Minnesota’s Edible State Symbols

Pre-reading

Questions:
- What are some state symbols of Minnesota?
- Which state symbols can you eat?

Definitions:
- Edible – able to be eaten as food
- Bill – a proposed law that has not yet been voted on
- Propose – to present or suggest as an idea

Reading

State Drink

Milk is Minnesota’s state drink. There are more dairy cows than lakes in the state. There is one cow for every nine people. Minnesota’s 545,000 cows produce a lot of milk! The state ranks fifth in dairy production in the United States. The state drink is used to make many dairy products. More than 80 percent of the state’s milk is used to make butter, cheese, ice cream, and yogurt.

State Muffin

Thanks to a class of Minnesota third-graders, the state muffin is the blueberry muffin. These children were studying how a bill becomes a law. They wrote a bill proposing the blueberry muffin be the official state muffin. Since Minnesota had a state drink, why not a state food? Blueberries are found in many wooded areas of northern Minnesota. They are a favorite fruit of many people. Wheat is used to make muffins. Farmers across the state grow wheat. The blueberry muffin seemed like a great addition to the list of Minnesota’s state symbols. The state’s government leaders agreed. In 1988, the school children’s bill was signed into law.

State Fish

The walleye is the “Land of 10,000 Lakes” state fish. More than one million fishermen and women try to catch this tasty fish every year. Walleye live in waters in all parts of the state. But, most live in the large, cool lakes of northern Minnesota. Their eyes are sensitive to light. They go to deep waters during the day and move to shallow areas at night. Minnesota’s record walleye was caught in the Sea Gull River in 1979. It weighed 17 pounds 8 ounces.

State Grain

Wild rice became Minnesota’s official state grain in 1977. For hundreds of years wild rice has been a staple for the Indians of northern Minnesota. It is an important crop and food for the Native American people. Wild rice grows naturally in the shallow waters of lakes in the northern half of the state. It is harvested from lakes in the traditional Indian way. Sticks are used to bend the wild rice grass into a canoe. The stalks are then gently hit to knock the grains loose into the canoe. For many years, all the wild rice produced in the world came from Minnesota. Minnesota is still the nation’s top producer of natural wild rice.

* Wild rice grain photo courtesy of Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station
Understanding

1. What does the word **produce** mean in the reading? __________________________________________

2. Why did the third grade students think the blueberry muffin would be a good choice for the state muffin? __________________________________________

3. What is another name for the state of Minnesota? __________________________________________

4. What does the word **sensitive** mean? __________________________________________

5. How many states in the U.S. make more milk than Minnesota? ______________________________

6. What does the word **staple** mean in this reading? __________________________________________

7. What other foods are made by Minnesota milk? __________________________________________

Writing

Option A: What state symbols surprised you? Why?

Option B: What state symbols would you change or add?