

**FOOD FROM THE SEA: GUEST CHEF CHOWDER GR: PREK-2 (LESSON 11)**

**Elder Quotation:** “All my life, I depended on that shoreline. I would go down to the beach to collect anything to make chowder for that night’s dinner. If we needed food I knew where to get it. The beach provided for us.”

– Elenore McMullen, Elder and past chief, Port Graham, 2004<sup>i</sup>

**Grade Level: PreK-2**

**Overview:** Food from the sea is a major component of the traditional subsistence lifestyle. The Sugpiat 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 depends upon knowledge of what to harvest and how to prepare foods from the sea and continues to this day.

**Lesson Objectives:** Students will:

- Recognize how subsistence traditions have adapted to changes.
- Identify subsistence foods, their locations, and uses.
- Learn the Sugt’stun or Eyak vocabulary listed below.

**Vocabulary Words:** Sugt’stun Dialects

English:	PWS:	Lower Cook Inlet:	Eyak:
Listen! (Directed to 3+)	<i>Niicugniluci!</i>	<i>Niicugniluci!</i>	
food	<i>neget</i>	<i>neget</i>	<a href="#"><i>Giyah</i></a>
ocean	<i>imaq</i>	<i>imaq</i>	<i>lahdz</i> (forward, out to sea)
Enjoy! (Bon appetit!)	<i>Piturnertuq!</i>	<i>Nunaniklluku!</i> (Very good eating!)	

**Materials/Resources Needed:**

- Photos slate knives and water proof basket (See below)
- Hot plate, pot, cutting board, knife, ladle, stirring spoon, etc. for cooking demo
- Spoons, small bowls, napkins for class sampling

### **Kit Library:**

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

### **Web Resources:**

#### **Traditional Cooking Artifacts**

- <https://alaska.si.edu/> Sugpiaq artifacts including cooking baskets and knives held by Smithsonian

### **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 respectfully interact with the Elder during his or her visit. Elders are always served food 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.
- *Optional:* Invite parents to class to share what students have learned and chowder.

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

### **Activities:**

1. Introduce Elder/Guest Chef to the class and invite him or her to recall favorite tidal edibles and whether the food/*neget* was eaten raw, barbecued, smoked, dried, baked, or boiled. Remind students to listen carefully (*Niicugniluci!*).
2. Lead discussion on traditional ways to prepare food/*neget* from the sea/*imaq*:
  - Raw – known to be safe to eat without cooking (i.e., not crab or shrimp)
  - Barbecued – *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. Share photos of slate knives and water tight woven basket for cooking. (See below) Explain time and skill required to make knife and weave waterproof basket.
4. 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
5. Have Elder/Guest Chef describe and prepare chowder.
6. Invite students to describe ingredient origins and indicate any relevant photos on display.

7. Discuss and compare how the Elder/Guest Chef prepared this chowder differently from the time before metal utensils were adopted.
8. Serve and distribute bowls of chowder to any Elders present first and then to students.
9. Before everyone ‘digs in’ have Elder recite and teach an offering of thanks for the food/*neget* being shared.
10. Enjoy!/*Piturnertuq!/Nunaniklluku!*

**Assessment:**

- Students recalled subsistence foods, their locations and uses.
- Students compared traditional and adapted cooking methods and means.
- Students correctly pronounced the Sugt’sun or Eyak vocabulary words.

<sup>i</sup> Salomon, Anne K., et al. *Imam Cimiucia: Our Changing Sea*, Alaska Sea Grant College Program, 2011. p. 2

<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



Slate Ulu and Sharpener; Courtesy of Cordova Historical Museum



Slate Knife; Courtesy of Cordova Historical Museum



Cooking Basket, Mark King Collection; Courtesy of Ilanka Museum, Cordova