

TRADITIONAL FOODS AND RECIPES: SPLITTING FISH 6-12 (LESSON 4-6)

Elder Quote/Belief: *“Families were busy in the fall putting away salmon for winter. Each family would smoke a couple hundred pounds of fish at least. They would mainly smoke or dry the fish. Then they would store them in either cardboard boxes or gunny-sacks, left from the sugar and flour we used to get. Back in those days, the climate was quite a bit different. The winters were a lot drier, so the fish pretty much kept all through the winter.”* Bill Hjort¹

Grade Level: 6-12

Overview: The Chugach Region people live on the coastline where salmon has been one of the main sources of food. There were many traditional ways of preparing and preserving salmon for the winter. One of the popular ways today is to split the fish for drying and smoking.

Standards:

<u>AK Cultural:</u> D4- Gather oral and written history and provide an appropriate interpretation of its cultural meaning and significance.	<u>AK Content Science:</u> F3- Develop an understanding of the importance of recording and validating cultural knowledge.	<u>CRCC:</u> SS(4)- Students should have knowledge of preservation techniques for traditional foods/plants.
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Lesson Goal: To teach the traditional ways of splitting fish for drying, stripping and smoking to preserve for the winter consumption.

Lesson Objective(s): Students will:

- Learn how to split (filet) fish
- Apply the Sugt’stun/Eyak words in their electronic presentation
- Create an electronic presentation

Vocabulary Words: Sugt’stun Dialects

English:	Prince William Sound:	Lower Cook Inlet:	Eyak:
Fish		Iqulluk	
Splitting Fish		Siqluku qukakun	
Strip fish for drying		Tamuleqlluki	
Strip fish for smoking		Paliliaqlluki	
Gills		Pacit	
Backbone		Pukqum nana	

Fins		Culugsutia	
Cut the fish head in half		Kuplluku igullum nasqua	
Brine		Salunam merra	
Smokehouse		Ciqlluaq	
Kidney		Tartuq	

Materials/Resources Needed:

Books:

How to Split, Dry and Smoke Salmon
Looking Back on Subsistence pp. 6-9, p. 23
Chenega As I Saw it-It's people, pp. 9-11, p. 14
We are the Land, We are the People

Websites:

<http://jukebox.uaf.edu/NanPG/nanwalek/html/23506.html> Vincent Kvasnikoff #13. Fishing
<http://jukebox.uaf.edu/NanPG/prtgrham/html/23507.html> Simeon Kvasnikoff # 20 & 21

Video:

Diane Selanoff demonstration for Cordova group
Copy of fish anatomy handout for each student

In the kit:

Chugachmiut apron
Cutting board
A fresh or frozen (thawed for class) salmon
Filet knife or ulu
A metal spoon
Sharpener
Gloves
Clean container for the filets
Twine

School provisions:

Tarp or Newspaper
Cutting board
Garbage can with doubled up plastic bags (place all the waste on layers of newspaper to keep the blood from dripping), for blood and innards

Teacher Preparation:

- Invite an Elder or Recognized Expert into the classroom to share their knowledge on traditional way of splitting fish and the Sugt'stun/Eyak words that correlate with the process.
- If Elder is coming, review with the students, proper ways of showing respect to the guest speaker.
- Review the books and booklet on *How to Split, Dry and Smoke Salmon*, the books have preservation techniques and beliefs

- Review the interviews on the Project Jukebox site
- Review the video of Diane Selanoff showing the splitting process.

First Clip

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/tdtjuem1afp1j97/10a%20Diane%20Selanoff%2C%20Fish%20FileStripCan%20%205.31.2017.MP4?dl=0>

Second Clip

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/bsp1lilf0wxsov/10b%20Diane%20Selanoff%2C%20Fish%20FileStripCan%20%205.31.2017.MP4?dl=0>

Third Clip

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/thkarqigm8aqiu4/10c%20Diane%20Selanoff%2C%20Fish%20FileStripCan%20%205.31.2017.MP4?dl=0>

Fourth Clip

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/hzbr77c8pidkfq/10d%20Diane%20Selanoff%2C%20Fish%20FileStripCan%20%205.31.2017.MP4?dl=0>

- The lesson is best to do outside, but if showing how to split the fish inside, please cover the table and floor with a lot of newspaper
- Put cardboard on top of newspaper.
- Give fish heads/fish eggs to Elder/students if they would like to take home and cook.
- Create documentary on information of the salmon
- Insert response from question throughout the classes
- Video the cutting of the salmon, processing, making strips, and cutting twine for hanging fish
- Ask for a volunteer/s to smoke the fish that has been processed and bring it back to the class when it is ready to consume.
- Have the volunteer/s document how the fish was smoked from the beginning to the end.
- A copy of labeling a fish, have students apply Sug'stun/Eyak vocabulary to worksheet
- Students share a recipe

Opening:

Traditional ways of preserving salmon have been passed down from generation to generation. One of the ways is the splitting, drying and smoking of fish for preservation is still a favorite today among the Chugach Region people. This lesson will be how to split fish and depending on time, can include instructions for making strips. Traditionally, no part of the fish wasted, so I will eventually show you how to cut the fish head, how we use the back bone and save the fish eggs. The fish eggs were used in many ways depending where you live; there are several recipes at the end of the lesson. Below is an old belief about salmon when caught and how to treat the remains.

“Fish intestines should be thrown back into the water so that they may turn into new fish. If they drift ashore, the soul of the fish, which remains in the guts, will die and the fish will not come to life again. The first fish (salmon?) caught each year must be eaten entirely except for the gall and the gills. If anything of the fish is wasted, it will never come back.”ⁱⁱⁱ

Activities:

Class I:

1. If an Elder is available, ask the Elder to show the students the traditional way to split fish while at the same time saying the Sugt'stun/Eyak word for the fish parts.
2. If an Elder is not available, have the students watch the video where Diane Selanoff shows how to split fish.
3. Place the whole fish on the cutting board made from the cardboard box, lying on top of layers of newspaper and say the Sugt'stun/Eyak words for each part listed.
4. Start the splitting process by cutting off the head of the salmon, cut under the gill plate near the throat.
5. Gut the fish by cutting off the anal fin and slice up the middle of the belly, starting from the vent up to where the head was removed. Do not cut deeply, avoiding areas such as; eggs, stomach and the gall bladder (if gall bladder is cut, it can ruin the meat of the fish)
6. Pull out the innards carefully, save the eggs if it is a female for later use.
7. Place the innards on a clean piece of cardboard for students to look at and create a drawing or capture the parts with a camera, print it out to label the parts and research what they are.
8. Using a spoon or the ulu and scrap out the blood (kidney), wash the fish and rinse the blood from cavity of the fish, removing as much as you can.
9. Ask if anyone wants the backbone (in my village people will smoke them for a day or so to boil to have with seal oil and rice or just dry them to eat throughout the winter) as well as some of the fins especially if there is fish meat still left on them.
10. Do you notice the lateral line going across the salmon? Have students research the purpose of the lateral line.

Class II:

1. The fish is ready to cut, split and strip, depending if you want to make dry fish or smoked salmon strips.
2. Questions for students;
 - Have you made smoked fish?
 - What kind?
 - Did you make dry fish?
 - How was it preserved?
 - Has anyone had fish preserved in seal oil?
 - Why was it preserved in seal oil?
3. Have Elder/Recognized Expert demonstrate how to cut the salmon into strips.
4. Encourage students to ask questions about brining, smoking and preserving of the fish.
 - How do you make brine?
 - What kind of salt is used?
 - Are there other ingredients you add?
 - How do you know if the brine is ready for the fish?
 - What kind of knot is used when tying with the twine?
 - How long do let the strips sit in the brine?
 - Does it matter what kind of smokehouse you put them in?
 - Do you have to get a certain kind of wood?

- How do you choose your wood?
 - Do you burn wood ever day to cure the fish?
 - How long do you smoke the fish?
 - Is the fish preserved a certain way?
5. After discussion make sure students document the responses.
 6. Read, Looking Back on Subsistence p. 6-9, p. 23 and Chenega *As I Saw it-It's people*, p. 9-11, p. 14. Is fish processed this way now? What preservation techniques changed and why?
 7. Have students bring a favorite recipe for fish as part of their electronic presentation

Class III

1. Allow students to create an electronic presentation;
 - Include the steps of splitting, preparation for drying and stripping fish for smoking.
 - Research through books that come with the heritage kit
 - Online about splitting fish for drying and stripping for smoking
 - Preservation techniques; traditional vs. today
 - Recipes using fish and all parts
2. Have students present their work.

Assessment:

- Student correctly describes/shows the process of splitting, preparation for drying and stripping fish for smoking.
- Student applies Sugt'stun/Eyak vocabulary to presentation and labeling of fish worksheet.
- Student shared a traditional recipe for fish.
- Student created an electronic presentation



Splitting fish. Nick Anahonak (Dick's father) is the man at the back. Agrafina Anahonak is the woman kneeling in the middle.

Boiled Salmon Eggs

Fresh salmon eggs, still in the sack

Salt and pepper to taste

Boil a pot of water. Add the eggs to the boiling water. The sack will fall right off the eggs. After a few minutes, remove the eggs from the water, draining well. Season with salt and pepper.

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Crunchy Salmon Eggs

1 bucket raw salmon eggs (beebles)

1 onion

Salt and pepper to taste

Rinse the salmon eggs in cold water. Place them in a large bucket and cover them with water. Let them soak in the refrigerator overnight. The following day, drain off any excessive water. The beebles are ready when they will bounce on a flat surface. Place the beebles in a large bowl. Dice up the onion and add to the bowl. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Mix well.

(The eggs for this recipe is from salmon that are in the streams spawning)

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Piinaq

1 pot full of raw salmon eggs

Salmonberries

Blueberries

Place the salmon eggs in a large bowl and mash with a potato masher. The skins from the eggs will come off during this process. These should be discarded. Once the skins have all been removed, set the bowl of mashed eggs in a warm corner, covered. Ferment the eggs for three to four weeks or until the mixture develops a crust. In a large pot, heat several cups of salmonberries for about eight minutes. Mix well with fermented salmon eggs. Before serving, mix with fresh blueberries.

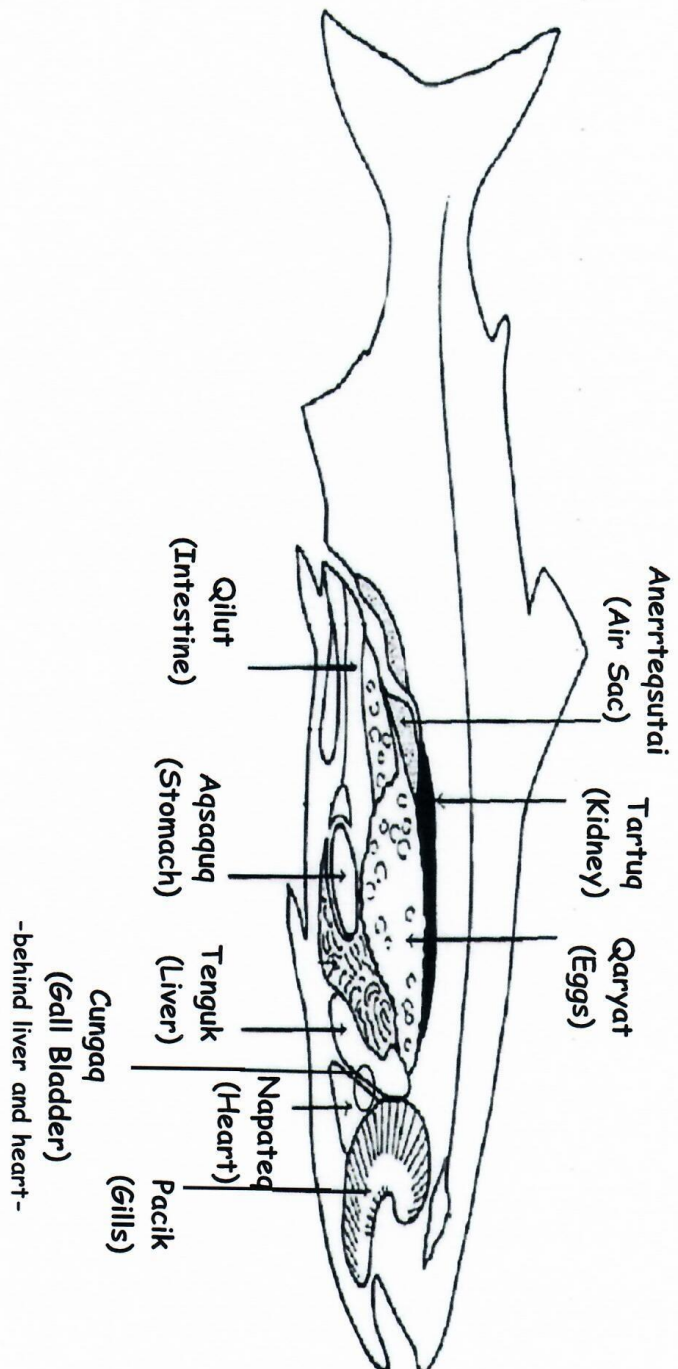
ⁱ Bill Hjort, Respecting Mother Nature, in *We Are the Land, We Are the Sea: Stories of Subsistence from the People of Chenega* (pp. 33). Anchorage, AK: Chenega Heritage, INC.

ⁱⁱ (1953). Birket-Smith K. *The Chugach Eskimo* (pp.42).

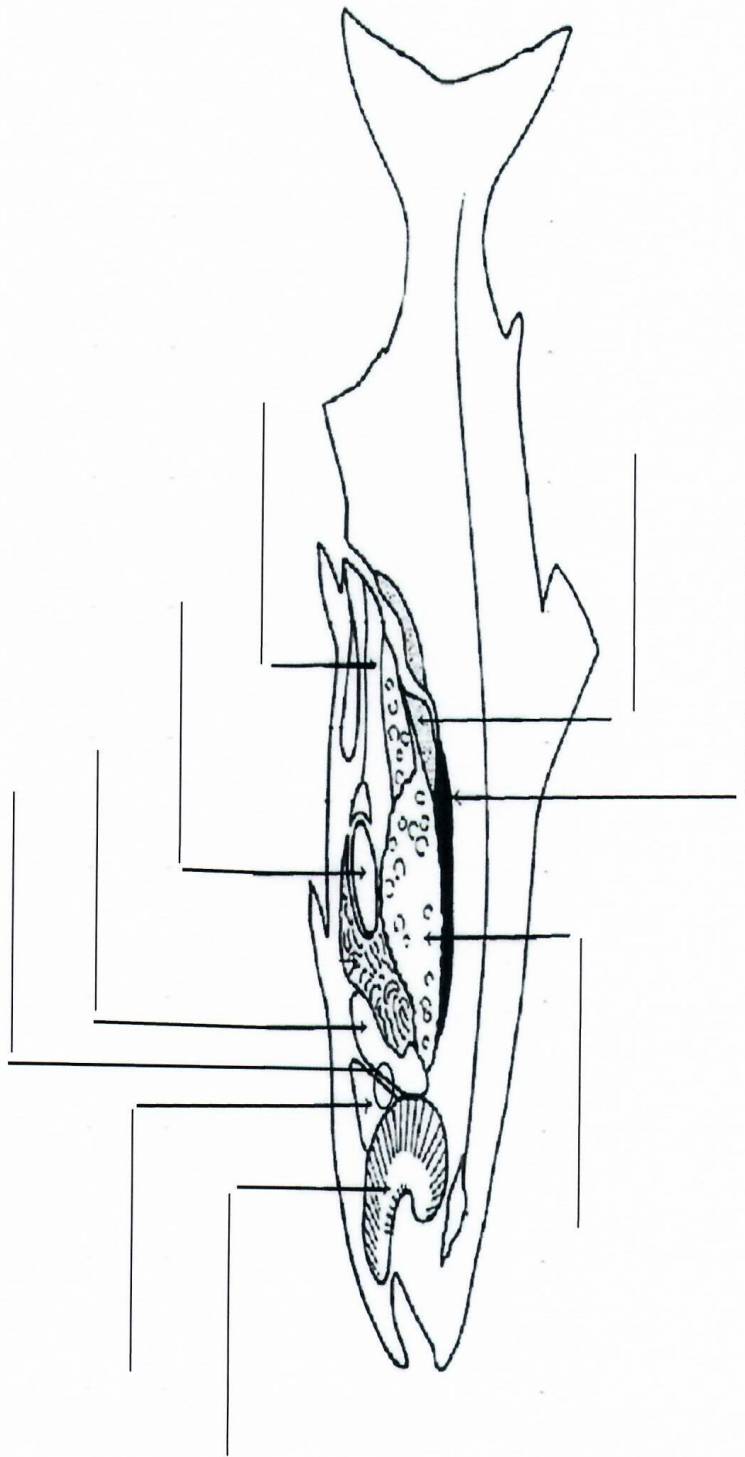
ⁱⁱⁱ (2007). The Old Ways. *We Are the Land, We Are the Sea: Stories of Subsistence from the People of Chenega* (pp. 152). Anchorage, AK: Chenega Heritage, INC.

^{iv} (2007). The Old Ways. In *We Are the Land, We Are the Sea: Stories of Subsistence from the People of Chenega* (pp. 152). Anchorage, AK: Chenega Heritage, INC.

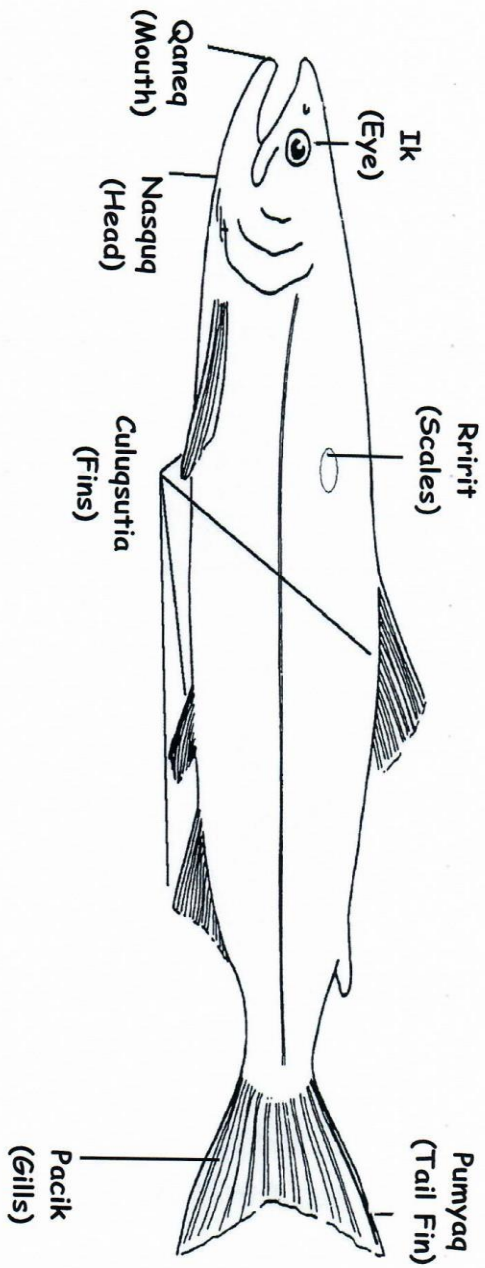
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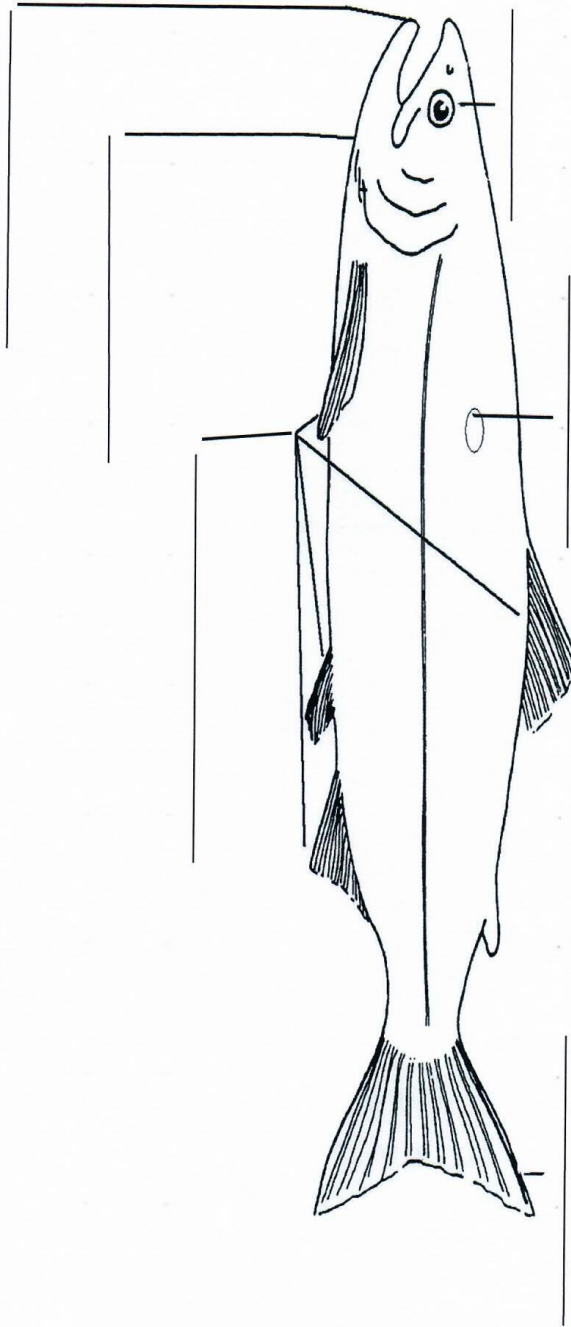


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