

## TRADITIONAL FOODS AND RECIPES: HOW DID THEY KEEP THEIR FOOD? 3-5 (LESSONS 8-9)

**Elder Quote/Belief:** “And you can rinse it off before you eat it. Lot of that salt would go away, but there was underground storage for some fresh stuff. No refrigerators to speak of. We’d get glacier ice. Sometime, if you wanted to keep something longer, [we’d] get glacier ice, put it in an icehouse or a little shed. I guess [we] made our own refrigerator, but just about everything was canned, jarred, dried, or smoked.”

Michael Vigil<sup>1</sup>

**Grade Level:** 3-6

**Overview:** Preservation of foods has existed since the creation of man. Whether human beings chose to pound their fresh meats into jerky, dried and preserved in a bag or dried seal stomach filled with berries and oil of some sort such as melted bone marrow or adding seal oil as a way of preservation.

**Standards:**

| <i>AK Cultural:</i>   | <i>AK Content Science:</i>   | <i>CRCC:</i>  |
|---|--|---|
| <b>D4-</b> Gather oral and written history and provide and appropriate interpretation of its cultural meaning and significance. | <b>A 14a:</b> A student who meets the content standard should understand: a) the interdependence between living things and their environments. | <b>SS3-</b> Be able to prepare and preserve gathered foods. |

**Lesson Goal:** To discover various types of traditional preservation.

**Lesson Objective(s):** Students will:

- Learn about four traditional methods of preservation.
- Students will learn the three Sugt’stun/ Eyak words.

**Vocabulary Words:** Sugt’stun Dialects

| English:   | Prince William Sound: | Lower Cook Inlet: | Eyak: |
|--|-----------------------|-------------------|-------|
| Seal stomach put dried food and meat in seal oil food for winter |                       | Qaigiam qaqsauqa  |       |
| Cache  |                       | Qulgutaq          |       |
| Root Cellar  |                       | Qulguyaq          |       |
| Wooden   |                       | Pucaq             |       |

**Materials/Resources Needed:**

Contact local Elder/Recognized Expert

*We Are The Land We Are The Sea*, Collect and Edited by John E. Smelcer and Morgen A. Young  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S12zZhdOckc>

Worksheet for each student

Recipe book from Lesson 1

### **Teacher Preparation:**

- Contact an Elder/Recognized Expert to invite to visit the class and share knowledge about food preservation.
- Review PWS/LCI/Eyak vocabulary words
- Review section from the book “*We Are the Land We Are the Sea,*” Jesse Tiedeman’s story, page 111.
- View the rotting watermelon YouTube video to create questions to ask how this watermelon could have been saved from rotting.
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S12zZhdOcke>
- Send home with students’ worksheet on their favorite food and how it is preserved.
- Have students bring one of their favorite foods from home, along with their worksheet.

### **Prep for Class II**

- Assign students in groups to discuss amongst each other and they will appoint someone from their group to share what they learned about preserving and storing foods.
- Ask students to keep all their documents to insert into their recipe book (from previous lesson, “Let’s make a recipe book.”)

**Opening:** What are some of the traditional ways food was preserved?

### **Activities:**

#### **Class I:**

1. Introduce guest speaker, Elder/Recognized speaker to the students, encourage students to ask questions.
2. Review Sugt’s tun/ Eyak words and practice.
3. View the YouTube and discuss the purpose of preserving foods so it does not rot.
4. Prompt ideas:
  - How is the food we eat preserved?
  - Is it canned, dried, frozen? Where do you get this food?
  - Does your family can, dry, smoke, salt and freeze food that has been gathered or hunted?
  - Have you heard of using a; cache, root cellar and dried seal stomach for storing food.
5. Make the T-chart, asking two questions and document student’s responses:
  - How do you think food was preserved, before there were refrigerators?
  - How do we preserve and store food?
6. What are some of the ways of preserving foods; oil packed, drying, smoking, salting, canning, freezing.
7. Give student’s worksheet to take home and bring back.

#### **Class 11:**

1. Have students use the vocabulary words when having their discussions.
2. Place students into groups to share their worksheets with one another.
3. Ask them to appoint a spoke person to share with the class after compiling information from the group.
4. Have each group do a presentation of their findings.

5. After students share, they can insert all their documents into the recipe book.
6. Ask students if there is anything new to add to the T-chart.



Wooden Barrel photo by Kari Brookover 2017

"I wrote some old ways of how Aleuts used to cook different things. I wrote two recipes of how my grandmother used to make dried cockles. She used to get cockles from the beach, and we would get a rock and crack the shell, take the cockle out, and squeeze it until we got all the mud out. Then my mother would take them up to her house and boil them for about ten minutes. She had a big darning needle and cotton thread. We'd thread the cockles on that string. My sister and I had fun. We'd ask my grandma what she was going to do next and she'd say, "We're going to put them in the smokehouse for about half an hour just to give them the smoke flavor." I asked, "Can we eat them then?" and she replied, "No you have to wait. I have to put them in the barrel of fresh seal oil."... Then she (grandma) brought the cockles in from the seal oil and put them on a cutting board and sliced the cockles real thin. She put the sliced cockles on top of the rice. It was a good dish. I never got hungry in my young days."

Jessie Tiedeman.  
"Subsistence in Tatitlek."  
*We Are the Land, We Are the Sea: Stories of Subsistence from the People of Chenega.* By John E. Smelcer and Morgen A. Young. Anchorage, AK: Chenega Heritage, 2007. 112-13. Print.



“Seal stomachs were very important. You clean it up and blow it up as big as you wanted it to be. Cut it a little so it will expand to one-eighth inch thick. Keep blowing up until it is big. Then stuff it with fish eggs, berries, seal oil, strips of seal blubber and close it with a wooden plug. It would be air tight. Nothing would spoil. You pack water in them too and use it for a water container on the kayak. Seal lion stomachs get to be about three feet long!”

Meganek, Walter Sr.<sup>ii</sup>



Dried seal stomach with wooden plug (wooden plug carved into a seal head) done by Ron Lind 2017

## **Preserved Seagull Eggs**

1 dozen seagull eggs

1 quart of seal oil

Boil the seagull eggs. Let cool. Peel the shell off. In a large jar add the seal oil and peeled seagull eggs. Be sure the eggs are covered by the seal oil. Store the preserved eggs in a cool, dark place. Preserved eggs will last indefinitely.

## **Salted Salmon**

Several pieces raw salmon

Rock salt

Take salmon and layer with rock salt-rock salt, fish, rock salt, fish, etc. Make sure the fish and salt are compacted. Store in a cool dark place until the fish is cured. Around October or November, take the fish out. Soak the fish in water overnight to soak the out of it. Eat the fish like that or cut it into cubes and boil it. Spices can also be added to the fish. Serve with rice or potatoes.

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<sup>i</sup> (2011). Preserving Food. Chenega Diaries Stories and Voices of Our Past (pp. 251). Ashburn, VA: Chenega Corporation Service Center

<sup>ii</sup> "I Was Born Between Two Cultures". Life and Times in Port Graham. Soldotna, AK: Kenai Peninsula Borough School District, 1982. 23-37. Print.

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**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Who is being interviewed?** \_\_\_\_\_

**What is your favorite food?**

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**How was this food preserved?**

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**Are there stories about how food was stored for the winter?**

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**Can you draw a picture of your favorite food and how it was preserved?**