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Sweet Celebrations

Around the world, holidays are commemorated with indulgences and sweets. Carve out time with family this season to make a classic Brazilian holiday dessert.



Geography: Look at a world map and locate South America. Notice the enormous size of Brazil, the continent's largest country and the fifth largest in the world. Brazil is the home to the Amazon River, which contains more water than any other on earth.



Social Studies & History: Discuss the language of Brazil. The most popular language in South America is Spanish. However, Portugal colonized Brazil in the 1500s; therefore, Portuguese is the national language.



Music & Art: Listen and dance to samba music, such as the classic album Getz/Gilberto. Create a mask like those worn during Carnival. (See how to make one at www.kiwimagonline.com.) Also, Capoeira, a type of dance that combines martial arts, gymnastics and game elements, is a popular and mesmerizing activity to watch or play. Grab a flexible partner and practice by doing cartwheels, turns and jumps, the basic moves of the dance.



Math: Just like the U.S., Brazil is divided into states. Count how many it contains.



Food: Explain that since Brazil is such a vast country, the cuisine is defined by each region and takes on many fashions and flavors. Constants throughout the country include rice and beans, tropical fruits (such as guava, papaya, pineapple and passion fruit), beef, seafood, root vegetables (such as yam and yuca), corn, coffee, cacao, sugarcane and nuts.



RABANADAS

In Brazil this sweet dish is customarily prepared for dessert on Christmas Eve. Leftovers are served for breakfast the next morning. Since rabanadas are typically prepared as a means of using stale bread, there's no need to relegate this dish to Christmas—it's delicious all year round.

1 cup	milk	3	eggs	½ tsp.	ground cinnamon (to taste)
1 Tbsp.	sugar	½ cup	vegetable oil		
½ baguette of French bread,	sliced into 2-inch thick pieces	¼ cup	confectioners' sugar (to taste)		

Child: Measure the milk and sugar. Mix together in a medium bowl. Set aside.

Child & Parent: Beat the eggs in another medium bowl. Set aside. Wash hands every time you handle eggs.

Child: Measure the confectioners' sugar and cinnamon. Mix together in a third medium bowl. Set aside.

Child: Dip each slice of bread into milk mixture, soaking each side completely.

Child & Parent: Use a spatula or tongs to dip both sides of the soaked bread into the eggs.

PARENT: In a large frying pan, heat oil on a medium-high setting. Fry the bread until browned on each side.

Child & Parent: Once bread is fried, use a fork or clean tongs to dip each piece in the bowl of confectioners' sugar and cinnamon to coat. Serve.

SERVES 4 *Per serving: calories 384, fat 33g, protein 7g, carbohydrates 16g, trace dietary fiber*

Cricket Azima is a chef and children's cooking expert. She is the founder of The Creative Kitchen based in New York City, and author of the children's cookbook Everybody Eats Lunch.