



**UNITED TRIBES  
TECHNICAL COLLEGE**  
LAND GRANT EXTENSION

# NUTRITION EDUCATION

## *Explanation for Indigenous Foodway Calendars*

### Local Food Then And Now



Tribes, tribal nations, and communities each have distinct foodways, eating habits, and cultural practices. Today we may say “local foods”, “food sustainability” or “food access”, but foodways and food systems have been used by all peoples of the world, forever.

There are over 500 recognized indigenous tribes in the United States. United Tribes Technical College (UTTC) Extension Program prepared Food System Calendars ([www.landgrant.uttc.edu/resources](http://www.landgrant.uttc.edu/resources)) to offer a glimpse of foodways followed by indigenous people in their region. Please forgive UTTC Extension staff for the oversight of the many other tribes from the area. They offer to create similar calendars for other tribes, too. UTTC’s Food System Calendars are designed for educational discussion, only. Design is based on one individual’s memories, culture, and traditions. UTTC Land Grant Extension appreciates the individual’s willingness to share and recognizes the Calendars are not reflective of foodways, systems, cultures, or words for other tribes, families, or periods of time.

UTTC’s Food System Calendars are designed around the “moons” of a year. Many tribes followed the moons to time annual food gathering, preserving, storing, and sharing traditions. The amount of food needed was based on the winter count (census) to ensure adequate food was available. The pictures in the center of the Food System Calendars depict the spiritual foods that were honored as important for survival. UTTC Extension philosophy is that “Food is more than something to eat!”, therefore they believe these practices supported the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health and well-being of the Tribal people and communities

**Woodlands Food System Calendars include Anishinaabe (Anishinaabeg) – Ojibwa, Chippewa and Iroquois people.**



Many bands continue to live on their ancestral lands around the Great Lakes and water ways from the Atlantic Ocean through the north-central United States and southern Canada. They enjoy subsistence hunting, gathering of native foods, collecting maple syrup and spear fishing. Wild rice or in Anishnaabemowin; Mah-NO-min (min is pronounced to rhyme with “bit” and means seed and the first part of the word is a contraction of Manido or spirit giver) is a traditionally important and sacred food. Typically in early fall, the moon (month) Manoominike Giizis is harvest time - a time of fun and a time of hard work when grain is gathered and processed. Even with modern help of aluminum boats instead of birch bark canoes the gathering of good food is still hard work.

**Agricultural or Farming Food System Calendar include Sahnish (Arikara), Hidatsa and Mandan people (Three Affiliated Tribes)**



Historically, the families in these tribes lived in earth lodges located along the Missouri River. They planted and grew tremendous gardens with corn, beans, squash, pumpkin, sunflowers, watermelon and Indian tobacco. Their spiritual ceremonies revolved around the corn (maize). The three sisters of corn, beans and squash were important foods harvested from large fields using advanced agricultural systems including irrigation and seed saving. During the fall, they hunted and preserved buffalo, deer, elk, rabbits, birds and other small game animals to ensure adequate food throughout the year. They traded their produce with other tribes and explorers for meat, hides, shells, rice, and etc.

**Nomadic Food Systems Calendars include indigenous people with strong ties to the buffalo and horse culture.**



The Lakota, Nakota and Dakota may be known as the Sioux Tribes. These nomadic people of the Great Plains lived in tepees and moved from summer to winter camps. They had a strong spiritual connection to Mother Earth and their relatives, the buffalo. They gathered edible plants, roots, and berries that grew native throughout the Plains and used their excellent hunting skills to support healthy lifestyles. In addition, as they moved their camps, they traded with people who practiced different foodways. Foodways are included in college coursework at UTTC [www.uttc.edu/academic/nutrition](http://www.uttc.edu/academic/nutrition). Sharing food stories connects people and supports Mother Earth’s connection to health through the kitchen table.