



## From Skjalda to store

### Exploring Skyr: Iceland's Traditional Dairy Product

**Grade Level:** K-12 (can be adapted for specific ages)

**Driving Question:** How has Skyr, a traditional Icelandic dairy product, influenced Icelandic culture, economy, and sustainability practices, and what can we learn about its production and global trade?

**Project Overview:** Students will explore the history, cultural significance, production methods, and global trade of Skyr. They will learn about sustainable dairy farming practices, the nutritional benefits of Skyr, and its impact on Iceland's economy. This project integrates social studies, science, geography, and economics to provide a comprehensive understanding of Skyr's role in Icelandic society.

#### Learning Objectives:

- **History and Culture:** Investigate the origins of Skyr and its role in Icelandic culture from ancient times to the present.
- **Economics:** Understand the economic impact of Skyr production and trade on Iceland's economy.
- **Sustainability:** Explore sustainable dairy farming practices and how they contribute to the production of Skyr.
- **Science and Nutrition:** Learn about the nutritional benefits of Skyr and the science behind its production.
- **Global Connections:** Identify global trade routes and countries involved in the import and export of Skyr.

#### Key Inquiry Questions:

- What is the historical significance of Skyr in Icelandic culture?
- How does Skyr production contribute to Iceland's economy?
- What sustainable practices are used in dairy farming for Skyr production?
- What are the nutritional benefits of Skyr compared to other dairy products?
- How is Skyr traded globally, and what countries are involved in its import and export?

#### Examples of Possible Activities:

- **Research and Storytelling (History and Culture):** Students will research the history of Skyr and create a timeline of key events, such as its introduction to Iceland and its evolution over time. They will present their findings through a creative medium, such as a digital story, podcast, or video.
- **Global Trade (Economics and Geography):** Students will research the global trade of Skyr, identifying the countries involved in importing and exporting Skyr. They will create maps showing trade routes and economic partners.



- **Production Techniques and Sustainability (Science and Environment):** Students will investigate the production process of Skyr, from dairy farming to fermentation. They will create models or illustrations of each step and evaluate the environmental impact of these practices.
- **Community and Sustainability (Social Studies and Local Action):** Students will conduct a case study of a dairy farm in Iceland, exploring how Skyr production supports local jobs and culture. They can compare these practices with local dairy farming practices in their own community and propose ways to improve sustainability.

#### **Final Project Presentation:**

**Students will present their findings in a multi-part exhibition that reflects their research on Skyr's cultural, economic, and environmental significance:**

##### **1. Timeline and Cultural Exhibit:**

- A visual timeline tracing the evolution of Skyr from its ancient origins to its presence in today's global markets. Students can highlight key events, such as Skyr's integration into daily Icelandic life over centuries and its role in Icelandic identity and culinary traditions. They can use creative media like short stories, illustrations, or video clips to depict Skyr's cultural importance.

##### **2. Production Process and Sustainability Exhibit:**

- Models or illustrations of each stage in the Skyr production process, from dairy farming to fermentation to the final product. Students explain sustainability factors at each step, such as how dairy farms use geothermal energy or reduce food waste in production. They might include a handmade model of a dairy farm or a sample of eco-friendly packaging to showcase environmentally friendly choices.

##### **3. Map and Global Trade Exhibit:**

- A world map showing Skyr's international trade routes, highlighting the countries involved in its import and export. The map could also show Iceland's economic connections with these trade partners, and students can discuss the challenges and opportunities for Icelandic products in the global market. Students can explain how trade impacts local agriculture and job opportunities.

##### **4. Nutritional Exhibit and Taste Test Booth:**

- A comparison of Skyr's nutritional value with other dairy products, focusing on Skyr's health benefits. Students could organize a taste test for classmates to sample different types of Skyr (e.g., plain vs. flavored) and share what they've learned about Skyr's nutritional advantages and flavor differences. They can also display visual information comparing Skyr's nutrients to other dairy items.

##### **5. Sustainable Dairy Farming Proposals and Community Connections:**

- A poster or report with suggestions for sustainable dairy farming practices, based on their research of Icelandic dairy methods and a comparison with local practices. Students can share their ideas for further eco-friendly approaches in Skyr production and propose local projects to reduce the carbon footprint.



### Assessment Criteria:

- Research and Inquiry: Quality and depth of research on Skyr's history, economic impact, and sustainability, with knowledge of Skyr's global influence and understanding of its connections to Icelandic society.
- Creativity and Presentation: Ability to communicate findings clearly and creatively through varied formats, including timelines, maps, models, visual data, and taste tests.
- Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving: Ability to connect theoretical knowledge to real-world challenges and reflect on sustainable solutions for dairy production and Skyr's global trade.

### Teacher's Tips for Implementing the Project:

- Hands-On Learning: Encourage students to explore the Skyr production process with models or homemade samples of the fermentation process, such as demonstrating Skyr's fermentation method. This helps students understand the science behind Skyr production and sustainability in agriculture.
- Cross-Subject Integration: The project offers opportunities to connect social studies, science, geography, and economics in projects that illuminate Skyr's comprehensive impact on Icelandic society. This allows students to place the subject matter in a broader context.
- Facilitate Reflection and Discussion: Encourage students to reflect on how their food choices and local agriculture relate to broader issues of sustainability and trade. Prompt discussions about the importance of protecting natural resources and how consumer choices affect carbon footprints and community values.