

Maya Food



twinkl

Aim

- I can describe a range of foods that were eaten by the ancient Maya people and explain why certain foods were particularly significant.

Success Criteria

- I can create a list of foods that the ancient Maya people would have eaten.
- I can describe why corn is significant and precious to the ancient Maya people.
- I can describe why chocolate is significant and precious to the ancient Maya people.

Maya Food Anagrams

Use the clues below to help you work out the anagrams for the Maya foods.

- A large animal hunted by the Maya for food.
- A protein rich food often grown alongside corn.
- A small, spicy fruit which could be added to many dishes.
- A sweet, sticky food made by a buzzing insect.
- A wild or domesticated animal which provided meat and eggs.
- The main food in the Maya diet. Used in a range of recipes.
- A small bean which was very precious and was used to make chocolate.
- A root vegetable whose seeds could be made into a nutritious paste.

eynoh

qshaus

senab

kutrye

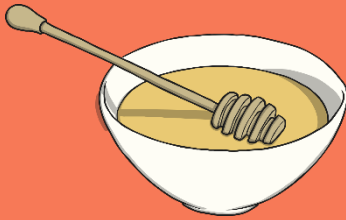
ocaca

hilicl
rppeeps

rnco or
ezami

erde

Food Anagrams Answers



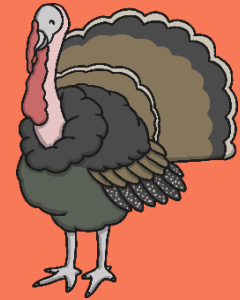
honey



squash



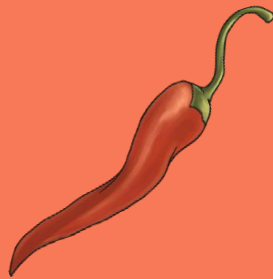
beans



turkey



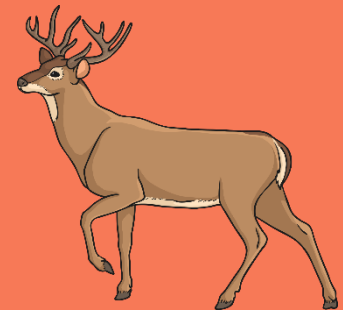
cacao



chilli peppers



corn or maize



deer

Other Maya Foods

Maize or corn was the main food of the Maya people and made up to 80% of their diet. Examples of other foods eaten include:



avocado



cassava



chilli peppers



cacao



honey



jicama



maize



papaya



pumpkins



squash



sweet potato



tomatoes

Fact

They would plant beans next to the maize so that the vines would wrap around the growing maize stalks.

Fact

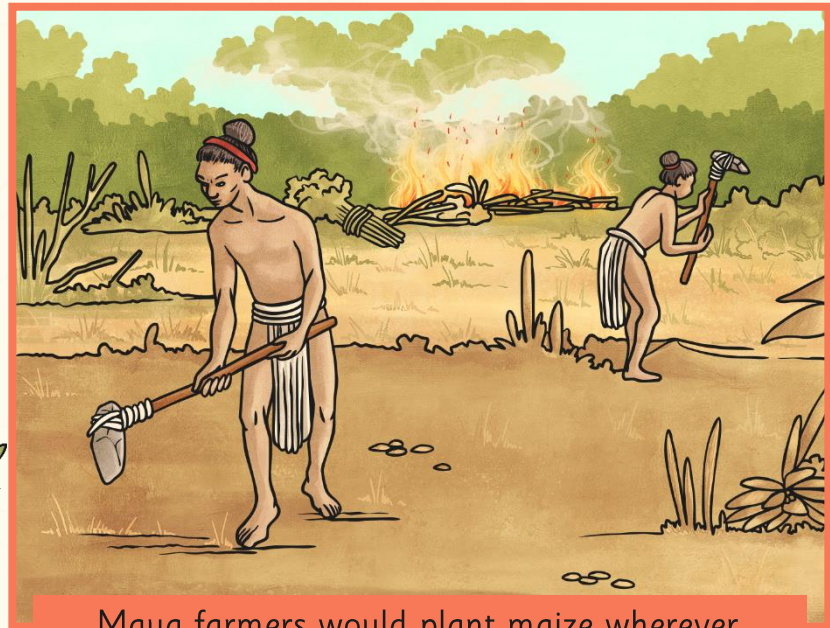
The Maya people ate out of bowls made of pottery.

Maize

Maize was a very important crop, and formed up to 80% of their diet.

To plant the maize, holes would be made in the soil with a sharp bladed, wooden digging stick called a dibble. The soil was very dry and if the May rains didn't come, a whole year's crop would be lost.

For thousands of years, the Maya worshipped the maize god. They believed that the first humans were made by the gods from maize dough! Because of this, when suffering from severe illness, they would eat nothing but corn.



Maya farmers would plant maize wherever they could. Maize is more commonly known as corn.

Marvellous Maize!



Discuss the following questions with your partner:

1. How was maize grown?
2. Why do you think maize was so important to the Maya people?

Chocaholics!

Cacao trees sprout cacao pods directly from their trunks. The pods are then opened to reveal the cacao beans inside. The Maya were using these beans to make a chocolatey drink from as far back as the fourth century AD. However, it was not the sweet, chocolately flavour we crave today, but a more bitter tasting version, often laced with chilli or vanilla and other spices.



The drink was enjoyed by the rich and noble members of society, and the cacao beans were highly valued. They were even used as a form of currency later on in Maya history.

The Maya word for chocolate is Kakaw.



The Maya used chocolate in religious ceremonies, and they also mixed them with herbs to make medicines.

Cool Cacao



Discuss the following questions with your partner:

1. How do cacao beans grow?
2. Why do you think cacao was so important to the Maya people?

Corn Vs Chocolate



Chocolate and corn were both very significant and precious foods in ancient Maya, but which do you think was the most important?

Your challenge is to research both foods in more detail and decide which you think is most important. Choose either the * challenge or ** challenge. You could just present it on paper or maybe make a table on a word document.

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Corn Vs Chocolate

Corn	Chocolate

I think _____ was the most important food to the ancient Maya people because

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Corn Vs Chocolate

Can you work out whether the following statements are describing corn or chocolate and put them in the correct column in the table?

Then use the information you have found out to decide which food you think was the most important. Describe your choice in as much detail as you can and be ready to debate the issue in the whole class discussion at the end of the lesson.

The Maya people believed that the first humans were made out of this.	The Maya people believed that this plant was found in a mountain by the gods.
This food could be made into a hot drink called atole, eaten like a porridge called pozole or made into tortillas.	The silky strands of this plant were used to make a tonic to help keep the bladder and kidneys healthy.
This food was often mixed with herbs and used in medicines.	This food was the main part of the Maya diet.
The beans of this plant were used as a form of currency (money).	The rich and noble members of society enjoyed this food made into a hot drink.

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Corn Vs Chocolate

Can you use books/the internet to research the importance of corn and chocolate to the Ancient Maya people? Find 5 reasons why corn was significant and 5 reasons why chocolate was significant. Record them in the table below. Then use the information you have found to decide which food you think was the most important. Describe your choice in as much detail as you can and be ready to debate the issue in the whole class discussion at the end of the lesson.

Corn	Chocolate

I think _____ was the most important food to the ancient Maya people because

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