

## Indigenous Food Cooperatives

The Indigenous food cooperatives initiative was suggested by 3 Indigenous women at the 2009 BC Food Systems Gathering, as a mutual challenge to revitalize bioregional or local Indigenous food systems, security and sovereignty, by supporting, revitalizing or recreating Indigenous hunting, fishing, gathering, farming and trade practices in our local areas. Ideas for revitalizing or recreating these practices have included:

- the formation of informal cooperative groups to support, find, learn from, or train local hunters or fishers, gatherers or farmers, to obtain and process Indigenous or bioregionally appropriate and safe foods (including water), for redistribution among cooperative members
- the rediscovery and reclamation of old trade routes, relationships and low impact transportation methods, for the exchange of goods, services, food and water
- the development of new food practices and relationships which utilize the same Indigenous principles of no or minimal environmental impact, low energy, collective effort and well-being, respectful, consensual & voluntary relationships and long term environmental sustainability
- the revitalization of old, or development of new non-monetary forms of reciprocity, barter, or exchange, to reduce the imposition and interference of money, regulatory and corporate control on food & water sources
- the research and development of new relationships within & between Indigenous territories or bioregions, to address issues of protection, climate changes, and enhancement of Indigenous food system sources, groups and processes

We invite you to start your own local Indigenous food cooperative and to share your successes and challenges with like minded others, for the revitalization of Indigenous food systems, security and sovereignty, in your territory or bioregion.

## Indigenous Diet Challenge

Like the Indigenous food cooperatives, this idea arose when 3 Indigenous women were discussing how to revitalize Indigenous food systems, security and sovereignty. We agreed that you have to just start doing it. In fact, the challenge between us - to survive for the winter (or over four months) on Indigenous foods - led us to the realization that we'd need to first prepare and set aside foods throughout the year, and to the idea that it would be easiest if we formed local Indigenous food cooperatives to do so. This is the year of preparation! This is the year to create those cooperatives, or Indigenous food relationships. Can you survive for 4 months on Indigenous foods? We challenge you to join us in preparing and surviving on local/bioregional Indigenous foods, or traded Indigenous foods, from November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010, to February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

For more information, or to join the listserve, contact [indigenousfoodcoops@yahoo.com](mailto:indigenousfoodcoops@yahoo.com).