

Lesson 10

Our Ethnic Ties - A Nebraska Calendar of Cultural Events



OVERVIEW: The purpose of this lesson is to illuminate the historical and cultural ties, which influence the ethnic character of communities, and therefore the local economies, throughout the state.

ECONOMIC CONCEPTS: the students will learn about:

1. economic resources
2. local economy

OBJECTIVE: The students will be able to:

1. collect data on cities and towns that hold ethnic festivals.
2. discover the historical roots of these festivals and the impact on the local economy.
3. draw conclusions about the relationship between people in Nebraska and various ethnic or cultural groups throughout the world.

NEBRASKA STANDARDS:

8.3.5 and 12.4.17

MATERIALS:

1. Information on the state of Nebraska or your immediate community is available from the tourist office of the State Department of Commerce or local Chamber of Commerce.
2. Information on historical sites is available in travel guides and through local travel agencies, visitor centers, and local historical societies.
3. Nebraska Calendar of Cultural Events, Student Handout

PROCEDURE:

1. Have students or groups collect data on cities in Nebraska that celebrate festivals based on the ethnic origins of their citizens, past and present. Also have students describe the impact of these festivals on the local economy. For example, visitors may stay in the city therefore supporting the local food and lodging industries.

Sources to utilize include local Chambers of Commerce, visitor centers, libraries and local historical societies. Much is available on the Internet including <http://visitnebraska.org>. To save some search time, the teacher may gather the information, brochures, posters, etc., ahead of time.

2. Students can present their findings to the class. Suggestions include:
 - Make a bulletin board display on the "parts of the world" that can be visited without leaving Nebraska.
 - Make a poster or bulletin board depicting all of the local businesses impacted by these festivals.
 - Report or demonstrate to the class crafts, customs, or styles of architecture from other parts of the world that can be found in cities in Nebraska.
 - As a class project, prepare a travel guide on "How to See the World Without Leaving Nebraska". This could be as simple or complicated as the class time and interest allows. If possible, have the class visit one of the places in their travel guides.
 - Make a large map and indicate with appropriate pictures where the national or ethnic festivals are located in Nebraska. Students in small groups (two or three) could be responsible for one picture.
 - Present a report on some famous people from the groups identified that settled in Nebraska. Indicate the contributions these people have made.

3. Any of these activities could be followed with some of the following questions for class discussion.
 - Based on our information, from what parts of the world have people come to our state?
 - People from what countries tended to settle in which parts of our state?
 - What visible influences have these people had on the areas they settled?
 - What impact do these cultural events have on the local economy?

Nebraska Calendar of Cultural Events



MARCH

O'Neill: St. Patrick's' Day Celebration

(Includes a parade, art show, mulligan stew, Irish dancers, and a kid's carnival.)

Norfolk: Annual Irish Festival
(Great Irish food, music, and fun.)

Wisner: Gaelic Frolics (Irish celebration with ethnic food and music.)

MAY

Fairmont: Old Settler's Picnic
(Pancake feed, barbecue, mutton busters, games, and more.)

Lincoln: Czech Festival
(Annual festival with authentic Czech food, language interaction, music, youth activities, and more.)

Madison: Cinco de Mayo



JUNE

Aurora: A'Ror'N Days

(Annual celebration with parade, car show, horseshoes, dances, food, entertainment, quilt show, kite flying, and much more.)

Clarkson: Czech Festival

(Annual ethnic celebration with pageant, polka music, ethnic food, carnival, rodeo, and talent contest.)

Crawford: Intertribal Celebration

(Interpretive and intertribal dancing, 5K run, Native American art market, buffalo stew supper, and more.)

Dannebrog: Grundlovsfest

(Annual event with music and dance, Danish foods, games, muzzleloader's rendezvous, melodrama, parade, and much more.)

David City: Vaudeville Days

(Carnival, tent shows, dance, vaudeville dash, food court, car and motorcycle show.)

Hastings: South Central Nebraska Czech Festival

(Annual festival with entertainment, heritage display, bake sale, ethnic foods, jamboree, and coronation dance.)

Holdrege: Swedish

Days/Midsommarfest

(Ethnic festival, music, food and parade.)

Nebraska Calendar of Cultural Events (Continued)

Loup City: Polish Days
(Ethnic festival with parade, dance, traditional cuisine, beauty pageant, games, golf cart race, quilt show, and carnival.)

McCook: Buffalo Commons
Storytelling Festival
(Storytelling performances, workshops, cowboy poets, ghost stories.)

North Platte: Mexican Fiesta
(Entertainment, games, ethnic food, dances, coronation, crafts, and dancers.)

Stromsburg: Swedish Festival
(Authentic Swedish smorgasbord, entertainment, arts and crafts, kiddie parade, games, parade, pop-can race.)

Verdigre: Annual Kolach Days
(Festival includes, bull-a-rama, turtle race, carnival, open air dance, queen's ball, polka mass, ethnic food, and more.)

JULY

Grand Island: Central Nebraska
Ethnic Festival
(Annual festival evolving around the saengerfest of the German Heritage.)

Henderson: Community Days
(Show and Shine car show, basketball tournament, craft show, parade, community theater production, ethnic foods, carnival and more.)

Wauneta: Harvest Festival
(Parade, barbecue, dance, games and activities.)

AUGUST

Bridgeport: Greek Festival

Genoa: Genoa Indian School
Celebration
(Share Indian School history with ethnic speakers and food, historical tours and Native American crafts.)

Newman Grove: Norwegian Days

Omaha: Greatest Ethnic Festival in
Town
(Croatian heritage, diverse ethnic groups, features food and game vendors and live music all day.)

Trenton: Massacre Canyon Pow Wow
(Commemorates a historic event that occurred between the Pawnee and Sioux Nations. Speakers, dancing, tours, special events, barbecue and more.)

Wilber: Wilber Czech Festival
(Annual festival with food, music, dancing, art show, queen pageant, carnival, and more.)



Nebraska Calendar of Cultural Events (Continued)

SEPTEMBER

Fairbury: *Germanfest*
(Annual festival with polka dance, parade, craft and art fair, quilt show, 10k/2 mile run, ethnic food, softball and more.)

Grant: *Savory Samples*
(A sampling of ethnic foods.)

Hemingford: *Czech Days*
(Ethnic food at noon, polka dance.)

Omaha: *German Day Festival*
(Entertainment, German bands, folk dancers, singers, ethnic food.)

Syracuse: *Germanfest*
(Annual ethnic festival with music, dancing, food, crafts, and games.)

OCTOBER

Norfolk: *Oktoberfest*
(German food and wine feast, entertainment.)

Omaha: *Oktoberfest*
(Entertainment, German bands, folk dancers, singers, and ethnic food.)

Sidney: *Oktoberfest*
(Parade, high school band competition, ethnic food, continuous entertainment, craft show, farmers market, games, 10k run, exhibits and dances.)

Valentine: *Old West Days*
(Cowboy poet gathering, bit and spur show, melodrama, trail ride, mountain man rendezvous, quilt show, parade, music jamboree, and Native American wacipi.)

NOVEMBER

Newman Grove: *Norwegian Days*
(Various family events, ethnic foods, parade and community services.)

Syracuse: *Tannenbaum*
(Lighting of the tree, singing, soup supper, trolley tour of homes, refreshments.)

DECEMBER

Blair: *Sights & Sounds of Christmas*
(Annual day-long celebration with band and chorale concerts, arts and crafts, live theater, storytellers, folk dancing and Scandinavian smorgasbord.)

Dannebrog: *Old-Fashioned Danish Christmas* (Annual celebration featuring Old Father Christmas, tree fantasy, Danish foods, living nativity scene, Christmas drama, song and dance.)

Nebraska City: *Santa Parade*
(Costumed characters, carolers, and musicians welcome Santa to town.)

Oakland: *Christmas Festival*
(Annual festival featuring ethnic charm.)

Tekamah: *Christmas Swedish*
(Refreshments)



Source: <http://visitnebraska.org>

