

Introduction

Northerners have been nourished by foods from the land and water for thousands of years. The gathering, hunting, preserving and eating of traditional foods is more than just a diet – it's a way of life. A lifestyle that has connected Northerners with the land and sea through celebrated rituals and practices passed down from generation to generation; from caribou hunting grounds to fish, and berry picking camps.

Today, importance is being placed on the returning to a traditional lifestyle and diet.

The nutritional and physical benefits to this include eating a diet low in unhealthy fat and cholesterol, eating more animal sources of protein, eating foods without chemicals and additives, and getting more physical activity by gathering, hunting and preserving traditional foods.

Northerners take comfort in eating traditional foods. The "Traditional Foods are Healthy Foods" colouring book shows the foods that people once grew up with are good for your health. Traditional foods are especially good sources of nutrients like protein, iron, and Vitamin A & B and also low in saturated fat and sugar.

Each region of the NWT relies on different types of animals, fish and plants to provide nutrients needed to live in a harsh environment. See the map provided on each page to see where the animal, fish or plants live in the NWT.

Why are Traditional Foods Healthy Foods?

- Contributes to physical fitness & good health.
- Keeps people in tune with nature.
- Upholds respect for animal and human life.

- Encourages sharing in the community.
- Is an important part of culture.
- Contributes to children's education.
- Teaches survival skills.
- Provides skills in food preservation and preparation.

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ADDITIONAL
FOODS ARE
HEALTHY
FOODS

Cross Generation – Passing on Traditional Skills

The inspiration behind this Cross Generation Polar Bear - "Flesh it" illustration comes from an Inuvik grandma and granddaughters, passing on traditional skills. As grandma, Beverly Ann Esau explains "it's a cultural connection with their past"



"Flesh It" means to take all the fat off. In order to clean the polar bear for resale all the fat needs to be cleaned off first, and the skin and feet, the mouth and head. This is very delicate work because it will be sold to a customer. Many times customers will make a rug with the shape of the head. In this particular story it took the family 12 hours to skin the roughly seven foot long bear hide.

In order to clean the hide a tool called an ulu is used. An ulu (as seen in the illustration) is an all-purpose knife traditionally used by Inuit. An ulu is utilized in applications as diverse as skinning and cleaning animals, cutting a child's hair, cutting food and, if necessary, trimming blocks of snow and ice used to build an igloo.

The technique of using an Ulu to flesh a hide is a challenge and requires hours of experience and training. The ulu is never used like a saw, which is something a person new to it would automatically think how it would be used. Instead it is used in a slicing motion, relying on the flexing and flicking of the wrist. If your wrist is locked and not moving, you are using it wrong!

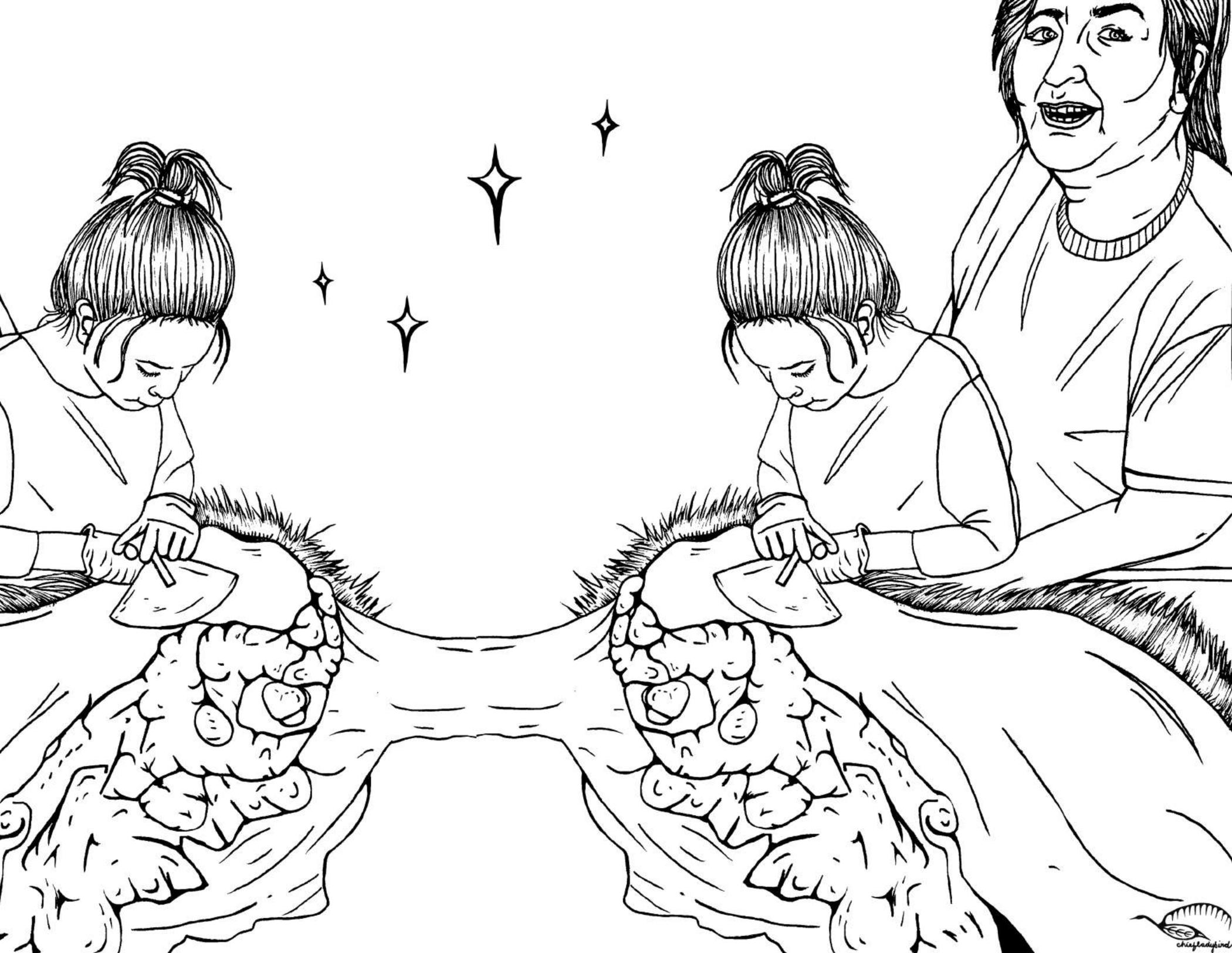
Fun Fact: Ulus will go dull pretty fast, but it depends on the type of skin you are working on. For instance I could work on caribou meat without having

to sharpen it at all besides the beginning, but when working on polar bear or seal you sharpen every 10 minutes.

Passing on Values and Traditions

Grandparents have gained wisdom and knowledge from their years on the earth. When they gain the respect of their communities for what they know they are known as Elders. They are willing to share what they know with others who, regardless of age, are looking for knowledge, Teachings, information on their traditions, culture and values. Grandparents have an important role to play in helping raise the children because they have patience and wisdom as well as the knowledge that the child's parents may not have to pass along to the child.





Water is Life by Chief LadyBird

"Water Is life" is a concept that was born from the Standing Rock movement, where water protectors have been fighting the Dakota Access Pipeline, to protect the water and land from the harmful effects of pipelines. It addresses the need for fair access to clean drinking water and opposes environmental racism.

My illustration responds to this movement through the healing symbolism of a jingle dress. The jingle dress originated in Whitefish Bay First Nation and came to a sick girl's father in a dream after he offered his tobacco to the creator to ask for assistance. While dancing in the dress, the girl was able to overcome her illness and has become a symbol for healing. Jingle dress dancers have a big responsibility

because when they dance at pow wows, people will often offer their tobacco and ask them to dance for a sick relative. In the case of this illustration, she dances for the water, which has been poisoned; she dances for the land, which has been destroyed; and she dances for the people, who have been hurt by capitalism and greed.

