

AP HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

The Geography of a Breakfast Commodity

Your access to the breakfast you eat depends on environmental conditions, economic networks, labor relations, political decisions and other events that have happened over time in particular places. Many people in many places have been involved in producing, transporting, and marketing the ingredients that make up your breakfast. Many other people have been involved in disposing of the waste created all along those processes. In addition to those who grew and harvested your orange, for example, others have negotiated international trade agreements, signed on to labor contracts, established government subsidies for certain crops, and so on. In this way, sitting at your breakfast table, you are connected to coffee growers in Latin America, jam makers in England, labor leaders in the southeast United States, trade negotiators in Washington D.C., and their counterparts in dozens of other countries.

In this project, you are asked to think about, investigate, and map the networks of food production that result in the breakfast on your table. In particular, you are asked to think about the places where food is grown, processed, packaged, distributed, consumed, and how they are related to one another.

The Why of Where of Foodstuffs

- For this assignment, you need to research a primary foodstuff or ingredient – that is, if you eat doughnuts for breakfast, then you need to do your project on an ingredient of doughnuts such as wheat, sugar, cinnamon, chocolate, or coconut. (This is an assignment about agriculture).
- Consider using maps, charts, diagrams, photographs, drawings, etc, throughout the project, in addition to the small-scale commodity chain maps required in Section D. Experiment with making your own graphics, or use existing maps, charts, etc., that you locate in the process of your research.
- Refer to Figure 8.21, p. 244 of Knox and Marston (2000), for a diagram of the agricultural commodity chain.
- For each of the lettered questions below, use 1-2 pp to explain and illustrate the answer. Use a one sentence answer to the question as the heading for the section. Headings should be in large or bold print, and each section should start at the top of a new page.
- Include a title for your project, your name, the course number, term, the project name (Project 3: The Geography of a Breakfast Commodity) and instructor name on a title page.
- Cite your sources throughout the text, cite your sources of illustrations, and include a bibliography/works-cited list.

A. Where and how is the breakfast item produced?

List as many regions/countries as you can identify, then focus on one region/country in particular

- Describe physical characteristics such as climate, soil, terrain
- Describe farming practices – (typical) size of landholdings, ownership and management of farms (e.g., vertically integrated plantations, contract farming, small family farms, large corporate farms), typical labor force (e.g., migrant workers, contract farmers, farm employees, farming cooperatives).
- Describe technological (e.g., irrigation, protection from the elements) or chemical dependence (common pesticides necessitated by common pests, common fertilizers necessitated by specific land conditions) during farm production.

B. Why is the breakfast item produced in this region/country?

- When was it first produced there, and under what circumstances? How is contemporary food production in that region an outcome of historical events, conditions or practices?
- Does the region's climate and terrain offer a natural advantage for producing this item?
- How important is this food item to the region or country's economy?
- Where are the markets for this food item (globally) – how much of production is exported, how much is consumed domestically?
- If you can locate the information: In what way do state policies such as price supports, irrigation projects, or land use policies support or hinder the production of this item in this place?

C. How and where is the breakfast item processed and transported to market?

- Identify any characteristics of the food item that necessitate particular means of handling, processing and transportation (e.g., perish ability, fragility, speed and conditions for ripening).
- Where are the largest markets for this item?

D. How is the item advertised/marketed?

- What images and types of language do advertisements employ? What seem to be the characteristics of the targeted market? What elements of the packaging convey a sense of the market for the product?

E. Map it.

- Use a base map most appropriate to your commodity, and map the commodity chain from site of production, through distribution channels to your breakfast table.

F. Works-cited list