

Semel Healthy Campus Initiative Center's EatWell Pod

Food Day 2021 at UCLA



The EatWell Pod at Semel Healthy Campus Initiative annually celebrates Food Day, which is a nation-wide day dedicated to raising awareness around our food systems. This year we hope to continue conversations from our blog post [The Language of our Food System: Food Apartheid and Food Sovereignty](#) and our [Community Collaborative Cookbook](#) inspired by our [2019 Food Day Sustainable Recipe Contest](#).

We are thrilled to collaborate with UCLA Farmers' Market, The Teaching Kitchen at UCLA, jane b semel HCI Community Garden, and Zero Waste, as each organization represents a different core area of how we interact with our greater food system:



Our partners:



UCLA Farmer's Market brings local farmers to campus who provide fresh produce, which promotes a more sustainable food system through less greenhouse gas emissions from food that travels shorter distances from farm to consumer. We are grateful to the UCLA Farmer's Market team for hosting EatWell Pod and our partners at Bruin Plaza this year for Food Day 2021. Visit their Instagram for more information.



Teaching Kitchen at UCLA is an educational, interactive space to meet the needs of the campus community in areas of nutrition education, food insecurity, culinary skills, and community engagement. Chef Julia Rhoton, who runs the Teaching Kitchen, contributed this seasonal Winter Grain Bowl for Food Day 2021, inspired by Lauren Brizzolara's recipe from our [Community Collaborative Cookbook](#).



jane b semel HCI Community Garden, located in Sunset Canyon Recreation Center, is a transdisciplinary, hands-on learning space that builds community and promotes personal, community, and planetary health at UCLA with a goal of supporting equity and food justice. The Garden is currently running its inaugural regenerative gardening certificate program and has contributed this [fall seasonal produce guide](#).



Zero Waste through UCLA Sustainability has a policy target of 90% diversion from landfill, 25% reduction of waste per capita from 2016 FY levels by 2025. We are excited to celebrate with Zero Waste the launch of the [Zero waste kitchen companion](#).

In addition to seasonal and sustainable eating, the EatWell Pod encourages you to reflect with us on the plants that nourish us, and their significance to the environmental landscape of North America and foodways of Native Americans. We selected the following ingredients collaboratively with Chef Julia Rhoton for this year's Food Day seasonal recipe and created this guide as a starting point to learn further about their significance. [All links and resources are underlined and highlighted in color:](#)

Wild Rice:

Wild rice, called manoomin in the Ojibwe language (which translates to "good berry"), is native to the lakes and rivers of the Great Lakes region and Canada and important to ecological health of wetlands as part of the diet of migratory birds and a resource and habitat for many other species. It was once a seasonal staple in the diets of many Native North Americans.

After colonization disrupted food systems, many Native Americans could no longer depend on stores of wild rice for food all year round. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, this traditional staple was appropriated and marketed as a gourmet commodity by non-Native entrepreneurs. This led to the domestication of wild rice, and farmers began cultivating it in paddies in the late 1960s.

In Minnesota, wild rice harvesters must be licensed to gather the grain and must harvest in the traditional, Native American way. Today, much of the wild rice we consume in the US is cultivated in California.

Many Ojibwe and other Native people have been fighting to sustain the hand-harvested wild rice tradition and to protect wild rice beds, which are also at risk of extractive activities such as mining and oil pipelines. Indigenous Water Protectors in northern Minnesota have been organizing a resistance around Enbridge's Line 3 plan to drill oil pipelines that violates the legal rights of the Anishinaabe treaties with the U.S. government, which grant them rights to hunt, fish, and gather food in the Great Lakes region.

We encourage you to visit [Stop Line 3's website here](#) to learn about their ongoing fight to protect their environment and foodways. [Learn more about the "Rights of Manoomin" here.](#)

Cranberries:

Cranberries grow on the vines of evergreen shrubs in cold-water bogs and marshes with clusters of pink flowers which turn into small red berries in late summer. Native American tribes such as the Algonquin and Wampanoag of New England would usually harvest ripe cranberries from Labor Day through October.

The coastal Algonquin, Wampanoag tribe holds a festival in Martha's Vineyard each October to celebrate the cranberry harvest. Similar festivals were held in Cape Cod and farther south in Delaware where Lenni Lenape chief Pakimintzen became known for his annual cranberry holidays. Fresh berries were often eaten raw or dried and stored for later use, and were a popular addition to pemmican, a dried mixture of meat, berries and rendered fat made by many Native American tribes as a portable, high-energy, highly nutritious, and

filling food non-perishable power food. Cranberries naturally contain the preservative benzoic acid, making them well suited for storage.

Cranberry harvest season is mid-September through mid-November in North America. You can learn more about how cranberries are harvested today through [this article here.](#)



Sweet Potato:

Sweet potato is a member of the morning glory (Convolvulaceae) family and not an actual potato, which is a member of the Belladonna (Solanaceae) family, also known as nightshades. Sweet potato has been an important food crop throughout South and Central America and archaeological evidence shows that it was in cultivation by at least 5000 years ago, making it one of the earliest cultivated plants in the world.

Sweet potatoes have become a culinary staple of Southern and modern American because of African American slaves who planted these crops, which food scholar Jessive Harris explains in detail [here](#). Sweet potatoes are different from yams, while both are referred to interchangeably to each other in the United States. Black Food FACTory explains why this happened [here](#). In the United States, sweet potatoes are generally harvested in September and early October.



Pepitas:

Pepitas are hulled pumpkin seeds (the name comes from Spanish pepita de calabaza, which means "little seed of squash"). Pumpkins are a squash, which is another important source of food for the indigenous peoples of the western hemisphere as what may be the oldest cultivated food in North America. Ancient containers of stored pumpkin seeds from Mexico date back as far as 7000 BC.

Squash was grown and eaten by the Pueblo, Apaches, Hopi, Navajo, Havasupai, Papago, Pima, Zuni, Navajo and Yuman tribes, among others. The Tohono O'Odham people would ground pumpkin seeds into flour and mix it with corn meal to make flavorful breads. Some Mexican tribes believe pumpkin seeds give exceptional energy and endurance to the people that eat them, and the Cocopa tribe of Arizona considers pumpkin seeds protection against the cold.

Pumpkins were grown alongside corn and beans as one of the Three Sisters of agriculture. The three sisters are corn, beans, and squash and have widespread importance to many Indigenous North American cultures and foodways. They have appeared in the mythology of the

Hopis of the Southwest to the Oneidas of the Midwest and the Iroquois in the Northeast. Native Seeds illustrates how the three sisters are planted, and explains their beneficial relationship to each other and the soil as a beautiful example of regenerative agriculture.

Pumpkins are a winter squash (the other category being summer squash) with a long growing season that starts in spring, and are usually ready to be harvested around mid-fall.

You can learn more about the significance of the three sisters [here](#) and the through the work of the cultural conservancy [here](#).



Further resources:

As a land grant institution, the Eatwell Pod at Semel Healthy Campus Initiative Center at UCLA acknowledges the Gabrielino/Tongva peoples as the traditional land caretakers of Tovaangar (Los Angeles basin, So. Channel Islands). We have a responsibility to educate ourselves on the history and ecosystem of the area in which the UCLA community exists, and the foodways of its first people.

The following resources and websites can help us better understand how we can continue to steward food systems in balance with the environment and uplift the knowledge and work of Native American peoples today toward food systems that are more sustainable and equitable for all:

Food Research Sources:

American Indian Health and Diet Project is a website based on Dr. Devon Mihesuah's book *Recovering Our Ancestors' Gardens: Indigenous Recipes and Guide to Diet and Fitness* published by Nebraska Press (2005).

Park, Sunmin & Hongu, Nobuko & Daily III, James. (2016). Native American Foods: History, Culture, and Influence on Modern Diets. *Journal of Ethnic Foods*. 3. 10.1016/j.jef.2016.08.001.

This provides a starting overview of Native American food culture that has had enormous influence on how we eat today.

Food Timeline was created and maintained solely by Lynne Olver (1958-2015), a reference librarian passionate about food history. Since the website launched in March 1999, The Food Timeline has grown from a single page with a sprinkling of links to 70 web pages offering a wealth of historic information, primary documents, and original research.

Read this exciting piece in the Daily Bruin on how UCLA law students through The Tribal Legal Development Clinic are supporting the Yurok Tribe in navigating food sovereignty.

"LA Foodways" is a series that takes a deep dive into the agricultural history of Los Angeles from food waste challenges to opportunities to bring fresh foods to urban communities. It examines these efforts through different local organizations and their efforts to identify environmentally friendly solutions for the future of regional agriculture.

We recommend watching **Gather**, a 1 hour and 14 minute documentary by James Beard Award winning filmmaker, Sanjay Rawal that follows the stories of natives on the frontlines of a growing movement to reconnect with spiritual and cultural identities that were devastated by genocide. **Gather** weaves together an indigneous chef's project to reclaim ancient food ways, a Lakota high school student's mission to prove her tribe's wisdom through science, and a group of Yurok young men in Northern California struggling to rehabilitate the habitat of the salmon sacred to their culture. These stories show how the recovery of ancient food ways is a way forward for Native Americans to bring back health and vitality to their people, and is a powerful reminder of how many traditional foodways and food systems that kept our ancestors alive and healthy have been disrupted by colonization and extraction.

Gather is available to UCLA students on Kanopy through the UCLA library, and also on [iTunes](#), [Amazon](#), [Vimeo on Demand](#), and NETFLIX.

Native American and Indigenous-Led *Decolonization, Sovereignty, and Movements around Food*

[Sogorea Te' Land Trust](#) is an urban Indigenous women-led land trust based in the San Francisco Bay Area that facilitates the return of Indigenous land to Indigenous people and has collaborated on the **rematriation** of land that is growing food locally with local groups:

[The Gill Tract Community Farm](#) is a collaborative community project between the University of California Berkeley and the local community, focused on food justice and urban farming.

[Rammay](#) is a small garden in West Oakland with 14 fruit trees, 10 raised beds, a vertical garden, and a small solar powered garden shed, rematriated in 2018 in collaboration with Northern California Land Trust.

[Regenerative Collective](#) (@regenerativecollective) has been organizing direct action, autonomous, and anti-colonial/regenerative Community projects on [#TongvaLand](#) through hyperlocal projects in the San Gabriel Valley, East Los Angeles, & Northeast Los Angeles Areas.

Learn more about the importance of seed keeping and food sovereignty amidst climate change through [this panel on Indigenous Seedkeeping](#): Caring for our Three Sisters Seeds from Native American Food Sovereignty Alliance

Read Dr. Elizabeth Hoover's [Garden Warriors to Good Seeds: Indigenizing the Local Food Movement](#).

[The Pimu Catalina Island Archaeology Field School](#) is taught over four weeks in Tongva land. In the 2015 field season, students learned from the Chia Cafe Collective, Craig Torres (Tongva) and Abe Sanchez, around Native foodways and food sovereignty.

Educate yourself and consciously explore indigenuous ingredients and cooking through [this series of recipes from Native American chefs](#).

[North American Traditional Indigenous Food Systems \(NāTIFS\)](#) is dedicated to addressing the economic and health crises affecting Native communities by re-establishing Native foodways. They are imagining a new North American food system that generates wealth and improves health in Native communities through food-related enterprises.

[Soul Fire Farm's Food Sovereignty Action Steps](#), compiled by the Soul Fire Farm community and Northeast Farmers of Color alliance and designed for anyone who has ever asked, "How can I help make the food system more just?"

[Maritza Geronimo's \(UCLA Geography PhD student and University of California Global Food Initiative Fellow\) Seeds of Rebellion: Indigenous Food Sovereignty Project](#) which took place at jane b. semel HCI Community Garden.