

The 2026 Great Big Crunch

Activity Toolkit



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Message from the National Coordinator

The Coalition for Healthy School Food is pleased to organize this year's Great Big Crunch.

The 2026 Great Big Crunch places a special focus on a core part of school food: student voices. Every day, students experience school food, and their perspectives matter. This year, we are inviting students to share their ideas, experiences, and hopes for school food in their own words.

We are so pleased that the federal government has tabled [Bill C-15](#) and the National School Food Program Act, which will make the National School Food Program permanent. The progress we are seeing today reflects years of collaboration among students, educators, families, school food practitioners, community organizations, and advocates.

As Canada continues to strengthen and expand the National School Food Program, it is so very important that student voices remain a central part of the conversation.

The Great Big Crunch is a joyful opportunity to come together, crunch into healthy food, and help student ideas travel beyond the classroom.

Thank you for supporting students and for helping build inclusive school food environments where well-being, belonging, and learning can thrive.

Debbie Field



What is the Great Big Crunch?

The Great Big Crunch offers a simple and joyful way to bring people together to celebrate healthy school food.

A Crunch can take many forms — as a classroom activity, a school-wide moment, a staff or community gathering, an online work meeting, or a lunch break that ends with a shared crunch into an apple or another crunchy fruit or vegetable.

By taking part, school communities and supporters help strengthen connections and contribute to a shared culture of healthy school food — today and into the future.

This year, the Great Big Crunch places a particular emphasis on student voices, while recognizing that strong school food programs are shaped through collaboration, shared learning, and community engagement.

The Great Big Crunch encourages reflection, creativity, and conversation about how healthy school food supports learning, well-being, and a sense of belonging at school.

Coordinated by the Coalition for Healthy School Food since 2020, the Great Big Crunch builds on a growing movement that values participation, connection, and leadership in school food initiatives.

A special thank-you to FoodShare Toronto, who first launched the Great Big Crunch in 2008 and helped shape many of the activities that continue to inspire engagement today.

Learn more



Activity Toolkit

The Great Big Crunch 2026



Why participate in the Great Big Crunch?



Connect with Nutrition Month



Taking place during March, Nutrition Month, the Great Big Crunch offers a natural opportunity to explore conversations about food, health, and well-being in schools.

To accommodate those participating in Ramadan, the Great Big Crunch can also be celebrated in February or April 2026.

Learn more about Nutrition Month from Dietitians of Canada.



Shared commitment to healthy school food



Participating in the Great Big Crunch is a simple way to recognize and support the collective efforts of school communities working toward positive, inclusive food environments.

Learn more about the Coalition's work and community initiatives.





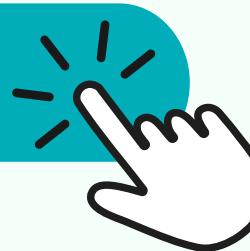
Our goal for Canada

The Coalition's vision is a Canada in which every school-aged child and youth has a healthy meal or snack at school daily. We have come a long way towards our vision in recent years.

As the National School Food Program continues to grow and becomes permanent, there is an opportunity to focus on what matters most in everyday school life – **the experiences of students and school communities**.

Our goal with this year's Activity Toolkit is to support school food programs as they continue to develop in ways that reflect the voices, ideas, and lived experiences of students, alongside those of educators, families, and school food practitioners and supporters. Healthy school food plays an important role in learning, well-being, and a sense of belonging, and everyone has a role to play in shaping positive food experiences at school.

Learn more



When does the Crunch happen?

The Great Big Crunch includes a shared pan-Canadian moment, alongside flexible opportunities to participate over several weeks.

A virtual, pan-Canadian, coast-to-coast-to-coast Great Big Crunch will take place on **Thursday, March 26, 2026, from 1:00 to 1:30 p.m. ET.**

Schools and communities are invited to join this virtual event or plan their own Crunch anytime from February through the end of April, choosing a date and time that best fits their schedules and local context and to accommodate Ramandan.

Participants can also join in through **the Great Big Munch**. Whether you crunch into an apple or munch on another crunchy fruit or vegetable, every bite is a way to take part.

Share and Register Your Participation

We encourage all participants to register and share their Crunch or Munch details.

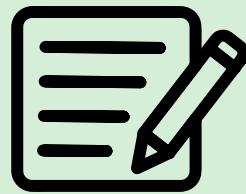
This helps capture the many ways schools and communities are participating — regardless of when, where, or how the activity takes place.



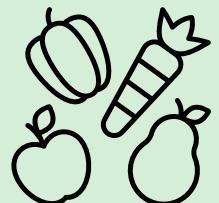
How to take part?

Prepare for your Crunch

Use this checklist to help you prepare your crunch:



Register your Crunch (or Munch - see Activity #2) [here](#).
We will count the number of 2026 crunchers and munchers.



Gather what you're going to Crunch (choose locally sourced fruits or vegetables if possible).



Use the activities below to bring the Crunch to life for your students. Also check out [past toolkits](#) and [additional resources](#) below.



Let your federal, provincial, territorial or city representative know you support a School Food Program for Canada and invite them, as well as local media, to your Crunch.

Check out email template in our [Communications Guide](#)!

Share your message and photo on social media! You can copy this message :

Healthy food means healthy kids. That's why we're taking part in the #GreatBigCrunch and asking the Government of Canada to #NourishKidsNow by investing in a National School Food Program! #cdnpoli

Tag us on

Facebook: @CHSF.CSAS

Twitter: @C4HSchoolFood

Instagram: @thegreatbigcrunch

Tiktok: @greatbigcrunch

Discover past Great Big Crunches on our social media accounts!



LET'S START
THE ACTIVITIES!

Activity 1: A.M.P. Up Student Voices for School Food

By: Brent Mansfield, Elementary School Teacher, Lord Roberts Elementary School, Vancouver;
Co-Founder of LunchLAB and BC Chapter of the Coalition for Healthy School Food

The A.M.P. Up Student Voices for School Food activity invites students to share their thoughts, experiences, and ideas about food at school.

Through short written messages and creative expression, students are encouraged to reflect on what school food means to them and to express their perspectives in their own words. This activity creates space for student voices and supports meaningful participation in conversations about healthy school food.

What is A.M.P.?

The Coalition for Healthy School Food is launching **the A.M.P. Up Student Voices for School Food** campaign to support students to **amplify, mobilize and participate in school food programs** as they are developed and expanded in Canada..

The campaign supports educators to:

- Amplify student perspectives on school food
- Mobilize students to share their ideas
- Help students participate meaningfully in decision making and encourage involvement in their school food program.

As part of this year's Great Big Crunch, we are inviting educators to take part in the A.M.P. Up campaign by supporting their students in writing messages to local, provincial, and federal decision-makers - using an apple as a creative way to speak up for school food programs.



Activity 1: A.M.P. Up Student Voices for School Food

Grade level : Elementary and Secondary

Time: 15-30 minutes

MATERIALS

-  One printed Great Big Crunch apple sheet per student (see following pages)
-  One piece of blank red or green construction paper per student
-  Pencils, markers, or crayons

INSTRUCTIONS

-  Provide each student with a Great Big Crunch apple sheet (blank or with a sentence stem), or invite students to draw or trace a large apple on red or green construction paper.
-  Ask students to write a short message about school food by completing one or more of the sentence stems below.^{1,2}
-  Encourage students to write clearly and use descriptive language so their message is easy to read and understand.

Students may decorate their apples using colour, patterns, or drawings to help express their ideas.



Choose one or more sentence stems

- 1** Crunching on healthy food at school helps me...
- 2** School food matters to me because....
- 3** It is important for there to be more healthy food for all students at school because...

About the Sentence Stems

The sentence stems are designed to support students in expressing their ideas in different ways, depending on their age, comfort level, and experiences with school food.

- **Sentence Stem 1** focuses on how food at school supports students' learning, energy, or well-being.
- **Sentence Stem 2** invites students to share why school food is meaningful to them personally.
- **Sentence Stem 3** encourages students to think more broadly about access to healthy food for all students.

Students should choose the sentence stem that best reflects what they want to share. There is no right or wrong answer — the goal is to lift up authentic student voices.

After the Activity: Sharing Student Voices

Completed apples can be shared to help highlight student perspectives on school food.

Options include:

- displaying apples in classrooms or school hallways
- sharing them with school leadership or school districts
- submitting them to the Coalition for Healthy School Food to be shared more broadly

Photos of student work (without student faces) may be shared by:

- Email: ken@healthyschoolfood.ca
- Upload your design below!

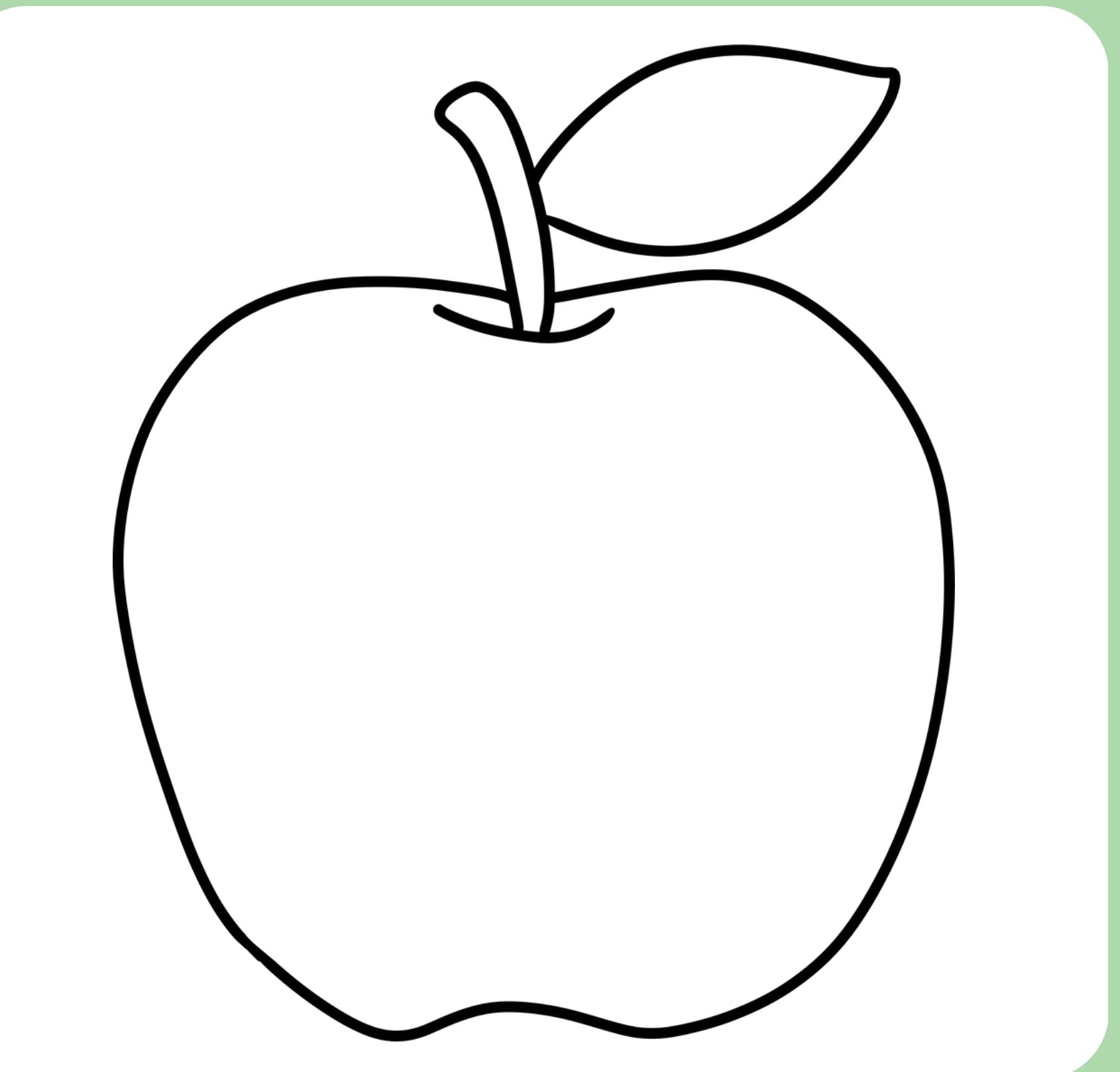


Educators may also choose to share student work on social media to celebrate participation and amplify student voices.

- For sample messages, hashtags, and platform-specific tips (including TikTok), please refer to the [Great Big Crunch Communications Guide](#).

Sentence Stems

Draw, write, print and share the design below!



Activity 2: The Great Big Munch

The Great Big Munch promotes inclusivity by celebrating cultures and countries where apples are not commonly eaten or grown. Created by Asma Musa, now Coordinator of the Black School Food Working Group and a first-year PhD candidate in Nutritional Sciences, the activity was developed during her practicum placement with the Coalition as a University of Toronto MPH student. The Great Big Munch celebrates the versatility of bananas, fostering cultural exchange through their universal appeal.

Part 1 - Bananavaganza: All about Bananas

Grade Level: All

MATERIALS

Bananas at 3 different ripeness stages, brown paper bag, plate with banana samples, and 5 senses chart.

INSTRUCTIONS

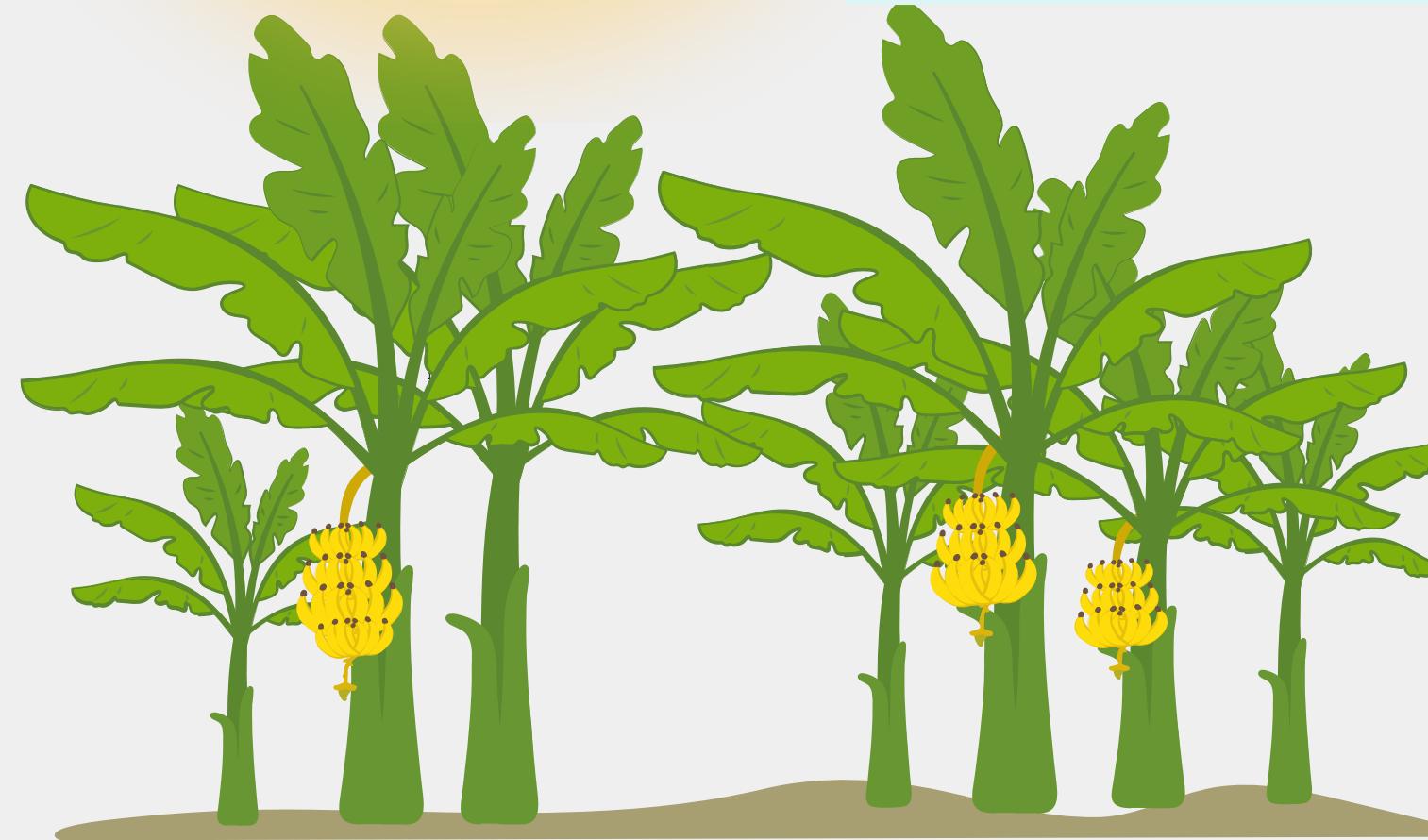
Time : 20 minutes

🍌 Put students into three different stations where only the students at each station know the ripeness stage of their banana. The stations are as follows:

- Station 1: Unripe Banana
- Station 2: Ripe Banana
- Station 3: Overripe Banana

🍌 Each group should take some time to identify the sensory properties:

Smell	Do I smell like anything?
Sight	Am I a [name a colour]? Am I more than one colour?
Taste	Am I sweet? bland? flavourful? chewy?
Texture	Am I soft? firm? mushy? chunky?
Sound	Do I make a sound when I am peeled?



🍌 Ask the groups to take turns asking questions about the ripeness stage of their banana. No group can repeat each other's questions. The first group to guess correctly wins.

DISCUSSION

🍌 Prompt them with questions like:

Do you like eating bananas? How do you like to eat your banana? As part of a meal or a snack? Raw or cooked? Do you like yellow, green, red or brown bananas? Or with a few brown spots?

Credit: Part of this activity is based on Food Is Science's "What Am I?" Food Literacy Activity, which was adapted from BC's Vancouver Coastal Health and Northern Health.

Activity 2: The Great Big Munch

Part 2 - Where in the World

Instructions

You will use the slides provided (with adaptable speaker notes for different grade levels) as a teaching tool for this activity. The slide breakdown is as follows:

Slide 2: Bananas of All Kinds

Discuss the four images of different bananas grown around the world and what they taste like:

- **Image 1 Red Banana**
- **Image 2 Blue Java Banana**
- **Image 3 Pink Seeded Banana**
- **Image 4 Pitogo Banana**
- **Discussion Prompts:** Have you heard of or tried any of these bananas? Which one would you try?

Time
20 minutes

Grade Level:
All

MATERIALS



Slides and world map that a teacher can use to project or print out.

Slides 3 & 4: World Map

Using the blank world map on slide 3 (printed or projected), have students guess and point to where the following countries are:

- Brazil, Guatemala, Cameroon, Tanzania, India and China
- Correctly identified and colour-coded on slide 4.

Think-Pair-Share:

Which country in the world grows the most bananas? Why?

Slide 5: Fun Facts

Share these fun facts about bananas with students, feel free to add more:

- Bananas grow in large bunches called hands.
- Bananas are the most traded fruit in the world.
- **Prompt:** What is fair trade? Why do you think it is important bananas?
- Bananas are being grown in colder countries like Canada.
- Peels can help if you get poison ivy or a rash.
- Bananas are grown in more than 135 countries.

Slides 6-11: Foods Around the World

Teachers display images of international dishes and beverages where bananas are the main ingredient:

- Puerto Rican Tostones, Filipino Ginanggang, Peruvian Chapo, Banana Strawberry Smoothie, Ugandan Matooke, Indian Gulgulas, Yemeni Masoob and Banana Bread
- **Discussion Prompts:** What kinds of banana foods do you know about? Which one of these would you try? Were there any foods that made you say, "Wow, I didn't expect that!"? Did you learn something new today?

Activity 3: Every apple has its speciality!

Grade level : Secondary

Length : 1 hour (with cooking time)

Equipment required

4 varieties of local apples to taste, and the ingredients needed to prepare the recipe.

CONTEXT

Apples are the perfect local fruit, as they keep a long time in the fridge and are very economical. Each apple variety has its own characteristics. While they are all good to eat, some are better suited for cooking, salads or applesauce!

GOAL Introduce students to the different varieties of local apples and how they are used.

INSTRUCTIONS

- Start the activity with a tasting and discussion session, asking the students to taste 4 different varieties of apple.
- Look at and comment on the table showing the different characteristics of each one.
- End the activity with a practical activity, asking the students to cook a delicious apple muffin recipe!



	READY TO EAT	SALAD	COOKING	PIE	COMPOTE
Cortland	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●
Empire	●●●	●●	●●	●●	●●
Gala	●●●	●●	●●	●●	●●
Ginger Gold	●●●	●●●	●	●	●
Honeycrisp	●●●	●●●	●●	●●	●●●
Lobo	●●●	●●	●	●●●	●●
McIntosh	●●●	●●	●	●●	●●●
Paulared	●●●	●●	●●	●●●	●●
Spartan	●●●	●●	●●	●●	●●
Sunrise	●●●	●●	●	●	●

● fair ●● good ●●● excellent

SOURCE : [HTTPS://LAPOMMEDUQUEBEC.CA/VARIETES/](https://lapommmeduquebec.ca/varietes/)



Activity 3: Every apple has its speciality!

RECIPE: APPLE MUFFINS!

INGREDIENTS For 12 muffins

Muffins:

- 1 cup (250 ml or 120 g) all-purpose flour, unbleached
- 2 tsp (10 ml) baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp (2.5 ml) ground nutmeg
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp (2.5 ml) ground ginger
- 1 tsp (5 ml) ground cinnamon
- A pinch of salt
- 1 cup (250 ml or 265 g) plain yogurt
- 1 tsp (5 ml) baking soda
- 1 large apple, unpeeled, diced
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (190 ml or 135 g) brown sugar
- 1 egg
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (125 ml) vegetable oil
- 1 cup (250 ml or 61 g) wheat bran

PREPARATION

- Preheat oven to 350 °F.
- Place paper muffin cups in each compartment of the muffin tin.
- Mix garnish ingredients in a small bowl and set aside.
- Add half of the yogurt mixture to brown sugar mixture and mix gently.
- Add half of the dry ingredients to the brown sugar mixture and mix gently.
- Repeat steps 8 and 9, then divide batter into 12 muffin tins.
- Spread garnish evenly on each muffin.
- Bake in oven for about 25 minutes or until toothpick inserted in the middle of a muffin comes out clean.

Muffins:

- Mix flour, baking powder, spices and salt in a small bowl. Set aside.
- Lightly mix yogurt and baking soda in a medium bowl. (Mixture will increase slightly in volume.)
- Add apple pieces to yogurt and set aside.
- Mix brown sugar, egg, oil and bran together in a large bowl.

DIETITIAN'S TIPS:

Muffins freeze well! 12 muffins = 12 nutritious snacks ready to place in a reusable bag or container!



This activity is part of the



Activity 4: Click & Crunch

This activity was developed by Chelsea Costa as part of a University of Alberta Master of Public Health degree field Practice Experience placement hosted and supervised by The Coalition for Healthy School Food.

A smartphone screen showing a social media post. The post is from the account '#MyClickAndCrunch'. It features a profile picture of an apple with three hands reaching up from inside it, and the text 'THE COALITION FOR HEALTHY SCHOOL FOOD'. The post includes the following information:

Grades 8-12 **Time** 10-15 mins.

Following

The foods we enjoy — and the moments we spend gathering, preparing, and eating them — often carry meaning and memories.

Digital tools such as smartphones and cameras allow students to capture these moments through photos and videos, preserving stories that might otherwise be forgotten.

Online platforms also make it possible to share these stories with others, helping students connect their everyday food experiences to broader conversations about nourishment, culture, and belonging.

First introduced as part of the Great Big Crunch in 2025, Click & Crunch invites students to reflect on food through storytelling and creative media.

The '**Click & Crunch**' activity encourages you as students to create a digital collection of stories to share the moments and memories you have gathering, preparing, or eating nourishing foods. The focus is on student voice, creativity, and reflection.

Activity 4: Click & Crunch

Instructions

It's as simple as **CLICK - CAPTION - POST!**

During **#GreatBigCrunch** week, invite students to share photos that display moments and memories gathering, preparing, or eating nourishing foods. We ask student to write a short caption about why they selected that photo or video and what nourishing foods mean to them. Students may share their work using **#MyClickAndCrunch** to help build a growing collection of student food stories.



© Jack Chen - LunchLAB at Lord Roberts Elementary School

DISCUSSION

Invite students to reflect together by:

Asking students how they can continue to make meaningful moments with friends and family in the future centered around healthy foods

Taking time to share stories as a class, offering students opportunities to discuss what image they chose and why

Liking and commenting on other students posts

Activity 4: Click & Crunch

Activity Toolkit

The Great Big Crunch 2026

(Insert student name here)

Follow

...

(Insert photo here)



#MyClickAndCrunch #GreatBigCrunch

(Insert caption here)



Students (or staff on their behalf) may share photos or short videos on platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, or other school-approved channels, using:

- **#MyClickAndCrunch**
- **#GreatBigCrunch**
- **#GBC2026**



Instead of posting on social media, staff can use the ***Click & Crunch*** template to print off submitted photos and captions and post them around your classroom, cafeteria, or anywhere else in the school. Educators may also use internal platforms such as a Mural board, Google Classroom, etc.



Encourage students in your classroom, grade, or school to brainstorm a school-specific hashtag to add to each post in addition to **#MyClickAndCrunch**.



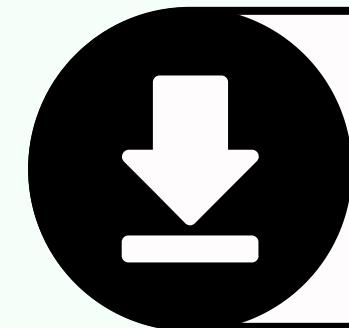
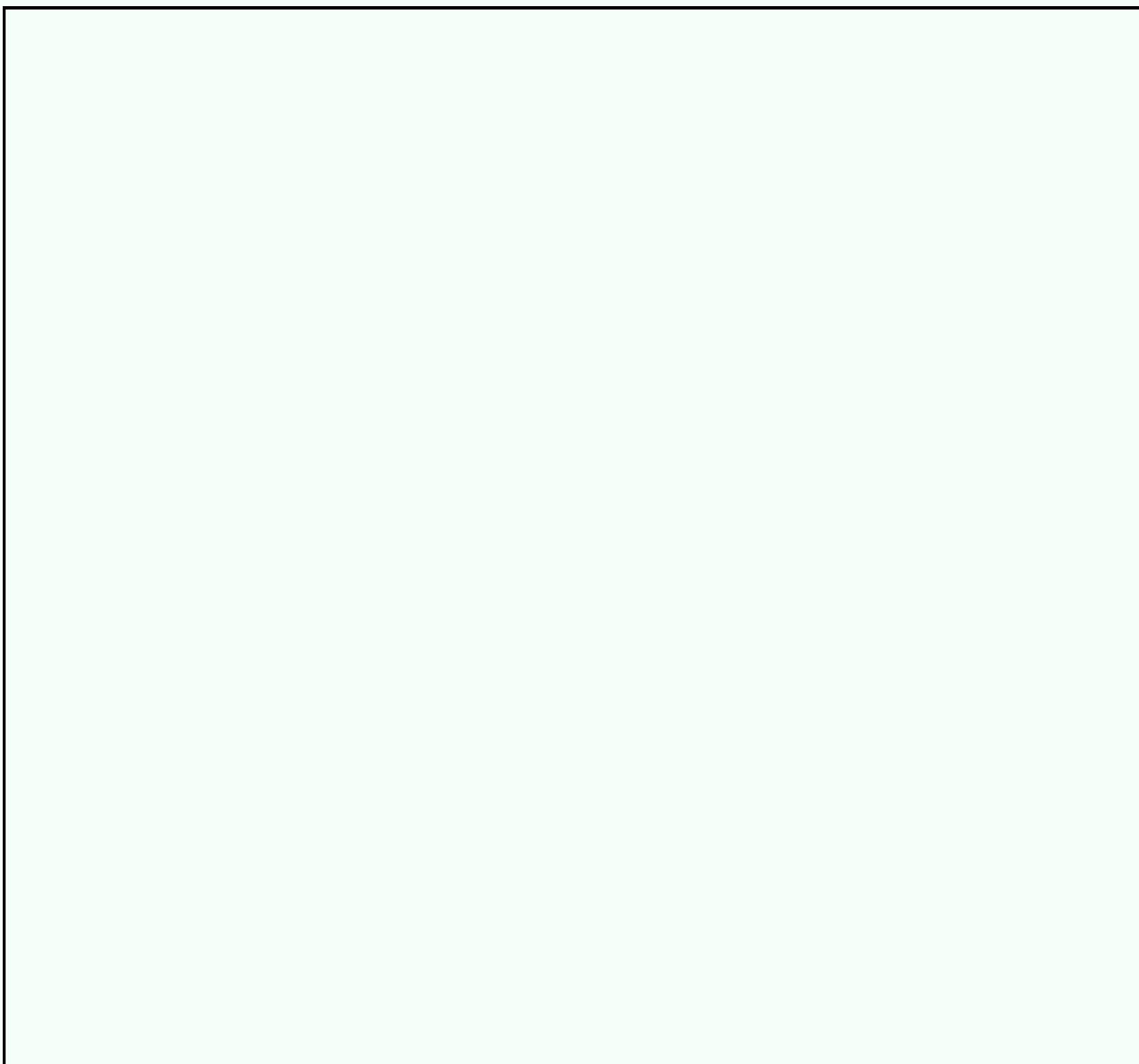
With the launch of the **GBC TikTok account**, Click & Crunch also works well as a short-form video activity. Ideas include:

- **short clips of food preparation or sharing (no faces required)**
- **videos featuring on-screen text or captions**
- **photo slideshows paired with music**
- **voiceover or text-based reflections**

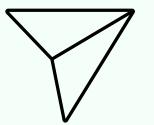
Videos should be filmed vertically, kept short, and include captions or on-screen text for accessibility.

Educators and schools may follow and tag: **@the.great.big.crunch**

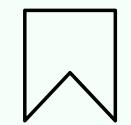
Follow



Download "Click & Crunch" template



100+ likes



#MyClickAndCrunch #GreatBigCrunch

Activity 5: Connection through Circles

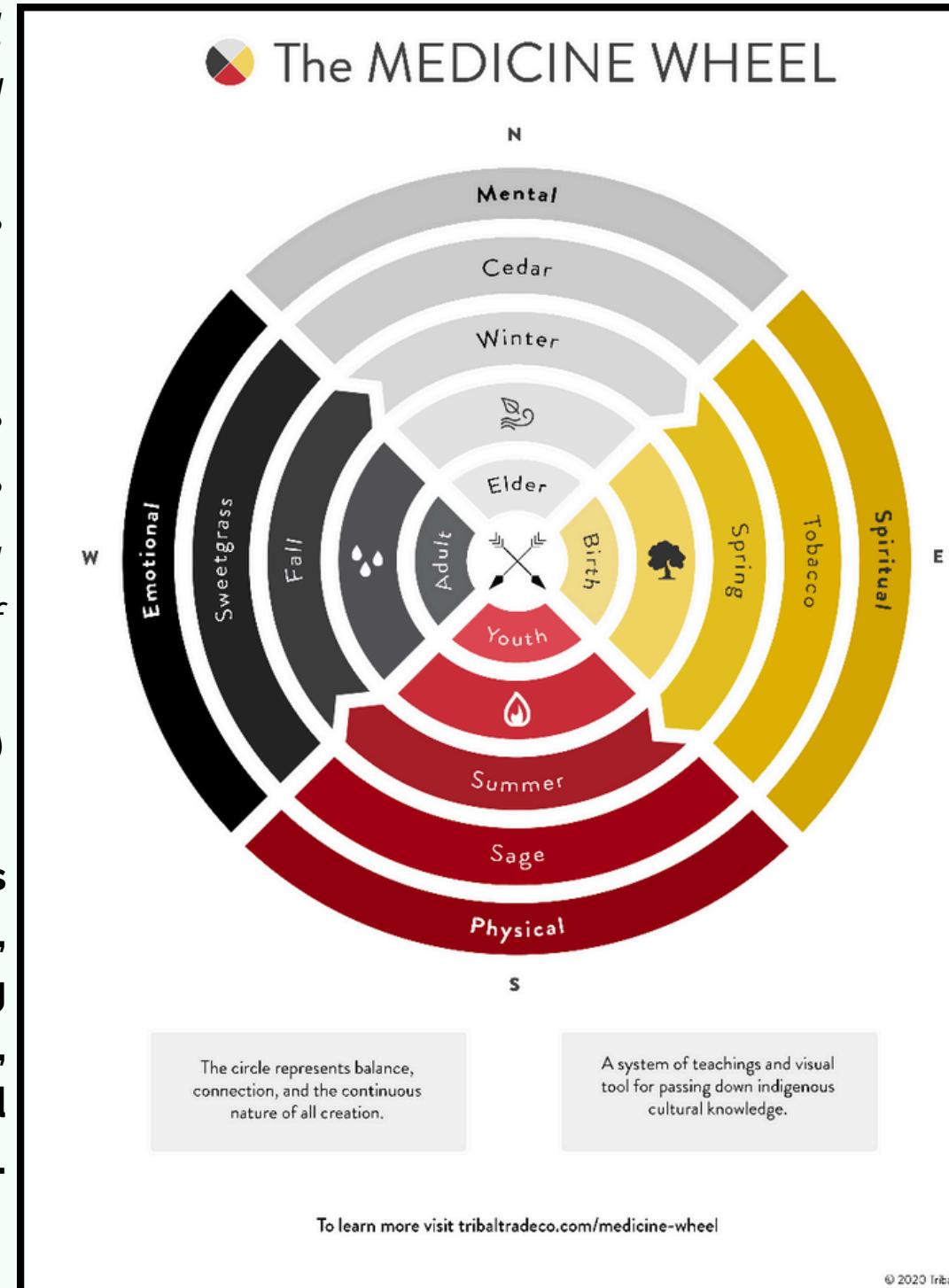
This activity is informed by resources from First Nations, Metis, and Inuit organizations and created in partnership by the Farm To Cafeteria Canada's Indigenous School Food Circle Coordinator, Sue-Anne Banks.

"The Medicine Wheel represents unity and balance between all things, including living a healthy life mentally, spiritually, emotionally, and physically.

By understanding the teachings of the Medicine Wheel, we can gain a deeper understanding of our holistic health".

(Medicine Wheel Workbook)

This activity invites students to explore connection, balance, and well-being through reflection, discussion, and food-related learning.



Part 1 - Medicine Wheel Teachings

Grade level : 1-6

Share that different nations have different medicine wheel teachings according to their stories, beliefs, traditions, and values.

Explain that the 4 areas of the wheel can be assigned different "attributes". E.g., 4 Instructions, 4 seasons, 4 elements, 4 states of Being, etc.

Have students identify the 4 seasons, elements, and Instructions, then have students guess which colour of the wheel they correspond to. As a class, ask students to share their guesses and explain why they think certain colours correspond to the attribute. Use the provided Medicine Wheel Poster to guide answers after students guess.

Grade level : 7-12

Show students this [4-minute video \(Medicine Wheel Teachings 101\)](#) and provide them with the Medicine Wheel Poster found on the next page..

After the video, have students discuss 2-3 new learnings in pairs. Invite students to share key reflections with the class.

Part 2 - The States of Being

Grade level : All

- To explore the 4 States of Being: Mind, Heart, Spirit, Body, ask students, in pairs, to generate ideas about things they do in the classroom and/or at home to nurture the Mind, the Heart, the Spirit, and the Body.
- Have students write or draw their ideas on chart paper.
- Invite students to share their work with the class and encourage open discussion.

Prompts:

- Was it hard to choose which category to assign things to? Why?
(*The idea here is that all four attributes work cohesively, so some things may seem like they could fit in any category*)



Consider inviting a First Nations, Métis, or Inuit Knowledge Holder/Keeper, Elder, or community member into the classroom to help guide this activity in your local context.

Part 3 - Traditional Foods

Grade level : All

- Provide each student with a blank Indigenous medicine wheel from p. 12 and a [reference guide of Traditional foods](#).

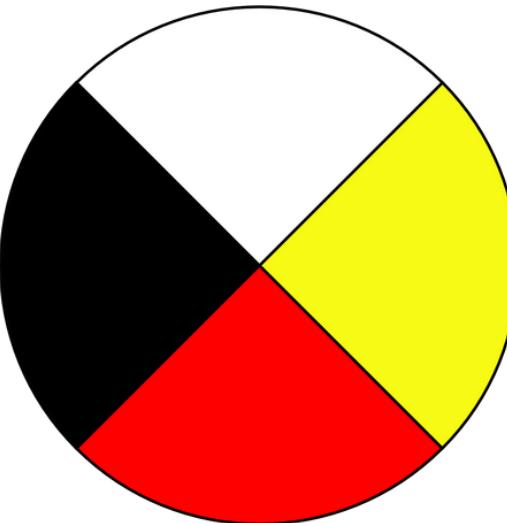
- Using this [reference guide](#), ask students to pair up and generate a list of Traditional foods that match the 4 colours of the medicine wheel.

- Ask students to draw and colour-in the foods on blank paper, then cut out and glue them to the corresponding colour quadrant within their wheel.

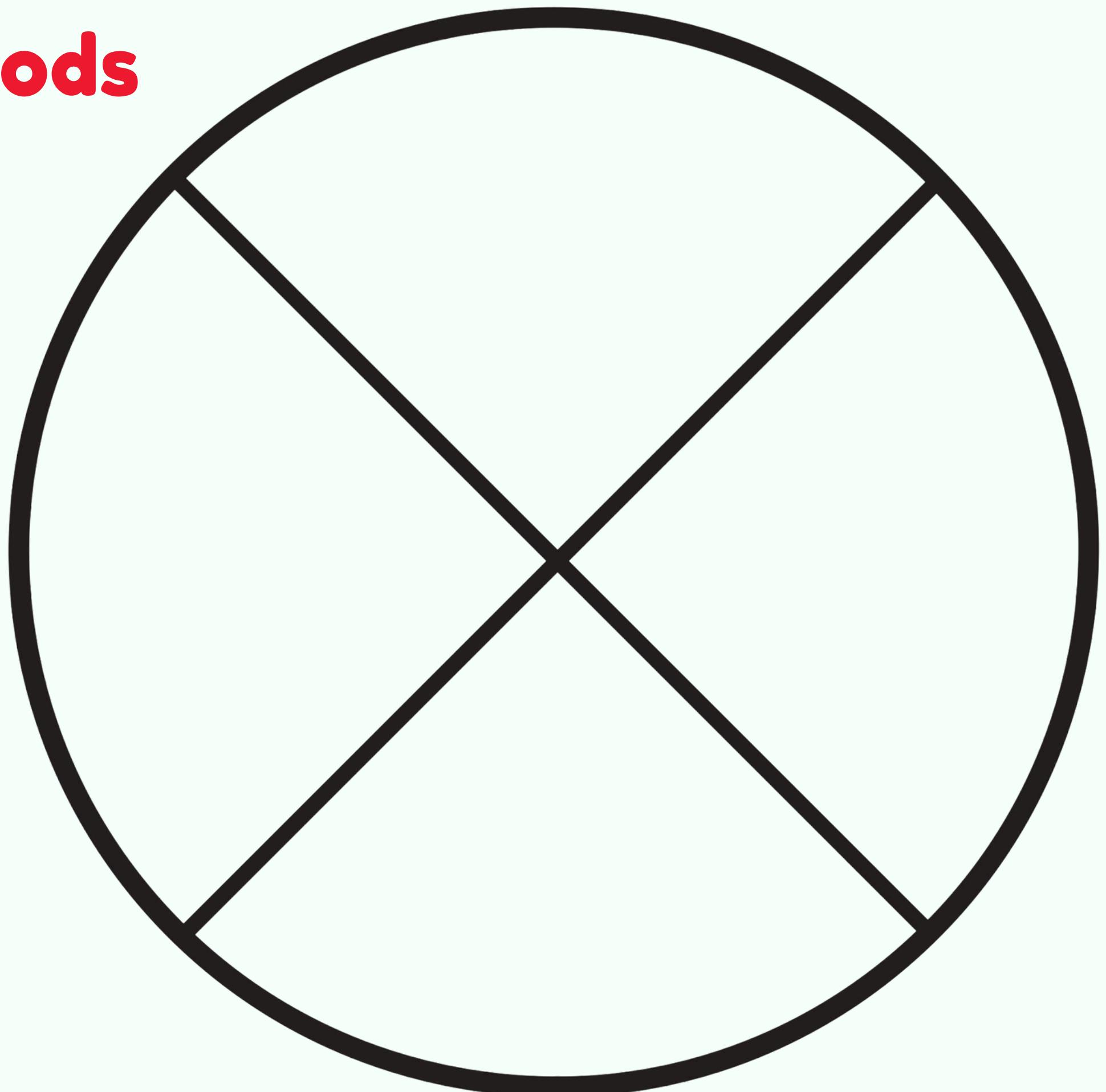
- Ask pairs to share the foods they included with another pair, and then discuss as a class.

Prompts:

- Have you ever heard of or tried these foods?
- What are the benefits of these types of food (i.e., enjoyment, celebration, culture, nutritional content, protein source, energy, and medicine)?
- Why are traditional foods important for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples?



Traditional Foods



Additional food literacy resources

Explore the resources below for additional activities, tools, and teaching ideas to support learning and discussion around healthy school food and student voices.

Best Practices for Teaching About Food in the Classroom

- Teach Food First - [Grade-Specific Guiding Principles](#)
- Teach Food First - [Tips for Teaching Food Literacy](#)

Educational Resources on Indigenous Teachings

- First Nations Education Steering Committee/First Nations School Association - [Teacher Resource Guides Units](#), Lessons, and Activities for Blended or Remote Learning Contexts
- [Weaving Indigenous Education Into Your Practice](#): A Teacher's Resource Guide
- [Medicine Wheel Workbook: Finding Your Healthy Balance](#) - Through a careful selection of teachings and interactive activities, the workbook will encourage children to live well and find their healthy balance with the help of the Medicine Wheel.
- [Teachfoodfirst - An Educator's Toolkit for Exploring Canada's Food Guide \(Traditional Foods\)](#)
- [Kidsnacks Indigenous Farm to School Curricula - Traditional Foods for a Healthy Future: A Traditional Snack Guide Based on Ojibwe Foodsit](#)

Food and Food Systems Activities, Resources, and Lesson Plans

- [Food Is Science](#) - Hands-on tools for teaching science through food, linked to the Ontario curriculum
- [Memory Game: Traditional Indigenous Foods](#) - Learn about traditional Indigenous foods in your community while playing a fun matching game!
- [Green Thumbs](#) - Consider vermicomposting with students after their Crunch!
- [BC Agriculture in the Classroom](#) - Plenty of food literacy activities and handouts highlighting apples, for grade 9-12
- Indigenous-inspired [Harvest Salad and Maple Vinaigrette](#).

Previous Great Big Crunch Toolkits

You can also take a look at past Great Big Crunch activity toolkits for additional ideas and inspiration:



These toolkits include a range of classroom activities, discussion prompts, and creative ideas that can be adapted to support your school or community's Crunch.

**Thank you for using
our activity toolkit!**



If you have any questions, comments, or feedback,
please send us an email at ken@healthyschoolfood.ca