



Crafts Around the World Series

Europe: German Kartoffeldruck (Potato Printing)

Enjoy learning how to make simple crafts from six of the seven continents: **Africa, Europe, Asia, Australia, North America, and South America.**

Purpose:

Introduce youth to some simple cultural traditional crafts from around the world. Journey around the continents, learning how to make simple crafts and having fun creating.

Objectives:

- ◇ Learn the cultural history and origins of the craft.
- ◇ Inspire global exploration.
- ◇ Develop fine motor skills in carving and painting.
- ◇ Increase cultural awareness, recycling, and creativity.

Education Standards:

- ◇ Understand the visual arts in relation to history and culture.
- ◇ Apply geometric methods to solve design problems.

Experiential Learning:

- ◇ Create designs from carving and paint stamping.

Encourage thought and discussion with these questions:

What happened? What's important? So what? Now what?

Audience: Grades K-12



Photo courtesy of Insa Raymond, 2021

CONTINENT: EUROPE

Home to 44 countries, Europe is the sixth largest of the world's continents. Some areas of the world combine Asia and Europe into one continent called Eurasia.

COUNTRY: GERMANY

Germany is located in western Europe. It is bordered by Denmark, Poland, Czechia, Austria, Switzerland, France, Luxembourg, Belgium, the Netherlands, and also by the North Sea, and the Baltic Sea.

A 1957 document *4-H Around the World: Extension Circular 0-19-2* shows that in 1956, of countries with 4-H or 4-H type organizations, Germany Rural Youth Advisory Service, Federal Alliance of Rural Youth had 150,000 members and Educational Rural Youth Group (4-H) had 17,980 members. The advisory service provided instruction in agriculture and homemaking to youth (University of Nebraska–Lincoln).

LESSON: German Kartoffeldruck: Potato Printing

The potato (die Kartoffel) is native to South America. It grows naturally in high altitudes in the Andes Mountains. Native South Americans, the Incas, used potatoes thousands of years ago. Later, potatoes were brought to Europe. While first used as food for the military in Spain, the use of the potato slowly spread into other European countries (Ortiz, 2000). Americans first thought potatoes should only be fed to horses, and they were hesitant to eat them because of their toxic leaves (Vegetable Facts, 2021). Today, potatoes are one of the most important foods worldwide after rice, wheat, and maize (corn) (Ortiz, 2020). Germany has been growing potatoes for food production since the mid-18th century, and today, Germany is the largest potato producer in the European Union (Eurostat, 2021) and the sixth largest potato producer worldwide (Lynn, 2020). Potato printing (Kartoffeldruck) has been a popular and common craft for children, youth, and adults for a long time.

German Kartoffeldruck: Potato Printing

TIME:

30-45 minutes or multiple days depending upon the interest to learn more.

MATERIALS:

- ◇ Paper or plastic table cover
- ◇ 1-3 medium to large potatoes
- ◇ Paring knife*
- ◇ Cutting board
- ◇ Small-to medium-sized cookie cutters
- ◇ Paintbrushes
- ◇ Acrylic, water or finger paint
- ◇ Cardstock notecards or sheets of cardstock
- ◇ Container with water
- ◇ Paper towels
- ◇ Pre-washed natural fabric such as a t-shirt, cotton dish towel, shopping bag (optional)
- ◇ Fabric paints (optional)

*Children may need adult supervision.

PROCEDURE: How to make potato prints

Step One:

1. Wash and dry the potatoes
2. Cover your work surface with paper or a plastic table cover.
3. With the paring knife and on the cutting board, cut the potatoes in half. You can cut crossways or lengthwise depending on the size and shape of your cookie cutter. (Be careful when handling the knife! Adult help or supervision may be needed.)
4. Press a cookie cutter into the cut surface of your potato, so that the cookie cutter is about ¼-inch to ½-inch deep.
5. With the paring knife, cut away the potato on the outside of the cookie cutter. (Note: When working with young children, parents or guardians may cut the stamps ahead of time and then let the children stamp.)
6. Take the cookie cutter out. Your potato stamp (Kartoffelstempel) is ready.

Step Two:

1. If the surface is moist, dry the potato off with a paper towel.
2. Using a paintbrush, apply a little water to your paintbrush, dry it out on a paper towel, then apply paint to the paintbrush. Then apply paint to the potato stamp. Begin stamping on to paper. You will need to reapply new paint to your potato stamp each time you stamp. You can make holiday or greeting cards, place mats, wrapping paper, or anything else you can think of. Your own creativity is the limit. Optionally, you can stamp on to fabric with fabric paint.
3. Suggestion for older youth: Design and cut your own potato stamps without using a cookie cutter.
4. Viel Spass! (Have fun!)

German Kartoffeldruck: Potato Printing

INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEO LINK:

View this instructional video to guide you in creating your potato prints: https://mediaspace.msu.edu/media/t/1_58d02x0u

Art and Science – Experiment with various types of paper or fabric. Try varied carving techniques, designs, and paints. Ask questions and make discoveries!

Reflection Questions: What surprised you and why? When were you the most creative, and why do you think that is? What made you curious today? What can you do with what you learned today?

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

The activity was developed by Michigan State University Extension Educators Janis Brinn and Insa Raymond 2021.

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