

Lesson Plan: “What They Were Eating” Podcast

[Podbean Link for “What They Were Eating”](#)

[Spotify Link for “What They Were Eating”](#)

[Apple Podcast Link for “What They Were Eating”](#)

Overview

Grade: 11 Canadian History (Manitoba) / German

Subject: Immigration, Identity & Food in Post-War Germany

Theme: Shaping the Nation / Canada After 1945

Duration: 75 minutes

Objective

Students will:

- Describe how post-WWII conditions affected daily life (KH-033)
- Explain how immigration shaped Canadian identity (KI-013)
- Appreciate the contributions of diverse cultural groups (VP-013)
- Analyze how food reflects identity, culture, and adaptation
- Apply historical thinking concepts (perspective, cause/consequence, continuity/change)

Materials

- [Website for What They Can Teach Us with Interviews](#)
- Podcast for What They Were Eating
- Worksheet: Podcast Listening Guide (attached)
- Answer Key (attached)
- Presentation: “What They Were Eating” – link forthcoming
- Extension Presentation on Post War Food Culture in Germany – link forthcoming
- Optional: Local food examples or visuals

Lesson Outline

1. Introduction (Pre-Listening – Activate Prior Knowledge) – 10 minutes

Inquiry Question:

👉 *How does food reflect identity and immigration experiences?*

Class Discussion:

Part A of Worksheet

- Why is food important to identity?
- What challenges might immigrants face with food?
- How might WWII affect what people eat?

✅ Purpose:

- Activates prior knowledge
- Connects personal experience to historical inquiry
- Introduces themes of identity, migration, and adaptation

2. Podcast Listening – First Listening (Main Idea) – 15 minutes

Students listen to the podcast for general understanding.

Task:

- Identify the main topic
- Identify key challenges faced by German immigrants

Students begin filling out the worksheet (**Part B**).

✅ Curriculum Focus:

- KH-033 (postwar daily life)
- Understanding immigration experiences

3. Podcast Listening – Second Listening (Evidence Gathering) – 20 minutes

Students listen again and complete detailed worksheet sections (**Part C**).

Focus Areas:

- Food scarcity and rationing

- Substitute (“ersatz”) foods
- Importance of bread
- Differences between Canada and Germany
- Beaverbrae immigration experience

✓ *Curriculum Focus:*

- Cause and consequence (WWII → shortages → migration challenges)
- Use of evidence

4. Post-Listening Critical Thinking – 20 minutes

Students respond to guided questions (Parts D–F of worksheet):

Discussion & Written Responses:

- Was food an important part of the immigrant experience? Why?
- How did WWII shape daily life in Germany?
- How does food reflect identity?
- What has changed and what has stayed the same?

Short Reflection (5–7 sentences):

👉 *How does food help people maintain identity after immigrating?*

✓ *Curriculum Focus:*

- KI-013 (immigration shaping Canada)
- VP-013 (appreciation of diversity)
- Continuity and change
- Historical perspective

5. Wrap-Up and Interdisciplinary Connections – 10 minutes

Class Debrief:

- Share key takeaways
- Discuss connections to modern Canada and Winnipeg communities

Connections:

- Multiculturalism in Canada
- Local immigrant food cultures
- German heritage in Canada

Optional Extensions:

- Research another immigrant group and their food traditions
- Write from a historical perspective (German immigrant in 1952)
- Explore recipes from postwar Germany (Found in Extension Presentation above)

Purpose:

- Reinforces big ideas: identity, resilience, adaptation, nation-building
- Connects past to present

Assessment

Students will be assessed on:

- Completion of worksheet
- Use of evidence from the podcast
- Understanding of post-WWII conditions
- Ability to connect food to identity and immigration
- Reflection depth and historical thinking

Notes for Teacher

This lesson supports Manitoba Cluster 4 outcomes by using food as an entry point into:

- Postwar Canadian history
- Immigration experiences
- Cultural identity and adaptation

It encourages empathy, critical thinking, and real-world connections through a relatable lens (food).

***Podcast Listening Guide: What They Were Eating**

Name: _____ Date: _____

Part A: Before Listening

1. Which foods are important in your culture or family?

2. Why would food matter so much to immigrants?

Part B: First Listening – Main Idea

1. Main Topic:

2. Main Challenge:

Part C: Second Listening – Details

1. Why was bread important?

2. Ersatz foods used:

3. What was the Beaverbrae?

4. Food in Canada vs. Germany after the war:

Part D: Historical Thinking

1. How did WWII impact daily food in Germany?

2. How does food reflect identity?

Part E: Continuity and Change

List four points about the German immigrant experience dealing with food during the 1940s and 1950s:

Compare their experience then to now. How has it changed?

Part F: Reflection

One thing I learned:

One question I still have:

One connection to today:

Teacher Answer Key

Part A: Pre-Listening (Sample Answers)

(Answers will vary)

1. Foods important in culture
→ Example: bread, rice, pasta, traditional dishes
2. Why food matters to immigrants
→ It connects to identity, culture, comfort, and memory

Part B: First Listening – Main Idea

1. **Main topic:**
→ The food experiences of German immigrants after WWII and how they adapted in Canada
2. **Main challenge:**
→ Difficulty finding familiar foods and ingredients

Part C: Second Listening – Details

1. **Why was bread important?**
→ Germany has about 3,000 types of bread; it is central to daily life (breakfast and “Abendbrot”)
2. **Substitute foods used:**
→ Potato skins (bread), acorns/chestnuts (flour), barley (coffee), turnips (cocoa substitute)
3. **What was the Beaverbrae?**
→ A ship that transported immigrants to Canada, carrying hundreds of passengers and large quantities of food
4. **Food in Canada vs. Germany:**
→ Canada had more food available after the war; Germany experienced shortages longer

Part D: Historical Thinking

1. **WWII impact on daily life:**
→ Food shortages, rationing, starvation, use of substitute foods

2. Food and identity:

→ Food connects to culture, traditions, and comfort; helps immigrants maintain identity

Part E: Continuity and Change

Then (1940s–50s):

- Food rationing
- Limited availability of ingredients
- Use of substitutes
- Difficulty accessing cultural foods

Now:

- Global food access
- Multicultural grocery stores
- Easier access to traditional foods
- More diverse diets

Part F: Reflection (Sample Answer)

(Answers will vary)

→ Students should explain:

- Specific food they would miss
- Emotional/cultural importance
- Why it matters to them