For the 13 Moon Challenges we will be sharing information about food and nutrition based on the 13 Moons Curriculum shared with us by the White Earth Indian Community. Each Moon includes a food topic; for Manido Giizis, the food topic is:

Mandaamin, Corn is Our Relative

Mandaamin is an important traditional food that is nutritious and delicious. Corn is part of the grasses family and is a unique food since we eat it both as a vegetable fresh from the garden, or we dry it and enjoy it as a grain. Popcorn, hominy, and whole grain cornmeal are whole grains important for good health. Nixtamalization of dried corn allows the release of even more nutrients. There are many different types of sweet corn and flint corn; these many colors and varieties of corn provide our bodies with phytochemicals (plant nutrients that give plants their colors, flavor and the ability to fight off plant diseases), vitamins and minerals that support health. The dietary fiber in corn promotes digestive health by working as a prebiotic with the bacteria in the gut to support the work of probiotics; eating popcorn also appears to prevent diverticulosis. By improving gut health, corn can also help to decrease your risk of heart disease, diabetes and cancer. The high fiber content of corn also keeps corn from spiking blood sugars too high when eaten in moderate-sized portions. Corn has a fair amount of protein and when combined with dried beans this results in a complete protein that is comparable to eating animal protein.

Nutrient content varies depending on how corn is eaten, dried mandaamin will tend to be higher in minerals, while fresh mandaamin tends to be higher in vitamins. Per WebMD, “Corn is rich in vitamin C, an antioxidant that helps protect your cells from damage and wards off diseases like cancer and heart disease. Yellow corn is a good source of the carotenoids lutein and zeaxanthin, which are good for eye health and help prevent the lens damage that leads to cataracts” (and macular degeneration). Corn also has smaller amounts of B vitamins, Vitamins E and K, along with the minerals magnesium, zinc, calcium, copper, manganese and potassium.”

In Celebration of Mandaamin

- We have included a recipe for Corn Pudding with Cranberries which is warm, and sweet; it is good for either breakfast or dessert during these cold winter months!
- If you feel like being whisked off to the southwest really quickly, try the this warm and spicey recipe for Blue Cornmeal Tamale Casserole
- Here is the link for the two recipes that were developed for the FDPIR program for hominy last January:
    - Hominy Corn Soup, a recipe first shared with us by Beverly Wemigwase for the FDPIR food videos, and another for
    - Hominy Black Bean Bowls, both can be found at: ACR_NutritionPacket_01_January-F.pdf (itcmi.org).
- What other ways do you include mandaamin in your meal planning?
- Why are you grateful for mandaamin?
- Where could you learn more about mandaamin and your community stories?

Please share any comments or questions with Charla Gordon at cgordon@ltbbodawa-nsn.gov or Ange Roberts at aroberts@ltbbodawa-nsn.gov. Miigwech!

Additional Resources Cited: https://www.webmd.com/food-recipes/corn-health-benefits, https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/foods/corn#bottom-line, and https://www.wellandgood.com/is-corn-good-for-you/ and What is Nixtamalization (thespruceeats.com).