



Cheese, ham, bread and other delicacies... yummy! The mere mention of Youth at the Top's 2021 theme certainly has something to make your mouth water. In the Alps, gastronomy is for many people synonymous with pleasure and conviviality. Yet, far beyond taste only, food has recently been at the heart of many societal issues. Whether we talk about «junk food», «animal welfare» or «organic farming», the question is the same: what diet can we adopt without doing any harm? This document offers some potential avenues and activities to address the theme «Local Food» in many aspects. If taste is not forgotten, a cultural, social and even historical vision of food is also possible. Of course, issues related to ecology and biodiversity - so paramount in our mountains - are also at the heart of the topic! Enough to offer to the participants of this 7th edition activities as fun as informative!

1. ICEBREAKER ACTIVITY

To introduce the theme and help young people get to know each other, each participant introduces himself/herself (first name, age...) and say what his favorite dish is, and whether it is a local dish or not.

2. LOCAL SPECIALTIES > INTERNATIONAL COOKBOOK (drawing activity)

All participating groups are invited to illustrate a local recipe and to share it with ALPARC. ALPARC will then gather all the drawings and recipes to create a unique international cookbook! **To take part of this project, please read Appendix 4.**

3. THE IMPORTANCE OF BIODIVERSITY > GAME AND DIY

The biodiversity that support our food systems is disappearing, seriously threatening the future of our food, livelihoods, health and environment. We offer here two activities to raise awareness of this issue among young people.

3.1 WEB OF LIFE > GAME

In nature, everything is connected! For example, many organisms support food production through ecosystem services. This includes all plants, animals and microorganisms (such as insects, bats, birds, herbariums, earthworms, fungi and soil bacteria) that maintain soil fertility, pollinate plants, purify water and air, keep fish and trees healthy, and fight pests and diseases of plants and livestock. In other words, without biodiversity in its whole, no agriculture or livestock farming would be possible!

TOPICS COVERED: species interconnectivity • soil fertility • compost • pollination • ecosystem services • sustainable agriculture • crop protection • water and soil decontamination...

ACTIVITY: By reflecting on the connections between the different organisms, young people will create a huge intertwined web.

NECESSARY MATERIAL: long rope/twine, slips of paper to write down the role of each player



CONDUCT OF THE ACTIVITY: Players are in circle. To start the game and make clear the connection with the food, the game leader mimes a starving character. Dreaming of a good steak, he/she needs the farmer to eat. Therefore, he/she keeps one end of the twine in one hand and passes everything else to the player who was assigned with the «farmer» role. What about this player? Who does he/she depend on? The farmer wraps the twine at his wrist before passing the rest, for example, to the player with the «sheep» role. The game lasts until everyone is interconnected, the twine forming a large web. The game leader helps young people make the less obvious connections. The twine should avoid making the same journey twice. This is the ideal opportunity to introduce all kinds of organisms (earthworms, fungi, bacteria...).

MORE INFORMATION: <https://www.amnh.org/explore/ology/biodiversity/web-of-life/activity-instructions>

3.2 POLLINATION > DIY

Mason bees certainly do not produce honey, yet they are essential due to their role as pollinators. Without pollination, no fruits nor vegetables are possible... More than 70% of crops (including almost all fruit and vegetable) are heavily or totally dependent on animal pollination. The intensive use of pesticides is harmful to pollinating insects, which are yet essential to ensure a good harvest.

TOPICS COVERED: pollination • pesticides • ecosystem services • sustainable agriculture

ACTIVITY: making a house for masons bees

CONDUCT OF THE ACTIVITY: <https://www.naturalbeachliving.com/mason-bee-habitat/>

TO GO FURTHER: Do you know of any other pollinating animals?



4. IMPACT OF FOOD CONSUMPTION ON THE ENVIRONMENT > MIME IT!

Nowaday, the impact of food consumption on climate change is certain. It is an important matter that can also be approached in a playful way.

TOPICS COVERED: climate change and consequences • global warming and its effect in mountain environment (melt ice...) • loss of biodiversity • sustainable agriculture • link between climate change and loss of biodiversity

ACTIVITY: The players mime food-related «activities» that have a negative impact on the environment in order to initiate discussion and offer solutions.

PREPARATION: Cards labelled with a food-related «activity»

CONDUCT OF THE ACTIVITY: Give one card to each player. Players glance at their cards but do not show them to anyone else. Players mime the content of their card in turn. Once the other players have guessed the content of a card, the topic is discussed as well as solutions to solve the problem. Then another player comes to mime it card and so on.

EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE TOPICS TO MIME AND DISCUSS:

Food related activities (to mime)	Consequences on the environment	Solutions
Food importation/Transport	Use of fossil fuels + Increase of CO ²	Eat local products
Energy consumption in greenhouses	Use of fossil fuels + Increase of CO ²	Eat seasonal fruits/veggies
Meat consumption	Increase of CO ²	Reduce meat consumption
Pesticides	Loss of biodiversity	Buy organic products/labels
Food waste	Overexploitation of land	Buy only what you can eat!
Plastics use	Loss of biodiversity	Buy bulk food / Recycle
...		

TO GO FURTHER: Introduce the concept of sustainable agriculture

5. A MATTER OF TIME > QUIZ & TASTING

Many agree on saying that time is a lost value! The expression «fast food» speaks for itself. Today, the Internet allows for near-instantaneous access to almost everything: to find the answer to a question, to communicate, and even... to eat? However, far from food delivery services, agriculture and livestock are time-required processes.

TOPICS COVERED: the importance of time • explanation of certain manufacturing techniques (salting, refining...)

ACTIVITY: Quiz about time and food related questions, followed by a tasting. Players can only taste the product after finding the right answer! This way, they'll have to... wait 😊



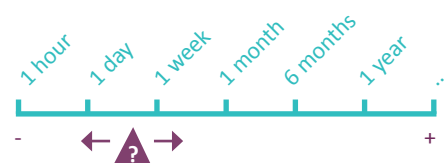
PREPARATION REQUIRED:

- Draw a timeline: 1mn, 10mn, 30mn, 1 hour, 2h, 1 day, 1 week, 1 month, 3 months, 6 months, 1 year, 5 years, 10 years...
- Plan what to use as a cursor. For example, a cardboard triangle that you can attach and detach with «patafix»

CONDUCT OF THE ACTIVITY: Present a product and give a sample to each player. Ask a question about this product questioning the notion of time (see below). A first player approaches the time line and places the cursor to propose an answer. The game leader replies «shorter» or «longer» and a second player comes forward to reposition the cursor accordingly. Again, the game leader says «shorter» or «longer» and the players follow each other until the game leader says «correct». Everyone applauds and can finally tastes the product related to the question!

EXAMPLES OF SAMPLE PRODUCTS/QUESTIONS:

- Gentian taste candies - How long does the gentian need to bloom for the first time?
- Cheese - How long has this cheese matured?
- Ham - How much drying time was required?
- Butter - How much churning time is necessary to get butter?
- Bread - How long does the bread dough have to rise?



OTHER POSSIBLE ACTIVITY: Making bread is also a great way to stress the importance of time in manufacturing processes.

4. FOR THE PLEASURE OF ALL SENSES > ALL-KIND OF FOOD TASTINGS

How to talk about «Local Food» without planning a food tasting? However, eating is not limited to the pleasure of the taste buds! A good dish can be enjoyed with all senses, including sight and smell. The following two activities are designed to encourage young people to take the time to (re)discover what they are eating.

TOPICS COVERED: healthy diet • local specialties • senses



4.1. OLFATORY MATCHING PAIRS (WITH CHEESES OR AROMATIC HERBS)

PREPARATION: Create pairs of food samples placed in boxes, with small holes on the top. Half of the boxes are labelled with letters and the other half with numbers. Of course pairs should not be 1A, 2B, 3C but rather 3A, 2D, 1C...

CONDUCT OF THE ACTIVITY: Each player has time to take and smell different boxes and must find the right Letter/Number combination (make them write their guesses down). Once the time is up, the answers are revealed, the boxes are open and it's time to taste! ☺

TO GO FURTHER: This activity may introduce or follow an explanation of cheese making.



4.2. HONEY, HONEYS: VISUAL AND TASTY MATCHING PAIRS!

A two-steps game about honey! There are a multitude of honeys, each with its own taste but also its own color.

PREPARATION : Select 5 different honeys (or more) and put each honey in 3 different pots: 1/3 in a transparent pot labelled with a number, 1/3 in a second transparent pots labelled with a letter and 1/3 in an opaque pot with the image of the corresponding plant glued on it (acacia, chestnut, lime...). Thus you have a total of 15 pots. Create 3 rows of pots: a line of transparent buckets labelled with numbers, a line of transparent pots labelled with letters and a line of opaque pots labelled with images. The order of pots in the rows should not match (pairs should not be 1A, 2B, 3C but rather 3A, 2D, 1C...).

CONDUCT OF THE ACTIVITY: At first, players should try to associate honeys of rows 1 and 2 only by looking at the honey colors. Players take turns making guesses. The first player grabs the pot 1, walks towards row n°2, observes and then proposes a match. The game leader tells him if the association is good or not. If it is good, the 2nd player takes the 2nd pot. Otherwise it's his turn to try to associate the 1st pot with the good honey of row n°2. And so on until each pot in row n°1 is associated with the right pot in row n°2.

For the second step of the game, players must associate the pots in row n°2 with those in row n°3, this time relying solely on taste! Therefore, they are invited to close their eyes during the tasting or better, to be blindfolded. This phase unfolds in exactly the same way of the first part of the game.

TO GO FURTHER: This activity can introduce or follow an explanation about the manufacture of honey.

ANOTHER POSSIBLE TASTING ACTIVITY: Comparative tasting of an industrial product with its «artisanal» version. Encourage young people to give their opinions and to question the link between health and diet.

5. EDIBLE PLANTS > BOTANICAL HIDE-AND-SEEK

As the ethnobotanist François Couplan recalls: «For some 3 million years -more than 99% of its existence on earth- humankind was fed on wild plants.» This very simple and quick game can introduce a dialogue about edible plants.

TOPICS COVERED:

local flora • protected plants • nutrition

PREPARATION REQUIRED: A simple little pre-tracking may be necessary. If possible, choose a plant that the group will be able to taste directly.

CONDUCT OF THE ACTIVITY: In a relatively large area, players are told that there is a plant nearby that can be eaten. Using «hot» «cold,» the game leader guides the players until they find the right plant.

TO GO FURTHER:

- Discussion about edible plants can also lead to talk about the therapeutic virtues of some plants.
- Mushrooms and berries are other food resources that can be found in the mountains... provided that you recognize them well!
- Discussion on protected plants



6. TRANSHUMANCE > THE MUSICAL CHAIRS NEW VERSION

In mountainous regions more than anywhere else, the seasons have a strong impact on human activity. Transhumance is the perfect example of it and it is the source of many traditions!

TOPICS COVERED: Stressing the impact of the seasons on human activity • Inviting to respect pasture areas in the mountains • Explaining what transhumance is • Cultural Heritage • Traditions

ACTIVITY: Depending on the season, the players will have to run between the valley and the pastures. Who's going to be the fastest?



CONDUCT OF THE ACTIVITY: Divide a fairly large space into two sections: valley and pasture. The game leader randomly draw a season: summer or winter. The draw can be done using a coin then being announced by the game leader. Ideally a wider visual support will be used to allow players to see the draw result directly. For example: a frisbee can be used as a coin with a sun on one side and a snowflake on the other. If winter is drawn and the players are in the pasture section, they must quickly run into the valley section. Conversely, if summer is pulled out, they must run fast in the pasture section. If the season matches the section they are already in, they just stay where they are. The idea is that at each draw players never know if they will have to change sections or not.

To make the game more interesting, it can be combined with the principle of musical chairs. If there are X players, X-1 pieces of wood (or other objects) are placed in each section. Each time players move from one section to another, they must quickly grab a piece of wood. The player who arrives last leaves the game. To not leave this player behind, he is entrusted with the task of making (and announcing) the following random draws, until another player loses and takes his place.

Whenever a player leaves the game, the game leader removes a piece of wood in each section to always have X-1 pieces of wood (X= number of players left in the game).

The game stops when there is only one player left. He/She is declared «winner of the transhumance»!

WANT SOME MORE FUN? Ask the players to move on all fours. Bursts of laughter guaranteed!

7. ELSEWHERE IN THE ALPS AND CARPATHIANS > GEOGRAPHICAL QUIZ

On July 8th, more than 250 young people will join the 2021 edition of Youth at the Top, across several countries in the Alps and the Carpathians! While each event is organized locally and independently of the others, the international dimension of the project is nevertheless at the very heart of Youth at the Top. We want to break down barriers and make young people aware that they are part of a common geographical area and that they therefore share common traditions and interests. Finally, beyond the mountains, it is the entire European identity that is valued by this project.

TOPICS COVERED: the international dimension of the Alps and the Carpathians • Differences and similarities across countries • Local specialties

ACTIVITY: Guess to which country belong certain culinary expressions and/or local products, and place them on the map. It's time to bring out the educational tarpaulin «The Alps in my backpack»!*

PREPARATION REQUIRED: Paper cards labelled with local specialties' names (provide weights so that papers don't fly off once placed on the map. Ex: pebbles).

CONDUCT OF THE ACTIVITY (2 VARIATIONS ARE POSSIBLE):

• “Enjoy your meal” (quick version)

How do you say «Enjoy your meal!» in the different languages of the Alpine and Carpathians countries? Ask the players if they know some answers spontaneously, in which case place the right answers on the map. Then, present the expressions that have not yet been found and have the players vote to determine their countries of origins.



• Local products

Do young people know where are Comté, Etivaz, Vorarlberger Bergkäse and Taleggio from? One thing is certain, the countries of the Alps and the Carpathians share here an essential food product: cheese! But there are differences. You can first offer a simple description of the cheese, and then, if they haven't guessed, reveal the name of it. The sound of the name will certainly help them to guide their choice. When the right answer has been found, place card labelled with this cheese's name on the map and draw another card. Variation: the same idea can be taken up with typical dishes of each alpine region.

** If you are taking part of Youth at the Top for the first time and you do not have the educational material «The Alps in my backpack», please contact us quickly so that we can send it to you on time.*



8. TIME TRAVEL > KEEP THEIR IMAGINATION RUNNING

In the 20th century, agriculture and livestock have evolved greatly, particularly in terms of the tools used.

TOPICS COVERED: history • cultural heritage • know-how • agriculture and livestock

ACTIVITY: Show the group some pictures of old agriculture tools to and let them guess what they were used for. The tools can be presented with pictures/drawings, but where possible it is better to bring a real tool (or reproduction) and let the youngsters observe and manipulate it.

9. NOTHING IS LOST, NOTHING IS CREATED, EVERYTHING IS TRANSFORMED! > CREATIVE ACTIVITY

In the mountains even more than anywhere else, it has long been necessary to make the most of local resources as the access to external resources was very limited due to the isolation of the villages. Therefore, nothing was wasted and almost everything has several functions. Hives provide honey and wax (e.g. for candles), sheeps provide milk but also meat and wool, some plants have medicinal virtues and can also serve as a dye ...

TOPICS COVERED: waste • recycling • creativity • local flora

CREATIVE ACTIVITY: A damaged potato or carrot, salad heart and other vegetables can be used as stamps. Berries, flowers, lichens and even mushrooms can be used as a natural dye. Let's be creative!

RESOURCES →

- <https://www.alpfoodway.eu/>
- <https://www.slowfood.com/>
- <https://www.patrimoineculinaire.ch/>

CONTACT →

ALPARC - The Alpine Network of Protected Areas

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