

## **The Value of the FOODS Field Trip for High School Students**

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Each year I take my Foods class on a field trip to Edmonton, a fun and interesting all day 'food foray.' We venture into unusual (for most of us) markets and have some interesting 'food experiences.'

Our tour starts with the 'Spice Center,' an East Indian market located on the south end of Edmonton. This is a delightful market which captures the essence of India in a market place. It has all the spices, foods and traditional cookware to create authentic Indian foods and provides a fascinating experience. The owner, Binde, takes us on a tour of his store and gives us some samples of East Indian candy, crackers, or whatever works for him each time. The atmosphere is further supported by the array of clothing, jewelry, religious materials, videos, and music CDs available. It is a sensory start to the day.

We follow our visit to the Indian market by eating at a lovely restaurant. 'India Grill' has been the choice several times. This is an authentic Indian restaurant also located in the south of the city. To see the chef making Indian naan bread on a tandoor oven is a great event! The meal is served as a smorgasbord with many vegetarian choices available. It is hot, spicy and authentic. A delicious dessert served in chilled metal dessert cups is the cooling end to a great meal.

Here is a sampling of student comments:

"The atmosphere was warm and friendly, it smelled appetizing, and I liked the music. The food was very good; I particularly liked the Naan bread and the pea curry."

"It was decorated with lots of Indian things. It was a very clean place and they served with older Indian style pitchers and silverware."

"They played nice instrumental Indian music in the background which brought a sense of India. The food was also great!"

"The atmosphere was very East Indian, it smelled like lots of different spices. It was very clean and authentic. It would be a great place to be a cook."

"It was good, but too spicy for my taste!"

"I thought it was a great atmosphere to eat at because it smelled like incense (I love incense) and it was really pretty inside (calming atmosphere). The food was ok, but kinda too spicy. The people who ran the place were very nice and polite."

"It had dim lights with quiet East Indian music; it smelled like spicy foods and was quite neat and clean. It was decorated nicely, kind of fancy and East Indian style."

“It was a very different experience.”

“The atmosphere was way different from the other places I go.”

After lunch, we proceed on to the Chinese section downtown. This presents a whole different array of foods. The selection of foods and style of display is ethnically influenced and provides another good ethnic food experience. While there, we visit Ying Fat Food Products which is a tofu factory near Chinatown. The owner, Mae, tours us through the facility and also gives us a sample of their tofu milk, deep fried tofu and other products. Students commented:

“It was really clean, but the tofu wasn’t that great.”

“They used 700 pounds of dry beans a day and they sell everything they make.”

Another food experience awaits us at Billing’s Gate Sea Food Market. We enjoy a display of Newfoundland products and are impressed with their adherence to quality and freshness. Among some of the more unusual products--the one and only Newfoundland Pineapple Crush! Other places we have visited include the Italian market, the Korean stores, a French restaurant, and a Thai restaurant! Exciting and ultimately, educating.

We conclude with a visit to ‘T N T’, the huge Chinese market in West Edmonton Mall. Here our tour ends with a sampling of Chinese New Year’s candy or Sushi, a tour of the fresh fish section and a look at some exotic and unusual fruit. The array of new foods and products is vast and would take a day to explore in itself!

My personal objectives for my Foods classes are to encourage students to be adventurous in their food experiences, to strive for excellence in the preparation of food, to understand the healthy options they can choose from for a lifetime of great eating, and to be hospitable all the time!

The Field trip serves as a useful ingredient in the attempt to educate students on the vast topic of Food.