

AN ORANGE OF MANY NAMES

Mandarin oranges are small, easy to peel, and sweet. Several different types of oranges are part of the mandarin family:



Clementines: the smallest of the mandarin family. These extra sweet and seedless oranges are also called “Cuties” and “Sweeties.”



Tangerines: a type of mandarin that originated in Tangier, Morocco. They are the deepest orange colour and usually the tarest kind.



Satsumas: a seedless variety from Japan. They are the juiciest of the group and are used in canned mandarin oranges.



CELEBRATE THE FOODS THAT MAKE YOU YOU!

A big part of why you choose the foods you eat is tradition: your family’s history and your culture. Some cultures have strict rules about eating or not eating certain foods. All cultures have special ingredients, ways of preparing food, and ways of enjoying food that suit who they are, where they live, and what is important to them.

When your grandparents were children, most of the fresh food they ate was grown or made in Canada, because shipping food between countries took too long. Most likely, your grandparents grew up with cooking habits based on the traditions of where their family originated.

Today, we have access to food from all over the world. By eating foods grown or produced in other places, we can experience something new, or we can maintain connections to our family’s cultural heritage.

A GIFT OF ORANGE – A HOLIDAY TRADITION

Mandarin oranges are an example of how food can influence tradition. They have long been important to Chinese culture as a symbol of good luck, and the tradition of giving mandarin oranges is known as “*song gam*” in Cantonese, which means “giving gold.” During Chinese New Year, mandarin oranges are used as decoration and given as a gift to friends, family, and business associates as a way of wishing them happiness and financial success.

In Canada, mandarin oranges became a holiday season tradition with the first Japanese immigrants who came to BC in the late 1800’s. When they received packages of satsuma oranges sent by ship from their families in Japan to celebrate the new year, these new Canadians shared them with family and friends here.



SCIENCE & FINE ARTS ACTIVITY: OPEN-ENDED DESIGN CHALLENGE

Curriculum Connection: Science - grades 4 to 7: Applying and innovating – contribute to care for self, others, and community through personal or collaborative approaches. Fine Arts - grades 4 to 5: Artists experiment in a variety of ways to discover new possibilities. Grades 6 to 7: Engaging in creative expression and experiences expands people's sense of identity and community.

Using at least 15 skewers, have the students build a structure that can support one mandarin orange.

Supplies:

1 mandarin orange per student
15 bamboo skewers (15 cm) per student
Modelling clay

Procedure:

Invite your students to use up to 15 skewers to build a structure that supports one mandarin orange and keeps it from touching the table. Tell students the orange must rest on and be fully supported by the structure (the orange cannot be "skewered," as that would make it part of the structure).

Possible structure design ideas could include a low structure, tower structure, or tripod structure.

When they have finished, invite students to eat their oranges.

SOCIAL STUDIES ACTIVITY: INTERESTING MANDARIN ORANGE FACTS

Curriculum Connection: Social Studies - grades 4 to 7: Sequence objects, images, or events, and determine continuities and changes between different time periods or places.

Read these interesting facts about mandarin oranges to students after they have finished eating their fruit:

1. Mandarin oranges have been cultivated in China and Japan for thousands of years.
2. Mandarin oranges were sent by ship to Canada from Japan by relatives as gifts from home to celebrate the new year.
3. They were transported from the west across Canada on freight trains called orange trains.
4. During Chinese New Year, mandarin oranges are used as decoration and exchanged by family and friends.
5. The essential oil from a mandarin orange is used for relaxation. As you were eating this fruit, could you smell the orange fragrance?
6. In Chinese medicine, the peel of the mandarin orange is used to improve digestion.
7. We don't typically eat the peel because it's bitter, but it is full of vitamin C and fibre, and it can be used fresh or dried in cooking to add flavour to dishes.
8. Mandarin oranges also contain vitamin A and several nutrients and minerals, such as potassium and manganese.
9. Mandarin oranges are often individually wrapped in tissue paper. The paper retains oxygen and prevents neighbouring oranges from spoiling.
10. Until recently, mandarin oranges were only available in the winter. Today, they are imported from many countries and we can enjoy them year-round.

MATH QUESTIONS

Curriculum Connection: Mathematics - grades 4 to 5: Fractions are types of numbers that can represent quantities. Grades 6 to 7: Mixed numbers represent quantities that can be decomposed into parts and wholes.

Ask each student to gently peel the skin off their mandarin orange. Have students pull their mandarin oranges apart into two equal pieces and ask these questions:

What do you have?

Answer: Two halves.

Now that you have two halves, pull those apart into two equal pieces. What do you have?

Answer: Four quarters.

How many pieces of mandarin orange do you have in each quarter?

Answers will vary.

Ask students these additional questions:

- How many pieces does your mandarin orange have in total?
- Is it an even or odd number?
- What would the denominator of your mandarin orange be?
- If you ate three pieces, what fraction of the mandarin would you have left?