

Learning About Folklife:

*The U.S. Virgin
Islands & Senegal*



*Apprenons À Propos Des
Traditions Culturelles:*

Les Iles Vierges Des Etats Unis Et Le Senegal

Learning About Folklife: The U.S. Virgin Islands & Senegal

A GUIDE FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS



CENTER FOR FOLKLIFE PROGRAMS & CULTURAL STUDIES
SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

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INTRODUCTION

Learning About Folklife: The U.S. Virgin Islands & Senegal



Bakary Diedhiou (left) from Ziguinchor, Senegal, and Lamine Mané from Thionck-Essyl, Senegal, perform Diola music for U.S. Virgin Islands schoolchildren at the annual Liberty Day Celebration in 1991 on St. Croix.

From October 31 to November 4, 1991, U.S. Virgin Islands residents and visitors had the opportunity to experience the first U.S. Virgin Islands Folklife Festival. The Festival was a restaging of the 1990 Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife, which took place on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., and featured the U.S. Virgin Islands and the African country of Senegal. As the term implies, a “folklife festival” is a living celebration of the history and cultural lives of the people of the Islands. At the U.S. Virgin Islands Folklife Festival, many school children from the Virgin Islands had a chance to visit the Festival and meet the tradition bearers present from the Virgin Islands and from Senegal.

This educational kit is an extension of the festivals held in Washington, D.C. and on St. Croix. It was developed by the Smithsonian Center for Folklife Programs and Cultural Studies, using examples of folklife from the U.S. Virgin Islands and Senegal. The kit introduces students to aspects of the traditional culture of these two culture areas and provides “building blocks” to allow students to explore their own regional and family folklife. The kit includes a four-part videotape, maps, photographs, audio tapes, teacher preparation information, background materials written at the student level, student discussion questions and classroom activities. (A complete checklist for the kit is included in Appendix D.) Appendices include vocabulary words, transcripts of the first three parts of the videotape, and resource lists for further study. The following publications are included in the kit for teacher background: 1) a copy of the 1990 Festival of American Folklife program book; 2) a copy of the American Folklife Center’s publication *Folklife and Fieldwork*; 3) *American Folklife: A Commonwealth of Culture*, another publication of the American Folklife Center.

This Guide will help the teacher integrate the kit materials into their existing curriculum plans. It can also be used to plan a special unit on folklife which can last from several days to projects lasting an entire semester.

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HOW TO USE THE GUIDE

The Teacher's Guide includes teacher preparation information, objectives and teaching strategies for each lesson, student discussion questions, copies of activity sheets, and ideas for follow-up on each lesson. It also includes maps, line illustrations, reproductions of photographs included in the kit, and printed copies of the narrative of the video available in the kit.

The Teacher's Guide for the kit is prepared in the form of four units, each with three lesson plans. The units include ideas for extending the lessons with more student activities relating to that section. Lessons are geared toward particular kit items (videotape, maps, photos, etc.) or combinations of those items. They are arranged in a logical sequence, designed to build upon one another with the goal of providing a good introduction to the folklife of the U.S. Virgin Islands and Senegal. Teachers may also choose to only use a particular segment of the kit and its corresponding lessons. **In any case, it is suggested that the teacher begin by showing the first section of the videotape to the class to establish the definition of folklife using examples from the Virgin Islands and Senegal.**

Materials are written at a student level of 6th grade and up, but may be adapted to lower grades by teachers.

The units and lessons are as follows:

UNIT DESCRIPTIONS

UNIT 1: *Introduction to Folklife*

This unit uses the first section of the videotape and the complete set of 8"x10" photographs to introduce students to the definition of folklife and some of its forms. In Lesson One, students view the videotape and discuss what they see. They also engage in an activity related to the videotape. In Lesson Two, students use the photographs to further their understanding of folklife. In Lesson Three, students learn interviewing techniques to collect information about the traditions of their own family and community, following examples from the fieldwork for the folklife festivals.

UNIT 2: *Geography & Cultural History*

This unit uses the maps, written descriptions of the Virgin Islands and Senegal, selected photographs and the second part of the videotape to further students' knowledge about these two areas of the world and the factors affecting their folklife. In Lesson One, students read descriptions and study the maps to learn basic information about the two culture areas. In Lesson Two, students view the second part of the videotape in the kit, which focuses on traditional foodways to show how food, its gathering, growing, preparation and serving are reflections of region and culture. In Lesson Three, students collect their own cultural recipes and share with the class the ways they reflect their own family and cultural background.

UNIT 3: *Music & Storytelling*

In Lesson One, students watch the storytelling segment of the video and listen to the Senegalese storytelling audio tape as the basis for discussion and a related activity. In Lesson Two, students listen to the music audio tapes and view photographs of musicians, discuss music in Senegal and the Virgin Islands, and form their own "band." In Lesson Three, students explore the relationships between storytelling and music in the two cultures, and compose their own "musical story."

UNIT 4: *Folklife Celebrations*

In Lesson One, students view and discuss the third section of the videotape on traditional celebrations in the Virgin Islands and Senegal. In Lesson Two, students compare photographs of the two celebrations in their home settings and at the Festival of American Folklife to learn more about the problems and benefits of restaging a traditional event at a folklife festival. In Lesson Three, students plan their own celebration, using elements of their own tradition and/or creating a new "tradition" of their invention.

Each unit in the Teacher's Guide begins with teacher preparation information. A lesson plan is included for each lesson, with copies of perti-

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nent materials. These materials, along with the set of photographs, maps, student activity sheets, videotape and audio tapes, are found in the complete kit. The Teacher's Guide is designed to give teachers a chance to plan the use of the kit prior to its actual availability in the classroom.

Each lesson is designed to be one class session (approximately one hour) in length. Suggested activities can be assigned as homework or completed in subsequent class time.

Appendices include vocabulary words of terms that may be new to both teachers and students, written copies of the narration from the videotape, a list of further resources, and a checklist for the kit. Please refer to this checklist when reassembling the kit when you are finished with it. An evaluation sheet is also included in the appendix folder — please fill it out and mail it to the Center for Folklife Programs and Cultural Studies, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20560.



Mrs. Marguerita Frett stretches, shapes, and twists "jawbone" candy on a marble slab as children anxiously await the cutting and cooling of this homemade treat.