

THIS MONTH™ · INSTANT LESSON



# Empanada Math Fiesta

Teacher Guide · National Empanada Day · April 8

Grades K–5 · Multiplication & Equal Groups · Skip Counting · ~15–20 min

## At a Glance

Students take on the role of empanada chefs preparing for a fiesta, scaling a recipe across multiple batches. The game generates a new randomized recipe each round — a different number of batches and a different set of ingredients — so no two playthroughs are identical. Players work ingredient by ingredient, looking at visual groups and calculating the total amount needed.

The same game serves all three grade bands through differentiated modes selected before play begins. Teachers can use this as a whole-class warm-up on an interactive whiteboard, a small-group station, or an independent digital center.

### Cultural Connection

Brief the class beforehand — empanadas are savory or sweet filled pastries found across Latin America, Spain, and beyond, made in large batches for celebrations and shared meals. This frames the math context authentically before students begin.

## How to Use the Game

1. Open the Empanada Math Fiesta game from the This Month™ page. It works in any modern browser — no login required.
2. Select the correct grade band at the top of the game — **K–1st**, **2nd–3rd**, or **4th–5th** — before play begins.
3. For K–1, choose a mode: **Practice Mode** animates the skip count automatically; **Challenge Mode** asks students to enter the answer themselves.
4. The game shows the number of batches, the current ingredient, and a visual array — one emoji group per batch. Students calculate the total and type their answer.
5. Each correct answer lights up that ingredient in the tray. When all ingredients are collected, a victory screen and sound play automatically.
6. Tap **Make More Empanadas!** on the victory screen to generate a fresh randomized recipe and play again.

### Music Note


Background music plays automatically on first interaction. Students can toggle it off with the speaker button in the top-right corner — useful in quiet classrooms or shared spaces.

## Grade Band Breakdown

### **K–1st**

**Math focus:** Equal groups, skip counting by 2s–5s, repeated addition. The game uses 2–4 batches with small ingredient amounts (2–5 per batch), keeping all products at or below 20.

*Emoji groups are displayed in a visual array — each batch shown as a separate labeled column. This directly mirrors the concrete-representational-abstract (CRA) progression by pairing the equation on screen with manipulative-style visuals.*

 *Classroom tip: In Practice Mode, have the whole class count aloud together as the numbers appear — this turns the animation into a choral skip-counting exercise before independent practice begins.*

<b>2nd–3rd</b>	<p><b>Math focus:</b> Multiplication facts 2–9, equal groups, repeated addition leading to multiplication. The game uses 3–6 batches and ingredient amounts of 2–7, with products up to approximately 42.</p> <p><i>Students see the equation 'batches × amount = ?' displayed on screen alongside the visual array. Encourage students to notice the array structure (rows × columns) as a bridge from the equal-groups model to formal multiplication notation.</i></p> <p><i>🗨 Classroom tip: After the game, ask students to write their own multiplication equation for one of the ingredients they solved — this reinforces the connection between the game’s equal-groups context and the abstract symbolic form.</i></p>
<b>4th–5th</b>	<p><b>Math focus:</b> Multi-digit multiplication (1- and 2-digit factors). The game assigns a different batch count to each ingredient — ranging from 4 to 12 — so every problem within a single round uses a different multiplier. Products target the 20–72 range.</p> <p><i>Ingredients at this level include chili peppers and salt with decimal amounts (0.5, 1, 1.5 tsp), offering a natural lead-in to multiplying with simple decimals for students who are ready.</i></p> <p><i>🗨 Classroom tip: Challenge early finishers to write out the full standard algorithm for at least one problem per round, then compare their written work to the game’s visual array — this bridges the procedural and conceptual models.</i></p>

 **Practice Mode (Auto-Count) — the K–1 Scaffold**

In Practice Mode, students press “Skip Count With Me!” instead of entering an answer. The game then animates the running count aloud — showing each skip-count number appear on screen as the batches are counted up one at a time. This provides a fully guided model of skip counting before students are asked to produce the answer independently.

Use this mode when introducing the concept or supporting students who are still building number sense. Switch to Challenge Mode once students are ready to count on their own.

 **Discussion Questions**

Use these before, during, or after play to deepen mathematical reasoning and cultural connections.

<b>K–1</b>	If each batch needs 3 olives, and we count 3... 6... 9, how many batches did we make? How do you know?
<b>K–1</b>	Look at the groups on the screen. Can you point to each group and say the next skip-count number out loud?
<b>2–3</b>	The screen shows 4 batches × 5 onions. Can you write that as a repeated addition sentence? Now as a multiplication sentence?
<b>2–3</b>	If you doubled the number of batches, what would happen to the total ingredients? How do you know without counting?
<b>4–5</b>	This ingredient needed 7 batches × 8 cups. What strategy did you use — area model, standard algorithm, or something else? Would a different strategy be faster?
<b>4–5</b>	One ingredient needed 1.5 tsp per batch. How did you figure out the total? What does that look like as a fraction?
<b>All</b>	Why do you think a chef would need to multiply ingredient amounts instead of just counting each one separately?
<b>All</b>	Empanadas are made in big batches for celebrations. Can you think of another food your family makes in large amounts? How would you figure out how much of each ingredient you’d need?