

HOW FAR HAVE YOU GOT? THE ENVIRONMENT

Teaching Activity 2

Clean

For Slow Food quality food is **good, clean and fair**.

A food is **clean** if it respects the Earth, if it does not pollute, if it does not squander or overexploit natural resources on its journey from field to fork. A food is clean to the extent that its supply system responds to certain criteria of naturalness, and if it is sustainable. A food is clean if it does not jeopardize the cleanness of the air and the water and the soil, and if, with its history and presence, it allows the water and the air and the soil to continue to produce life.

A clean food has left no trail of dirt behind it: has thus been produced without excessive use of fossil fuels, it has caused no deforestation, it has not been transported from the other side of the planet, it is seasonal and it is not over-packaged. Let us not forget that each one of us helps protect the planet we live on with our daily food choices.

Consumer need to realize that, albeit more expensive, "clean" foods are essential for their own health and for that of future generations.

Preparation and set-up

- Read the second part of the story "The days of the Great Grayness" with the class.
- Procure fruit and vegetables that do not come from one's own country, not loose but packaged and fully labeled: e.g., South American garlic and onions, Moroccan zucchini, North African tomatoes... (These are some suggestions, please check what is available in your country)
- Print out the pictures of the map of the world and means of transport annexed.

Description of the activity

Divide the class into groups, each with the same number of members, and hand each a packaged fruit or vegetable, the printouts of the map of the world and the means of transport, and the stationery. Each group observes the fruit or vegetable it has received to understand what it is, then reads through the information on the label to discover its place of origin.

The students then pinpoint the country they live in on the map of the world, color in the geographical area it occupies, and write "We are here" over it. After coloring in the food's country of origin and writing the name of the food beside it, they join the two countries together with an arrow. If the children are very small, it is possible to give them the map of the world with the names of the countries already written in.

The students now try to imagine the journey made by the food to arrive at the supermarket and, finally, into the classroom: what means of transport have been used? The students trace the whole journey and glue onto the map or draw in pictures of the means of transport they think may have been involved for each stage (e.g., trucks to go from the field to a port or airport, a ship or a plane to cross the ocean, a truck or a train to go from the airport to the supermarket, a car to take it home from the supermarket). The aim of the activity is not so much to find the right answer as to reflect on the environmental impact of the transportation of food products over long distances.

The teacher points out that the product may have been packaged in a place other than that of origin. If so, is it in the same country? How many legs has the product travelled on its journey?

For a food to be clean, it is not only the farming and processing stages that have to be sustainable but also transportation.

At this point, the teacher explains the concepts of local food and food mileage: namely, when possible, buy food from small local producers who respect the environment and discover local fruit and vegetables and animal breeds, and traditional bread, cheese, charcuterie and cakes and confectionery. This is another way of preserving biodiversity.

Teaching aids

Printouts of the map of the world and means of transport (see annexes), crayons, pens, pastels, glue, scissors and a packaged fruit or vegetable for each group.

Additional teaching aids

- Petrini C., ***Slow Food Nation: Why our food should be good, clean and fair.*** Rizzoli 2013.
- Peter Newton, ***Failing to go the distance: what's the beef with food miles?*** (Eng)
www.youtube.com/watch?v=sfBzwBxl-zQ
- Birke Baehr, ***What's wrong with our food system.*** (Eng sub Serbian)
www.ted.com/talks/birke_baehr_what_s_wrong_with_our_food_system#t-294970

Annexes

Map of the world and means of transport (to print out).