

INTRODUCTION

This worksheet takes as its starting point Section I of the Junior Certificate Curriculum, *Our Roots in Ancient Civilisation*. It is intended for the First Year secondary students of mixed ability.

The worksheet focuses particularly on food in early Ireland, in particular the culture of butter and dairying, which has been, and remains, integral to Irish life and culture.

The worksheet is designed to engage as many aspects of the student's capabilities as possible, using a range of source materials. The student's own experience of life and food is an integral part of this methodology of this worksheet.

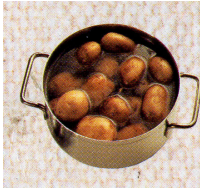




The intention is to enhance the student's awareness of the centrality of food in human culture and the particular conditions which created the food culture of early Ireland. It is also intended to create an awareness of the differences between the food culture of early Ireland and that of modern Ireland and the causes of those differences. The impact of fundamentals, such as climate, agricultural practice and diet, on higher culture, such as language and literature is also addressed.

As with all worksheets in this series, the value to the student will be greatly enhanced if the worksheet and the Museum are used as part of a continuum of learning, not divorced from the classroom.

FOOD IN EARLY IRELAND

1 Which of the foods in the box below do you think you would find a thousand years ago in Ireland?

Tick the boxes for each one you think might have been there.

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|  |  |  |  |  |
| Potatoes | Tomato | Chocolate | Tea | Coffee |
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2 Write down six different kinds of food you ate yesterday - tick next to the ones you think you could have found in a thousand years ago in Ireland?

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Look at the information panel called Cattle, Milk and the Early Irish in upstairs room in the Museum

On the panel there is a list of the kinds of food the people in early Ireland made from milk

- 3 How many different kinds of foods are there in the list? Write your answer in the box.

- 4 Do you think your local shop has more, the same, or fewer types of food than the list given in the panel?

Tick in the box next to what you think the answer is.

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|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| More types of food | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Fewer types of food | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| The same number of types of food | <input type="checkbox"/> |

5



The picture above is of a feast of a wealthy Irish nobleman at around 1581

(i) How many different kinds of food can you see in the illustration?

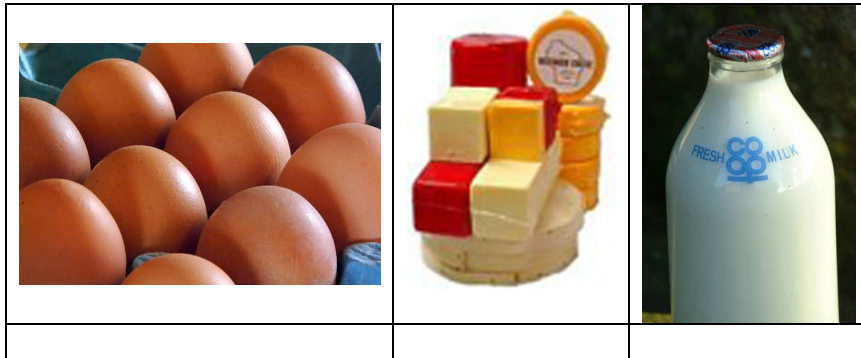
(ii) Do you think you would see more or less kinds of food at a modern feast?

Yes No (Draw a line through what you think is the correct answer)

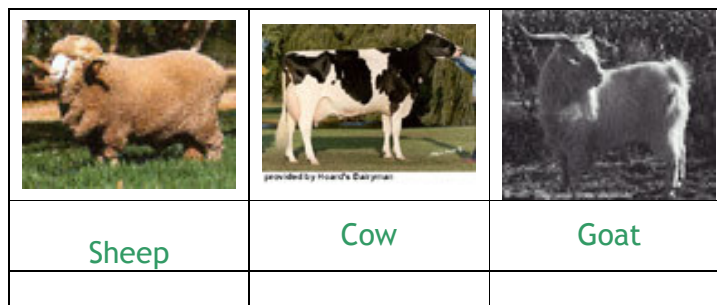
6 From the answers which you have given to the last few questions, could you find say how the diet of a thousand years ago in Ireland differed from that of today.

7. Can you say from which of the foods below butter is made from?

Put a tick under what you think is the correct one.



8. What animal produces most of the milk we drink? Tick in the box under the answer you choose.



9. What do you think cows mainly eat?

10. What is the colour of the Irish soccer team jersey ?

11. What is the colour of the Irish post boxes?

12. Can you think of any reason why this colour is always used by Ireland?

13. Can you think of any reason why grass grows so well in Ireland?

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14. Can you suggest why people who live in the Arctic do not eat a lot of butter?

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15. Match the countries on the left with the objects on the right in the box below.

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| Cows | Arabia |
| Camels | Greenland |
| Polar Bears | Iceland |
| Fish | Ireland |

Look at the container of Bog Butter in the Museum

A container of bog butter. This real butter is over one thousand years old. In that time the butter at the outside has become hardened but the butter at the centre of the container is still soft after all this time. The butter is held in a container made from a single tree trunk. This was hollowed out, a job which would have taken two days to finish.



16. From the information on the wall panel near the bog butter, can you say why this butter is called bog butter?

The woman in this picture is milking a cow by hand, just as was done in early Ireland. It could take from twenty minutes to half an hour to milk a cow by hand. Today cows are milked by machines.



17. The normal size of a herd of cows in a family farm in Ireland today is 60 - 80 cows; in early Ireland it was around 20 cows; can you think why the early Irish had smaller herds of cattle? *[remember, cows must be milked twice a day]*

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18. Find out from either your teacher or museum staff, how much milk it takes to make 500 grammes of butter.

Look at the bog butter in the Museum

19. The people who placed the butter in the bog considered this butter valuable. What is about the exhibit that tells us this?

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20. List three things that this container of bog butter tells you about life in Early Ireland. For example, it tells us that grass grew in Early Ireland.

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Preserving Food

21. What happens if butter is left out of the fridge for a long time?

22. How is a fridge powered? Tick beside the answer that you think is correct.

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| Electricity | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Gas | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Steam | <input type="checkbox"/> |

23. Was this power source available in early Ireland?

24

Imagine yourself on a desert island in a warm climate and you want some way of preserving the fish that you have caught with great difficulty. What would you do?



25 Imagine yourself in early Ireland with gallons of milk and no fridge. What would be the smart thing to do with the milk.

Look at the panel called Early Butter Making in Ireland in the Early Ireland room in the Museum

26 Which time of the year was the main time for milking the cows and making the butter?

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| Spring | |
| Autumn | |
| Winter | |
| Summer | |

27 What was a “booley”? (If you are not sure what the word “makeshift” means - ask)

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Look at the panel called Bog Butter in the Early Ireland room in the Museum

28 From reading the panel, can you suggest two reasons why the early Irish might have put butter in a bog?

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29 Name two different ways the early Irish packaged their butter

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C Early Irish culture

- 30 Today we can identify a wealthy person by the objects that he or she buys - Can you list three things which would show a wealthy person today?

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- 31 How many of those would you have seen in early Ireland?

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Look at the panel called The Táin - Cattle Raiding as a Way of Life in the Museum

- 32 How did the early Irish judge wealth?

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| By the number of cows an person had | |
| By the amount of money a person had | |
| By the size of the farm a person had | |

Put a tick in the box beside what you think is the right answer

33 How many cattle raids did Toirrbealach O' Conchubhair go on?

34 A famous Irish poem is based on the story of a cattle raid - can you name the poem?

35 Write down the Irish word for "cow" and the Irish word for "road" in the empty boxes below

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| Cow | |
| Road | |

36 Can you see any connection between the spelling of the two words?

37 Draw the meter in the display case.

This is a page from the Book of Kells, one of the most famous books ever produced in Ireland. There was no paper in early Ireland so the book was produced on the dried skins of a young animal were used to produce it.

From what you have learned about Early Ireland, could you say which type of animal skin was used?

