

# The Legend of the Three Sisters



## **Target Season:**

## **Learning Objectives**

After completing this lesson, students will be able to:

- Gain exposure to new vegetables and herbs through taste testing
- Evoke creative expression in relation to healthy food items
- Describe the concept of interdependence and relate it to corn, bean and squash
- Recognize the names of nutrients contained in corn, bean and squash

## **Attachments**

- Legend of the Three Sisters and Discussion Points
- Corn Salsa Recipe Card
- “Three Sisters’ Roles” Worksheet
- “Nutrients in the Three Sisters” Word Search
- Nutrients in the Three Sisters Reference

## **Steps**

1. This lesson involves preparation of fresh salsa. Before beginning, gather any items from the garden that you wish to incorporate into the salsa (see the recipe on page 3 for reference).
2. Read the Legend of the Three Sisters aloud to students. Engage in the discussion points.
3. Inform students that we will now prepare a corn salsa recipe. Prepare the salsa as a cooking demonstration, indicating each step aloud as it is completed.
4. Invite students to line up and receive a sample of the corn salsa with chips.
5. While students are enjoying their salsa, invite them to complete:
  1. The “Three Sisters’ Roles” worksheet
  2. The “Nutrients in the Three Sisters” word search. Students are intended only to gain exposure to these words as a result of this lesson. The list of nutrients contained in each food item is detailed on page 6 for reference.
6. Optional – print and laminate the recipe cards so that students have a delicious recipe to take home and share with the whole family!
7. Collect all completed work sheets at the end of the lesson.

## **Adapted from:**

<https://foodcorps.org/cms/assets/uploads/2018/07/Grade-3-Planting-the-Three-Sisters.pdf>

<https://slowfoodusa.org/the-three-sisters-legends-and-facts/>

## The Legend of the Three Sisters

Native Americans tell a story of three sisters who love and support each other. There is the oldest sister, Corn, who grows very tall and lends support to her younger sister, Bean, who wraps herself around her older sister. Without Corn, Bean wouldn't have a place to climb and reach closer to the Sun. Bean helps her sisters by feeding food to the soil through her roots. Then there's the youngest sister, Squash, who's happy to stay close to the ground where she can fan her wide leaves out and bathe in sunlight from down there. She helps her sisters by shading the ground, keeping the earth moist with water, and preventing other weed plants from growing.



*The legend goes...*

A long time ago there were three sisters who lived together in a field. These sisters were quite different from one another in their size and way of dressing. The little sister [squash] was so young that she could only crawl at first, and she was dressed in green. The second sister [beans] wore a bright yellow dress, and she had a way of running off by herself when the sun shone and the soft wind blew in her face. The third [corn] was the eldest sister, standing always very straight and tall above the other sisters and trying to protect them. She wore a pale green shawl, and she had long, yellow hair that tossed about her head in the breeze.

There was one way the sisters were all alike, though. They loved each other dearly, and they always stayed together. This made them very strong. One day a stranger came to the field of the Three Sisters—a Mohawk boy. He talked to the birds and other animals—this caught the attention of the three sisters. Late that summer, the youngest and smallest sister disappeared. Her sisters were sad. Again, the Mohawk boy came to the field to gather reeds at the water's edge. The two sisters who were left watched his moccasin trail, and that night the second sister—the one in the yellow dress—disappeared as well. Now the Elder Sister was the only one left. She continued to stand tall in her field. When the Mohawk boy saw that she missed her sisters, he brought them all back together and they became stronger together, again.”

### **Discussion Points:**

- Why do you think the three crops of food that Native Americans grow are called sisters?
- When you have a relationship with someone or something where you each depend on one another, that's called interdependence. Think of someone you rely on.
  - Who would like to share an example of how you depend on them?
  - How do they depend on you?



# Corn Salsa

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Servings: 4

From Mrs. Smollar & the Joseph P Cory Foundation

Prep Time: 20 min.    Total Time: 2 hours\*, 20 minutes

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## Ingredients:

- 1 ear of corn, kernels removed. You can use frozen corn.
- 1/2 red bell pepper, diced small
- 1/2 green bell pepper, diced small
- 1/2 red onion, diced small
- Juice of 2-3 limes and zest of 1 lime
- Juice and zest of 1 navel or any orange
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1/4 cup fresh cilantro, minced
- 1 clove of garlic, grated
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 jalapeno pepper, minced. Use seeds if you want more heat, remove seeds for less heat.

## Preparation:

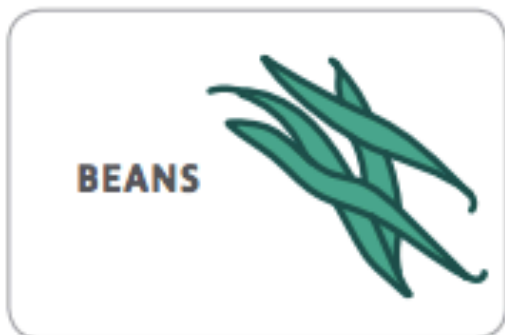
1. Combine all the ingredients together in a bowl and mix thoroughly.
2. Cover and refrigerate for at least \*two hours.
3. For healthy options, serve with blue corn chips, romaine lettuce leaves, or on a veggie burger.

*Enjoy!*



# The Three Sisters' Roles Worksheet

**Directions:** Match each plant with what it provides to its plant sisters.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Nutrients in the Three Sisters

G	U	P	P	R	P	A	U	H	C	V	F	I	R	O	N	Z	T
Z	D	X	O	E	P	R	I	P	X	Z	I	W	K	P	V	T	T
K	T	K	V	T	M	O	O	U	Z	R	B	B	T	H	I	Q	E
Y	B	M	I	F	A	H	Z	T	Z	Y	E	C	H	O	T	L	O
X	O	G	T	O	R	S	Q	C	E	J	R	O	I	S	A	D	F
U	O	U	A	L	I	T	S	E	K	I	N	P	A	P	M	K	P
X	C	A	M	A	V	R	V	I	J	N	N	P	M	H	I	D	Q
D	K	Q	I	T	L	X	V	V	U	P	J	E	I	O	N	R	T
M	A	G	N	E	S	I	U	M	W	M	R	R	N	R	C	N	H
T	C	I	A	Z	S	G	Q	Z	Z	Y	D	W	E	U	P	K	O
E	A	S	L	C	F	K	S	I	A	K	C	H	G	S	Q	F	R
J	E	W	L	K	M	T	O	D	Z	I	N	C	R	Q	W	D	M

Find the following words in the puzzle.

Words are hidden → ↓ and ↘ .

COPPER

FIBER

FOLATE

IRON

MAGNESIUM

PHOSPHORUS

POTASSIUM

PROTEIN

THIAMINE

VITAMINA

VITAMINC

ZINC

## **Nutrients Contained in the Three Sisters Include:**

### **Corn**

- Fiber
- Folate
- Thiamine
- Phosphorus
- Vitamin C
- Magnesium

### **Beans**

- Protein
- Copper
- Folate
- Iron
- Magnesium
- Manganese
- Phosphorus
- Potassium
- Zinc

### **Squash**

- Vitamin A
- Vitamin C
- Potassium