

# Lesson Plan: Exploring Agricultural, Culinary, and Rural Tourism

**By:** Lana Bowen

**Subject Area:** Agricultural Education / Family & Consumer Sciences / Career Exploration

**Grade Level:** Middle School (6–8)

**Lesson Length:** 1–2 class periods (45–90 minutes total)

**Theme:** “Discovering the Connection Between Food, Farms, and Rural Life”

## Purpose:

This lesson introduces students to the connections between agriculture, food culture, and rural life. Students will learn how these three areas combine to create tourism experiences that support local communities, protect cultural traditions, and promote sustainable living. The purpose is to help students appreciate how farms, food, and rural culture create opportunities for business, travel, and education.

## Background Agricultural Connections:

Agriculture connects deeply to travel, food, and culture through agritourism, culinary tourism, and rural tourism. Agritourism invites visitors to farms and ranches to learn about or participate in agricultural life. Culinary tourism celebrates local foods, cooking traditions, and farm-to-table experiences. Rural tourism highlights small-town heritage, crafts, and outdoor recreation. Together, these industries strengthen rural economies, support farmers, and preserve cultural and agricultural heritage for future generations.

This lesson helps students understand that farms are not only places for producing food but also serve as destinations for education, recreation, and tourism. Students will explore how agricultural products—such as honey, dairy, herbs, or produce—connect to food culture and local tourism experiences.

## Learning Objectives

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

1. Define **agricultural**, **culinary**, and **rural tourism**.
2. Explain how these industries connect to local economies, cultural heritage, and sustainability.
3. Identify examples of these tourism types in their community or state.
4. Work in teams to design a mini tourism experience that combines agriculture, culinary, and rural culture.
5. Present their plan using visuals and teamwork.

## Key Vocabulary

- **Agritourism:** Visiting farms or ranches for education or recreation.
- **Culinary Tourism:** Traveling to experience local food and cooking traditions.
- **Rural Tourism:** Exploring the culture, nature, and lifestyle of rural areas.
- **Sustainability:** Meeting needs without harming future generations.
- **Local Economy:** The business and trade activity in a local area.

## Materials and Equipment Needed

- Whiteboard or chart paper
- Markers and sticky notes
- Printed or projected images of farms, local foods, small towns, and tourism sites
- Projector or screen for visuals/slideshow
- Poster boards, colored pencils, scissors, and glue for tourism project
- Access to digital tools (Canva, Google Slides, or paper brochures)
- Optional: Local farm product samples (e.g., honey, herbs, jam)
- Student [group instruction worksheet](#) or blank paper for group planning
- [Exit ticket slips or student reflection sheets](#)

## Teacher Preparation:

1. [Prepare a short slideshow](#) or photo collection showing examples of agritourism, culinary tourism, and rural tourism.
2. Gather or print real-life examples (local farms, food events, rural festivals).
3. Print group activity instructions and reflection/exit tickets.
4. Arrange the classroom for group collaboration.
5. (Optional) Invite a guest speaker such as a local farmer, chef, or tourism representative for a short Q&A or a video clip from a local tourism site.

## Activities and Procedures:

### 1. Hook: “Guess That Destination!” (10 minutes)

- Show a few pictures (farms, farmers’ markets, small-town diners, vineyards, and B&Bs).
- Ask:
  - “What do these places have in common?”
  - “Why do people visit them?”

- “How might people visit these as part of tourism?” or “How might people visit these places for fun or learning?”
- Explain that today’s lesson explores how farming, food, and rural communities attract visitors through *Agricultural, Culinary, and Rural Tourism*.

## 2. Mini Lecture & Class Discussion: “What Are These Tourism Types?” (10-15 minutes)

Use visuals or a [short presentation](#) to explain:

- **Agritourism:** Farm tours, pumpkin patches, u-pick farms, vineyards, corn mazes, and farm stays.
- **Culinary Tourism:** Cooking classes, food festivals, farmers’ markets, and farm-to-table dining.
- **Rural Tourism:** Exploring country towns, learning traditional crafts, staying on homesteads, or hiking trails.

### Discussion Questions:

- “Why do people enjoy visiting these types of places?”
- “How do they help farmers and local communities?”
- “How do these support local businesses and protect traditions?”
- “Why might travelers choose these over city vacations?”
- “How do they help protect culture and the environment?”

## 3. Group Activity: “Design Your Own Tourism Experience” (25-35 minutes)

### Instructions:

1. Divide students into small groups of 3-5.
2. Assign or allow them to choose a region (real or fictional).
3. Each group designs a **3-day tourism experience** that includes:
  - One **agricultural** activity (e.g., farm visit, milking cows, gardening workshop)
  - One **culinary** activity (e.g., cooking demo, local market visit, tasting event)
  - One **rural** activity (e.g., stargazing, folk crafts, local festival)
  - A sustainability feature or **cultural** connection (How will your plan protect nature or help the local community?)
4. Groups create a **poster or brochure** describing their tourism package that includes:
  - Title, slogan, and logo of their tourism plan
  - Description of each activity

- Target audience (families, food lovers, students, etc.)
  - Why it's sustainable and helps the local community or How it benefits the community
5. [Grading Criteria](#)

The teacher circulates to assist, ensuring students use vocabulary correctly and connect to agricultural principles.

**Extension Option:** Allow students to create a digital flyer using Canva or Google Slides.

#### 4. Gallery Walk & Presentation: (10-15 minutes)

- Each group presents their tourism experience (2-3 minutes each).
- Peers walk around, view posters, and leave positive feedback on sticky notes.
- As a class, vote on “Most Creative,” “Most Sustainable,” or “Most Realistic” experience.
- Class votes on which experience they'd most like to attend.

#### 5. Reflection/[Exit Ticket](#) and Wrap-Up (5-10 minutes)

Ask students to reflect and answer:

- What surprised you most about tourism in rural areas?
- What did you learn about how agriculture connects to tourism?
- How does food tell the story of a place?” or “How does food and farming connect people to a place?
- One new thing you learned today.
- One way this type of tourism could benefit our community.

#### Assessment:

- Participation in discussion and activities
- Quality and creativity of tourism plan
- Accuracy in using vocabulary terms
- Exit ticket responses

#### Extension Ideas

- Invite a **local farmer or chef** to speak about their role in tourism.
- Invite a guest speaker (farmer, chef, or local tourism official).
- Plan a **field trip** to a nearby farmers' market, dairy, orchard, or community garden.
- Create a **class garden-to-table project** to experience the process firsthand.
- Create a classroom “Farm-to-Table Day” featuring local foods.

**References/Resources:**

Barbieri, C. (2013). *Assessing the sustainability of agritourism in the US: A comparison between agritourism and other farm entrepreneurial ventures*. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 21(2), 252–270.

New Mexico Tourism Department. (2024). *Agri-Tourism in New Mexico: Growing Connections Between Farms and Visitors*.

# Group Instruction Sheet

**Activity Title:** Design Your Own Agricultural, Culinary, and Rural Tourism Experience

**Group Member Names:**

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## Instructions:

### 1. Goal:

- Your team will design a creative **3-day tourism experience** that combines **agriculture, food, and rural life**.
- Your plan should attract visitors, support local farmers and businesses, and show respect for the environment.

### 2. Your Tourism Experience Must Include:

- **1 Agricultural Activity** – something connected to farming or food production (examples: farm tour, gardening workshop, milking cows, fruit picking)
  
- **1 Culinary Activity** – something focused on cooking or tasting local food (examples: cooking class, food tasting, farmers' market visit)
  
- **1 Rural Activity** – something that celebrates rural culture or outdoor life (examples: campfire stories, crafts, hiking, local festival, stargazing)
  
- **Sustainability Element** – How will your plan protect nature or help the local community?

## Planning Steps:

**1. Choose a Location:**

Real or imaginary (e.g., a ranch in New Mexico, a small mountain town, a farm near your school).

**2. Create Your 3-Day Schedule:**

<b>Day</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Purpose / Why Tourists Would Enjoy It</b>
1		
2		
3		

**3. Design a Poster or Brochure:**

Include:

- Title of your tourism experience
- Description of each activity
- Target audience (families, students, food lovers, etc.)
- Logo or artwork (optional but encouraged!)
- 1-2 sentences about how your tourism plan helps the community or environment

**Prepare a Short Presentation (2-3 minutes):**

Each group member should share part of your plan!

# Grading Criteria:

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

Category	Points	Description
Creativity and Organization	/10	Poster or brochure is neat, colorful, and easy to follow
Content Accuracy	/10	Includes all required elements and shows understanding of the three tourism types
Team Collaboration	/5	All members participate and share ideas
Presentation	/5	Clear, confident, and well-organized explanation
<b>Total</b>	<b>/30</b>	

# Student Exit Ticket

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

**Directions:** Please complete before leaving class.

1. **One new thing I learned about agricultural, culinary, or rural tourism:**

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2. **One example of this kind of tourism I've seen or would like to visit:**

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3. **One way this type of tourism can help a community or the environment:**

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4. **Which activity today did you enjoy the most, and why?**

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