

Traditional food sources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

Australian Curriculum Links

Humanities and Social Sciences/7-10 History/Year 9/ Geographical Knowledge and Understanding/Biomes and food security/ACHGK063

Australian Curriculum Content Description

ACHGK063 Challenges to food production, including land and water degradation, shortage of fresh water, competing land uses, and climate change, for Australia and other areas of the world.

Australian Curriculum Elaboration

Investigating the impacts of alterations of biomes on the productivity and availability of staple resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (e.g. murnong or yam daisy in Victoria).

Australians Together Elaborations



The Wound



Our History



Why Me?



Our Cultures



My Response

Essential question

How does the disruption of food production affect communities and the wider population?

Introduction

This topic examines problems stemming from the significant disruption to Australian biomes caused by European colonisation. Alterations in diet have caused negative impacts on the health of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Additionally, there have been critical impacts on the survival of native flora and fauna due to introduced species. Students can examine solutions and come up with their own ideas for how native food sources can be developed and promoted.

Glossary

Terms that may need to be introduced to students prior to teaching the resource:

Cardiovascular disease: disease relating to blood supply to the heart, that can cause heart attacks or strokes.

Chronic disease: a long-lasting health condition with effects that impact on the day-to-day living of the sufferer.

Colonialised/colonialisation/colonialism: the act of one country taking over another; the invaded country is called a 'colony'.

Elder: a person in Aboriginal society who has gained recognition for their knowledge of culture.

Europeans/British/early settlers/colonisers/occupiers/invaders/convicts/free settlers/First Fleet: various terms used to describe Europeans who came to live in Australia.


Firestick farming: controlled burning of land in order to clear old growth and encourage germination.



Frontier Wars: the organised conflict that occurred between Aboriginal peoples defending their Country and Europeans who wanted to use land for their own purposes.



Germinate: when a seed begins to grow into a plant.

Protection: a set of government policies from the early 1800s to late 1900s that meant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples had to live under a different set of rules and laws to the rest of Australia.

Traditional food sources: foods that have been eaten in Australia by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people since before colonisation; also called native plants and animals.

	Teacher guidance	Ideas for student activities
 <p>The Wound</p> <p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives on the issue</p>	<p><i>It's a good idea to introduce students to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives at the beginning of a study; so, their views don't become peripheral to the topic.</i></p> <p>There are strong links between traditional food sources and the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities. Some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people today have limited access to, and awareness of traditional foods. This has been caused by the disruption of knowledge systems and traditional ways of life, and the destruction and alteration of Indigenous croplands, pastures and hunting grounds.</p> <p>The introduction of non-traditional foods into the diet of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples has led to an increase in chronic disease and other health-related issues, leading to higher rates of illness and disease compared to non-Indigenous people.</p>	<p>Class discussion point</p> <p>How easy is it to be healthy in today's society? What outside influences prevent us from being as healthy as we can be?</p> <p>Research task</p> <p>Find an online article written by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person about health issues in Indigenous communities. Write down a single quote that summarises their opinion, with their name. Share it on a wall display. Write a summary of the similarities or differences of opinion.</p> <p>Research task</p> <p>Locate relevant health statistics on the Australian Bureau of Statistics website that demonstrate that there's a difference in the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous people. Write a paragraph summarising this information.</p>

	Teacher guidance	Ideas for student activities
 <p>Our History</p> <p>A background to the issue (in the Sydney area)</p>	<p><i>Below is a summary of the information on the student handout:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior to colonisation, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were lean and healthy with a nutrient-dense diet. • Many native plants have both nutritional and medicinal uses, but knowledge about them has often been lost due to colonisation. • The system of protection has contributed to poor diets today, particularly the consumption of refined white flour in damper. • Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people reverting to a more traditional diet has improved health. • Biomes have been interfered with due to colonisation. • There are some efforts around Australia to revive traditional food cropping. Indigenous communities continue to educate young people about how to source traditional food. 	<p>Research task</p> <p>Find out if there's available information about the traditional diet of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people in your local area. Write a reflection about how easy it was to locate information. What might be the reasons?</p> <p>Research task</p> <p>Find information that details the cost of ordinary groceries in remote parts of Australia and the Torres Strait. Compare them to prices in major cities and towns. How does this contribute to the gap in health between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous people?</p> <p>Practical activity</p> <p>Create a community garden in the schoolyard with native food sources. Write labels educating other students about them.</p> <p>Engaging with the public</p> <p>Invite an expert from a local Indigenous organisation (paid for their time, of course!) to talk about food cultivation and hunting practices in the local area.</p>
 <p>Why Me?</p> <p>Why am I learning this? What do I need to know to understand the issues?</p>	<p><i>This section focuses on student activities that promote an in-depth understanding of the issues.</i></p> <p>Teachers should research native plants or crops that are grown by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within the biome that they reside in. Many native crops have experienced significant difficulty surviving, with disruptions caused by introduced species of plants and animals.</p> <p>Local Indigenous organisations, such as land councils or Aboriginal corporations, may be supporting initiatives to preserve and promote native plants and share traditional knowledge about how they are used. Councils and state governments may have set aside reserves to protect and nurture native plant and animal species.</p> <p>Students can be given a range of case studies of successful Indigenous-controlled businesses and harvests around Australia. Students can learn about compression of the soil and the importance of firestick farming in relation to their case study. There are often articles and short news video clips about this topic by the ABC.</p>	<p>Extended project</p> <p>Using a native food plant in your local area, come up with a plan to develop it as a crop in your local area. Find a suitable plot of land and investigate what needs to be done to grow the plant. How much money will be needed? What equipment might be necessary? Draw up a plan to promote the food to people in your local area.</p>

	Teacher guidance	Ideas for student activities
 <p>Our Cultures</p> <p>Are there any ways that more knowledge of Indigenous cultures can help broaden our understanding of this topic?</p>	<p><i>When teaching content relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, teachers need to spend time engaging in a positive and thoughtful examination of culture and knowledge systems.</i></p> <p>Examine the ways in which traditional culture and knowledge is shared by Elders with young people today. The traditional method of schooling in Indigenous societies is for children to accompany adults and attempt to perform skills under guidance. Many children's toys and games are small versions of things that adults are doing around them, so they can practice and learn. For example, artefacts in the Bunjilaka Aboriginal Cultural Centre at the Melbourne Museum include small spears, a tiny canoe and a doll for breastfeeding.</p>	<p>Reflection task</p> <p>How effective are Indigenous methods of education for teaching children to live, survive and participate in the community? Would a school with subjects and lessons, in the Western way, be more appropriate? Discuss your thoughts.</p> <p>Discussion and reflection point</p> <p>In Western societies, children are separated from the world of adults to be educated in schools, where they practice real-life skills and learn about the outside world.</p> <p>Which is the better way of educating a child, or should the two systems of education be blended?</p>
 <p>My Response</p> <p>How does this lesson help us do our part to work towards justice and reconciliation?</p>	<p><i>This Key Idea concludes the unit and asks students to consider how they would reframe the situation in Australia to bring about justice and equality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. There are many ways to respond, including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting Indigenous businesses that are developing native crops for consumption. • Learning about native food sources in the area in which you live. • Planting native vegetation that supports the survival of endangered species, including insects, in your garden. 	<p>Class discussion</p> <p>How can investing in native crops help close the gap in health between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous people? Discuss together then summarise your thoughts in a paragraph.</p> <p>Reflection</p> <p>Read this article on the importance of Indigenous rights to native foods: https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2018/jul/11/australia-on-a-plate-recognising-indigenous-rights-to-bush-food. Summarise and reflect on this information.</p>
<p>Other resources</p>	<p>Further information about the health gap can be found by doing an internet search. There are frequent items in the news that cover the difficulties that remote communities have in accessing fresh, healthy food such as fruit and vegetables. This article from health news website Croakey provides an excellent overview with many embedded links: https://croakey.org/the-cost-of-eating-well-in-australias-remote-indigenous-communities</p> <p>This article discusses the health benefits of native foods: https://sustainabletable.org.au/going-native-why-should-we-eat-native-foods/</p> <p>Many high-end food suppliers, such as gourmet supermarkets and restaurants, are increasingly incorporating native foods, mainly as garnishes or flavourings, in their products. Information can often be found about this on gourmet food news sites. This article from the Daily Telegraph in 2015 gives a comprehensive overview: https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/lifestyle/food/sydney-taste/how-aussie-chefs-are-making-indigenous-food-cool/news-story/d06022471d69e938946d3b4d3820d7c7</p>	