

Global Flavors: Dream Itineraries & Bento Box Art

Lesson Overview

In this dual-subject lesson, students will combine geography and art by planning a three-day "dream vacation" to a country of their choice. They will then translate the culture, landmarks, and colors of that country into a visual masterpiece: a themed "Bento Box" (a traditional Japanese lunch box) using either real food or art supplies.

Learning Objectives

- **Geography:** Identify and research a specific country, its capital, major landmarks, and traditional foods.
- **Planning:** Create a logical three-day travel itinerary based on geographical locations.
- **Art & Design:** Apply principles of color, texture, and arrangement to create a representative 3D "Bento" model.

Materials Needed

- World map or Atlas (digital or paper)
- "Dream Trip" Planner (paper or digital document)
- A divided container (an actual bento box, a clean plastic food container with sections, or a shoebox lid with cardboard dividers)
- **Art Option:** Modeling clay, construction paper, felt, markers, and scissors.
- **Culinary Option:** Rice, colorful vegetables, fruits, seaweed (nori), and cookie cutters.

1. Introduction: The Magic Ticket (10 Minutes)

The Hook: Imagine you just won a "Magic Ticket." This ticket can take you anywhere in the world for 72 hours, and all your expenses are paid. The only catch? You have to plan exactly where you are going and bring back one "flavor" of the culture to share.

Discussion Questions:

- If you could fly anywhere right now, which continent would you head toward?
- What is the difference between a "tourist" and an "explorer"?
- Why do you think food is such a big part of a country's identity?

2. "I Do": Modeling the Itinerary (15 Minutes)

Teacher/Parent Modeling: Show the student how to research a destination. Use **Japan** as an example since it is the home of the Bento Box.

- **Step 1: Choose a Hub.** (Example: Tokyo).
- **Step 2: Find Landmarks.** (Example: Mount Fuji, The Shibuya Crossing, Tokyo Disneyland).
- **Step 3: Map it Out.** Explain that an itinerary needs a Day 1, Day 2, and Day 3. You can't be in two cities at once, so travel time matters!

Bento Concept: Explain that a Bento isn't just a lunch; it's an art form. It uses colors (Red, Green, Yellow, White, Black) and shapes to tell a story. A "Geography Bento" uses these items to represent the country (e.g., a round red strawberry for the Japanese flag).

3. "We Do": Brainstorming & Research (20 Minutes)

Guided Practice: Help the student select their dream country. Use an atlas or safe search engine to find the following:

1. What is the capital city?
2. What are three famous landmarks?
3. What colors are in the national flag?
4. What are three popular foods or ingredients grown there?

Example: If choosing Italy, they might list the Colosseum, the Leaning Tower of Pisa, the colors Red/White/Green, and tomatoes/pasta/basil.

4. "You Do": The Creation Phase (45-60 Minutes)

Task A: The Itinerary. The student writes or draws a 3-day plan.

- Day 1: Arrival and Capital City exploration.
- Day 2: Visit a famous natural or man-made landmark.
- Day 3: A cultural activity (a festival, a museum, or a food tour).

Task B: The Bento Box. Using their container, the student creates a visual representation of their trip.

- **Section 1 (The Flag):** Represent the flag colors using paper, clay, or food.
- **Section 2 (The Landmark):** Create a small 3D model of their favorite landmark from the itinerary.
- **Section 3 (The Landscape):** Use textures (green clay for hills, blue paper for water, or broccoli for trees) to show what the land looks like.
- **Section 4 (The Culture):** A small "souvenir" or symbol of the country (e.g., a tiny clay Eiffel Tower for France or a paper maple leaf for Canada).

5. Conclusion: Travel Showcase (10 Minutes)

The Presentation: The student acts as a "Travel Agent." They present their bento box and explain how each item in the box relates to their 3-day itinerary.

Recap:

- What was the most surprising thing you learned about your country?
- How did you use art to represent a big place like a country in a small box?

Success Criteria

Target	Requirement
Geography	Itinerary includes a specific country, capital, and 3 logical landmarks.
Art	Bento box uses at least 3 different colors and 3D elements to represent the country.
Communication	Student can explain the connection between their art and their research.

Adaptations & Extensions

- **For Advanced Learners:** Calculate the "Travel Budget." Research the cost of flights and a hotel in the chosen country's currency.
- **For Struggling Learners:** Provide a pre-divided bento template on paper to draw in before attempting the 3D model. Use a "Destination Choice Board" with 3 pre-selected countries.
- **Digital Variation:** If physical supplies aren't available, students can create a "Digital Bento" using a slide deck, where each "compartment" is a different slide with images and icons.