arizona and Texas. French, African, Spanish, and Caribbean cooking shaped cuisine in the South. The cuisine in Hawai'i was influenced by Japanese, Filipino, Korean, Chinese, Portuguese, and Polynesian recipes and cooking methods. Today, you can find dishes from just about every country in the United States!

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Sharing a meal with friends and family is often an important part of a country's culture.

Introduction

Have you ever wondered where the ingredients of your favorite meal come from? Today, you can go to a store and find corn from Peru, peaches from China, and salmon from Norway, all in one place. Hundreds of years ago, though, people could only eat foods that were naturally available where they lived.

People in different regions around the world developed their own dishes and styles of cooking, called *cuisine* (kwih-ZEEN). Trade and travel then started to influence each region's cuisine as people were introduced to foods and **spices** from other places. Today, cuisine can vary quite a bit even within a country. Exploring a country's cuisine can teach you a lot about its **culture**.

South America

Across the Atlantic Ocean in the large South American country of Brazil, the cuisine is equally diverse. Along with the Indigenous peoples of the region, colonizers from Portugal and enslaved peoples from West Africa shaped the cuisine here over time. Black beans, rice, peppers, and fruits such as mangoes and papayas are common ingredients. For dinner, you might have a stew of black beans, pork, and beef served with rice.

Feijoada (fayzh-WAH-duh) is a stew of beans with beef and pork.

The food of Southern Africa is sometimes called "rainbow cuisine" because of how diverse it is. Throughout history, colonizers from France and the Netherlands, as well as enslaved peoples from India and Malaysia, influenced the cuisine.

Ingredients traditionally used by Indigenous peoples of the area, like the Zulu, are still popular, too. These include potatoes, leafy vegetables, corn, and beans. In the country of South Africa, one common dish is *bobotie* (buh-BOO-uh-tee), a mix of meat, dried fruits, and nuts topped with eggs and milk.

People can buy just about everything they need—from spices to fruit to meat—at outdoor food markets like this one in Morocco.

Asia

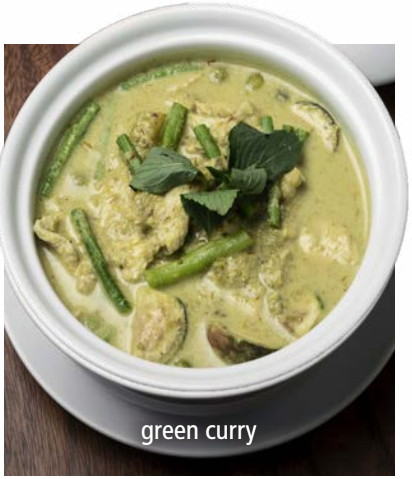
The warm, wet climate of many regions of Asia is perfect for growing rice. Because of this, rice is a **staple** in many Asian cuisines.

If you sit down for dinner in India, you might see rice, stewed meat or vegetables, and a bread called *naan* (NAHN) on the table. In India, meals often include meat such as chicken or lamb, **legumes**, and yogurt-based sauces. One popular dish is *biryani* (bee-ree-AH-nee)—rice with meat, onions, and hot spices, topped with raisins, dried apricots, or nuts.

You'll find rice on the dinner table in an East Asian country like China, too. In Southeast China, rice might be served with meat, slightly cooked vegetables, and a **mild**, sweet sauce. To keep the natural flavor of the food, few spices are used here. In Southwest China, on the other hand, meat and vegetables are often served with hot, spicy sauces.

A street vendor sells food at a market in China.

If you travel to Thailand (TY-land), in Southeast Asia, you might try shrimp in a green curry sauce served with rice for dinner. Curry paste, coconut milk, lemongrass, and garlic are used to flavor many dishes here. Cooks in this region often blend sweet, sour, salty, bitter, and hot flavors together in one dish.



green curry

Africa

Northern Africa is also in the Mediterranean. Couscous (KOOSS-kooss), olives, almonds, dates, and cinnamon are used in many dishes. In Morocco, dried fruits such as figs and apricots add a sweet taste to savory dishes. For dinner, *lamb tagine* (tah-ZHEEN)—a lamb and prune **stew** cooked in a tagine pot—is a popular dish.

Moving south to Central Africa, you'll find tomatoes, cassavas, and plantains in many dishes. Traders brought peanuts to this region from Brazil in the 1600s. Now, they are used in many sauces, mixed with ingredients naturally found in the region such as yams and okra. One popular dish here is *fufu* (FOO-foo)—smashed cassava mixed with water to form balls that are dipped in peanut soup.

The modern pizza (flat dough topped with tomatoes and cheese) was invented in Naples, Italy, in the 1700s.

In the warmer climate of Southern Europe, which is part of a region known as the Mediterranean, many fruits and vegetables grow. Tomatoes, olives, peppers, lemons, and onions are included in many dishes. In Italy, *pasta alla Norma*—a popular pasta dish with fried eggplant, tomatoes, garlic, and cheese—might be on the dinner menu.

Dumplings All Around!

Sometimes the same dish can be found in many different countries—it just might look a little different from place to place. One example is dumplings—cooked pieces of dough sometimes wrapped around a sweet or savory filling. The dough is often made of flour or potatoes, and the fillings can be a mix of meat, cheese, fruits, vegetables, or nuts. There are more than 140 different kinds of dumplings around the world!

Do You Know?

In Japan, using certain foods when they are at their freshest and most flavorful is an important part of the country's cuisine and culture. Most foods are available year-round, but many local markets choose to offer only food in season. Waiting to enjoy vegetables, fruits, nuts, fish, and grains when they're at their freshest builds excitement for a new season. *Shun* (SHOON) is the Japanese word for "season," but it also describes the time when a food is at its best.

Oceania

To the southeast of Thailand is the region known as Oceania, which includes Australia. Because Australia was **colonized** by Great Britain in the 1700s, its cuisine includes many of the same foods. Dinner here might be meat pie—beef or chicken cooked in a **flaky** crust—and vegetables. People from Thailand and Vietnam have also influenced the cuisine, and dishes like curry and stir-fry are popular as well.

Lovos, underground ovens made with heated stones, are a traditional cooking method in Fiji. Meats and vegetables cooked in lovos are wrapped in palm or banana leaves.

To the east of Australia is Fiji—one of the many small islands that make up Oceania. It's expensive to ship fresh meat here, so canned meat like corned beef is common. Miles of coastline provide plenty of fish, though. Cassava and taro (potato-like vegetables) are used in nearly every dish.

Many fruits, including bananas and pineapple, grow well in the country's hot, wet climate. For dinner, you might have *kokoda* (koh-KOHN-dah), a dish made of raw fish served with coconut cream and fresh lime juice.

Europe

In places with long, cold winters like Eastern and Northern Europe, dinner might look quite different from what you saw in Fiji. Fruits and vegetables only grow for a short time in colder climates. In Poland, **pickling** fruits and vegetables by putting them in vinegar or salty water helps them last through the long winter. Meat is often dried, smoked, salted, or pickled for winter. Here, dinner might be smoked sausage, rye bread, potatoes, and pickled cabbage.

Beet soup is a popular dish in eastern European countries. It's often served with sour cream on top.