

Mi Vida Loca Cabin · November

Fall · Gratitude, History & the Science of Harvest

A Two-Day Homeschool Adventure Guide for Families Staying at Mi Vida Loca

Welcome to November at Mi Vida Loca! This guide pairs two days of real Broken Bow adventures with complete unit studies, lessons, and quizzes. Subjects this month: **American & Native American History · Agricultural Science · Astronomy.**

Month	November · Fall
Subjects	American & Native American History · Agricultural Science · Astronomy
Day 1 Main Activity	Beavers Bend Quiet Season Nature Walk & History Study
Day 2 Main Activity	Forest Heritage Center + Choctaw Heritage Cooking
Home Base	Mi Vida Loca Cabin · mycabinbrokenbow.com
Weather Note	Indoor backup options included — see end of Day 1

DAY ONE · Beavers Bend Quiet Season Nature Walk & History Study

Lunch today at **Stevens Gap Restaurant** — a local favorite.

9:00 AM

November Nature Walk — Bare Forest Beauty

November transforms the Ouachita Mountains into something completely different: the leaves are largely down, revealing the structure of the forest itself — the architecture of branches, the full width of the river visible through bare trees, the mountain topography that summer foliage hides. This is an ideal month for geology observation: with vegetation minimal, you can see rock outcroppings, ridge formations, and stream erosion patterns invisible in summer.

11:00 AM

Harvest Gratitude Journal — Science of Food Systems

November is the perfect month for a Thanksgiving-themed exploration of food science and agricultural history. In nature journals, trace the journey of a Thanksgiving dish back to its origins: Where was corn domesticated? Which Thanksgiving foods are Native American in origin? Corn, squash, cranberries, wild turkey, pecans, and sunflowers — the majority of the traditional meal! What would a Pilgrim have known about agriculture that most Americans no longer know?

12:30 PM — LUNCH

Stevens Gap Restaurant

A beloved local institution in Hochatown known for exceptional catfish, chicken-fried steak, and homemade pies that people drive hours to eat. The warm, unpretentious atmosphere and genuine Southern hospitality make it a quintessential small-town Oklahoma dining experience.

2:00 PM

Stargazing — November Skies: Taurus & the Leonid Meteor Shower

November's dark cold skies are exceptional for stargazing. The Pleiades star cluster is at its highest and most visible in November — it was used by farming cultures worldwide to mark planting and harvest seasons. The Leonid meteor shower peaks around November 17-18. Find Taurus the Bull rising in the east — the red star Aldebaran marks the bull's eye, and the Pleiades rest on his shoulder.

■ Weather Note

Unpredictable. Early November can be gorgeous (highs in the 60s); late November can bring the first cold fronts with freezing temperatures. Ice storms become possible after mid-month. Always check the forecast and bring warm layers, rain gear, and a backup indoor plan.

Indoor Backup Options:

Cold or ice day options: Full indoor day at the Forest Heritage Center. Museum of the Red River in Idabel (free, excellent). Cooking the Choctaw recipe at the cabin is a perfect indoor activity. Gutter Chaos for bowling and arcade.

DAY TWO · Forest Heritage Center + Choctaw Heritage Cooking

Lunch today at **Jake's Brickhouse Grill** — a local favorite.

9:00 AM

Forest Heritage Center — Full Immersion Visit

November crowds are minimal — use this for the most thorough Forest Heritage Center visit of the year. Spend extra time with the Caddo Indian life dioramas, the logging history exhibits, and Peter Toth's Trail of Tears totem pole outside. Ask if rangers have any November programming — Thanksgiving-themed historical talks are sometimes offered.

11:00 AM

Choctaw Heritage Cooking Experience

Using the Choctaw Nation's published traditional recipes (available free at choctawnation.com), cook a simple traditional dish at the cabin. Tanchi labona (corn and pork soup) is a manageable, delicious starting point. Discuss the agricultural science of corn: it was the most important crop of indigenous North America, sustainably grown for thousands of years using the Three Sisters method — corn, beans, and squash planted together in symbiotic relationship.

12:30 PM — LUNCH

Jake's Brickhouse Grill

A warm, welcoming Hochatown spot for steaks, burgers, and hearty fall fare. Makes excellent use of the cooler weather with seasonal menu additions and a cozy interior perfect for a November family lunch.

2:30 PM

Cabin Fireside: Thanksgiving Read-Aloud & Reflection

End the November weekend around the cabin fireplace with a read-aloud session using primary source accounts of the first Thanksgiving and Native American accounts of the same events. Comparing perspectives is one of the most powerful history-teaching tools. This is historical thinking: understanding that every historical event has multiple perspectives, and that the full truth requires hearing all of them.

*Back at Mi Vida Loca — End your day at the resort community: swimming pool (seasonal), stocked catch-and-release fishing ponds, clubhouse with pool tables, children's playground, and beautiful walking trails.
Tonight, complete the quiz together as a family! www.mycabinbrokenbow.com*

UNIT STUDY · NOVEMBER

Agricultural History: From Native American Farming to the Modern Food System

Subjects: American & Native American History · Agricultural Science · Astronomy · Ages 6–16

LESSON ONE

The story of American agriculture begins at least 9,000 years ago in Mesoamerica, where indigenous farmers gradually domesticated wild teosinte grass into maize (corn) through generations of selective breeding — choosing plants with the most desirable traits and planting their seeds. This process, called artificial selection, is essentially the same principle Charles Darwin later described as natural selection, but directed by human choice rather than environmental pressure. Native American farmers also domesticated squash (one of the world's first domesticated plants, dating to 10,000 years ago), beans, sunflowers, tomatoes, potatoes, and peppers — collectively transforming the global food supply.

LESSON TWO

The Three Sisters agricultural system developed by Native American peoples is one of the most sophisticated examples of polyculture — growing multiple crops together to benefit each other. Corn grows tall and provides a structure for bean vines to climb. Beans fix atmospheric nitrogen into the soil through root bacteria, fertilizing both the corn and squash. Squash spreads across the ground, shading out weeds and retaining soil moisture with its broad leaves. Together, they produce a nutritionally complete diet. Modern industrial agriculture (monoculture — growing single crops over vast areas) maximizes short-term yield but depletes soil fertility and is extremely vulnerable to disease and pests. The Three Sisters system is sustainable indefinitely because it replenishes what it consumes.

Star Calendars: How Ancient Peoples Used the Night Sky

LESSON THREE

Before clocks, calendars, and GPS, humans navigated time and place entirely by the sky. Every agricultural civilization developed detailed astronomical knowledge because knowing when to plant and harvest was literally a matter of survival. The Pleiades star cluster appears above the horizon in November and was used as a harvest calendar by cultures worldwide. The Lakota (Sioux) people used the stars to track the lunar calendar, time ceremonies, and navigate the Great Plains. The Cherokee had detailed star knowledge embedded in their traditional stories, using constellations to teach values and history to young people.

LESSON FOUR

The Leonid meteor shower, which peaks in November, is produced by debris from Comet Tempel-Tuttle, which has a 33-year orbital period. Most years the Leonids produce 15-20 meteors per hour. But in years when Earth passes through a particularly dense clump of comet debris (a storm year), the Leonid storm can produce thousands of meteors per hour — filling the sky with continuous streaks of light. Historical Leonid storms (1833, 1866, 1966, 1999) were described as stars falling like rain and caused widespread fear in people who had no explanation for the phenomenon. The 1833 Leonid storm prompted the first systematic scientific study of meteor showers.

QUIZ - NOVEMBER - Agricultural History: From Native American Farming to the Modern Food System

1. The Three Sisters system uses corn, beans, and squash together. What specific benefit do beans provide?

- A) They attract pollinators that also pollinate the corn and squash
- B) They fix atmospheric nitrogen into the soil through root bacteria, fertilizing the other plants
- C) Their deep roots break up hard soil
- D) They repel insects that would otherwise damage the corn

2. What is selective breeding (artificial selection)?

- A) A natural process where the environment selects which traits survive
- B) Humans choosing organisms with desirable traits to breed, gradually changing a species over generations
- C) A laboratory technique for directly altering DNA
- D) The process of grafting branches from one plant onto another

3. Which of the following foods were originally domesticated by Native American farmers?

- A) Wheat, barley, and oats
- B) Rice, soybeans, and ginger
- C) Corn, squash, tomatoes, and potatoes
- D) Apples, pears, and peaches

4. What meteor shower peaks in mid-November and originates from the debris of Comet Tempel-Tuttle?

- A) Perseid meteor shower
- B) Geminid meteor shower
- C) Leonid meteor shower
- D) Orionid meteor shower

5. Why did ancient agricultural civilizations develop detailed astronomical knowledge?

- A) To navigate ocean voyages
- B) Because the night sky was their only entertainment
- C) Knowing when to plant and harvest crops was survival-critical — the sky was their calendar
- D) To predict earthquakes using star positions

6. What is monoculture agriculture, and what is its primary weakness?

- A) Monoculture uses only heirloom seeds; it is weaker because these seeds are less productive
- B) Monoculture grows a single crop over large areas; it depletes soil fertility and is extremely vulnerable to disease and pests
- C) Monoculture requires no irrigation; it is weaker in dry climates
- D) Monoculture uses no pesticides; it is weaker because pests are uncontrolled

Answer Key:

1. B 2. B 3. C 4. C 5. C 6. B

We hope this adventure fills your family with wonder and curiosity. Every season in the Ouachita Mountains brings something new to discover. Mi Vida Loca Cabin · Broken Bow, Oklahoma · mycabinbrokenbow.com