FOOD Ed.

FOOD EDUCATION FOR CHANGE

UNIT 3:
FOOD AND POWER

L.30

REVALUING INDIGENOUS WISDOM

Note to Teachers

While conventional agriculture has imposed a system of cultivation on nature, indigenous peoples have traditionally fished, farmed, gathered, and hunted close to nature. Indigenous peoples have altered and managed the land, but exerted significantly less pressure on the land that we have seen with industrial agriculture. In the process, they have learned the nutritional and medicinal characteristics of the diverse plants in their ecosystems, and sought out plants that can grow even in extreme environments. Non-indigenous farmers, scholars, doctors, and scientists generally ignored the knowledge of native peoples until recently. Now, prompted by the need to adapt to a changing climate and disillusionment with industrial agriculture and western medicine, the wisdom of indigenous peoples—including their knowledge of the local plants—is being recognized, revalued, and recorded. This exercise explores some of that wisdom through wild plants used for food.

Lesson 30 represents a two- or three-day project.

Goals *In this lesson, students will*

- gain a glimpse of the vast variety of native plants that have nutritional and medicinal value, and thereby appreciate the wealth of resources they offer.
- appreciate the need to expand our sources of food for the world's population as we adapt to climate change.

Objectives

- Students will use online resources to research, analyze, and prepare a presentation or poster about an indigenous food.
- Students will follow a complete set of steps and questions to ensure that their final product is substantive, thoughtful, and effective.

L.30

REVALUING INDIGENOUS WISDOM

Please use this margin to notate how to best adapt this curriculum to your students.

Materials

- Computers for reference and research
- Copies of the student handout below

Instructions

Part I: Uncovering the Power of Indigenous Foods

1. Remind students that lesson 29 focused on how to increase the productivity of fertile lands around the world. Lesson 30 also takes a global approach, but focuses less on the work (largely by outsiders) to develop land. Instead, it focuses on the achievements of farmers and foragers who already live on and work the land.
    - Remind students that wild foods often have high concentrations of nutrients and could offer nutritional benefit.
    - Indigenous plants are well suited to their environments, making them more sustainable over time.
    - Due to Native Americans' current isolation on some of the least fertile land in this country, their crops are often suited to more extreme conditions—a vital hedge in an age of climate change.
2. Ask students to bring the Food Tank List of "20 Native North American Foods with Stories to Tell" up on their computers or tablets.

    https://foodtank.com/news/2016/07/indigenous-foods-historically-and-culturally-important-to-north-americ/
    (Search by name if the link does not work.)
3. Read aloud or do a read around of the first seven paragraphs.

    When you have finished, ask students: Why, according to the text, are indigenous foods valuable?
    - They contribute to plant diversity—diminished diversity being a consequence of industrial agriculture.
    - They offer health benefits—in contrast to engineered foods that have negative health consequences.
    - They are resistant to drought and disease—in contrast to conventional crops that have become less and less resistant due to an overuse of chemical pesticide and herbicides.

      In these ways, such plants offer solutions to some of the problems posed by conventional agriculture.
4. These are foods, as the title suggests, with "a story to tell." Students will now research some of those foods in order to learn and tell those stories.

    PRODUCT: You may want students to prepare a presentation, poster, or less formal oral presentation.

    RESOURCES: Students will use both the entry in this list and information linked to it. Below are the 12 foods in the list that are linked to the fullest resources.

    SMALL GROUPS: Divide students into pairs or trios. Either assign students to a specific food or ask them to select from among these 12 foods. If your

students have difficulty contributing equally to a project have students work independently, assigning more than one student to each of the twelve foods.

I have listed the highlighted search terms students should use. Ask students to write a bibliographic citation for each.

Acorn*: name and "central to diet and lives" links

Anishinaabe Manoomin (Wild Rice): "cultivated"

Bay of Fundy Dulse: name

Blue Camas: name and "sustainability"

Candy Roaster Squash: name

Cholla Cactus Flower Buds: name

Highbush Cranberry: name and "water soluble"

Mesquite: name and "make"

Ostrich Fern Fiddleheads: "successfully commercialized" and "originally harvested"

Pawpaws*: "folksongs" and "growers"

Ramon seed: name and "seeds"

Tehuacan Amaranth: name

** Great for especially strong students as there is a lot of linked information.*

5. Ask students to take notes as they go and to keep track of where they source their information.
6. So what questions do students want to answer?

   Students should answer the following questions, being sure to put what they learn in their own words or, where necessary, quoting directly from the sources.

   - What are both the common and Latin names of the plant?
   - Where does the plant grow? (Where is it found, and in what kind of environment?)
   - What does the plant look like?
   - Who are the peoples who traditionally cultivated or gathered it? Do they still do so today?
   - What part of the plant can we eat? In what way or ways is it prepared?
   - What nutritional benefits does the food offer?
   - How can you characterize its cultural value?
   - Is the plant still common or at risk of disappearance?
   - Is it grown or cultivated commercially?
   - What else should we know about it?
7. Give students ample time to research, take notes, and put together their presentations/posters. Remind students in both cases to use precise, evocative language; to add images, maps, or other information to make their final product effective and appealing; and to cite their sources accurately.
8. End the lesson with a gallery walk or presentations.

Part II: Cooking Lab

L.30

REVALUING INDIGENOUS WISDOM

Please use this margin to notate how to best adapt this curriculum to your students.

Lesson 30 presents a dish created through a program designed to expose young people to Native foods, medicines, and practices. According to the First Nations Development Institute website, today's dish was created by students in a Youth Leadership program in Minnesota. The Wild Gitigan Salad includes traditional and garden foods, and makes a substantial, delicious dish.

Because some students may be working on Anishinaabe Manoomin, or wild rice, for their research projects, consider asking students to share some of what they have learned at the start of lab. Consider showing video footage of the harvest of wild rice, a ritual that helps to keep Native people in Minnesota in close contact with the land.

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Task: DISCOVERING THE POWER OF INDIGENOUS FOODS

FOOD Ed.

REVALUING INDIGENOUS WISDOM

ACORN
name and "central to diet and lives" links

ANISHINAABE MANOOMIN
(Wild Rice)
"cultivated"

BAY OF FUNDY DULSE
name

BLUE CAMAS
name and "sustainability"

CANDY ROASTER SQUASH
name

CHOLLA CACTUS FLOWER BUDS
name

HIGHBUSH CRANBERRY
name and "water soluble"

MESQUITE
name and "make"

OSTRICH FERN FIDDLEHEADS
"successfully commercialized" and "originally harvested"

PAWPAWS
"folksongs" and "growers"

RAMON SEED
name and "seeds"

TEHUACAN AMARANTH
name

In this exercise, you will research foods identified by Food Tank as "20 Native North American Foods with Stories to Tell." Working in small groups or individually, your job is to uncover and present in a poster or presentation the value of this food.

Food Tank's list is located at https://foodtank.com/news/2016/07/indigenous-foods-historically-and-culturally-important-to-north-americ/

The foods for which the fullest information is available are listed to the left, followed by the search terms you want to use for your research.

As you research, remember to quote directly from the source or put the information provided in your own words. Write a bibliographic citation for each.

As you read, seek the fullest answers you can find to the following questions:

1. What are both the common and Latin names of the plant?
2. Where does the plant grow? (Where geographically is it found, and in what kind of environment?)
3. What does the plant look like?
4. Who are the peoples who traditionally cultivated or gathered it? Do they still do so today?
5. What part of the plant can we eat? In what way or ways is it prepared?
6. What nutritional benefits does the food offer?
7. How can you characterize its cultural value?
8. Is the plant still common or at risk of disappearance?
9. Is it grown or cultivated commercially?
10. What else should we know about it?

Take the time to you to work carefully through your research, taking notes as you go. In your final product, be sure to use precise, evocative language; to add images, maps, or other information to make your final product effective and appealing; and to cite your sources accurately.

REVALUING INDIGENOUS WISDOM

WILD RICE GITIGAN SALAD

16 students

Multiply this recipe by two.

Equipment List

- 2 6-qt. pots or large saucepans
- colander
- 2 induction burners
- 8 cutting boards
- 8 knives
- 2 wooden spoons
- ½ and 1 cup dry measures
- 1 cup and 1 quart liquid measure
- 1 tablespoon, ¼ teaspoon measuring spoons
- fine grater
- table fork
- salad spinner
- 1 whisk
- 2 medium mixing bowls
- 1 large serving bowl
- serving tongs or large spoon

Food Items

- 4 sprigs thyme
- 1 cup cooked black beans, or 1/3 cup dry beans
- 1 ½ cups wild rice
- 3 cups vegetable stock
- 2 bunches kale (about 8 cups of finely sliced leaves)
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes or ground cherries
- ½ cup grated Romano or pecorino cheese
- 1 lemon
- ¼ cup olive oil
- salt and pepper

L.30 Lab

REVALUING INDIGENOUS WISDOM

WILD RICE GITIGAN SALAD

YIELD: 8 1-cup servings

From *https://firstnations.org/recipes#A*

Ingredients

FOR THE SALAD:

- 4 sprigs fresh thyme
- 1½ cups whole wild rice
- 3 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
- 1 cup cooked black beans (if using dried beans, 1/3 cup dried yields 1 cup cooked)
- 2 bunches (about 8 cups) kale
- 1 cup baby tomatoes or ground cherries, rinsed and halved
- ½ cup grated pecorino Romano cheese or parmesan cheese

FOR THE DRESSING:

- Juice of 1 lemon (about 2 tablespoons juice)
- 1 tablespoon fresh grated lemon zest
- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
- ¼ teaspoon salt & freshly ground black pepper

Directions

1. Cook the black beans. Either soak beans overnight or use the quick-boil method. Then, add beans to a pot of fresh water, and boil until done, about 1-2 hours. Set aside to cool.
2. Meanwhile, cook the wild rice. Rinse the rice well in a bowl of cold water and drain. Add rice, vegetable broth, and thyme to a pot and simmer for 20 minutes. Remove from heat and let the rice stand in the pot, covered, for 5 minutes. Remove the thyme stems and fluff the rice with a fork. Set aside to cool.
3. Wash the kale and remove the ribs. Thinly slice the kale into ribbons. Using a salad spinner, spin until most of the water is gone.
4. In a large serving bowl, add the kale, a drizzle of olive oil, and a little salt. Massage the kale until it starts to soften and wilt, about 2 to 3 minutes. Set aside while you make the dressing.