



News for Schools from the Smithsonian Institution, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Washington, D.C. 20560

MARCH 1984

Ethnic Folklore in Your Classroom: Traditions, Tales, and Treasures from Tijuana to Timbuktu

A festival! Just the word conjures up bright lights and movement, warmth and celebration. A *folklife* festival embodies all these certainly. But it provides something more besides: it enables us to celebrate the diversity of our cultural heritage—while forging a link that binds us together. It's the American tradition to enjoy the vast panoply of cultural traditions that we possess, especially American to share these traditions with others, as in a folklife festival.

The picture on this page is of a recent Festival of American Folklife, when hundreds of folksingers, dancers, craftspersons, and storytellers converged upon the National Mall in Washington, D.C., to demonstrate the folklife customs of Americans from Southeast Asia. Each year the Smithsonian's American Folklife Festival focuses on a different culture or set of cultures, and each year thousands upon thousands of visitors listen, watch, study, join in, sing along, recount their own stories, and feel a stir of recognition or a sense of wonder and delight as they view or take part in the customs and traditions of other cultures.

You and your students can share some of this same exhilaration by putting on a folklife—or cultural heritage—festival of your own in your school classroom. This issue of ART TO ZOO tells you how to guide your students through the steps of doing fieldwork for the festival, organizing the material, and actually staging the event. In the process of such activity, your students will have the opportunity to practice *gathering information* through interviewing and other means, *organizing data*, and *presenting* the material both orally and in writing. And in enjoying and sharing the customs of others, the children will also gain insight into the whole idea of folklore—what folklore is and how it is shared by people everywhere, including oneself and one's own classmates.

The most readily observed and colorful examples of folklore are ethnic—that is, those customs and practices followed by a group with common heredity and cultural traditions as for example Polish-, Mexican-, Italian-, or West Indian-Americans. The costumed dances a group performs at a wedding, foods prepared at holidays such as Passover or Easter, as well as certain games children play or toys children make, all exemplify ethnic folklife . . . as do certain songs, myths, and stories handed down from one generation to the next. The brightly colored threads of America's own ethnic folklores immeasurably strengthen the fabric of our everyday life.

Because of the rich texture of this ethnic folk tapestry, and because all children, whether they're aware of it or not, have personal ties to specific ethnic traditions, we have in this issue of ART TO ZOO focused specifically on *ethnic* folklore, as opposed to other kinds of lore that scholars collect and study, such as "children's," "family," or "occupational."

or in similar ways? If the children can look back into their families' pasts and see that such was true, they are beginning to discover an important part of what folklife is—the passing on of *traditions* from one generation to the next.

Next return to the bulletin board photographs and ask your students to study each picture again closely. Now they should see that in some of the pictures, participants look as if they are members of the same cultural group. This observation should lead the youngsters to another part of the definition of folklife: Folklife is always shared by a group with common ties, such as a family, a community, or a nation.

Now ask your students to list some of the customs practiced in their own homes to celebrate an event commemorated in many different cultures—the arrival of the New Year. For example, do they perform special dances, cook special dinners, or watch on television the annual celebration in New York's Times Square? How were some of these customs learned? Was it from a book . . . by copying, or imitation . . . or by listening to older family members?

If the students say they have learned a particular holiday tradition by imitating or listening to older family members, they have discovered another part of what folklife is: Folklife traditions are always passed from generation to generation by word of mouth, or imitation, rather than through books. (This is why one scholar, Dr. Louis C. Jones, Director Emeritus of the New York State Historical Association, has described folklife as the "most fragile kind of history there is . . . the part of history that is unwritten because it lives on in the people's tongues and in their everyday ways, until somebody takes the trouble to preserve it.") [From "Folklore in the Schools: A Student Guide to Collecting Folklore," *Yorker Field Research and Writing Guide*, an informal publication of the New York State Historical Association, 1976.]

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Southeast Asian women dancing at the Festival of American Folklife, Washington, D.C. Photo credit: Chip Clark



Scenes from the Festival of American Folklife, Washington, D.C.



The Festival of American Folklife is sponsored by the Smithsonian Institution and the National Park Service.

1
Puerto Rican women dancing. Photo credit: Barbara Hadley

2
Barbeque, North Carolina style. Photo credit: Barbara Hadley

3
Riding the *vipukelka*, a Finnish whip sled. Photo credit: Chip Clark

4
Vietnamese New Year's game. Photo credit: Dane Penland

5
Hmong embroiderer from Southeast Asia. Photo credit: Barbara Hadley

6
Costumed dancers from Vietnam. Photo credit: Dane Penland



Master singer Adam Popovich sings and plays a traditional Serbian-and-Croatian-American form of music called *tamburitzas*. Festival of American Folklife, Washington, D.C. Courtesy of Ethnic Folk Arts Center

A Guidebook for Teachers

How do children learn in museums? What kinds of educational programs are available at the Smithsonian museums? A new booklet *Through Looking to Learning: The Museum Adventure*, answers these questions for teachers.

Schools outside the Washington area may request a copy of this booklet—if they are planning a class trip to the Smithsonian. To request this free copy, your school's principal should write to: *Through Looking to Learning*, OESE, A&I 1163, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20560

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Song Workshop

For each workshop, choose a group of songs—a lullaby, a folksong, and a holiday song, for instance—representative of a specific cultural heritage. With the help of a knowledgeable parent or other adult (who should also be present at the performance), teach the songs in advance to four or five students. Then at the festival performance, pass out words and song sheets to each class member. Have one of the students who already knows the words and music introduce each song and explain its background. After the song has been performed, other students should be taught the song and encouraged to join in. A parent, student, or music teacher might accompany the group on harmonica, guitar, or piano.

Dance Workshop

In format, this is similar to the song workshop. Four or five children who have already been taught the dance steps demonstrate them and then help the rest of the class join in.

Discussion Workshop

A discussion workshop might be built around the theme of New Year's celebrations. Assign one child to be a TRADITION BEARER for each cultural group represented at the festival, to tell how his or her culture celebrates the arrival of the New Year. Then the similarities and differences between methods of celebrating can be discussed.

Another good topic for a discussion workshop is "immigration," in which parents or grandparents tell stories of how they or their ancestors came to the United States.

Family Folklore Exhibition

A new Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service show on the subject of Family Folklore has begun a nationwide tour. Watch for it near your city or town. Here are the dates in 1984: Feb. 11–March 11, Ohio Historical Society, Columbus; May 19–June 17, McMillan Memorial Library, Wisconsin Rapids; July 7–Aug. 5, State Historical Museum, Jackson, Miss.; Aug. 25–Sept. 23, Columbus, Ga., Museum of Arts and Sci-

ences; Oct. 13–Nov. 11, Rensselaer County Junior Museum, Troy, N.Y.; Dec. 1–Dec. 30, Western Heritage Center, Billings, Mont.

In 1985:

April 27–May 26, Ft. Nashborough Museum, Nashville, Tenn.; Sept. 21–Oct. 20, Midland, Mich., County Historical Society; Nov. 9–Dec. 8, Museum of Arts and Sciences, Macon, Ga.; April 5–May 4, Public Library of Columbus and Franklin County, Columbus, Ohio.

Smithsonian Offers Summer Course for Teachers

You don't have to live in Washington to study at the Smithsonian! "Using Museums to Teach Writing," a special one-week course, will be offered by the Smithsonian Institution this summer for elementary and secondary school teachers living more than 75 miles outside the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area.

The course is accredited by the University of Virginia. Tuition and materials fees will total approximately \$200. No scholarships are available.

"Using Museums to Teach Writing" will survey ways in which teachers can use local museum exhibitions and community resources as tools for teaching writing. In addition to working on formal and informal exercises, participants will interview several Smithsonian Institution staff writers to learn about various approaches to writing.

The course, worth three graduate credits, is open to full-time classroom teachers of grades 5

through 12, school librarians (media specialists), and curriculum specialists. Interpreters for hearing-impaired individuals can be provided for all class work.

Classes will meet July 5–13, 1984, in Washington, D.C. Specially priced housing may be available in a conveniently located college dormitory. Participants will arrange for their own meals.

Enrollment is limited. Applications must be postmarked no later than April 6, 1984. Notices of acceptance will be mailed by April 30, 1984.

For an application form, including complete information, write:
National Seminars
OESE, A&I 1163, Smithsonian Institution
Washington, D.C. 20560
Or, call (202)357-3049.

Food

Food is an important part of any folklife festival, and your festival is no exception! A parent or other good cook can demonstrate step-by-step the making of each kind of ethnic food. If no stove is available, the actual cooking phase of the preparation will, of course, have to be left out, but you can still bring in enough of each finished product so that everyone can have a small taste at the end of the demonstration. Also be sure to provide copies of the recipes for each class member.

A sampling of foods or a meal consisting of foods from the various cultures represented might conclude your folklife festival, with parents and children bringing in their specialties. Do, however, ask contributors to avoid foods that spoil easily, as for instance dishes made with mayonnaise or custard.

Scheduling Considerations

If contained within your own school classroom, your festival might be scheduled to last for an afternoon or for an entire day, with the activities taking place in sequence. If, however, your class is unusually rich in cultural traditions, you might consider holding the event in a larger space—such as the multipurpose room or gymnasium—and inviting other classes to attend. In that case, schedule the festival so that at any given time, several activities will be occurring simultaneously. You might, for example, assign each ethnic group represented at the festival to a different 45-minute time slot. Then for each group, a number of workshops and demonstrations (say, in dance, crafts, storytelling, singing, and cooking) could be happening all at one time in different parts of

the room. This would give everyone who comes to the festival an opportunity to experience several aspects of at least one of the cultures represented.

Whatever arrangements you make, your students' own ethnic folklife festival is bound to be a success if everyone is given an active role to play in which he or she feels comfortable. Then hours of research, planning, rehearsal, and interpretation will finally result in the long-awaited day. You'll find that sharing folklore in your classroom is fun—and it works!

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Regular Contributors

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THE CHESAPEAKE BAY CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES
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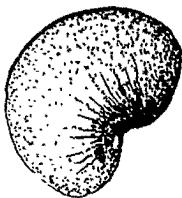
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Art to Zoo brings news from the Smithsonian Institution to teachers of grades three through eight. The purpose is to help you use museums, parks, libraries, zoos, and many other resources within your community to open up learning opportunities for your students.

Our reason for producing a publication dedicated to promoting the use of community resources among students and teachers nationally stems from a fundamental belief shared by all of us here at the Smithsonian: in the power of objects. Working as we do with a vast collection of national treasures that literally contains the spectrum from "art" to "zoo," we believe that objects (be they works of art, natural history specimens, historical artifacts, or live animals) have a tremendous power to educate. We maintain that it is equally important for students to learn to use objects as research tools as it is for them to learn to use words and numbers—and you can find objects close at hand, by drawing on the resources of your own community.

Our idea, then, in producing Art to Zoo is to share with you—and you with us—methods of working with students and objects that Smithsonian education staff members have found successful.

PULL-OUT PAGE



Beans, Beans, and More Beans . . . From All Over the World

by Ann Bay

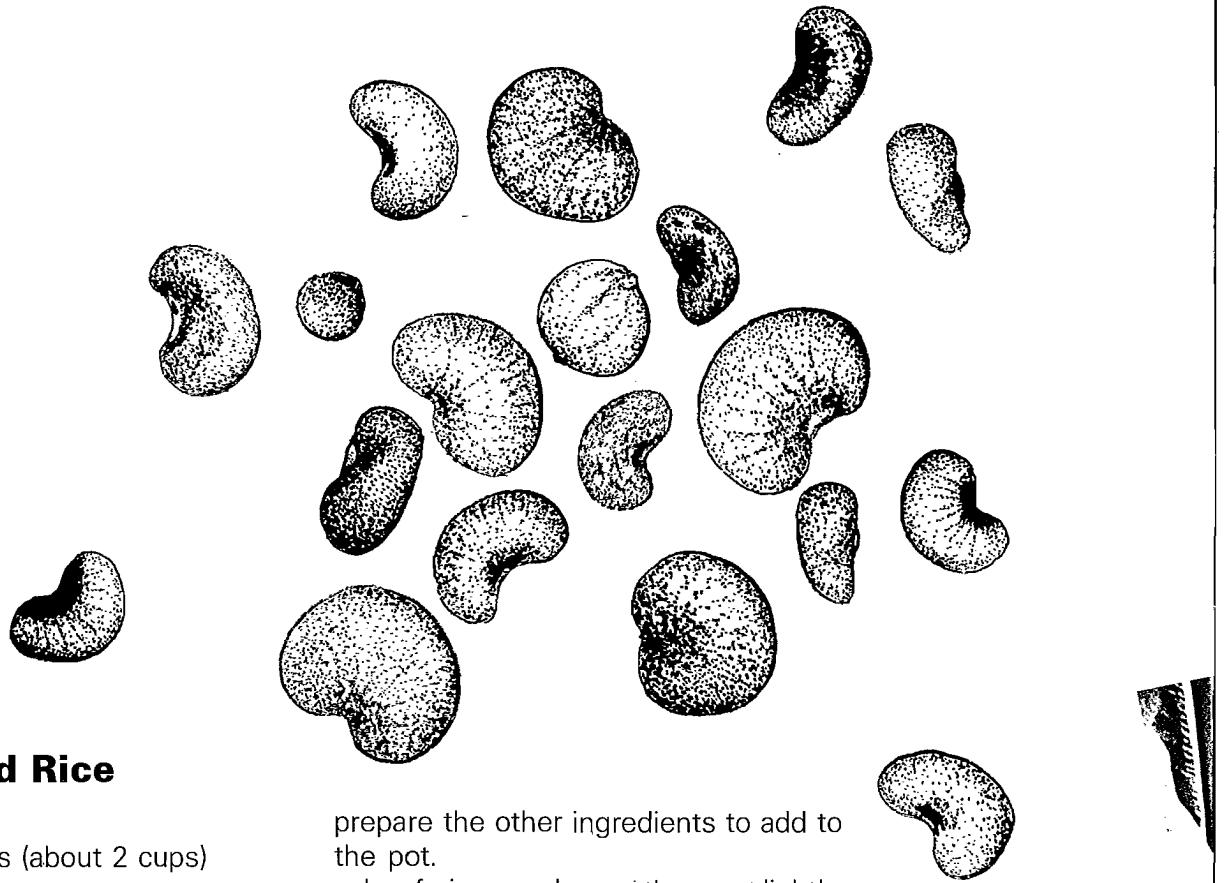
When you think about a food that practically everybody eats, dried beans come immediately to mind. All over the world—in Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Americas—beans are a staple of everyday life.

To make dried beans, the seeds from one or another kind of bean plant are harvested and then dried. Drying preserves the beans, which means they will keep on your kitchen shelf for a very long time, no matter what kind of climate you live in.

Dried beans are highly nutritious (with lots of protein, vitamins, and minerals), widely available, and inexpensive to buy. This, along with the fact that they keep well, helps to account for their worldwide popularity.

There are many different kinds of dried beans: black beans, mung beans, kidney beans, garbanzos, black-eyed peas, and lentils, to name just a few. Which of these kinds of beans you usually eat depends largely on where you live. For example, lentils are popular throughout much of Africa; black beans are eaten in Latin America; and white beans of various types are widely enjoyed in Europe.

The way in which dried beans are cooked also varies from place to place. Two famous bean dishes from the United States are baked beans (New England) and red beans and rice (Louisiana). Here is a recipe for red beans and rice:



Red Beans and Rice

ingredients

1 lb red kidney beans (about 2 cups)
1/2 lb ham bone with meat
8-10 cups of water
1 onion, chopped
1 clove of garlic, chopped
2 Tbs celery, chopped
2 Tbs parsley, chopped
1 large bay leaf
salt and pepper to taste

preparing for cooking

As with all dried beans, you have to plan ahead because the beans must be prepared *before* cooking. First *measure* the beans, *wash* them under running water, and *sort* carefully through them, removing any stems, stones, or other inedible matter. Now *soak* the beans: Either cover them with cold water and let them stand overnight . . . or drop them a few at a time into a big pot of boiling water, boil two minutes, and let stand covered for two hours.

cooking

When the beans have finished soaking, drain them of their soaking water and cover them with 8 cups of fresh water. Bring this to a rapid boil; then lower the fire and let the beans simmer while you

prepare the other ingredients to add to the pot.

In a frying pan, brown the meat lightly. Then remove the meat from the pan, and add the onions, garlic, celery, and parsley in its place. Cook these vegetables slowly in the meat drippings until tender. Now add the meat and vegetables, along with the bay leaf, to the bean pot and continue to let all of this simmer very slowly for at least two hours, or until the beans are very tender but not mushy.

Next, correct the seasoning. Using a long-handled spoon, reach into the pot and scoop up a few of the beans. Let the beans cool on the spoon before you taste them. (You can tell that they're cool when they stop steaming.) Now decide: is salt or pepper needed? If so, season to taste.

serving

Finally, cook 2 cups of rice according to package directions. When the rice is tender and fluffy, put it on plates and serve the beans over it. Makes eight generous servings.

NOTE: "Red Beans and Rice" is especially delicious when served with a tossed green salad and crisp French bread.

Doing What Folklorists Do



Stone carvers Vincent Palumbo and Roger Morigi,
at the National Cathedral, Washington, D.C.

When you ask your family about traditions and customs, you are doing what *folklorists* do. Folklorists find out about certain things people do now that their mothers, fathers, grandmothers, and grandfathers did before *them*. Such things include making special foods on holidays and dancing special dances at weddings. Folklorists are interested also in the kinds of traditions people carry on at work. And they are interested in children's games—since games too have been passed down from one generation to the next.

Marjorie Hunt is a folklorist who works for the Smithsonian Institution's Folklife Program. She went to college to learn how to study the traditions of many different kinds of people from all over the world: storytellers, craftspeople, artists, dancers, singers, and workers in a variety of jobs.

Marjorie Hunt searches out such people to take part in the yearly Smithsonian festival. She says her job requires detective work. "I follow a thread," she says. "I'll ask at the church or stores or restaurants, or knock on people's doors, to find men and women who still practice folklife traditions and can teach others about them." Being a folklorist, she says, "requires a keen interest in the different ways people live."

Marjorie is especially interested right now in researching and telling the story of the Italian stone carvers who, for the past twenty years, have been making the statues and decorations on the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. Vincent Palumbo and Roger Morigi come from five generations of stone carvers in Italy. The two men began to learn their craft by doing odd jobs around their fathers' studios when they were seven. After many years of training, they finally became master stone carvers. Now Marjorie Hunt is making a movie about the two of them.

In doing her job Marjorie Hunt has gotten to know interesting people all over the country, which is one good reason she loves her work. Being a folklorist certainly is for her a challenging and rewarding life.

Sticky Bean

Sticky Bean is a game of tag played by people who come from Southeast Asia, from Hong Kong to be exact. For this kind of tag, you must start with an even number of people. Make one person *It*. In Sticky Bean, people are safe from the person who is *It* only when they are *in pairs touching each other*.

To make the game more fun, it is better to split up, and then to pair up only when the person who is *It* comes around!

This tag game is called Sticky Bean because the players are supposed to stick together like red beans cooked in hot soup.

To learn more about becoming a folklorist, write to the American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540, or to the Office of Folklife Programs, Smithsonian Institution, 2600 L'Enfant Plaza, Washington, D.C. 20560.



Photo credit: Richard Hofmeister