

Farming in Fingal, A Proud Tradition



Exploring food production past and present
(Fifth and Sixth class)



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Fingal's food heritage

Welcome to Blas, Fingal's Food Heritage project! In Fingal we have strong traditions of horticultural, farming and fishing. Our food heritage encompasses everything from grandparent's recipes, cooking and utensils, traditional ways of farming and fishing, to folklore, the famine, and fieldnames.



Newbridge House Kitchen

What is Blas?

BLAS explores, records and shares traditions, attitudes, beliefs, and practices that surround how we produce and consume food and introduces different food traditions to new audiences.

What is Fingal's food heritage digital story map?

As part of the project, we've created a [website](#) and [digital story map](#) celebrating food heritage in Fingal, which is part of our social history. The story map features food memories gathered from the community in Fingal, old photos, and recipes.

How can schools take part in the Blas project?

- Pupils are asked to write a diary entry as a Fingal farmer.
- We ask teachers to submit either a class entry or choose three individual diary entries to represent the class.
- A selection of submissions will be represented on the Blas website.

Win a school tour to Newbridge House and Farm!

All classes that submit their work will be entered into a prize draw for a class tour of **Newbridge House and Farm**.

Teacher's Guide

Lesson Overview

Classes	Subject	Strand	Strand Unit	Curricular Links	Cross-curricular Links
Fifth and Sixth Class	History	Local studies	My locality through the ages	<p>The child will be enabled to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> study a period/ periods in the history of the local village, town, city area townland 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Geography English Digital Literacy
		Story	Stories from the lives of people in the past	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> listen to local people telling stories about their past examine and begin to make deductions from some simple relevant evidence 	
		Life, society, work and culture in the past	Life in Ireland in the 19 th and early 20 th century	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> become familiar with aspects of the lives of these people – food and farming examine and become familiar with evidence from the periods studied, especially evidence which may be found locally 	

Lesson: 'Fingal Farming – a Proud Tradition' (Fingal Food Production in the Past and Present)

Resources: Whiteboard, Activity Sheet: 'Diary of a Fingal Farmer' (Page 6 of this lesson plan), Photograph of Fruit Picking c.1940, Lambs Fruit Farm (Page 7 of this lesson plan), 'The Big House' video, and the audio recording 'Picking sprouts, topping and binding carrots, Rush 1940s-60s' (Mary Leonard Lowndes, Swords. From Maurice O'Keeffe, Irish Life & Lore recordings, Fingal Series 1) available on Blas website [here](#).

Learning outcomes:

Pupils will be enabled to:

- Locate the area of Fingal and Newbridge House and Farm, on a map
- Identify some towns in Fingal
- Identify similarities and differences between food production (harvesting, storage and sustainability) in the past and nowadays
- Compare their lives with those of people in the past
- Examine simple historical evidence
- Write about the life of a Fingal farmer in the past

Introduction

Find the Food

1. Ask pupils as a class/in groups, to use Google Maps to locate the Fingal area of Dublin. Ask them to find and list six Fingal towns.
2. Next ask pupils to locate Newbridge House and Farm.
3. Then show pupils this video extract [here](#) 'The Big House' from the Blas website about food in the past at Newbridge House, Donabate, Co Dublin.
4. In this video, curator Cathal Dowd-Smith talks about Newbridge House in the past and where the staff sourced their food. Ask pupils to use Google Maps as a reference to make their own simple map, plotting where the food came from.
(*Dublin - groceries like lemons and oranges; Swords bakery - bread; Howth and Skerries -fish*).

Development

Then and Now

Historical Sources



Fruit picking c.1940 Lambs Fruit Farm, Courtesy of the Donabate Historical Society Museum

1. Show the pupils the image 'Fruit Picking' (You can find a copy of the picture on page 7 of this lesson or on the Blas website [here](#)).

2. Then play the audio recording “Picking sprouts, topping and binding carrots, Rush 1940s–60s” (Mary Leonard Loundes, Swords. From Maurice O’Keeffe, Irish Life & Lore recordings, Fingal Series 1) available [here](#).
3. Ask pupils in groups, to create a ‘Fingal Food Production in the Past’ mind map, showing what they have learned from both historical sources about food in the past.
4. Then invite groups to share their mind maps with the class. (Pupils can draw their mind maps or they can create digital mind maps using online mind map generators e.g. Popplet).

Encourage pupils to think about some of the following:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tools used • Technology • Machines • Markets/shops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food packaging • Storage • Types of food available • Transport of food
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5. Ask pupils, in their groups, and drawing on the video extract, image and audio source, to compare and contrast how food production is different today than in the past. Ask them to create a mind map for ‘Fingal Food Production Today’.
 - Consider what has changed and what has stayed the same?
 - What sustainable practices are used in farming now?
 (Pupils could use online tools such as Kiddle to investigate or see short videos of farmers in Fingal today at Local Growers – Life is Better with Fruit & Vegetables (fruitnveg.ie)).

Some ideas for discussion:

- In the past, most food was grown in the spring and ready for harvest in the autumn.
- Nowadays food can be grown at other times of the year using polytunnels, glasshouses and modern technology to keep the temperature and conditions right for growing.
- In the past people had to harvest food when it was ripe and ready.
- Nowadays we have fridges and freezers to preserve and store food for longer. We can get a lot of fruit and vegetables throughout the year.
- In the past some food like gourds (e.g. pumpkins) were good to store with their hard skin but other foods could be more difficult to store and could rot easily. People sometimes used a ‘pickling technique’ to preserve vegetables, for example, putting vegetables into brine.
- In the past, most people ate what they grew themselves, or they bought local food at the local market. For most people, their food didn’t travel very far. It couldn’t be frozen or refrigerated so it was sourced locally.
- However, nowadays we can buy food at supermarkets and even online. Some of this food has travelled from faraway places – bananas, avocados, limes, passionfruit. (Teacher note- you can ask pupils to find where these and other vegetables have come from i.e. Food Miles).
- In the past, there was not a lot of packaging on food, as people got small amounts of food, as they needed it, at their local market or shop. This helped to avoid having to store a lot of the food.
- Nowadays, because we can transport food further, and store and keep it for much longer, there is much more packaging created, which is harmful for the environment.
- There is also a lot more food waste today.

Conclusion

Fingal Farmer - A day in the life

Ask pupils to write a diary entry as a Fingal farmer in the past. Encourage pupils to think about some of the following:

- Tools
- Technology
- Organic farming
- Packaging
- Farm buildings
- Markets/supermarkets produce is sold to
- Sustainability
- Transport of food

Competition – Submit either a class entry or choose three individual diary entries to represent the class. Submit a scan or clear photo with your class and school's details to Blas foodheritage@fingal.ie



Fruit picking c.1940 Lambs Fruit Farm, Courtesy of the Donabate Historical Society Museum at Newbridge House, Donabate