Fish Jerky: Class Project &/or Fundraiser

Teachers – work with carpenters, using directions given in the “How to Make a Dry Box” handout in this unit, so students can learn from them. Invite community members to teach students how to clean, filet and dry fish or other foods to raise class funds for trips or supplies.

It’s best just to start with building just one drybox and making fish jerky for the class to share. This project will give the class a chance to learn from mistakes, before investing time and money into multiple dryboxes and purchasing and drying fish.

Some Tips – Clean & Filet the Fish

To start, clean your fish. There are plenty of resources online to help you or you can ask your fishmonger to clean them for you. (A) Insert the tip of your knife into the belly of the fish right near the tail, sliding it in until you feel the spine. (B) Gently slice along the length of the fish from tail to head, riding the tip along the spine the whole way. (C) Make a second pass from tail to head, this time cutting just to one side of the spine nearly to the skin. Be careful not to cut the skin though. We left the fish head on during these photos, but the next step will be easier if you lop it off. (D) Gently pull open the fish along the incision and flatten it out into the butterfly shape as shown above. Congratulations! You’re ready now to grill, dry or fry!

Buy the Right Fish

If you cannot get the fish donated, go to your local fish market and ask the owner if they can support your fundraiser. Be sure to buy only sustainably harvested fish (see http://www.montereybayaquarium.org/cr/SeafoodWatch/web/sfw_regional.aspx?region_id=3 or the Pono Fishing handouts in the Unit 9 Appendix). Avoid fish caught by dredging, gillnetting, longlining, purse seining, trawling or dragging and coastal farmed farmed fish (inland aquaculture is best).

Class Project & Scaling Up for a Fundraiser

Start with 40 lbs of fresh fish (not marlin of other dense types). This will yield about 20 lbs of dried fish. Clean and filet fish then mix with 3-4 ounces of Hawaiian salt. Put in drybox in full sun, up high and away from pests and rain, for 2-3 days (depends on time of year, temperature). Bag and sell for $10/lb (ahi, aku) or $2.50/lb (‘akuli, opelu) depending on affluence in your neighborhood.

Retrieved & adapted June 3, 2009 from: maona.net/archives/2008/01/