

**FOOD FROM THE SEA: GUEST CHEF CHOWDER GR: 3-5 (LESSON 10)**

**Elder Quotation:** “I know where to go. I know what to get. I don’t get so much that, you know, most of it is going to be ruined, ‘cause we have pretty good preserving system these days. You have your freezers and stuff like that. We didn’t have that back then. You only get what you can use or what somebody you know can use.”

- Lawrence Evanoff<sup>1</sup> born in 1948 and raised in Old Chenega

**Grade Level:** 3-5

**Overview:** Food from the sea/*imarlat neqet* is a major component of the traditional subsistence lifestyle. The Sugpiat and Eyak of today continue this tradition even as they adapt to change.

**Standards:**

<i>AK Cultural:</i>	<i>AK Content:</i>	<i>CRCC:</i>
D1: Acquire in-depth cultural knowledge through active participation and meaningful interaction with Elders.	Science F (3): A student should understand and the dynamic relationship among scientific, cultural, social, and personal perspectives and should (3) develop an understanding of the importance of recording and validating cultural knowledge.	L1: Students should understand the value and importance of the Sugt’stun language and be actively involved in its preservation.

**Lesson Goal:** Students understand how the subsistence lifestyle continues and has adapted to changing circumstances.

**Lesson Objectives:** Students will:

- Recognize how subsistence traditions have adapted to changes.
- Identify subsistence foods, their location, and uses.

**Vocabulary Words:**

Sugt’stun Dialects

English:	PWS:	Lower Cook Inlet:	Eyak:
Listen! (Directed at 3+)	<i>Niicugniluci!</i>	<i>Niicugniluci!</i>	
barbecue	<i>manyuq</i>	<i>manyukq</i>	
spoon	<i>luskaq</i>	<i>luskaq</i>	
Enjoy!	<i>Piturnertuq!</i>	<i>Nunaniklluku!</i> (very good eating)	

**Materials/Resources Needed:**

- (Washed) Clamshells, sticks with split ends for spoon handles (one each per student)
- Glue, small paper plates on which to dry spoons
- OPTIONAL: Small knives if sticks will be split by students
- Hot plate, pot, cutting board, knife, ladle, stirring spoon, etc. for cooking demo
- Spoons, small bowls, napkins for class sampling

### **Kit Library:**

Salomon, Anne et al. *Imam Cimiucia: Our Changing Sea*  
Chandonnet, Ann. *The Alaska Heritage Seafood Cookbook*

### **Teacher Preparation:**

- Review Activity Plan and practice Sugt'stun or Eyak vocabulary.
- Contact your Local Education Coordinator or local Tribal Council for a list of Elders that could share his or her expertise as guest chef demonstrating how to make a sea chowder.
- Before the Elder or Recognized Expert arrives review with students how to interact respectfully with the Elder during their visit. Elders are always served first.
- In conjunction with Elder/Chef decide on ingredients needed for chowder
- Have students/parents bring in chowder contributions from ingredients list.
- Assemble hot plate, pot, utensils, bowls, spoons and napkins for cooking demo.
- Prepare Food from the Sea display of activity photos and work sheets.
- Assemble clamshells and sticks gathered from field trip. Split one end of each stick deep enough to accept insertion of clamshells OR supervise students splitting stick handles.
- *Optional:* Invite parents to class to share chowder and what students have learned.

**Opening:** People often say ‘when the tide is out the table is set.’ Now that we’ve explored the beach and identified food that we can eat can you explain what that means? (*Allow students to describe some of the food from the sea they found and harvested.*)

### **Activities:**

#### **Class I:**

1. Introduce Elder/Guest Chef to the class and invite him or her to recall favorite tidal edibles and whether the food was eaten raw, barbecued, smoked, dried, baked, or boiled. Remind students to listen carefully (*Niicugniluci!*)
2. Lead discussion on traditional ways to prepare food from the sea:
  - Raw – known to be safe to eat without cooking (i.e., not crab or shrimp)
  - Barbecued – *Manyuq/Manyukq* – suspended over flame, inserted into ‘tongs’ made from sturdy split green sticks and/or skewered on green sticks stuck into the ground beside the fire<sup>ii</sup>
  - Dried – strung up on spruce roots or draped over branches and hung in open air
  - Smoked – brined and strung up or draped over branches in smoke house<sup>iii</sup>
  - Baked – wrapped in leaves and buried with hot stones in earth pits<sup>iv</sup>
  - Boiled – placed in waterproof baskets or bentwood boxes in water heated by hot stones<sup>v</sup>
3. Talk to students about how living s subsistence lifestyle means using the resources at hand. Carol Ann Kompkoff of Chenega recalled the seal barbecues/*manyuq* of her youth:

“(My Dad) would catch a seal and go up to the beach and cut it open. He would cut out the parts we wanted and then go cut alder sticks for us to roast the seal meat, ribs, kidneys, and liver. My job was to get the plates, which were big flat rocks. Nature always provided the plates. You didn’t have to bring plastic plates or paper plates or anything. You didn’t worry about getting them dirty. When it came time to wash the dishes, all I did was set them in the water and leave them there. It was always so simple.”<sup>vi</sup>

4. Distribute a clamshell and a stick (OPTIONAL and a knife) to make a traditional Sugpiat spoon/*luskaq*. Have students insert clamshells into splits in sticks to use as a spoon/*luskaq* for their chowder. (*For those shells that don't stay in position offer some 'glue assistance' and place on small plate to dry.*)
5. Invite Elder/Guest Chef to describe modern adaptations:
  - Introduction of knives and metal cookware by Russians by 1800s
  - Introduction of metal stoves (wood burning, then gas, then electric)
  - Introduction of non-local ingredients (flour, milk, sugar, tea, spices)
  - Changing tastes as more Western food available
6. Have Elder/Guest Chef prepare chowder.
7. Invite students to describe ingredient origins and indicate any relevant photos on display.
8. Discuss and compare how the Elder/Guest Chef prepared this chowder differently from the time before metal utensils were adopted.
9. Serve and distribute bowls of chowder to any Elders present first and then to students.
10. Before everyone 'digs in' have Elder recite a grace of thankfulness.
11. Enjoy! (*Piturnertuq!/Nunaniklluku!*)
12. Student presentations: salmon life cycle posters; selected sea lion interviews; sea lion report; what they've learned about subsistence.

Assessment:

- Students can explain what they learned about subsistence foods, their locations and uses.
- Students are able to compare traditional and adapted cooking methods and means.
- Students correctly pronounced Sugt'stun or Eyak voacbulary words.

<sup>i</sup> Poling, Donald Robert. *Chenega Diaries: Stories and Voices of Our Past*. Chenega Corporation, 2011. p. 254

<sup>ii</sup> Chandonnet, Ann. *The Alaska Heritage Seafood Cookbook*. Alaska Northwest Books, 1995. p.272

<sup>iii</sup> Chandonnet, pp.274, 276

<sup>iv</sup> Chandonnet, pp.270 - 271

<sup>v</sup> Chandonnet, pp.271 - 272

<sup>vi</sup> Smelcer, John E. and Morgen A. Young. *We Are the Land We Are the Sea: Stories of Subsistence from the People of Chenega*. Chenega Corporation, 2007. p.48

