



Learning Journey

Introduction



Introduction to the Learning Journey



Welcome!

This Learning Journey is designed to deepen your relationship with history, food, land, and ultimately, with yourself. Through the lenses of two-eyed seeing from Mi'kmaw Elder Albert Marshall, and of systems thinking, you will have opportunities to learn and reflect on (de) colonization; Indigenous perspectives, cultures and foodways; and steps you can take toward honouring Indigenous worldviews in health care. This journey will highlight and celebrate the diversity of traditional foods and Indigenous foodways across Canada, encourage introspection, and promote the narrative that Food is Our Medicine.

Culturally appropriate food is understood to include restoring and respecting the relationships that Indigenous peoples have with the land, with ancestors, with current and future generations, and with local environments. Exploring the past, present and future relationship between food and healing will assist you, as a health care professional, in decolonizing food systems in health care settings and advancing the work of reconciliation.

There is a common misunderstanding that bringing Indigenous foods into health care means getting traditional foods onto patient meal trays. It is, in fact, about so much more. Understanding and embracing Indigenous foodways in health care is about

acknowledging and respecting the land and waters from which the food comes, the stories and teachings in the practices of cultivating and harvesting traditional foods, and the connection of these foodways to cultural identity. We start by looking at how food fits into health care, and we emphasize that meaningful change must be approached and designed by considering the health care system as a whole.

The words we use

This Learning Journey is presented through the voices of Indigenous communities and allies working alongside these communities. Indigenous peoples are the original inhabitants of what is now called Canada. You will encounter terms that may be new to you, terms with different meanings at different times in history, and terms that are sometimes used interchangeably. We acknowledge that at times, different terminology can be confusing, so we'll highlight and clarify some key terms now.

As you engage with materials in the Learning Journey, you will come across various terms referring to Indigenous communities – terms that continue to change and evolve.

- Aboriginal
- Native
- Indian
- First Nation
- Inuit
- Métis
- Indigenous people(s)

Indigenous peoples is the term that is widely used today. It is a blanket term that includes First Nations, Métis, and Inuit living in Canada. However, the term conceals the reality that there are hundreds of distinct Indigenous communities, each with its own unique history, culture, traditions and economies. There is not one “Indigenous culture.”

It is vital to understand that **the Indigenous communities that live within Canada each have distinct beliefs and practices around food.** These include different protocols, different ceremonies... and different opinions about bannock! Our goal is to invite you into a deeper awareness of and with Indigenous communities, so you can advance your reconciliation journey in a culturally mindful and place-based way.

As an active learner in this Learning Journey, when reading, listening, and then reflecting on your learnings, it will be important to ask yourself who specifically is being referenced. For example, is an article about the whole Indigenous population in Canada or a Cree community in Northern Quebec? It is important to be as specific as possible where you can be. You will learn that Indigenous communities are incredibly diverse, as are the foodways from coast to coast to coast.

You may see Canada being referenced as part of **Turtle Island**, another name for the lands now known as North and Central America, including Canada. This name is used by many Indigenous communities, whose creation stories describe how the land was formed on the back of a turtle (see examples from the [Haudenosaunee](#) and [Anishinabeg](#) communities).

You will also see reference to both traditional foods and country foods.

- **Traditional foods** are foods harvested from the natural environments and traditional territories of Indigenous communities. They include wild meats, fish, birds, plants, and berries. These foods are acquired through activities such as hunting, fishing, and gathering throughout the different seasons. Some Indigenous communities also cultivate traditional foods, such as corn, squash and beans.
- **Country foods**, while occasionally used interchangeably with traditional foods, typically refers to traditional foods from Inuit communities, including game meats, migratory birds, fish, marine mammals and foraged foods.

How to get the most out of the journey

Find your allies and make a shared commitment

Good company can make a journey more meaningful. We encourage you to invite a few colleagues in your organization or in your community to commit to going through this Learning Journey on a shared timeline. Depending on your circumstances, you could aim to complete it within 30 days or 100 days. Check in on each other regularly, and especially as you encounter material that brings up difficult memories or emotions. Seek permission from your managers and colleagues to complete the work as part of your professional development and build a routine around completing the seasons. Create a shared calendar event to keep you on track, and that reminds you to submit your completed PDFs or worksheets to Nourish.

Honour your time

The experience is designed for learners with a range of experiences and knowledge about Indigenous foodways and knowledge systems. It is not comprehensive, but it is extensive, and by inviting you into your own curiosity may well lead you beyond the limits of what we could introduce in this format. So, you will need to make some choices along the way about how you spend your time. To help you do this, the resources provided are classified as core, key, or additional.

- **Core resources and key resources** are the foundation of each teaching, and are often from sources outside of Nourish. They are intended to be read or watched in their entirety, though we sometimes draw your attention to only part of the resource (e.g., specific pages of a text or sections of a video).
- **Additional resources** are optional and are listed at the end of each teaching, allowing you to dive deeper into some of the subject areas covered.

Journal your way through

Questions and/or activities accompany each core and key resource, to help you engage with and relate to the materials and content. To complete the course, respond to the journaling prompts in the beige text boxes. If you would like, you can also have your own notebook on the side to jot down other reflections.

You will encounter two types of questions on your journey:

- **Journaling prompts** are the ones you are encouraged to fill out for the online course.
- **Pause and reflect questions** are not mandatory, and encourage you to slow down and think more before continuing.

Both types of questions invite you to connect what you learn to your circumstances and practice.

Open your mind

You will get the most out of this experience if you approach it with:

- an open willingness to try new ways of understanding,
- an effort to suspend judgment,
- a desire to learn and unlearn, and
- a humble orientation.

Let's begin

Take a moment, wherever you are reading this, to acknowledge the ecosystem around you, from which everything needed to sustain life comes. It is important that we approach food with respect and from a place of deep gratitude. For the duration of this Learning Journey we, learners and teachers, come together as one mind.

To help centre and ground us as one mind we now invite you to take a few slow, deep breaths. Observe your energy in this moment, and **your intention for being here. We encourage you to have a clear mind and a sense of peace, friendship, and respect, along with a willingness to examine your worldview.**

Worksheet 1: Intro

Journaling prompts

Complete the 'Journaling prompts' as part of the online course for certificate. Download and save this PDF to your computer. You can add your responses to the beige text box (to the right) by clicking on it. Your work could be lost if you do not do this. Be sure to save your work before you click on any link in the Learning Journey (Youtube video, PDF, website). If you do not save first, your work could be lost.

Using the text box on the right, take 15 minutes to reflect on your intentions, hopes, and fears.

1. Why did you decide to go on this Learning Journey?
2. What do you think you might gain by completing this Learning Journey?
3. What hopes and fears come up as you think about the learning (and unlearning) that might be ahead?
4. By when do you commit to completing the four seasons of this Learning Journey?
5. Have you invited any colleagues to accompany you with a shared goal for completion?

When you're ready, click the button below to access a webpage, where you can upload your answers. We will then send you the next season's PDF by email.

Submit

Add your responses here by clicking on the beige box. Don't forget to save before moving on to the next page. If you do not save your responses, they may be lost! If you do not want to work in a PDF, there is a Doc that you can download and save your answers - [here!](#)