

Activity 2: The Human Body

Read Rebecca Earle, “If You Eat Their Food ...”: Diets and Bodies in Early Colonial Spanish America, *The American Historical Review*, Volume 115, Issue 3, June 2010. Learn about Spanish attitudes towards food and health in colonial times, then answer the following questions. <https://academic.oup.com/ahr/article/115/3/688/41267> .

- 1) Did the initial European belief that solely their own food would be sufficient for eating prove to inherently discriminate against indigenous people?
- 2) Should the European tactics to make indigenous people like themselves by using food be considered immoral, or could these tactics be viewed as logical for people living during the Colonial period?
- 3) In which ways did Europeans believe that climate, food, and the human body were connected?
- 4) Historian Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra claims that “European and indigenous bodies ... therefore began to be conceptualized as incommensurably different and fundamentally incomparable.” How does this idea contribute to the fact that Europeans viewed themselves as superior to indigenous individuals, and how did they use food to advance these beliefs?
- 5) Why did Europeans view American foods as inadequate?
- 6) Why were beards so important to Europeans and how did food impact the preservation of these beards?
- 7) How did food play a role in correcting imbalances in the human body?
- 8) How did Europeans use food to counteract the effects of living in a different climate?
- 9) How were race and the social hierarchy related to food consumption?
- 10) What was a “Christian diet” and what was its role? What foods were symbolic pieces of this diet?
- 11) How was the use of food necessary to achieve the European goals of colonization and religious conversion?

- 12) Why was maintaining Spanish complexion so important to Europeans? How did they use food to do this?
- 13) What New World foods did Europeans eventually incorporate into their diets? Why did they do this and how were they able to accept these foods?
- 14) Why did Europeans believe that they were incapable of incorporating certain foods into their diets because of the incompatibility of these foods with their cultural practices?
- 15) How did the debate concerning whether or not maize was bread relate to Indian “capacity to become Christians?”
- 16) How did the European goal of making Indians like Spaniards relate to European desires of profiting off of these people? Was this wrong of the Europeans or do you believe they actually tried to help the natives in some cases?