

# "COOKING AND EATING TOGETHER: FROM THE KITCHEN TABLE TO THE COMMUNITY MEAL" PHOTO ESSAY

## DIGGING IN: FACILITATING DIALOGUE AND ACTION

### KEY THEMES AND TERMS

Kitchen table, food sovereignty, longhouse, good mind, mindful eating, rituals, eating psychology, potluck suppers, collective cooking, *agradicimiento* ceremony, commensality, collective cooking, *comida*, *pip*, buried food, tamales, ancestors.

### CATALYZING CONNECTIONS

#### DECODING QUESTIONS

- *Description*: What stories are told? How did you feel reading them?
- *Personal Connection*: Do any of these stories connect to your personal experience or stories in your family?
- *Common Themes*: What social issues/themes are raised in these stories? Is there a common issue shared across contexts?
- *Social Analysis*: What are the historical and social processes that created this situation?
- *Planning for Action*: What can be done? What can I/we do?

#### SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

- Why does the new Canada Food Guide emphasize the act of eating together? What are the social forces and practices that have discouraged this?
- How did the Haudenosaunee longhouse make communal cooking and eating possible?
- What value does Chandra see in having rituals at the table before eating?
- Do you have any dinner table rituals?
- What rituals exist in the P'urepecha community when there are large communal meals?
- What is the cultural significance of buried food for the Mayans in the Yucatán?

### INTERGENERATIONAL AND INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

How has Anna Murtaugh carried on the legacy of her mother in organizing communal meals? What conditions in her town make this possible?

Organize an intergenerational interview around family cooking and eating practices. For example, if you are a young person, interview your grandmother or someone of her generation to find out about their practices and how they have shifted over time.

Compare the different stories shared in this photo essay. What are the geographic conditions and cultural values that shape their eating practices?

## **INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE ACTION**

Talk about your own daily practice of eating, how often you share cooking or eating with others.

Check out the Canada Food Guide: <https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/>. See what it says about the values of eating together and the suggestions it makes about how you can create more opportunities to share meals at home, at work, and in your community. Note that it recommends you put away distractions like TV and electronics. What challenges do you face in organizing the sharing of meals?

Plan a community potluck asking people to bring food that says something about their personal histories and/or cultural backgrounds. Share the stories behind the food.

What kind of rituals are used in your community around growing and eating food? Listen to "For the Wild Podcast" on rituals related to agriculture (<http://forthewild.world/listen/mary-evelyn-tucker-on-cosmological-re-inheritance-120> - from about 40-45 minutes).

## **DIGGING DEEPER: RESOURCES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH AND ACTION**

### **VIDEOS**

Choi, Zach. "ASMR Spicy Fire Noodles & Chicken Wings Mukbang (No Talking) Eating Sounds - Zach Choi ASMR." June 14, 2019. Video, 15:41.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FA23u4a7-js&list=RDQMGPp2PHoUKBY&start\\_radio=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FA23u4a7-js&list=RDQMGPp2PHoUKBY&start_radio=1).

A popular culture response to eating alone is found in the Mukbang videos in which a host films him/herself eating large amounts of food while interacting with an online audience.

Finkle, David. "Aboriginal Community Feast 2014." November 14, 2014. Video, 10:16. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hbyp8JxsPcQ>.

Indigenous Tourism BC. "The Importance of the Feast." October 22, 2014. Video, 2:28. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-PC6b3yY5R8>.

## **BOOKS AND ARTICLES**

Hayden, Brian, and Suzanne Villeneuve. "A Century of Feasting Studies." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 40, no. 1 (October 2011): 433-449.

Julier, Alice P. *Eating Together: Food, Friendship and Inequality*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2013.

Kerner, Susanne, Cynthia Chou, and Morten Warmind. *Commensality: From Everyday Food to Feast*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015.

Roberts, Wayne, and Lori Stahlbrand. "A Smiling Face is Half the Meal: Setting a Place for Culture in Food Advocacy." In *The Bloomsbury Handbook of Food and Popular Culture*, edited by Kathleen Lebesco and Peter Naccarato, 314-328. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018.

## **ORGANIZATIONS**

Slow Food is a global, grassroots organization, founded in 1989 to prevent the disappearance of local food cultures and traditions, counteract the rise of fast life and combat people's dwindling interest in the food they eat, where it comes from and how our food choices affect the world around us. A range of videos on related topics and from diverse parts of the world can be found:

Slow Food. "Slow Food - YouTube." Accessed July 5, 2020. <https://www.youtube.com/user/SlowFoodInt/videos>.