

# NATIVE AMERICAN EDUCATION FOR ALL RESOURCES

Partnership of IllumiNative and the National Indian Education Association



ILLUMINATIVE



## Grade Level

6-8

## Subject

Health and  
Social Studies

## Lesson Title

Sioux Chef Sean Sherman: A  
Rebirth of Native American Cuisine

**Activity Description:** As health issues such as diabetes are increasing in Native communities, some people such as Sean Sherman, an Oglala man referred to as the Sioux Chef, are bringing back the traditional Native diet through gourmet cuisine. In this activity learn about the Sioux Chef, discuss what decolonizing a diet means, and gather some recipes for traditional Native cooking.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- WiFi access (recommended)
- Paper and pen/pencil
- YouTube video ["The Chef Bringing Native American Food to Your Table"](#)
- ["Decolonizing Our Diet: Sioux Chef"](#) article from *Cultural Survival* magazine
- *Indian Country Today* article ["Exclusive First Look : Two Recipes from Sean Sherman's Cookbook"](#)

## STEPS

During this activity you will learn about Sean Sherman, the Sioux Chef, who is bringing traditional Native ingredients to gourmet cooking. As a way to help Native Americans eat healthier, this movement encourages tribes to return to the ingredients of the land to prepare more traditional dishes.

### Activity Steps:

1. First, watch this YouTube video ["The Chef Bringing Native American Food to Your Table"](#) to learn about the Sioux Chef. While you watch, pay close attention to what the chef says about the ingredients he chooses.
  - a. What does the Sioux Chef say about the ingredients brought over by the European colonist?
  - b. Were you surprised about the list of ingredients?
2. In that video, the Sioux Chef talks about "decolonizing" Native people's diet through his recipes. If you want to know more about the definition of decolonization watch the video listed in the "Helpful Tips" section below.
3. Next, read this [article by Cultural Survival magazine](#) on an interview with the Sioux Chef as he explains more about decolonizing your diet. There is also a delicious recipe you can make at home at the bottom of the article.
  - a. How does the Sioux Chef explain the connection between food and cultural identity?
4. Now that you know more about the chef, find more of his recipes in this *Indian Country Today* article ["Exclusive First Look: Two Recipes from Sean Sherman's Cookbook"](#)

### Food for Thought Activity:

1. With permission, look through the food items you have in your kitchen. As you look, think about what Sean Sherman said about indigenous versus colonized ingredients.
2. List the foods you have that could be considered Native or indigenous.
3. How many ingredients or food items would you think are "colonial"?
4. What local, natural ingredients would you add to your kitchen to "decolonize" your family's diet?

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## HELPFUL TIPS

**Parents and caregivers:** This activity may lead to additional questions about decolonization and how European colonialism has impacted Native ancestors and modern tribes. This YouTube video "[Nih! KIDS TALK about Decolonization](#)" features children sharing their thoughts on the meaning of decolonization. We recommended that you watch this with your child to open a discussion on how your community can continue to push back against the effects of colonialism while still progressing.

One of the most popular meals during the year is Thanksgiving Dinner. However, there is much controversy over the celebration of this holiday because it ignores the suffering of Native tribes during colonization. Of much debate is the menu that non-Natives assume were eaten during what is called the "first" Thanksgiving. In this article "[Indigenous Thanksgiving Meal](#)" you will find recipes for Thanksgiving that reflect more accurate and indigenous ingredients.

## WANT TO LEARN MORE?

**Families and educators:** The topic of decolonization can be sensitive and controversial. Before addressing this in the classroom, we recommend seeking advice on community perspectives on decolonization or even the use of the term. Traditional foods, though, is an important topic to help open discussion on how colonialism impacted diet and health for many Native American tribes.

For recipes and more information about Sean Sherman, visit the links below:

- "[Sean Sherman's 10 Essential Native American Recipes](#)" from *The New York Times*
- "[Meet the Sioux Chef: Revitalizing Native Foodways](#)" by Eco Farming Daily

### Activity Resources:

- "The Chef Bringing Native American Food to Your Table" YouTube video by *Great Big Story* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ocm6DRIF9oU>
- "Decolonizing our Diet: Sioux Chef" in *Cultural Survival* magazine <https://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/decolonizing-our-diet-sioux-chef>
- "Exclusive First Look : Two Recipes from Sean Sherman's Cookbook" in *Indian Country Today* <https://indiancountrytoday.com/archive/exclusive-first-look-two-recipes-from-sean-sherman-s-cookbook-00-QQlepvEger7fFsZHnJw>

### Additional Resources:

- "Nih! KIDS TALK about Decolonization| KIDS TALK" posted by *Nih! Kids* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e5JsNqJ94ks>
- Indigenous Native Thanksgiving Dinner in the *Huffington Post* ([Click here for the article](#))
- "Sean Sherman's 10 Essential Native American Recipes" from *The New York Times* <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/04/dining/native-american-recipes-sioux-chef.html>
- "Meet the Sioux Chef: Revitalizing Native Foodways" by *Eco Farming Daily* <https://www.ecofarmingdaily.com/eco-farming-index/meet-sioux-chef/>