

## TOPIC 6: LIFE IN THE MOUNTAINS

### KAI IN THE SKY

#### TOUGH VEGIES

Food in the Himalayan region is made of a combination of a few basic crops that can grow at high altitude. The growing season in the mountains is short, the climate is cold, and the soil is thin and fragile.

The potato is the main ingredient in many Himalayan dishes as well as wheat and barley. These hardy crops can grow well in the difficult mountain conditions.

Corn, carrots, turnips, onions, garlic and other vegetables can grow at the slightly lower altitudes so are often used in cooking as well. Spices such as turmeric, chilli and ginger are widely used.

Most food will be grown in local, family-owned fields and gardens but weekly markets give families access to a wider variety of ingredients.

Most of the dishes are designed to defend against the cold. Hot dishes such as spicy stews help warm from the inside out.

#### KNACK FOR YAK

Yak (male) and nak (female) farming is important in the region. They provide milk, butter, meat, fur, as well as dung to add nutrients to the poor soil.

The male yak are also used to transport goods along the mountain tracks - there are no roads or trucks high up in the mountains! Yak/nak are well adapted to living at high altitude but are vulnerable to disease at lower altitudes.

#### BY THE FIRE

The fireplace is usually in the main living room in homes in the region. This main living room is typically used for cooking, eating, living, as well as sleeping. The fireplace is often the only source of heat in the home so during the winter the family gather around the fire to keep warm and to do their cooking.

#### SLOW COOKED

Because the air is thinner at high altitudes, it takes longer for water to boil. This means food is usually cooked at a lower temperature and so takes longer to cook.

#### EATING WITH YOUR HANDS

Nepalis insist that dhal tastes better if you eat it with your hands - which takes some skill and practice!

First wash your hands thoroughly. Only use your right hand. Using your fingers, push the rice together on the plate so it sticks together. Use your thumb and fingers to scoop a bite-sized amount of rice and pop it in your mouth. Remember not to use your hands for anything else once you've started eating! Wash your hands when finished.

#### A WELCOME CEREMONY

Guests are often welcomed into a home by begin offered a cup of tea. Hosts will offer the tea saying "shey-shey" meaning please take. It is polite for guests to refuse the tea at first. But the host will keep on asking until eventually the guests gives in and accepts a cup of tea. If a guest completely refuses to take a cup of tea, it will offend the host!

### MAKE YOUR OWN!

#### BUTTER TEA RECIPE:

<http://sherpasisters.com/sherpanichef/blog/2014/01/11/sherpa-butter-tea/>

#### DAL BHAAT:

<http://mycookingjourney.com/dal-bhaat-tarkari-national-dish-of>

#### MOMOS:

<https://delishably.com/appetizers-snacks/How-to-cook-dumplings>