

Arctic Indigenous Food is Cool! Have Indigenous Youth Made the Best Cookbook in the World?

Indigenous reindeer herding youth initiative nominated for 22nd Gourmand International Cookbook Awards 2018

The [22nd Gourmand International Cookbook Awards](#) (the “Oscars of the cookbook world”) is being held May 26-27 in Yantai, China where authors from all over the globe will compete for the prestigious awarding of the World’s best cookbooks.

An international group young indigenous people and others are among the top nominees, with their food book entitled: “EALLU –Food, Knowledge and How We Have Thrived on the Margins”. The term ‘*eallu*’ means a herd (of reindeer) in the indigenous Sámi language, closely connected to the word ‘*eallin*’, which means life.

In this unique and acclaimed food book, a team of 50 young indigenous authors present 14 different Arctic indigenous peoples’ food cultures in one volume, the first of its kind. The book has been nominated in as many as 4 categories at the Gourmand Awards: Food Heritage, Sustainable Food, Arctic Food, and the main prize itself - **Best Food Book of the World, across all categories**. The book is 1 of 16 nominees for the main prize, selected from contributions from 116 countries.

“This is much more than just a book of recipes”, says Chair Mikhail Pogodaev of Association of World Reindeer Herders (WRH): “This is about Arctic indigenous peoples’ deep knowledge about food, raw materials, processing and conservation, food security, health and wellbeing - Its about our food traditions, our traditional nomadic lifestyles, our local economies, our philosophy and our worldviews.”

“Arctic indigenous peoples have an absolutely unique understanding of the Arctic environment, their ecosystems, and their living food resources,” says Anders Oskal, the EALLU project leader and Secretary General of WRH. He maintains that on the one hand this knowledge is essential for reindeer peoples to survive and thrive in the harshest natural environments on the planet. But it can also be a universal knowledge, and something the world can learn from: “For instance, the traditions of all reindeer herding peoples to utilize everything from the reindeer remains strong, and is something today’s world could learn from as the needs to restructure the global food system has become increasingly apparent”.

Editor in Chief Philip Burgess (International Centre for Reindeer Husbandry), points out: *“This book is an ambitious attempt to present a snapshot of Circum-Arctic indigenous peoples’ food culture in just one volume, an impossible task given the great depth of knowledge possessed by these peoples. One goal is that we start a positive discussion about the role, potential and importance of indigenous peoples food production systems”* Burgess explains that a key part of the EALLU project is to document and bring forth traditional indigenous knowledge related to food, a knowledge that is little documented and that in some cases is being lost.

The Arctic is undergoing rapid and historical changes, driven by climate change, increasing human activity, biodiversity change and socio-economic changes. An aim of the EALLU project is to also focus on the *opportunities* arising from global change. Young Evenki reindeer herder and co-author Alena Gerasimova from Eastern Siberia explains: *“We wished to explore if we could have another type of development, based on our own knowledge, our own perspectives, and our own people – how we could build our own economies on our own premises - and we found one answer in our own traditional food culture”.*

The book is a product of an Arctic Council project entitled EALLU: Indigenous Youth, Arctic Change and Food Culture. The project is initiated and led by the Association of World Reindeer Herders (the circumpolar NGO for all 24 indigenous reindeer herding peoples), in close partnership with 5 Arctic States and the 6 indigenous organizations of the Arctic Council. The book was presented in person to all Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Arctic States during the Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting in Fairbanks, Alaska May 11, 2017.

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Ассоциация «Оленеводы Мира»
Association of World Reindeer Herders



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<http://www.eallu.org> & www.reindeerherding.org

An pdf copy of the book can be found here:

<http://reindeerherding.org/blog/eallu-book-now-available-online/>

The Gourmand International Cookbook Awards homepage:

<http://www.cookbookfair.com>

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