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The Modern History of Global Food

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Potatoes



- Potatoes originated in the Andes mountains and were consumed by the Incas
- The Spaniards brought them to Europe at the end of the 16th century
- Potatoes were not originally accepted into diets, but were catapulted into popularity through crises
- Eventually, potatoes became staples in places like Ireland, England, France, the United States, and Russia
- Today, potatoes are universally accepted as a global product and are the second most important staple crop

Research Process

- Found sources for Dr. Janes' upcoming global food textbook
 - Built Zotero Library
- Each focused on a case study
- Researched in the Van Wylen Library and visited the Janice Bluestein Longone Culinary Archive at UofM



Rice

- Rice is a main food staple for over half of the world's population
 - Almost every culture that has come into contact with rice has incorporated it into their diet in some way
- It is Indigenous to Southeastern Asia
 - It then spread throughout the world through trade and conquest



- Virtually all rice grown today is descended from an Asian strain
- Due to its importance to many cultures, rice has often been the focus of imperialism
- Rice has been the focus of genetic modification to increase yields
- New technology and foreign aid in respect to rice have led to theories of neocolonialism on the rise

Sugar



- Sugar was originally from the South Pacific, then moved to India and Southern China, then to the Middle East, Mediterranean, North Africa, and Southern Spain
- Crusaders brought it back to Europe with them
 - Was a luxury good in Europe and used only by the rich
- Christopher Columbus introduced sugarcane to Hispaniola in 1493
- European countries colonized the New World, and the Caribbean Islands and Brazil became large producers
 - Sugar became common household item in Europe
 - Slavery drove the production of sugarcane, Africans were constantly imported in large amounts to the plantations
- After slavery was abolished, large amounts of Indian and Chinese immigrants came to work the sugarcane fields
- Now, most sugarcane production for global trade is controlled by large companies and countries

Overall Themes

- Imperialism
- Exploitation
- Cultural Assimilation
- Abuse/use of Land
- Symbolism of Food
- Power of Demand
- Global Trade and Globalism
- Political Importance of Food

Curry

- The word "curry" refers to any dish of Indian origin that relies on the use of strong spices
 - It developed from the British mispronunciation of *karil* or *kari*
 - No Indian would have referred to their food as "curry"
- Modern curry developed from a fusion of different dishes
 - The Mughal emperors
 - combined cuisines of northern Hindustan, central Asia, and Persia
 - The Portuguese
 - introduced the chili pepper and tomatoes
- The British brought their love of curry home with them
 - This led to the development of curry powder

