

## Food Traditions and Cultural Wisdom

This set of activities has been developed by Chaiti Seth, a sustainability educator. It is an introductory level suite of discussion-based activities to get community members, fellow professionals, or clients thinking about how their own food traditions and cultural wisdom aligns with sustainability.

- Role: Dietetic Educator; Community
- Activity: Education; Programming
- Region: Adaptable

### Materials:

- Ensure participants and facilitators review concepts of sustainability before beginning. You can use the Glossary in this Toolkit for key definitions and concepts, and if possible, it can be made available to participants during the activities.
- Photos of foods can help with this activity – see page 2 for some ideas.

### Objectives:

- Articulate local food traditions and cultural notions surrounding nutrition
- Make links between food traditions and cultural wisdom and western scientific nutrition models
- Identify contradictions between these two
- Consider how valuing and celebrating local food traditions and cultural wisdom can support an integrated understanding of the interconnections between nutrition and sustainability

### Activities:

#### Festivals & Celebrations

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- Ask participants to identify major local festivals and/or celebrations
- Ask participants to identify foods typically associated with these festivals/ celebrations and share in a small group
- In small groups, consider and map out how these particular foods are connected with season, climate, growing conditions, stories, nutritional needs at different times of year and/or life stages (for e.g. nutritional needs in winter versus summer or post-partum).
- Share key points from the small groups with the big group, then collectively brainstorm what these traditions might tell us about nutrition and sustainability and their interconnections.

#### Food Combinations

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- Ask participants to identify foods that cultural wisdom says should OR should not be eaten together
- Ask participants to identify rationales for these combinations—consider seasonality, harvest time, complementary nutrition or nutrient absorption, medicinal value, etc.
- As a group, brainstorm what these combinations tell us about understanding nutrition and/or sustainability

#### Social Norms:

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- Split into small groups. Give everyone a few minutes to reflect on childhood social norms around food (for example, eating suppers together, cooking specific foods with grandparents, community preserving or harvesting traditions, etc.).

