

From Root to Table

Embracing Filipino Food Heritage for Ethical Consumption



*A handbook prepared by students from
the University of the Philippines-Diliman*

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Introduction

- **Food Paradox:** Rich biodiversity, yet malnutrition and food insecurity persist.
- **Declining Native Crops:** Shift to non-native, processed foods weakens food heritage.
- **Colonial Influence:** Native ingredients marginalized over time.
- **Ethical Consumption:** Supports farmers, sustainability, and food heritage.
- **Youth's Role:** Drives food trends, sustainability, and future food security.



Understanding Food Heritage in the Philippine Context

- Food heritage is the umbrella term encompassing the food cultures inherited from past generations, maintained in the present, and preserved for future generations.
 - It encapsulates shared memories and origin, manifests environmental responsibility, and is tied to local food production.

The Diversity of Philippine Food

Native	Endemic	Introduced	Naturalized	Cultivated-but-not-naturalized
These are food species naturally found and thrive in the Philippine soil without human intervention	These are food species that are uniquely found in the Philippines only.	These are food species brought to the Philippines from colonization, migration, and trade.	These are introduced food species that have adapted to the local climate and reproduce on their own.	These are food species that are locally grown in farms, gardens, or plantations that do not reproduce independently.



How Native Plants Became Marginalized?

- **Marginalization of Native Plants:** Colonial influence, export agriculture, and urbanization pushed native crops aside in favor of commercial and imported crops.
- **Impact:** Loss biodiversity, weaker food security, and fading cultural identity as traditional crops gradually disappear.
- **Restoration:** Promoting native crops through sustainable farming, biodiversity-friendly culture, and local food movements.



Why Revisit and Revitalize Native and Endemic Food Plants?

- **Enhancing Biodiversity** supports ecological balance by cultivating native crops that naturally adapted to local conditions, reducing the need for chemical inputs.
- **Promoting Sustainable Agriculture** ensures resilient food systems, minimizing resource consumption and soil degradation.
- **Decreasing Carbon Footprint** happens when we choose local produce over imported goods, reducing transportation emissions and energy-intensive farming practices .
- **Providing Healthy Food Choices** becomes easier by rediscovering indigenous plants rich in essential nutrients.
- **Preserving Cultural Heritage** strengthens our identity by keeping traditional foodways alive.



Ethical Consumption and Sustainable Food Choices

Steps on Eating with Intention

- Step 1: Reclaim Native and Indigenous Ingredients
- Step 2: Eat with the Seasons Before grocery
- Step 3: Support Ethical Sourcing Food
- Step 4: Reduce Waste by Honoring Whole Ingredients
- Step 5: Revive Traditional Cooking Methods Before Industrialized food.
- Step 6: Shift to Plant-Based Filipino Proteins
- Step 7: Pass It On Food traditions

Recipes

<i>Laing</i>	<i>Kangkong Salad</i>	<i>Adobong Puso ng Saging</i>	<i>Kalamay Hati</i>	<i>Pandan Juice</i>
<p>Laing is a popular Filipino dish made from dried taro leaves cooked in coconut milk, and other seasonings. It hails from the Bicol region, known for its love of coconut-based dishes and spiciness.</p>	<p>Kangkong Salad is a Filipino dish that highlights water spinach, typically served fresh with tomatoes, and a light vinaigrette. It's a refreshing and simple side dish commonly paired with main courses.</p>	<p>This dish features banana hearts (puso ng saging) sautéed in soy sauce, vinegar, and spices, prepared in the style of adobo, a classic Filipino cooking method. It's often enjoyed as a vegetarian alternative to the traditional meat-based adobo.</p>	<p>Kalamay is a Filipino sweet treat made from glutinous rice, coconut milk, and brown sugar, often wrapped in banana leaves. It's a beloved dessert or snack in many regions, especially during festivals.</p>	<p>Pandan Juice is a refreshing Filipino drink made from pandan leaves, known for their distinct aroma and flavor. The leaves are boiled, and the resulting liquid is sweetened and served chilled as a cooling beverage, often enjoyed during hot weather.</p>

Recipes

Laing



Kangkong Salad



Adobong Puso ng Saging



Kalamay



Pandan Juice





Communities

Haribon Forests for Life, Philippines

Nat Re

SIBAT

Shumei Philippines Project

Champions of Philippine Food Heritage



Chef Lao Castillo



John Sherwin Felix



Chef Jam Melchor

Advocates and Influencers



Celine Murillo



Ethan Hernandez



Promoting Ethical Consumption through Food Heritage

Reconnecting with Native and Endemic Species: Practical Strategies			
Growing Native Plants in Home and Community Gardens	Prioritizing Native Foods in Daily Diets	Supporting Local Farmers and Markets	Integrating Native Foods in School and Community Meal Programs

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Promoting Ethical Consumption through Food Heritage

Advocating for Native Foods: How to Spread Awareness

- **Sharing** stories about the native foods (history, nutritional facts, advantages compared to mass-produced products, etc.)
- **Utilize** reels, TikTok videos, and other short-form videos to showcase the cultural identity of native foods (interview local farmers, collaborate with chefs to make dishes using native produce, etc.)
- **Teach** communities how to make native dishes
- **Conduct** talks with local farmers and Indigenous entrepreneurs as speakers about native foods
- **Advocate** for local food policies/use by creating social media accounts as online resource hubs (recipes, nutritional facts, etc.)



A Pledge to Promote Local Food Heritage

Through this pledge, I acknowledge my role as a consumer to be more aware and intentional about alternate food and native ingredients in my locality. More than the cultural importance of food heritage, I am an advocate for ethical consumption that, in turn, makes ripples towards alleviating malnutrition, food security, and sustainability.

I will make an effort to try local food and ingredients.

An open mind and willing heart are crucial to experiencing local culture through its cuisine. From seasonal fruits and vegetables to unique main dishes and snacks, I will wholeheartedly explore and make sense of such culinary and communicative interactions.

I will support local producers and promote sustainable practices.

By choosing local ingredients and supporting small-scale farmers, I contribute to the health of my community and the preservation of our food culture. I will consider the impact of my choices on both the environment and the livelihood of local producers.

I will do my part in introducing local food and ingredients to others.

Sharing food with others is both a powerful and fun way to allow more people to experience local cuisine. When opportunities come, I shall consider bringing local food to the table, and I will do such practice with confidence and pride.

I will continue to promote local food heritage in my daily practice.

Food culture is embedded in the lives of an individual and of the community. I promise to continuously uphold values that will cherish and enrich my cultural experiences with food through experiences of tasting, sharing, celebrating, and more.

I will contribute to the preservation of food diversity.

I will support efforts to protect native ingredients and traditional food practices to ensure that future generations can enjoy the rich diversity of foods that are part of our heritage.