



A FIREPLACE
+ GARDEN
TO GATHER
HEAL + GROW



DECOLONIZING THE KITCHEN PANTRY

Colonization didn't just take land—it changed our relationships to food.

- Food systems were disrupted through land theft, forced relocation, commodity rations, and boarding schools.
- Indigenous communities were pushed away from traditional foods and toward processed commodities.
- The modern pantry reflects colonial supply chains and industrial food systems.

Decolonizing the pantry = reclaiming relationships with land, culture, and wellness.

What are the most common foods in your pantry? Where did they come from?

WHAT DOES “DECOLONIZING FOOD” ACTUALLY MEAN?

Decolonizing your pantry DOES mean:

- Relearning traditional foods
- Understanding food history
- Supporting Indigenous producers
- Rebuilding relationships with land and community

Decolonizing your pantry DOES NOT mean:

- Rejecting every non-Indigenous ingredient
- Trying to recreate a “pure” pre-contact diet
- Policing how others eat
- Romanticizing the past

The goal? Making food choices with *awareness* and *intention*, embracing the *process* of change!

THE COLONIAL PANTRY

Many common pantry staples come from colonial food systems:

Examples:

- Refined wheat flour
- White sugar
- Industrial vegetable oils
- Processed packaged foods (high in sodium, preservatives + artificial ingredients)
- Commodity ingredients (canned meat, shortening, powdered milk)

These foods often replaced traditional diets through government programs, displacement, and assimilation.

HEALTH & CULTURAL IMPACTS

Colonization disrupted access to traditional foods and foodways, affecting both physical and mental health.

Physical health impacts:

- Higher rates of diabetes, heart disease and obesity
- Lower energy levels that make exercise a struggle
- Increased reliance on processed foods—we don't *really* cook anymore!
- Loss of nutrient-density—we have to eat larger portions to feel full and still aren't getting the vitamins + nutrients we need!

Mental and emotional impacts:

- Disconnection from land + cultural identity
- Loss of traditional knowledge passed through food
- Reduced opportunities for community gathering and teaching

FOUNDATIONS OF THE INDIGENOUS PANTRY

Seeds & Grains

- Corn / hominy
- Wild rice
- Amaranth
- Chia
- Quinoa

Beans & Legumes

- Traditional heirloom beans: *variety is important!*

Animal Proteins

- Bison
- Venison
- Fish
- Turkey

Flavor & Preservation

- Maple sugar
- Honey
- Agave nectar
- Dried chiles
- Seasonings: sumac, sage, cedar, juniper, wild bergamot, rose hips, pine needles

Wild & Foraged Foods

- Nuts (hickory, black walnut, pecan)
- Wild onions
- Pokeweed
- Lambsquarters
- Berries

Traditional or healthier fats:

- Tallow/rendered animal fat
- Olive oil
- Avocado oil
- Cold pressed oils (sunflower, nut oils)

PRACTICAL STEPS TO DECOLONIZE YOUR PANTRY

Practical ways to begin:

- Learn the food history of your region and/or your people
- Swap traditional ingredients into recipes you already make frequently
- Replace ingredients slowly
- Support Indigenous farmers and businesses
- Share knowledge through community

Start with simple pantry swaps:

- White sugar → Maple sugar/syrup, honey, agave
- Refined flour → Cornmeal, masa, nut/grain flours
- Pasta → whole grains
- Processed snacks → Dried fruit, nuts, jerky
- Industrial vegetable oil → Rendered animal fats, cold pressed oils

Start small. *Every change matters.*

CHALLENGES + MISCONCEPTIONS

“Traditional foods are expensive.”

- True in some cases due to disrupted food systems.
- Community gardens, hunting, foraging, trade systems and community purchasing can help restore access.

“I don’t know how to cook these foods.”

- Start with one recipe or even just one ingredient and build your repertoire from there—learning and sharing knowledge is part of decolonization!

“I’m not Indigenous—can I participate?”

- Yes, Indigenous foods are healthy for everyone, and help heal the land we all share! Respect, education, and supporting Indigenous food sovereignty are important to allyship.

REFLECTION

- What is one ingredient you could add to your pantry this week?
- What food connects you to land or ancestors?

Decolonizing your pantry isn't about perfection.

It's about rebuilding relationships—with land, food, and community.



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