

## **Lesson Plan #1 - Houston Harvest: Global Flavors, Local Roots — Sustainable Culinary Tourism Project**

**By:** Rachel Baxter

### **Purpose:**

Students will explore how culinary and agricultural tourism intersect through sustainable practices. Using Houston, Texas as a case study, students will design and evaluate a 3-day food- and farm-focused tourism itinerary that integrates hospitality, sustainability, and local culture.

This lesson connects classroom learning about agritourism, sustainability, and marketing to real-world applications in culinary and hospitality management.

### **Background Agricultural Connections:**

Agritourism and culinary tourism connect consumers directly to agricultural production, showcasing local farms, sustainable sourcing, and regional cuisine.

Houston, known as “*The Bayou City*,” represents how agriculture, food systems, and hospitality industries can collaborate to promote both **economic growth** and **environmental responsibility**.

Students will examine how farm-to-table restaurants, urban farms like **Plant It Forward**, and local food entrepreneurs strengthen community identity while supporting local growers and reducing food miles.

### **Grade Levels:**

11th–12th Grade (Culinary II or Hospitality & Tourism)

### **Lesson Length:**

2–3 Class Periods (45 minutes each)

- Day 1: Tourism overview and itinerary planning
- Day 2: Marketing design and sustainability review
- Day 3 (optional): Gallery walk and peer feedback

## Learning Objectives:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Define and explain **culinary and agricultural tourism** concepts.
2. Identify sustainable tourism practices within the hospitality industry.
3. Design a **3-day sustainable culinary itinerary** featuring regional agriculture, hospitality, and local dining.
4. Create a short **marketing or promotional flyer** for their itinerary using digital tools.
5. Evaluate how sustainability, culture, and customer experience influence tourism success.

## Materials and Equipment Needed:

- Student Chromebooks or devices with internet access
- Google Docs/Slides templates for itinerary and promotional flyer
- Copies of *Houston Harvest: Global Flavors, Local Roots* model itinerary (with URLs visible)
- Colored pencils or markers (for printed promotional designs)

- Optional: printed maps of Houston, bayou system, and restaurant/farm locations

### **Teacher Preparation:**

1. Review the **Houston Harvest** sample itinerary and ensure all links function.
2. Prepare a short slide deck introducing agritourism, culinary tourism, and sustainable travel.
3. Set up a shared Google Classroom folder with student templates:
  - “3-Day Sustainable Itinerary Template”
  - “Tourism Marketing Flyer Template”
4. Print rubric for project grading (Creativity, Sustainability, Organization, Accuracy).
5. (Optional) Queue short video clips from Urban Harvest, Plant It Forward, or Visit Houston’s culinary tourism campaign.

### **Activities and Procedures:**

#### **Day 1 – Introduction & Itinerary Design**

1. **Bellringer:** “If you could design a food-based field trip anywhere in the U.S., where would you go and why?” (5 min)

2. **Mini-Lesson:** Discuss how culinary and agricultural tourism connect to hospitality. Highlight Houston as a model (10 min).
3. **Activity:** Students review the *Houston Harvest* itinerary and highlight examples of sustainable practices (10 min).
4. **Group Work:** Students select a U.S. destination of their choice and begin drafting their own 3-day itinerary including farm visits, culinary experiences, and sustainability components (20 min).

## Day 2 – Marketing and Storytelling

1. **Warm-up:** “What makes you choose a trip or restaurant from an ad or flyer?” (5 min).
2. **Mini-Lesson:** Introduce promotional design and digital storytelling (QR codes, social media posts).
3. **Activity:** Students design a digital or printed promotional flyer for their itinerary (25–30 min).
4. **Teacher Circulation:** Provide formative feedback on clarity, creativity, and sustainability connections.

## Day 3 – Gallery Walk & Reflection (Optional)

1. Students display itineraries and flyers around the classroom.

2. Peer groups rotate, offering feedback using sticky notes (“Strongest idea,” “Could improve,” “Most creative”).
  
3. Class debrief: “What makes sustainable tourism appealing?”

**References/Resources:**

- Vakil, M. K. (2022). *Agritourism: A new trend in modern agriculture*. LinkedIn. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/agritourism-new-trend-modern-agriculture-mohd-kamil-vakil>

[Links to an external site.](#)

- *Houston Harvest: Global Flavors, Local Roots* (teacher-developed case study)
  
- *Urban Harvest Farmers Market* – <https://www.urbanharvest.org/farmers-market>
  
- *Plant It Forward Farms* – <https://plantitforward.farm/>
  
- *Visit Houston Culinary Trails* – <https://www.visithoustontexas.com/things-to-do/eat/>
  
- *Hospitality Insights: The Future of the Food Industry* – <https://hospitalityinsights.ehl.edu/hospitality-trends-future-food-industry>

[Links to an external site.](#)

**Grading of Lesson Plan Activity:**

Criteria	Points	Description
----------	--------	-------------

<b>Purpose, Background Agricultural Connections, and Learning Objectives</b>	10	Clear, relevant, and standards-aligned with practical classroom connections.
<b>Materials, Equipment, and Teacher Preparation</b>	5	Well organized, feasible for classroom and student access.
<b>Activities and Procedures</b>	20	Logical sequence, engaging and inquiry-based, integrates sustainability and hospitality.
<b>Total</b>	<b>35 Points Possible</b>	

## **Lesson Plan #2 – Bienville Bites: Sustainable Dining & Local Agriculture**

### **Name of Activity:**

### **Bienville Bites: Exploring Sustainable Dining and Local Food Systems**

#### **Purpose:**

Students will connect sustainable dining concepts to local agriculture by experiencing Mobile’s restaurant scene through a guided **Bienville Bites Food Tour**. They will analyze how local chefs integrate regional ingredients, reduce waste, and support Alabama farms. This lesson links the culinary, agricultural, and hospitality sectors, allowing students to see sustainability in practice through farm-to-fork operations.

#### **Background Agricultural Connections:**

Every menu item begins with agriculture. The Bienville Bites experience showcases how **farmers, fishers, and chefs** form a local food network that strengthens the Gulf Coast economy. Participating restaurants often use Alabama-grown produce, Gulf seafood, and locally milled grains. Through this activity, students will observe how hospitality professionals communicate agricultural values to guests — from menu design to customer interaction.

#### **Grade Levels:**

Grades **11–12** (Culinary I, Culinary II, Hospitality & Tourism)

#### **Lesson Length:**

**2 days (45–60 minutes each + field trip duration)**

- **Day 1:** Pre-tour preparation & sustainability discussion
  
- **Day 2:** Bienville Bites Tour & reflection

**Learning Objectives:**

1. Identify how restaurants source local ingredients and promote sustainability.
  
2. Describe how hospitality workers represent agricultural producers through menu storytelling.
  
3. Evaluate sustainable dining practices observed during the food tour.
  
4. Create a reflection comparing farm-to-table principles with classroom culinary practices.

**Materials and Equipment Needed:**

- Permission slips and transportation arrangements for field trip
  
- Student reflection worksheet or Google Form
  
- Notebooks or mobile devices for note-taking

- Sample menus from participating restaurants (provided by Bienville Bites)
- Camera/phone for photo documentation (optional)

### **Teacher Preparation:**

1. Coordinate tour with **Bienville Bites Food Tour** (<https://www.bienvillebitesfoodtour.com/>).
2. Review participating restaurant list and confirm dietary accommodations.
3. Prepare a short pre-lesson introducing **farm-to-fork supply chains** and **sustainable menu development**.
4. Print reflection worksheets and rubrics.

### **Activities and Procedures:**

#### **Day 1 – Pre-Tour Discussion**

1. **Bellringer:** “How can a restaurant tell the story of a farm on its menu?”
2. Present short slideshow: *From Farm to Fork – Alabama’s Local Food Network*.
3. In groups, students brainstorm what to look for on the tour: local sourcing, composting, waste management, customer engagement.

4. Review tour etiquette and safety expectations.

## **Day 2 – Field Experience**

1. Attend **Bienville Bites Food Tour** (3–4 restaurants).
2. Students complete reflection sheets: identify one sustainable practice per stop.
3. Post-trip class debrief: “What did you taste, learn, and notice about how agriculture connects to hospitality?”
4. Exit ticket: one paragraph on the most creative sustainability idea observed.

## **References/Resources:**

- Bienville Bites Food Tour – <https://www.bienvillebitesfoodtour.com/>
- Alabama Sustainable Agriculture Network – <https://asanonline.org/>
- “Farm-to-Table Dining in Alabama.” *Alabama Farmers Federation*.
- *Hospitality Insights (EHL): Future of the Food Industry* – <https://hospitalityinsights.ehl.edu/hospitality-trends-future-food-industry>

[Links to an external site.](#)

## **Grading of Lesson Plan Activity:**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Description</b>
Purpose, Background Agricultural Connections, Learning Objectives	10	Clear connection between agriculture and culinary sustainability.
Materials & Preparation	10	Well organized and realistic for a field-based lesson.
Activities & Procedures	10	Engaging, experiential, and reflection-driven.
<b>Total</b>	<b>30 pts possible</b>	

### **Lesson Plan #3 – Hope Farms: Farm-to-Fork Field Experience**

#### **Name of Activity:**

#### **Hope Farms: Understanding Urban Agriculture and Food Sustainability**

#### **Purpose:**

Students will explore **urban agriculture** and its role in the culinary and hospitality industries through a field visit to **Hope Farms**. They will observe sustainable farming techniques, participate in a guided tour, and enjoy a locally prepared lunch featuring farm produce. The activity reinforces how chefs and farmers collaborate to support healthy, local food systems.

#### **Background Agricultural Connections:**

Hope Farms demonstrates how agriculture thrives even within city limits. It uses organic growing practices, composting, pollinator habitats, and farm-to-school programs to promote food equity. Culinary students will see firsthand how local ingredients move from field to kitchen and how agriculture supports tourism through education and community engagement.

#### **Grade Levels:**

Grades **11–12** (Culinary I, Culinary II, Hospitality & Tourism)

#### **Lesson Length:**

**1 full class day (on-site field trip, ~3 hours)**

#### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Identify sustainable farming methods used in urban agriculture.
2. Describe how local farms connect with restaurants, schools, and hospitality operations.
3. Analyze how agricultural literacy benefits culinary professionals and guests.
4. Reflect on personal responsibility toward sustainability in the food industry.

**Materials and Equipment Needed:**

- Permission slips and transportation arrangements
- Hope Farms tour materials (contact: Recipe for Success Foundation – <https://recipe4success.org/hope-farms.html>)
- Student field journals or digital reflection form
- Water bottles, sun protection, closed-toe shoes

**Teacher Preparation:**

1. Contact Hope Farms and confirm group visit date/time.

2. Review the farm's mission and sustainable agriculture practices.
3. Prepare guiding questions for the tour: "How is water conserved?", "How do they handle food waste?", "What happens to produce that isn't sold?"
4. Print rubrics and reflection forms.

### **Activities and Procedures:**

#### **Pre-Visit (15 min)**

- Quick discussion: "What do you expect an urban farm to look like?"
- Review safety guidelines and purpose of the visit.

#### **Field Experience (2 hours)**

1. Guided tour of Hope Farms facilities (greenhouse, compost area, pollinator garden).
2. Student Q&A with staff on how agriculture connects to local restaurants and farmers markets.
3. Lunch featuring produce from Hope Farms (students identify farm-to-plate items).

#### **Post-Visit Reflection (30 min)**

- Students write a brief reflection:  
"How does visiting a working farm change the way you think about food and

sustainability?”

- Group share-out to connect observations with culinary classroom learning.

### References/Resources:

- Hope Farms – <https://recipe4success.org/hope-farms.html>
- USDA Urban Agriculture Toolkit – <https://www.usda.gov/urban>
- Alabama Ag in the Classroom resources – <https://alabamaaitc.org/>
- Vakil, M. K. (2022). *Agritourism: A New Trend in Modern Agriculture*. LinkedIn. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/agritourism-new-trend-modern-agriculture-mohd-kamil-vakil>

[Links to an external site.](#)

### Grading of Lesson Plan Activity:

Criteria	Points	Description
Purpose, Background Agricultural Connections, Learning Objectives	10	Ties classroom learning to agricultural systems.
Materials & Preparation	10	Thorough and achievable for school field setting.
Activities & Procedures	10	Clear, experiential, reflective.
<b>Total</b>	<b>30 pts possible</b>	

### Unit Summary

These three lessons — *Bienville Bites*, *Houston Harvest*, and *Hope Farms* — create a capstone sequence integrating **agriculture, culinary arts, and hospitality** through experiential learning. Students progress from observing sustainable practices locally, to analyzing them in a national model (Houston), to applying their knowledge through direct engagement at an operating urban farm.