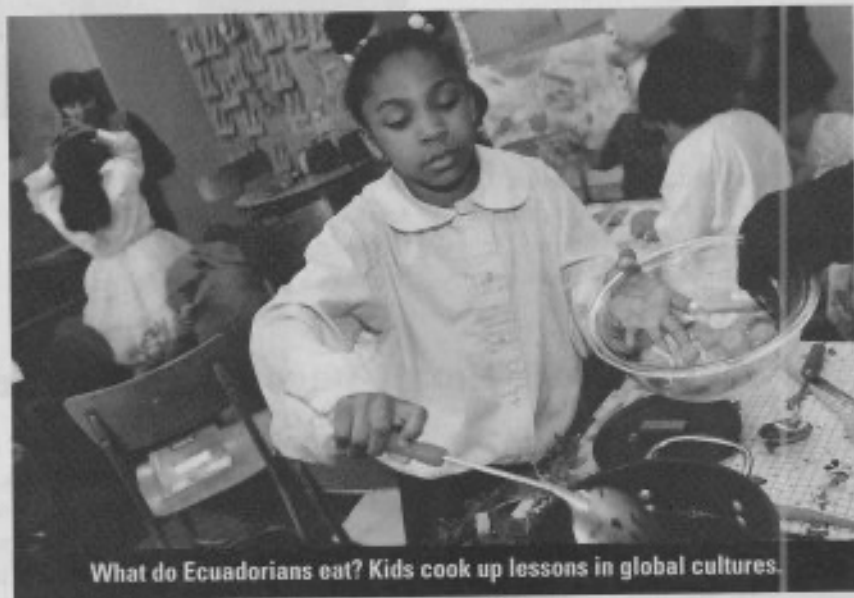


## World-Class School Lunches

Students at E.J. Martinez Elementary School in Santa Fe, New Mexico, recently sat down to a lunch of Ecuadorian llapingachos—potato pancakes with salsa verde made of avocado, lime juice, and cilantro. At P.S. 61 on Manhattan's Lower East Side, kids dine on Caribbean-style steamed snapper with mangos and black beans. And at Crestwood Children's Center in Rochester, New York, children are choosing pasta primavera over peanut butter and jelly. What's happening to our kids?

The new menus are part of a multicultural curriculum developed by Antonia Demas, director of the nonprofit Food Studies Institute in Trumansburg, New York. As part of her doctoral dissertation at Cornell University, Demas discovered that students who learned about different societies—and then made recipes from those cultures in the classroom—were much more likely to eat the ethnic specialties when they were added to the school lunch menu.



What do Ecuadorians eat? Kids cook up lessons in global cultures.

Demas has been introducing the program to schools across the country to whet kids' appetites for low-fat, vitamin-rich cafeteria food. But the goal isn't simply better nutrition: Children are also being educated about different places and cultures around the world, which helps them develop

an appreciation for diversity. "By accepting the food of a certain culture, children also learn to accept the people of that culture," says Demas.

LEAH INGRAM

For more information on multicultural food programs, contact the Food Studies Institute at 607/387-6884.