

Food Miles: How Far Does Food Travel?

Grades: 4th & 5th
Lesson Length: 45 mins

Materials:

- Food Miles Google Slides Presentation
- Chromebooks or other devices (1 per pair of students)
- Food Miles worksheet (1 per student, attached below)
- School coins flyer (1 per student)
- Examples of local produce (apple, empty Kalispell Creamery bottle, etc)
 - Optional but would be a great visual to have!

Learning Objectives:

- Introduce the idea that much of our food travels long distances from farm to plate
- Compare and contrast a global and local food system and explore the pros and cons of each system
- Explore where our food comes from
- Give students an understanding of how their choices have a global and environmental impact

Procedure:

1. Begin by introducing yourself and the lesson (5 min)

- “Today, we’ll be talking about where our food comes from and how far it has to travel to get to our plates.” Expand with whatever additional info you’d like to include.
- Ask students where they usually get their food from. Answers could include: grocery store, school’s cafeteria, farmer’s market, or their own home garden. Mention any that students leave out. If students have home gardens, ask what kinds of things they’ve grown.

2. Play a guessing game with the food miles presentation. (10 min)

- Have students estimate the distance (no chromebooks yet, just using their brains).
- Discuss the importance of local food and advantages of eating/buying local vs food from farther away.

3. Have students complete the food miles worksheet. (15-20 min)

- Direct students to form pairs. Each pair will get a chromebook or other device that is available.
- Pass out worksheets to each student (they will work in pairs but are responsible for filling out their own answers).
- Give students instructions for filling out the worksheet.
- Give students an example by showing them on the projector how to search for ingredients’ locations and the distances. Use tomatoes as an example and search on Google “Where are tomatoes produced in the US?”. Most results will say that California produces the most tomatoes. Then go to Google Maps, search “California” and get directions from the school you’re at to find the distance (about 1,200 miles or so).
- Have students label each ingredient on their maps (with the #).

4. Discuss and wrap up (5-10 min)

- Once students have completed the worksheet, review some of the answers that students found and discuss with the class. Students can share their findings if they would like. Wrap up & conclude with the School Coins competition.

Food Miles

Name _____

Instructions:

- With your partner, choose a meal and make a list of up to four main ingredients.
 - For example, a meal of a burrito might include *ingredients* of cheese, tomatoes, beans, and rice.
- For each ingredient, use your Chromebook to research where this ingredient came from (follow the teacher's example). Next to each ingredient, write the number of miles the origin is from your school using Google Maps. Then, place the number of your ingredients on the map below.

Meal: _____

Ingredients:	Where from?	Miles to your school:
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

