



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage:



**A photobook of traditional foodways of the
Isukha and East Pokot communities of Kenya**



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A photobook of traditional foodways of the Isukha and East Pokot communities of Kenya

Editors: Patrick Maundu, Brian Kapeta, Patel Muiruri,
Ruth Adeka, Julia Ombonya and Y. Morimoto

Compiled by: P. Maundu, B. Kapeta, P. Muiruri, R. Adeka,
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- Members of the Isukha and the East Pokot communities
- Teachers and pupils of Muraka and Shihuli primary schools in Isukha and Chemolingot and Churo primary schools in East Pokot.

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Foreword

Kenya became a state party to the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural in 2007 with a strong commitment to the safeguarding and promotion of the intangible cultural heritage of its communities, groups and individuals.

Since 2010, with financial support from the Japanese Funds-In-Trust, UNESCO has been collaborating with the Kenyan Government in implementing a project, “Safeguarding traditional foodways of two communities in Kenya”, Isukha and East Pokot. The aim of the Project is to revitalize the traditional foodways in these two communities by: identifying and inventorying their traditional foodways; encouraging these communities to appreciate traditional food practices; and raising awareness in Kenya about the endangered diversity of its traditional foodways.

Traditional foodways involves practices transmitted within a community concerning the growing, harvesting, collecting, preparation and consumption of food, including the provision of ingredients and the roles of all people involved. Traditional foodways, both those related to everyday life as well as those associated with special occasions (such as rituals, social practices, and festive events) constitute an important part of the intangible heritage of communities in the World. In Kenya, as in many countries, because of globalization, modernization and urbanization traditional foodways are being abandoned for western style foodways. The younger generation is particularly affected as they are no longer aware of the traditional foodways and their associated traditions and practices of their communities.

The Project targeted young people and worked with 2 primary schools in each of the two communities: Muraka and Shihuli Primary Schools in Isukha; and Churo and Chemolingot Primary Schools in East Pokot. Teachers and parents helped school children document information about the various foodways within their community, developing a manual which provided the school children with a step by step procedure on how to identify, document and inventory traditional foodways of their communities, covering aspects such as: types of traditional foods; traditional foodways seasons; harvesting and preparation methods; preservation methods, nutritional values; as well as associated rituals.

The experiences of school children in inventorying their traditional foodways in Isukha, a mixed farming community, and East Pokot, a livestock keeping community have been used to produce this “Photo Book of the Traditional Foodways of the Isukha and East Pokot Communities of Kenya”. The Photo Book provides a mirror into the rich and diverse traditional foodways of the Isukha and East Pokot communities and their associated traditions, beliefs, taboos and practices.

UNESCO would like to express its profound gratitude to the Government of Japan for the resources provided through the Japanese-Funds-In-Trust which supported the implementation of this Project. UNESCO is also grateful to the team at Kenya Society of Ethnoecology, National Museums of Kenya, Department of Culture and Bioersity International for their invaluable contribution to this project and the publication of this book.

Djelid Mohamed
Director
UNESCO-Nariob

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Executive summary

This photobook presents the results of traditional foodways documentation conducted in Isukha and East Pokot communities of Kenya within the project 'Safeguarding traditional foodways of two communities in Kenya' executed by UNESCO Nairobi Office. The documentation was undertaken between 2008-2012 largely by pupils of primary schools in Isukha and East Pokot. The pupils received great assistance from their teachers, local project coordinators and the project team mainly consisting of staff from National Museums of Kenya, Bioversity International and the Department of Culture.

Altogether, 22 food themes are covered in two chapters - 10 themes for East Pokot (chapter 1) and 15 for Isukha (chapter 2). Three topics are overlapping. The themes were selected on the basis of their importance in the two communities.

Selected themes/topics are as follows:

Pokot	Isukha
1. Local market	1. Breakfast
2. Evening meal (ugali)	2. Planting vegetables and sweet potatoes at school
3. Wild fruits	3. Vegetables
4. Manga (Gums)	4. Sweet potatoes
5. Cooked fruits	5. Chicken
6. Wild roots and tubers	6. Shitienyi
7. Termites	7. Shibambala
8. Milking and tea preparation	8. Ibusaa
9. Herding of livestock	9. Tsimbare
10. Ceremonies	10. Tsisindu
	11. Market place
	12. Mushrooms
	13. Bananas and plantains
	14. Fruits
	15. Traditional ceremonies

About 330 colour photographs have been used to tell over 50 photostories of food processing and eating in the two communities. In some instances however the photographs were not sufficient for complete stories.

The main themes running in each case are:

- Acquiring the food
- Food preparation/processing
- Serving and eating food
- Related beliefs, taboos, myths, songs

Two glossaries, one for each community, are presented at the end of the book. Over 70 terms are explained. One caution however is that spellings of words may differ a lot, even within one community. In the case of Pokot, a standard way of writing is only being developed. In the case of the Isukha, the authors have attempted to use Isukha names and spellings as much as possible but in cases where a name could not be immediately found, an alternative name from a neighbouring Luhya group has been used if available.



Map of Kenya showing location of the two communities- Isukha and Pokot



West Kenya showing the location of the four participating schools

CHAPTER I: Documenting Foodways of East Pokot (Tiaty)

Market day at Amaya



◀ It is Tuesday morning at Amaya trading centre, located at the border of East Pokot and Samburu districts of north-western Kenya. It is a market day (siroo). Cows, sheep, goats, donkeys and camels are traded. Livestock among the Pokot is viewed as a source of wealth and when there is food shortage, illness or other pressing household needs, then it has to be sold or exchanged with goods (barter trade). The market is also the place where people come for news.



▲ Olesuda (left) is a Samburu moran (warrior) and is busy walking around the animal market looking for the right animal to buy. With him is Wialanyang, a Pokot moran also a buyer. Despite wearing a Western shirt, as a moran, Wialanyang has to wear suka (a local piece of cloth wrapped around the waist) since a trouser is believed to make a person poor in terms of livestock numbers. People in trousers are not allowed to get near livestock.



▲ Losakuru and Ameriaruk are dragging their goats (ngaror) to Amaya market to sell. Goats are sold mainly for medicine (sakat) while cows are sold for other household needs. According to the Pokot, it is only men who can sell an animal. Each animal has a clan mark on the ear. Among the Pokot, wealth is measured by the number of livestock one owns. Cows are used for payment of dowry and are rarely slaughtered for meat. They provide milk, blood and butter which are an important component of Pokot diet

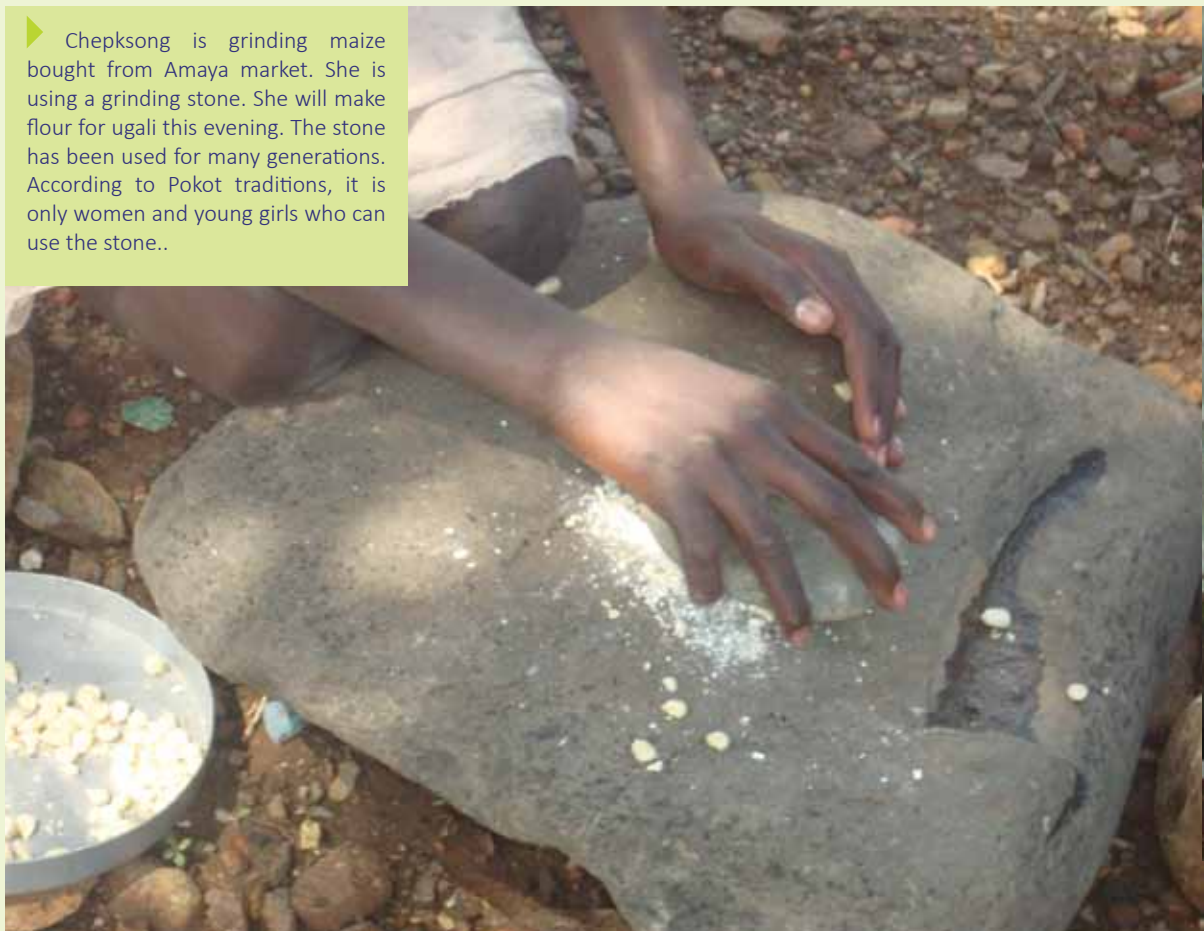


▲ Unlike men who deal in animals in the market, women fetch food for the household including cereal flour, sugar, tea and salt. Girls (mror) wear different clothes and hair styles from their mothers (kokon). Girls apply brown stone ochre on their hair while women apply black ochre. According to Pokot tradition, married women should wear an animal skin (trim) around their wrist as a sign that they are married (see photo).

Preparation of evening meal

Preparation of ugali

► Chepksong is grinding maize bought from Amaya market. She is using a grinding stone. She will make flour for ugali this evening. The stone has been used for many generations. According to Pokot traditions, it is only women and young girls who can use the stone..



▲ Ugali (pantaa) prepared from whole maize flour is now the staple food of the Pokot community and it is normally eaten with cho (milk) and occasionally with traditional vegetables or peny (meat). It is dry season and Chepksong is not in her traditional home, but in kiporiaka, a temporary dry season grazing field. She has been away for several months with her brothers looking after animals. Little girls such as Chepksong come along to help with fetching water, cooking and taking care of calves.



▲ Lotuya, Chepksong's brother is pouring the flour (psyaa) into the boiling water to make ugali. He is helping his little sister to cook.

▲ As the flour is being prepared, a sufuria (tor) containing water is placed on a three-stone fireplace to boil.

▲ Using a wooden oar-like stick, he stirs to get a good mix of the water and flour, breaking any lumps. Normally at this stage one uses a different stick, the akipiret to break the initial lumps. Akipiret is a stick with a forked tip. Once the ugali is a bit firm, the oar-like stick called amakang is used for turning the ugali. Akipiret is usually made from a branch of komolwo tree, which has a natural star-like fork.



▲ While the food is being served, men are chatting away in their hut (aperit). Women take the food to this hut. Milk is brought in special gourds (muko papoo) used by men only. The woman places the milk gourd and the ugali on a ktarr (a table made from twigs but fixed to a wall). The men then pick the food and serve once she has left. Milk is poured in cups (kapuritin). In case a man has more than one wife, he has to wait until all the women have brought their food to him, before he can eat. Children are not supposed to serve men at their aperit since they would treat it as lack of respect on the part of the woman sending the children. The Pokot use sticks to cut the ugali (panta). Each man would normally have a stick in their aperit

▶ When the meal is ready it is molded into a dome shape (kemulmul) to look presentable then served. When cooking ugali, one has to be seated since it requires a lot of attention and the fire must be kept burning.

▶ By continuously turning and mixing the ugali, Lotuya makes sure it gets heated uniformly and does not burn.



Vegetable preparation

Tuyunwo



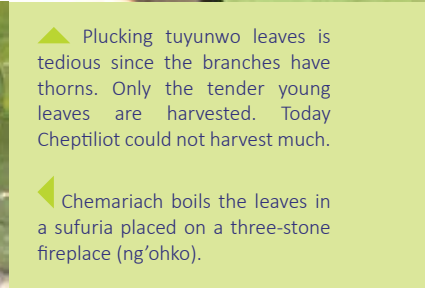
▲ Cheptilot is climbing a Tuyunwo tree (desert date) to harvest leaves.



▲ She is now at the top of the tree cutting down branches. Tuyunwo provides fresh leaves even when it is dry. The tree will grow new branches during the next rainy season.



▲ Cheptilot takes the branches home.



▲ Plucking tuyunwo leaves is tedious since the branches have thorns. Only the tender young leaves are harvested. Today Cheptiliot could not harvest much.

▲ Chemariach boils the leaves in a sufuria placed on a three-stone fireplace (ng'ohko).

▲ The leaves are boiled for about 25 minutes. Younger leaves take less time to cook.

▲ Chemariach is serving the vegetables.

▲ Cheptiliot, Chemariach and their little sisters are eating the vegetable. It is usually served with ugali but now it is being eaten as a snack.



Kiptanya and kisocho

▲ Lopeto and Chaun are going to collect vegetables. The dry season is approaching and vegetables can only be found along dry steams like the one in this photo.



▲ Chaun has come across kiptanya (amaranth). He then harvests it.



▲ Kiptanya



▲ On the other side of the stream, Lopeto has spotted kisocho which he harvests. Once home, the leaves are plucked from the stems.



▲ Chemetich fries onions and adds tomatoes then the vegetables.

▶ The vegetable sauce is ready for eating with ugali.



▲ Motonyo and Pirakol are older and have stood to pose for a photo.



▲ Sorghum ugali is also used by the Pokot. In the photo Akeno and his younger brother Moreru are eating sorghum ugali.



▲ A photo of a sorghum head. Sorghum is being replaced by maize.

▲ Lopeto and his brothers are enjoying ugali outside the house. Next to them is an animal enclosure and also a fireplace where the boys spend their early evening keeping vigil.

Edible wild fruit

Edible fruits gathered in the wild include oron, lakatet, putar, kamol, kinyat, sitet and matunden. Some fruits such as Oron are collected by herders and sold at the market. Matunden is an introduced plant that has gone wild in Pokot.





Kamol

▲ Lopoghon is up on a small tree picking kamol. As Lopoghon picks the fruits, he drops them down. He occasionally shakes the branches so that ripe fruits that he cannot reach by hand may fall to the ground.

▶ Lopoghon then collects the fruit, peels the outer part and starts to eat the brown pulp. He then discards the seeds. He takes the remaining fruits home. Kamol can also be used to prepare a type of porridge (musar). Cooking of musar starts by soaking the fruit overnight in a pot (toropochon) then early in the morning the mixture of pulp and water is boiled. It is taken alone or used as a sauce for ugali.

▶ Fruits of komolwo on the tree



▲ Fruiting branch of komolwo





Kelion

▲ These are unripe fruits of kelion or the arrow-poison plant, a small highland tree. Kelion roots are poisonous. The roots are boiled with water until a black viscous tar-like substance is obtained. This is applied on arrow heads and used to kill wild animals.

► Lochom is with his friends from Churo Primary School. They are showing ripe kelion fruits. These have some latex. Ripe fruits have to be eaten in moderation. Unripe fruits are bitter and poisonous. Young girls (mror) use the red extract of the fruit as dye for lips and the seeds as beads to make necklaces (karin). Fallen ripe fruits are eaten by goats but can cause bloat.





▲ Loktari is showing unripe Oron fruit



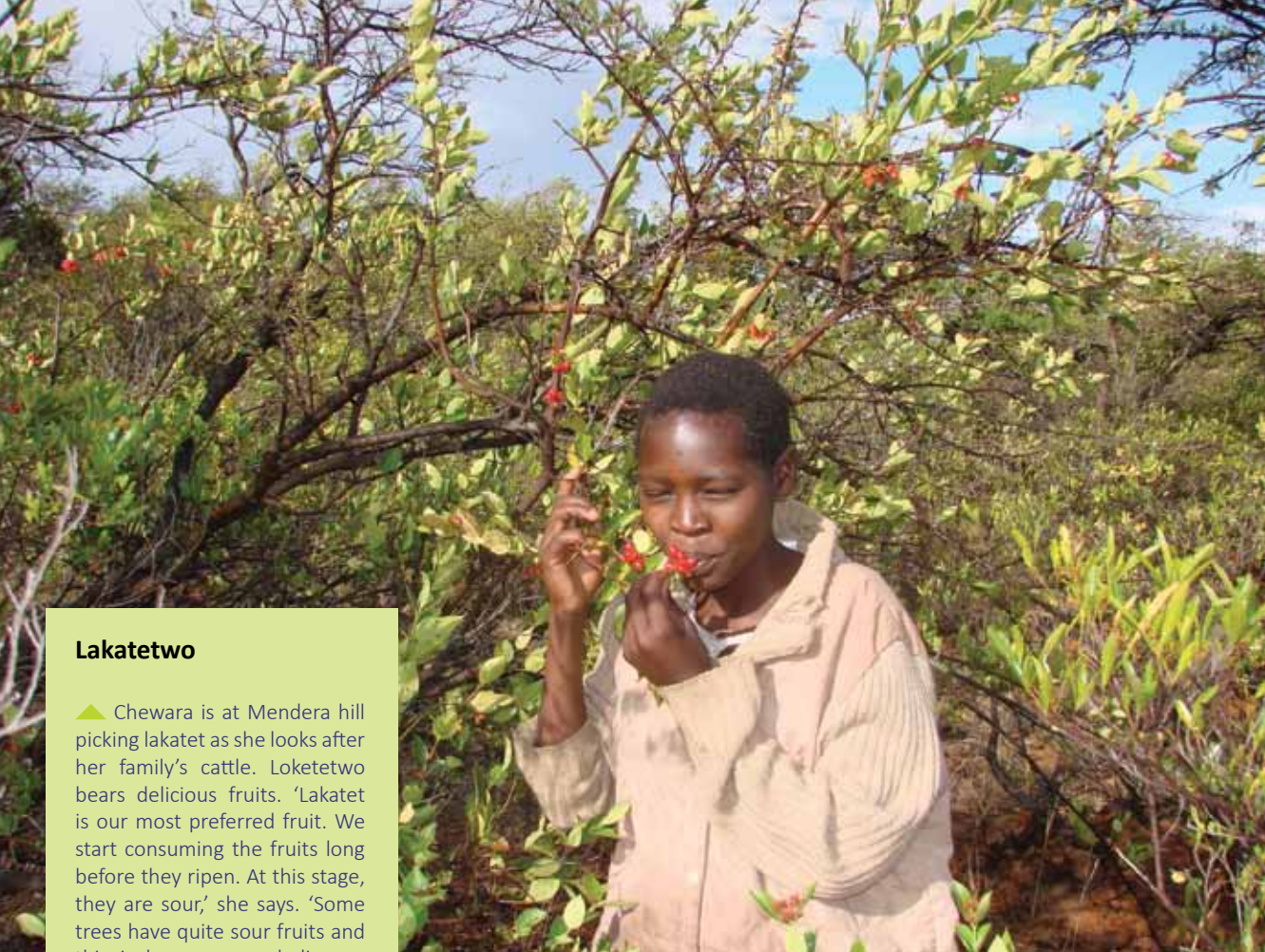
▲ Unripe fruits of oron are sour but still edible.



▲ Loktari has shared Oron fruits with his friends and all are enjoying eating the fruits.

Oron

▲ O r o n (*Tamarindus indica*) is a huge riverine tree. Loktari has climbed the tree to harvest oron fruits.



Lakatetwo

▲ Chewara is at Mendera hill picking lakatet as she looks after her family's cattle. Lokettwo bears delicious fruits. 'Lakatet is our most preferred fruit. We start consuming the fruits long before they ripen. At this stage, they are sour,' she says. 'Some trees have quite sour fruits and this is because, we believe a snake has spat on the fruit,' says Chewara. 'Our parents also boil the roots in soup and drink it to feel strong. The bark is also chewed to cure headache,' she adds

▶ Lakatet thorn.



▲ Immature fruits are green, but often tinged red

▲ Sometimes the red colour can dominate when the fruit is in bright sunlight.

▲ The fruits turn purplish black when ripe.



▲ Chepturu and Poriot are chewing the sour unripe lakatet fruits.



▲ Chelimo is a pupil at Churo Primary School. It is break time and she has picked some fruits of lakatetwo from the school fence to eat.

▲ Chepturu is too short to harvest lakatetwo fruits from the ground level. Here she has climbed the bush to pick fruits. The bush is thorny and so she has to be careful. According to the Pokot, pregnant women are not allowed to collect these fruits since it is believed they could break their hands.



Taparer

▲ Chepakka is a pupil at Churo Primary School. She is with her colleagues eating taparer.

► They will eat the fruits but also use them as glue for their books. Taparer has a gummy sweet fluid around the seed.





Matunden

▲ This is matunden or the prickly pear. The ripe fruits are edible.

◀ Lotoye and Nakum are picking matunden. They have to be careful because the fruits have small prickly hairs. The hairs cause agony to children when they get into their skin.

◀ Lotoye is picking a ripe fruits but has to hold it at the right place.



▲ Lotoye uses the leaves to brush out the prickly hairs. He can also drop it on the ground and roll it using his feet.



▲ He removes the outer cover



▲ Lotoye eating Matunden



▲ Ripe kinyat is yellow turning orange.



▲ peels the outer cover of kinyat...



▲and eats the juicy part.

Kinyotwo

▲ Cheptai is a pupil at Ngingyng Primary School. At break time he rushed to the near-by bushes and collected kinyat.



▲ Cheloken and Cheptai enjoying their snack.

▶ Unripe kin-yat still attached to a tree branch. Unripe fruits are also eaten but are sour.

▶ Unripe fruits are green

▶ Chepyoku is a pupil at Churo Primary School and she is peeling the outer covering of kin-yotwo fruit.



▲ The seed is discarded.

Dry seeds of kin-yat are collected, roasted and the oil used to soften animal leather worn as skirt by women. Men also apply the oil on their walking sticks.

▶ Ko'lokala is dressed in an animal hide (koliko) softened with kin-yat seed. She is carrying a skin bag (motoku).

◀ Unripe kinyotwo fruit is sour.





Muchukwo

▲ It is lunch time at Kolowo Primary School. Lopenyo, Ngurai and Minito are up a muchukwo tree harvesting muchuk.

◀ Unripe fruits of muchukwo are green but can still be chewed. Ripe fruits are yellow and very sweet.

◀ Lopenyo and his friends are eating muchuk.

▲ Minito is showing his harvest of muchukwo fruits.





Koloswo

▲ Lomonyany is felling koloswo fruits by hitting them with stones.

▶ Fruits are often eaten when green but all there is now is dry fruit.

▶ Lomonyany is felling koloswo fruits by hitting them with stones.



▲ Lomonyany showing a dry koloswo fruit.

◀ Lomonyany is removing the outer papery covers of the koloswo fruit.





▲ Lomonyany chewing dry koloswo fruit.

‘▲ This is what the fruit looks like. It is winged. The seed is at the centre and this is what you chew. It is a bit sour,’ she says.

▲ Chepkolio demonstrating how to eat the fruit.



Puterwo

- ▲ Narumbea is picking putar.
- ▶ Narumbea and his friends demonstrating how to eat putar. Unripe putar are green in color but they are not eaten until they turn brown (ripe).

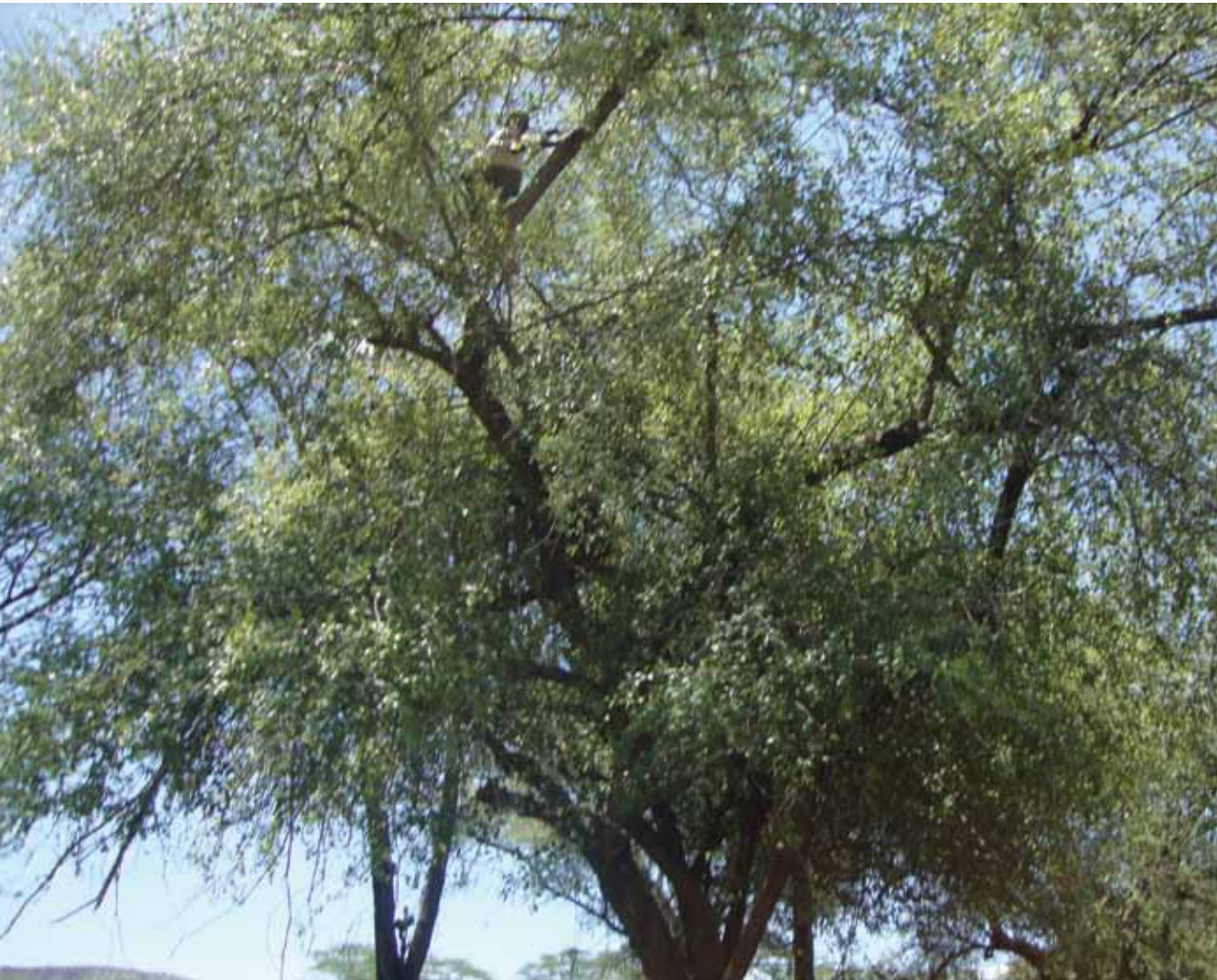




Sitet

▲ A branch of sitet with unripe fruits.

▼ Adoket is demonstrating how to eat sitet.



Tilam

▲ Tilomwo is a prickly tree found mainly along rivers. Cheptiyos has climbed this tree to pick fruits.

► Cheptiyos showing tilam in his mouth as his brother looks.



Manga (Gum)



▲ Edible gum



▲ Many acacia trees produce edible gum (manga). Chemangayan (*Acacia senegal*) has the best gum.

◀ Cheptiliot is picking the gum.

▶ Cheptiliot shows the gum.

◀ The gum

▶ The gum in her mouth.



Cooked fruits- collection and processing



Loma

▲ It is six o'clock in the evening at Chemoril village. Chepkukot is hitting loma fruits from a lomion tree while her sisters are collecting the fallen fruits. They are putting the fruits in motoku.



▲ Loma



▲ Chepkukot and her sister holding loma



▲ Unripe loma are green while ripe ones are yellow.



▲ Boiling loma



▲ Ko'lokipet explaining to her grandchildren how to process loma. She loves these fruits since they are not hard to chew.

'We will remove the fruit pulp to obtain the seed. The seed has a hard cover. We have to crush this to get the edible kernel. This is what we will boil for a whole day, replacing water many times in order to wash out the bitterness,' she explains

▲ Loma is first boiled in toropochon placed on a three stone fireplace. When boiled enough, the fruits are poured on a clean mat (ripka). Fruits that are already attacked by insect pests (ngutiaan) are removed by hand. Clean ones are put in cow dung (pures) and pounded with a palm-size stone (kogh).



Sorichon

▲ Ko'lokipet is using a long stick to harvest sorichon from sorichon. Her grandchildren are helping her.



▲ Once she has brought down enough fruit, she removes their outer cover using a stone leaving seeds with a tough white skin.

▲ Ko'lokipet and grandchildren displaying seeds of sorichon.

▲ The seeds of sorichon have a tough white skin.



▲ Ko'lokipet is patiently boiling sorichon seeds.



▲ Boiling Sorichon seeds takes several hours. The water used for boiling has to be changed several times to remove bitterness.



▲ Ko'lokipet and her grandchildren sharing the cooked seed.

▲ Boiling sorichon seeds.

Harvesting of edible root



Kaptirmam

▲ Kukat and Kalikwon are harvesting kaptirmam using a panga (large heavy knife). Traditionally, sticks are used for digging and are more preferred because there is less likelihood of damaging the tuber. Kaptirmam is an edible root tuber that looks like sweet potato and tastes sweet. Besides eating, boys looking after animals make toy cars from the root. As Kukat digs, Kalikwon scoops out the soil until the root is seen clearly then removed.



▲ Kaptirmam has fibrous roots the size of sweet potatoes. Herders harvest and consume the tuber raw



▲ Kalikwon has peeled the outer part and shared the tuber with his friend Kukat. They are both enjoying their Kaptirmam.



▲ Kukat and Kalikwon wander more and come across another plant with edible tubers – kamurmur. It is hard to find and so they are happy with their find. They had been looking since morning.



▲ Kamurmur is a climbing or creeping plant which requires another plant to climb on and support itself. The plant has thin fibrous roots the size of a pen. It is one of the popular traditional edible roots in highland areas and is harvested mainly by herders to quench thirst. There are two types of Kamurmur – a highland type and lowland type. The highland type has strong and short roots compared to the lowland type which tends to have thin and long roots. Highland types absorb more water than the lowland types and hence are good for quenching thirst especially in the dry hot season.

▲ Kukat and Kalikwon enjoying kamurmur.

▲ Chepkite and Losiwa are harvesting lowland kamurmur. They are busy digging using sticks.



Aurieng'o

- ▲ Aurieng'o is commonly found in acacia bushland.
- ◀ Kiwial has seen signs of aurieng'o under this acacia tree. He is busy digging using a stick.
- ▶ .. then tries to feel how firm it is.



- ▲ Some signs of its presence include a strong smell and cracked ground as it emerges.

▲ Kiwial removing Aurieng'o

▲ Kiwial showing the fruit of his work

▲ Kiwial opens aurieng'o by biting off the tip.



▲ Breaking the tip reveals rice-like floral parts that are edible.

▲ Rice-like parts of aurieng'o

▶ ...and it is time to enjoy.



▲ He is pouring the rice-like flower parts on his hand.



▲ Flour-like component.

▲ Kiwial pours out the flour-like part of aurieng'o on his hand.

▲ ...and starts to lick.

Harvesting of termites



▲ It is six o'clock in the evening and the termites have emerged from the mound. It is a sign that the flying forms (ng'okoi) are coming out of the mound this evening. Soldier termites come out first to provide security for the flying forms.



▲ Chepoisho, her sisters and cousins surround the termite mound to harvest the flying forms of the termites. Harvesting starts from about six or seven o'clock in the evening.



▲ Termites emerging from a hole on the side of a termite mound



▲ Children harvesting termites. During harvesting, children have to be careful as snakes, spiders and wild animals such as anteaters also come out to feed on the winged forms.



▲ Traditionally the termites would be put in motoku but nowadays plastic cups and other containers are increasingly being used.

▲ Ng'okoi are brought home, put in a sufuria (tor) and roasted till the wings can come out easily. They are turned constantly for even roasting and to prevent them from burning.

▲ After frying, the termites, they are spread on a sheet and can now be eaten. The wings are easily removed by rubbing a handful of termites between the hands and blowing the wings off.

▲ According to Pokot tradition breast-feeding mothers are not allowed to eat termites since they believe this can cause rashes in babies.

Milking and tea preparation



Milking a camel

▲ Camels are the first to be milked as early as 3 am in the morning followed by cows and finally goats and sheep at around 8 am. Milking is done twice in a day, morning and evening.

▼ Kangoror and Chilitwa are assisting each other to milk a camel. Boys and girls milk goats but can also milk the other animals.

▼ Milking a camel.

► The calf is then released to continue suckling.



▲ A calf is allowed to suckle first before milking.

► Chilitwa and Kangoror are each holding a container of milk.





Milking a cow

◀ It is sunrise at Adipo village near Churo.

▲ Lokwarita is milking a cow. Milking is done mainly by women but in other cases men also do the milking.



Milking a goat

▲ This is the home of Kedii. Kapranyie wakes up early in the morning to milk goats.

Pokot pregnant women are not allowed to drink milk from a goat or cow that has been attacked by snake or hyena as this may cause miscarriage

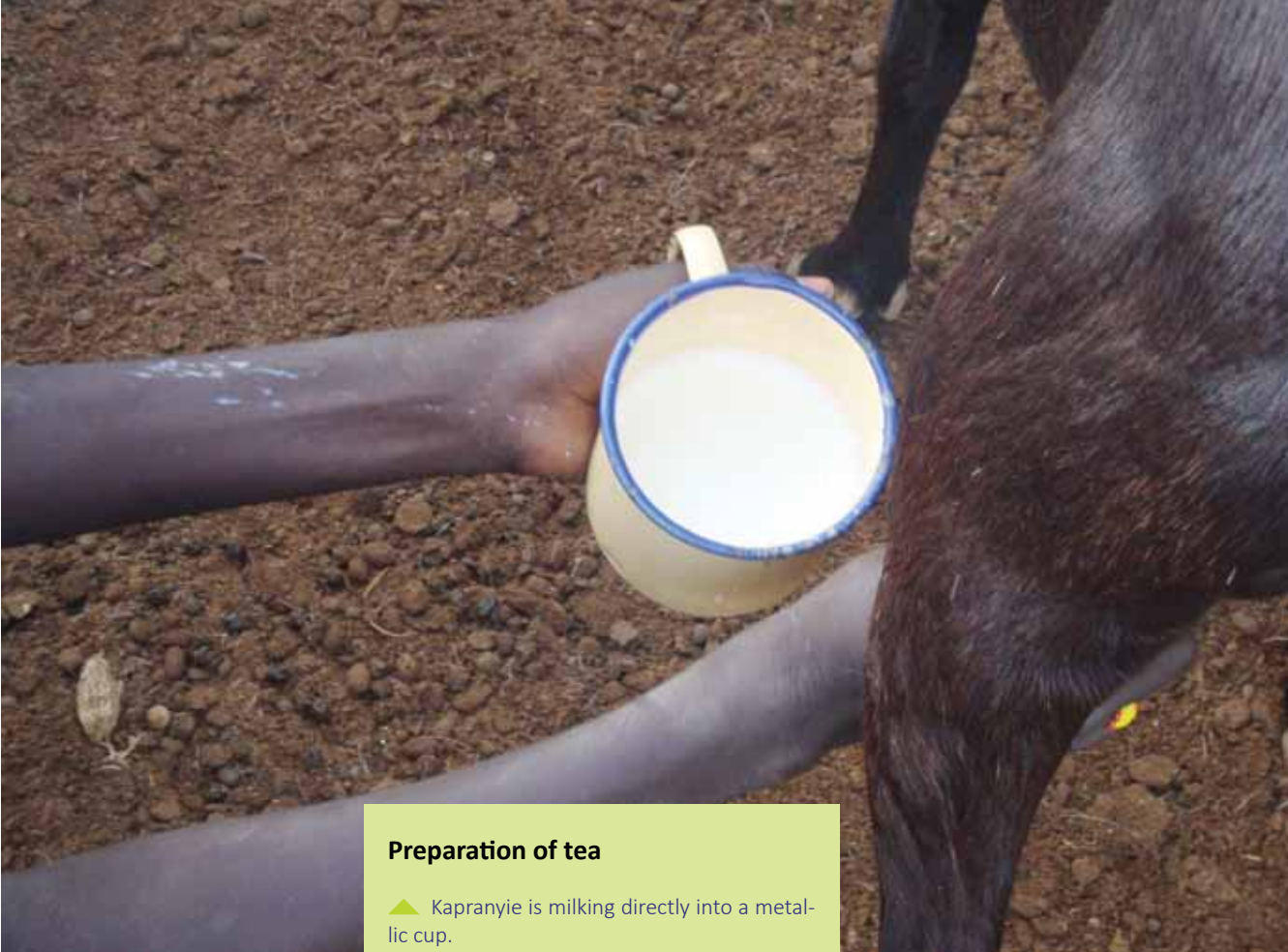


▲ The milk will be used for making tea.

▼ The kid can now suckle the remaining milk.

► Milk gourds are stored at asachaa, a traditional basket made from animal skin strips woven together around a framework of twigs. When asachaa is loaded on to a donkey, women also use it to carry water containers from a water source such as a stream.





Preparation of tea

▲ Kapranyie is milking directly into a metallic cup.

▲ Lomorun is holding a traditional wooden jug for milking goats. It is called alepit and has a handle. The one used for milking cows is bigger than that of milking goats. The milk is boiled then put in a gourd (muko). For small quantities of milk such as from a goat, kadang (small type of gourd) is used instead

▶ Preparing tea

▲ The goat milk has been used to prepare tea. Pokot traditional tea is put in different kettles and taken to different household members.

▶ Some tea is taken to male members of the family who have their tea outside as they sit on apolong (traditional stool made from kureswo tree). Milk is consumed mainly with ugali as alternative to vegetables.



Herding of livestock



▲ Chelalwa and her younger sister Cheptiliot are looking after cows with the help of dogs to alert them in case of wild animals such as hyenas.

▲ It is morning at the family of Kaliamoi in Sigorion village near Churo. Goats are outside their enclosure (kweoho'o) basking in the morning sun as others are leaking magadi salt from ateker (a long wooden trough made from kresuo tree and used for giving animals water or salt).

▲ Riaonoluk is leading the goats out of the homestead to the field.

▶ Goats and sheep are each grazed separately by children near the homestead.

▶ In the field boys entertain themselves by watching bull fighting. When one's bull is defeated he has to be punished too by his colleagues accusing him of failing to take good care of his bull. East Pokot is a vast area owned by the community and hence one has the freedom to move a lot and far in search of good pasture

▶ Lotireng is seated on apolong while watching his cows grazing. He is well dressed with beadwork on his neck and arm. On his wrist are a bangle "karinn" and more beadwork.



Ceremonies



▲ Petareng is graduating during sapanana. He is in a traditional cap (bulu) made from ochre stone. The stone is collected from a river bank and crushed between two stones, mixed with ghee and then applied on hair. Sapanana is an important ceremony among the Pokot community as it enables someone to graduate from childhood to adulthood. The graduate kills a bull to mark his brevity on the day of the function



▲ Chemakitiny drinking the blood of a goat.

▶ A traditional stool given to a graduate after undergoing sapanana.

▶ There is a function today and men have slaughtered a goat under a tree. The slaughtering is preferably done on cheptuya (*Euclea divinorum*) leaves. Roasting of meat is usually done by men as women cook.

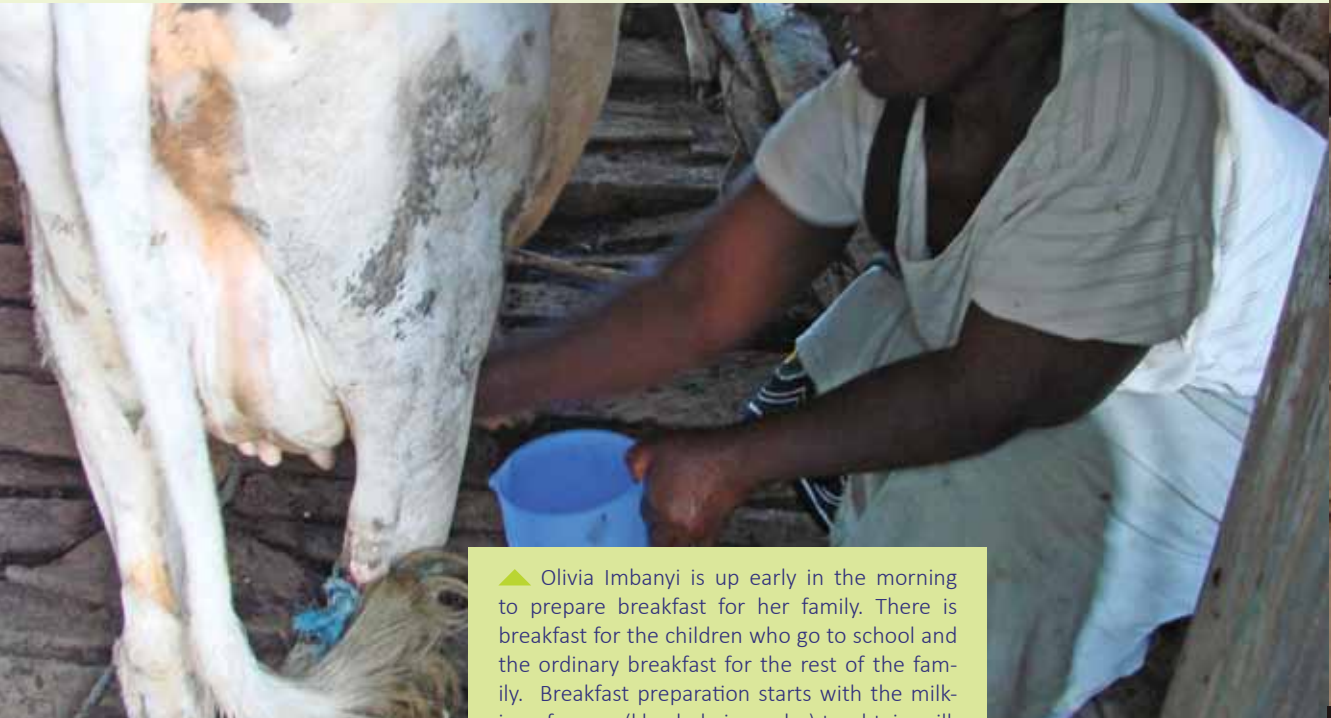
▶ Cheporukoita and Monika are cooking the meat in a big sufuria (tor) placed on a three-stone fireplace (koughn). They are using a cooking stick (amkang) to mix the meat.



Breakfast

Tea

Tea has become an important part of local diet. It is taken any time of the day often with other foods including mushenye, mapuoni, tsinduma, amenjera, amaruku and emioko (boiled cassava).



▲ Olivia Imbanyi is up early in the morning to prepare breakfast for her family. There is breakfast for the children who go to school and the ordinary breakfast for the rest of the family. Breakfast preparation starts with the milking of a cow (khushela ingombe) to obtain milk for making tea. Before milking, she ties the hind legs of the cow to prevent it from kicking while it is being milked.

▶ Meanwhile in the kitchen Sylvia has placed water on amaika (three- stone fireplace). She will make tea.

◀ Women and girls are served in the kitchen while men are served outside. Tea is served along with boiled sweet potatoes, taro (tsinduma) or mahenjela (a mixture of maize and beans or bambara nuts) to provide sufficient energy for the day.

▶ Olivia adds milk and tea to the boiling water. She uses a cup as a measure of the amount of milk she requires. The quantity of the tea prepared depends on the family size and the amount of milk available. If the tea has plenty of milk, it is referred to as itavara and if the milk is weak, the tea is referred to as 'muchuru'.



▲ Olivia puts the tea in a kettle and she may serve the tea directly into cups or put in a vacuum flask. If one has no flask, tea is left in the metallic kettle and placed near the fireplace to keep warm. For the fire to last long, the embers are covered in ashes (kufundikira muliro).

Mahenjela

Mahenjela (amenjera in Kisa) is a cooked mixture of maize and beans. It is normally used for breakfast but at times of food shortage it can be eaten for supper. It is also prepared as snack and lunch for people doing heavy manual work in farms such as casual laborers. It is also served as low cost food with tea during overnight ceremonies such as funerals and also as supplementary food during weddings.



▲ It is morning and this mahenjela has been on low fire at the three-stone fireplace since last evening. It is now cooked. The fire had died but Olivia has restarted it this morning. Also being warmed at the fire place is a kettle of tea.



▲ To ensure the mahenjela warms up uniformly, Olivia jerks the pot and continues to warm it. The paddle-shaped stick (mwikho) leaning on the wall is not used for mahenjela but ugali.

▲ Using a bowl, Olivia serves mahenjela as her granddaughter watches. They will have mahenjela with tea for breakfast. Mahenjela is eaten with clean bare hands.

Taro (tsinduma) and sweet potatoes

Boiled sweet potatoes are taken with tea. Alternatively the sweet potatoes are boiled with taro.



▲ Sweet potatoes

▼ Boiled sweet potatoes are popular for breakfast

▶ Olivia is harvesting some taro (tsinduma) which she cooks together with sweet potatoes. Taro is normally planted among bananas in the home garden (mundangu) or along the stream (khumwalo). 'I check which taro plant is mature then using a panga (machete), I cut off the side roots to weaken the plant. I then pull it out,' says Olivia.

▶ After uprooting (khuyeva) the taro, I chop off the corm and replant (khuraka) the rest of the shoot to allow the tsinduma to grow again,' explains Olivia.





▲ Later during the day Olivia sits under a tree in shade chatting with her neighbour Zipporah as they peel the taro and the sweet potatoes (khubasa) for the evening meal.

After school, Lavender and her siblings help their parents in the preparation of meals including their next day's breakfast of taro, sweet potatoes and tea.

◀ Lavender is cleaning the sweet potatoes and taro.

◀ Lavender's sister Bellemy is preparing tea that will be used the next day with the taro and sweet potatoes.



▲ Lavender covers the taro and sweet potatoes with banana leaves and another smaller sufuria on top to retain steam. It is believed that if the steam escapes, the taro cannot cook.

Amaruku

Amaruku (air potato) is a climbing yam that produces tubers on the stems. Its popularity has waned significantly and is usually maintained by farmers as treatment for measles in children and to a smaller extent as food.



▲ Amaruku is prepared in a similar way as mapuoni. It can be boiled or roasted. It is mainly used when there is a shortage of food.

- ◀ Amaruku
- ▶ Boiled amaruku
- ▶ Roasted amaruku



Breakfast for school-going pupils



▲ It is evening and Bellemy is pouring tea in different containers for storage till the following morning.

◀ Before retiring to bed, a mixture of taro and sweet potatoes is put in a sufuria to cook overnight. Enough water is added. By morning, the food is cooked and nicely dry.

▶ Lavender and her siblings are serving tea. They will have tea with sweet potatoes and taro. This day is an exception. Like most families who cannot afford tea in the morning, they usually go to school without breakfast then come back home for lunch. Sometimes they pack a snack for use during lunch.

◀ It is morning the following day and Olivia is up early to prepare breakfast for school-going pupils. She removes the taro and sweet potatoes from the fireplace and serves.





▲ It is early in the morning. Lavender, her brother and cousin are having breakfast before they leave for school.

▼ Bellemly packing some taro and sweet potatoes for lunch at school.

► Bellemly going to school with her cousin.



Vegetable and sweet potato planting at school

Shihuli primary school is in Kakamega County. The pupils are involved in many activities including vegetable farming at their school. Some of the vegetables they grow include mitoo and murenda. They also grow sweet potatoes. They are normally guided by their teachers on issues of farming.



▲ The pupils are tilling the land and making mounds and ridges to plant sweet potatoes. Sweet potatoes grow best on deep, loose well-aired soil.

▶ During planting the vines are planted on ridges or mounds.

◀ Here the pupils are planting vegetables. There are two ways of planting vegetables; through drilling and by broadcasting. Here a pupil is broadcasting vegetable seed while the others dig shallowly to cover the seed.

◀ Murere (Jute) in the school farm.





► After the hard work in the school farm, the pupils harvest some vegetables and start to prepare them. The vegetables will be used for lunch the following day by both pupils and teachers.

► The school cook is preparing mahenjela to be served for lunch.

► The pupils have been served the food in groups.

► Pupils sharing food. Mahenjela is eaten by hand. Girls will normally eat together and boys together.



Vegetables

The Luhya have a variety of local vegetables and recipes. The recipes are made by mixing several vegetables in a meal.



▲ Olivia Imbanyi will prepare a mixture of cowpea leaves (likhubi), miroo and inderema for lunch.

‘There are several ways one can harvest cowpea leaves (khwihila likhubi) from the farm. When they are still young and crowded, one usually uproots the entire plant which is also a way of thinning the plants. Alternatively one can pluck the upper stem shoots,’ she says.

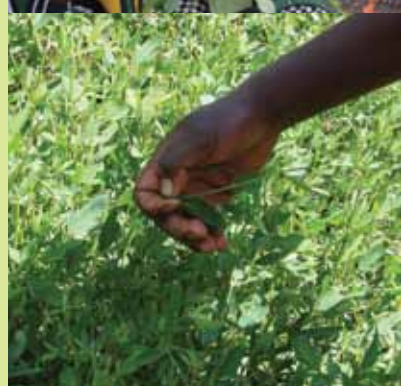
After harvesting the vegetable, Olivia will take them home, put them on lutelu (winnowing tray) and start preparing them.

◀ Olivia and her mother-in-law are sitting outside the house on a mat chatting as they remove the hard stalks from cowpea leaves (khunyola).

▼ Processing cowpeas (likhubi) involves plucking individual leaves (khunyola) from the uprooted plant. The older leaves are coarse and bitter.

◀ As Olivia prepares likhubi, she sends Jantrix, her granddaughter to harvest mitoo and inderema leaves which will be mixed with likhubi.

▶ Mitoo is harvested by plucking the upper tender shoot. This stimulates fresher shoot to grow from the main stem.





▲ Jantrix is harvesting inderema, a climbing plant which is normally planted among banana plants (mundangu) on fertile soil near the homestead. Here inderema is twining on banana plants.

◀ 'I pluck the individual leaves of inderema without the stalks,' says Jantrix. 'The stalks are excluded because they are hard. I do not cut the leaves before cooking because they are soft and slimy. For this reason, this vegetable is usually mixed and cooked with other vegetables,' she adds.

▶ Jantrix brings the harvested vegetables (inderema and mitoo) to her grandmother to be mixed with likhubi.

▶ Mitoo has small leaves and are tedious to prepare.





▲ After the preparation (khunyola) of the vegetables, Olivia mixes all the vegetables in the lutelu before cleaning.

▲ Musherekha is lye made from burnt remains of bean pods, sedges, banana peels or dry maize cobs. The lye is prepared by filtering the ash through a special pot (lusherekho). The lye softens vegetables and reduces cooking time. Use of too much lye makes the vegetables too soft and leaves a burning taste in the mouth when eating.

▶ Olivia is stirring the vegetables to ensure that they cook uniformly.

▲ Frying the vegetables (khukalanga) is optional since most families cannot afford this stage. Rather than fry, some add milk or ghee.

▶ Vegetables are eaten with ugali. Whole maize flour is commonly used in the community to make ugali. While cooking, one constantly keeps turning (khuluka) to make the consistency even and also to avoid burning.





▲ The cooked ugali is molded into a dome shape (khuvumba).

▶ Adults are served individually while children share ugali but have separate bowls of vegetable (tsindabo).

▶ The ugali is picked by hand (khumeka) mixed with vegetable and eaten. Spoons are not used. Eating of ugali is referred to as khulachila obusuma



Mapuoni (Sweet potatoes) and mushenye

Sweet potatoes (mapuoni) are used as a snack, often with tea but are also an important ingredient in a number of dishes. They are used in the preparation of mushenye, a mashed dish of tubers and beans or bambara nuts. Mushenye is usually preferred when there are plenty of beans. It is normally cooked for supper.



▲ Olivia is joined by Joyce to dig up sweet potatoes. Harvesting of a few sweet potatoes for home use is called *khuyeva mapuoni* and is normally done with a special stick called *shiloo*. At the end of the season all sweet potatoes are dug out (*khusinya mapuoni*) using a hoe. Planting and harvesting of mapuoni is normally done by women.



◀ 'During *khuyeva mapuoni*, we first check for the vines that have wide cracks on the soil underneath. This is a sign that the tubers are large enough,' says Olivia.

◀ Jenafeba is making *mushenye*. She is adding peeled sweet potatoes to the cooking beans. She will then cover the food with banana leaves (*amaru*) and another *sufuria* to keep the steam within.

▼ Boiling mixture of sweet potatoes and beans with *amaru* removed.





▲ The food is cooked and Jenafea is mashing the mixture of sweet potatoes and boiled beans. 'While mashing, I have to turn (khutuba) the food constantly to avoid burning.'

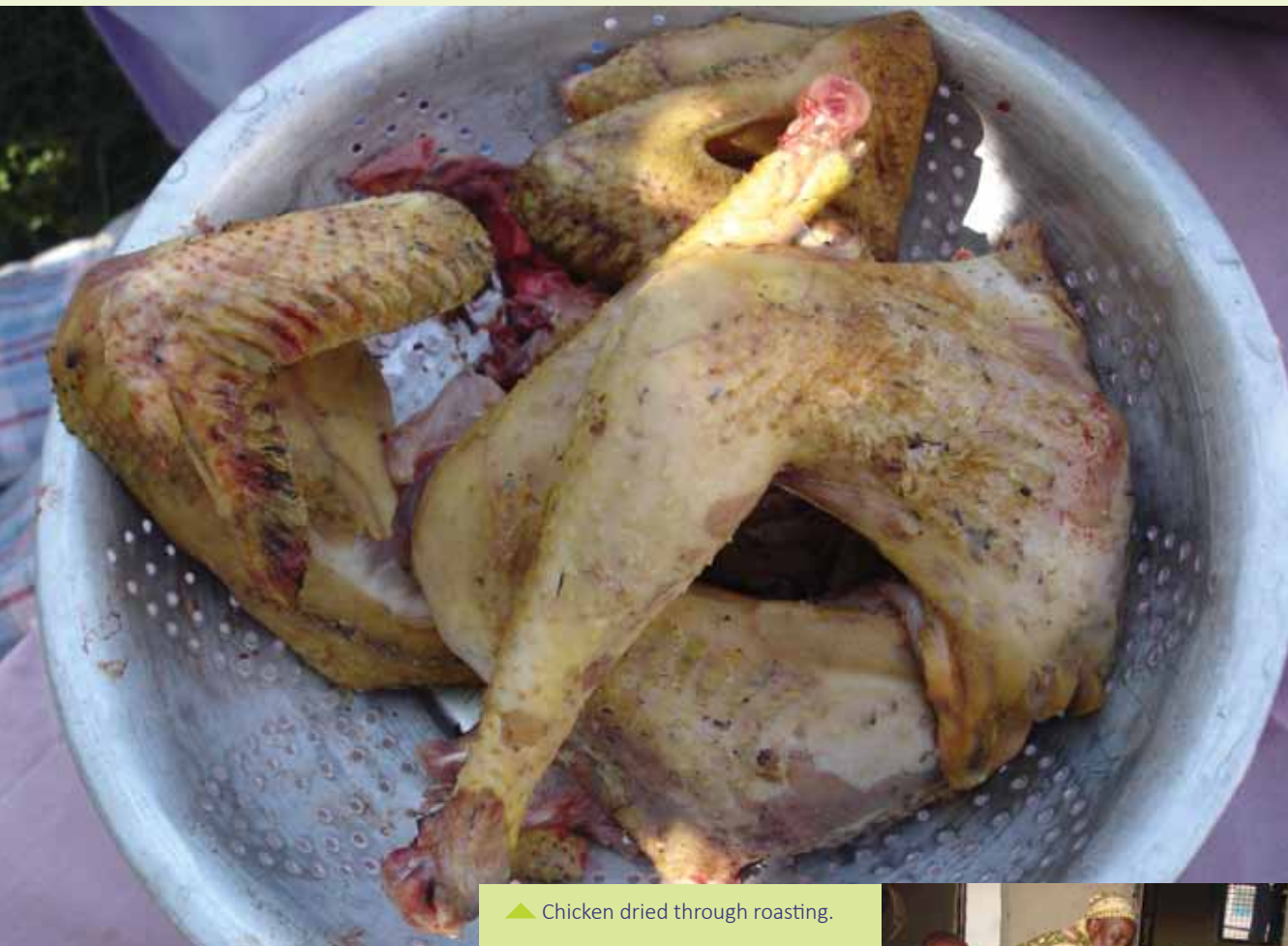
▶ It is time to serve (khukaba) mushenye and Jenafea her friend is helping out to mold it into a dome shape on the plate.

▶ Mzee Khamati enjoying mushenye. It is normally eaten with tea but this time Mzee Khamati is eating Mushenye with chicken sauce.



Chicken

Chicken is an important food of the Isukha and the Luhya community in general. It is so important that traditionally it was a preserve for men. They slaughtered and served it. Nowadays it is increasingly including women but some of the taboos that safeguarded men's domination in its processing are still respected.



▲ Chicken dried through roasting.



◀ Blandina is slaughtering a chicken for supper. She places the chicken on a banana leaf to avoid soiling it.

▶ Blandina's grandson is watching as she burns the skin of the chicken (khuomia). 'I burn the skin in order to dry the body fluids of the chicken and to give it a golden brown look. Burning also removes the tiny feathers and remains of larger feathers on the skin. It also improves the taste of the chicken and removes the unwanted characteristic smell of chicken (ilimisi),' says Blandina.



◀ To loosen up the feathers, the chicken is dipped in hot water. The feathers are plucked out by hand. The scales on the legs are also removed by pulling the skin out.



▲ When serving visitors, these parts remain intact but when serving family members, some parts may be cut further to increase the number of chicken pieces. In the Luhya tradition, ikasundi (the fleshy protuberance at the posterior end of chicken or Pope's nose) and imondo (gizzard) are normally served to the older men. It is only when the head of the household is served the imondo that he acknowledges that there is no more chicken to serve.



According to tradition, women do not eat imondo. If they eat it is believed they would be aggressive and quarrelsome.

◀ The chicken is cut (khutonya in Kisa) at specific areas to form specific parts.

◀ Mushereka is added to boiling chicken in order to make it tender and to improve taste. The chicken is left to cook for a while then fried with onions and tomatoes. One can also boil the chicken with salt, add mushereka then let it cook till soft.

▼ During the ceremony for giving dowry, the chicken is fried whole and served to the visitors bringing the dowry.

Shitienyi

Kukhu (grandmother) is preparing shitienyi. This meal is commonly prepared during the dry season.



▲ ‘The preparation of shitienyi may take several days. First the beans are roasted dry. They are then dried in the sun till the outer seed coat can come out easily,’ Kukhu explains as she grinds the beans.

◀ ‘To remove the bean covers (khushililu), one can either rub the beans between the palms or use a grinding stone (luchina and isio),’ she continues.

◀ ‘The loose bean covers separate out easily when you winnow as you can see,’ says Kukhu.

▼ Nicely cleaned beans without the seed coat.





▲ Water, musherekha and salt are added to a pot and boiled. The beans are then added and cooked. Musherekha makes the beans tender, hastening the cooking process. It also improves the taste and is believed to minimize stomach gases due to beans,' she continues.

▶ Shitienyi in a pot. "The beans are mashed till they turn into a paste (shitienyi),' says Kukhu. More water is then added to the pot till it is fluid then boiled for a final time.

▲ "We usually give the head of the household first priority when serving except at times of food shortage when children are served first,' Kukhu explains.

▶ Traditionally the beans are not fried but nowadays the dish is fried with onions and tomatoes.





▲ Kukhu's great granddaughter is enjoying her meal. Shitienyi is normally served with ugali but one can eat it alone in which case it is made thicker.

Shibambala

Shibambala is fish, mainly tilapia, which has been split into two and dried in sun for several weeks.



▲ This is dried fish and some fish parts at Shinyalu market near Kakamega. The fish includes shibambala and omena (sardines). Fish parts include fish skin (makhanda), internal organs (mala ge sutsi in Maragoli) and skinned dried Nile perch (mbuta).

▶ Cutting shibambala into pieces.

▲ Scholastica has bought shibambala from Shinyalu market for her family.

▲ “Shibambala is first dipped in hot water to remove dirt and to soften it,” Scholastica explains.

▶ In the kitchen there is a fire-wood shelf (lilungu in Isukha, in-ungo in Kisa) above the fireplace which is used to store and dry fresh firewood.





► Scholastica is adding mush-elekha to fried tomatoes and onions. Water too has been added and all is boiling. Musherekha is added to soften the fish and to improve its taste. Traditionally shibambala is boiled and not fried.

◀ Occasionally Scholastica adds fresh wood and uses a pipe (mutulele) to invigorate the fire.

◀ Fried shibambala. The cooked fish has an appealing smell and a light coloured stew.

◀ Scholastica is preparing Ugali. It will be served with the fish.

► Mzee Shiamola has his hands washed by his wife in readiness for the lunch meal.



► Mzee Shiamola is served in two bowls one with the fish and the other with ugali. Men are served alone while the mother eats with her children.



Ibusaa

Ibusaa is a common brew of the Isukha. The brew is consumed by adult men and women.



◀ The process starts by mixing milled maize flour with water in a large container such as a drum and leaving it for about a week to ferment.

▲ The fermented flour is then put in a large metallic tray which is then placed on fire for roasting. A shovel is used to turn the flour continuously till it turns brown.

▶ Finger millet is partially germinated on a wet sack. It is then dried in sun. Once dry, it is ground to flour then mixed with the roasted fermented maize flour.

▶ The mixture is left to ferment in a large plastic container for a few days.





▲ Busaa is put in a special pot and sipped using long wooden straws (luseti). While drinking, warm water is added to the pot containing the busaa to dilute the busaa and re-dissolve the dregs as demonstrated by these women.

◀ When it is ready, the fermented mixture is poured into a clean cloth which is then folded and wrenched to strain out the busaa. The coarse remains in the cloth are put in the container on the right.

◀ Adding more busaa to a central pot from where everyone is drinking.



▲ Men enjoying busaa

Tsimbare



▲ Tsimbare is the fermented roasted maize flour which is sold in the market as meal.

► Men enjoying their lunch which is served in a plastic container. The fermented roasted maize flour is mixed with water and some sugar to improve the flavor.



Tsisindu

Tsisindu (quails) are small wild seasonal birds. They are a delicacy among the Luhya and are often prepared for important visitors. Tsisindu trapping is a man's activity.



▲ When in season, tsisindu are common in fallow land (mwibembe). Trappers lay their snares along paths used by the birds as seen in this photo. Quails are in season when there are cereals in the farms.



▲ A snare (eshireka in Kisa) is laid along a tsisindu path. Sticks are placed above and on the sides of the path, leaving the snare as the only way. The string is usually made from a cow's tail tendons as these slide easily and tighten well when the bird tries to free itself. Such string is known as obushikha in Kisa.

▲ Trapped quails are placed in special handmade baskets called shiyonzo in Isukha and Eshiuli in Kisa. Shiyonzo are of different sizes depending on the sex of the bird.



▲ Male tsisindu are placed on a separate basket which is then suspended on a long stick or pole (omulatse in Kisa-see picture). The pole is fixed in a field in an uncultivated field. As the males sing in the baskets, they attract females which are trapped by the snares as they use the paths made in the fallow land below. The paths could be man-made (in case of new fields) or made by the birds themselves. The larger space in the basket enables the singing males to move around as they sing.





▲ Trapped tsindu are put in the respective baskets depending on whether they are male or females. During the day they are placed near the homestead and are fed with cereals. Sorghum is placed near the basket. The bird feeds through the openings. In the evening baskets with male birds are taken to the farms and hanged on long poles to 'call' other quails.

◀ Female birds are sold while the males are used for trapping others. Mature quails are sold at approximately Ksh 50 per bird but become more expensive when they are not in season.

▶ As mature male members of the family engage in trapping the birds, boys may also shoot them using catapults (efandili) (like the boy in the picture).

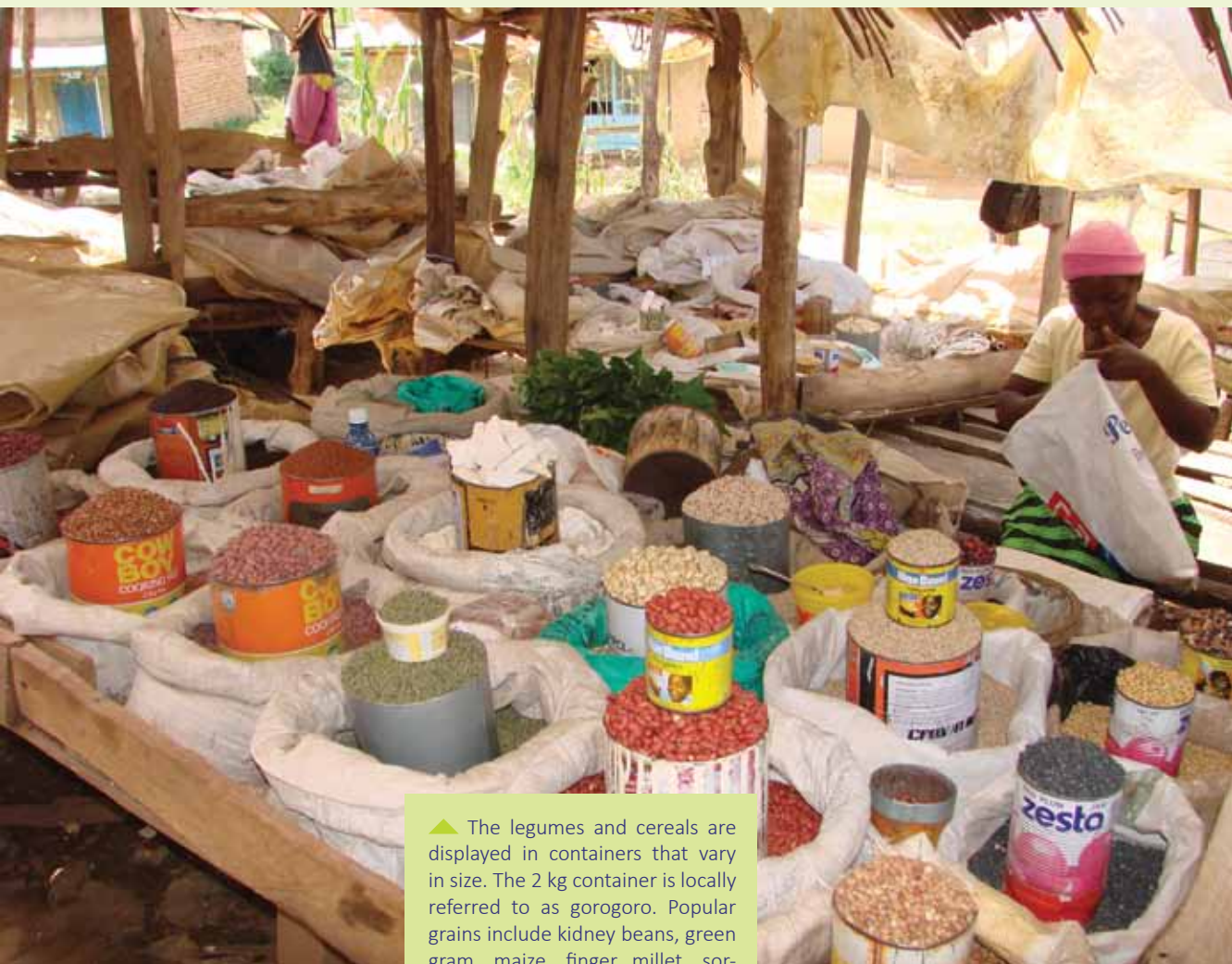
◀ 1-3 birds are served per person with ugali. The birds are served whole. Killing the bird involves strangling it (khuborola likosi in Kisa) and throwing it in fire to burn away the feathers. Intestinal contents are then removed. It is normally cooked dry with musherekha and salt. One eats everything including bones as they are soft.

▶ When quails are not in season, the farmers keep some in the shiyonzo where they are fed with cereals.



Market place

Kakamega Market has a diversity of foods but is mainly dominated by indigenous vegetables, cereals and legumes. Women are the key players in the food market. Next to the food area of the market are other places where tools, clothes and utensils are sold.



▲ The legumes and cereals are displayed in containers that vary in size. The 2 kg container is locally referred to as gorogoro. Popular grains include kidney beans, green gram, maize, finger millet, sorghum, cowpeas and bambara nuts. Vegetable seeds are sold in much smaller quantities.

◀ Traditional vegetables dominate the leafy vegetable market.

▶ Mitoo is one of the vegetable seeds sold. There are two types - the mild and bitter mitoo (mihomo and mirulu respectively). Sellers in the market distinguish them by their color and taste.





▲ These are seeds of tsisaka (spider plant)

▲ Libokoyi (*Amaranthus blitum*) is a popular vegetable and so its seeds are in high demand. The smaller of the two bottle caps is two spoonfuls and goes for Ksh 20.

▶ Seeds of kanzira (Ethiopian kale) resemble those of the common kale locally called sukuma-wiki. Kanzira is a popular vegetable in the Luhya community.

▶ Grain amaranth is gaining popularity due to its high nutritional value. It is now used to fortify porridge flour and one can also get it in the popped form. Most of it is bought for baby porridge by women. Leaves of this amaranth are also cooked.





▲ “We normally use a bottle cap as the unit of measure for the vegetable seeds we sell to our customers. A small-sized lid is about two tea spoonfuls,” explains Mama Mboga.

◀ Next to Mama Mboga is her colleague who is selling different types of edible fungi (obuoba).

◀ Tsinjuku (groundnuts) are popular in Isukha. They are roasted and sold as snack or used in food preparation.



▲ Tsinuni (sesame) is cultivated by some farmers. Seeds are usually made into balls which are sold mainly by children as snack.





▲ At the market, Mama Mboga unties the vegetables she has bought and ties them again into the desired size of bunches, usually smaller. She then puts the new bunches on display.

▲ Tsimbande (bambara nut) is a delicious pulse. It can be boiled and eaten as snack or used in a similar way as kidney beans.

▶ Tsimbindi (cowpea) seeds are usually for planting.

▲ The traditional vegetables sold at the market are usually brought in trucks from the farms then distributed by middlemen to vendors. The middlemen give out vegetables to the vendors in the morning then collect the money in the afternoon.





▲ A woman selling murere at the market

◀ Sutsa (African nightshade). This type is relatively new in the market.



◀ Libokoyi (leafy amaranth)

▲ Lisebebe (pumpkin leaves)

▼ Tsisaka (spiderplant)

▶ Murere (jute, Jew's mallow)





▲ Mitoo (cro-talaria)

◀ Likhubi (Cowpea leaves)

▶ Tsimboka (leaf amaranth)



Collecting Obouba (edible fungi / mushroom)

Over ten types of edible fungi are used by the Luhya community. Knowledge about them is widespread in the community even among children.



▲ On the way from her work place, Zipporah notices a lone mushroom in the farm.

◀ 'It is edible,' she says as she uproots it and puts it in a bag.



▲ She harvests them as well and takes them home.

◀ Further along, she finds some other types of obouba called matere growing on a tree trunk.





▲ Back home she sends her daughter with her friends to go and look for more obouba in the farm and forest.

◀ The children collect more different types of obouba.

▶ The children are given the task of cleaning them and breaking them into smaller pieces for them to dry fast.

◀ They then spread the collected mushrooms on a clean surface.



▲ The obuoba are dried in sun for several days before they can be stored. On this winnowing tray (lutelu) are several dry types of mushrooms. They will be used to make a sauce.



Bananas and plantains (mariwa)

Banana and plantains are an important food of the Isukha and the wider Luhya community of Western Kenya. Many types are cultivated, often near the home where trash is thrown (mundangu in Kisa).



▲ There are several types of bananas and plantains in Isukha. Plantains (or plantain bananas) are for cooking, have a hard skin and take long to ripen – often to a black colour. Bananas are smaller, thin skinned and ripen to a yellow colour and are sweet.

◀ When the banana has matured, it is harvested by cutting down the plant.

▶ After harvesting, the bananas are separated from the main stalk.





▲ They are then peeled and cleaned. When peeling one applies some oil on their hands to avoid getting the stubborn banana sticky sap.

◀ Cooking banana
Bananas can be boiled with the covers intact.

▶ Bananas can also be peeled, boiled and fried.

◀ Boiled bananas. These will now be peeled, salted and eaten with tea, usually for breakfast.

▶ A boy enjoying his delicious boiled banana meal.





▲ Mashed bananas is a less common meal. To make it, bananas are peeled, boiled and mashed. The ripe or nearly ripe bananas can be peeled and boiled together.

◀ Mashed boiled unripe and ripe bananas. The dish is called emere in Maragoli. Emere is served with tea as breakfast or with stew during lunch. This meal is best eaten hot.

◀ Bananas are kept in a warm place to ripen.

▶ A child eating bananas.



Fruits

Guava



▲ Ruth's uncle is picking guavas for his niece after school. It is guava season and pupils would normally eat guavas after school.

◀ Ruth is collecting the guavas dropped by her uncle. Guava trees in most of Western Kenya grow in the wild.

Traditional ceremonies

The Isukha people have different ceremonies during which food is cooked and served. These ceremonies are mainly related to birth, naming, circumcision, marriage and death. The ceremonies involve eating and in some cases dancing for one to several days and nights.

Burial

Burial among the Isukha community is perceived as a celebration of life especially if an individual dies at an elderly age. Cattle and chicken are slaughtered and other foods are cooked to feed the mourners and visitors from far. Dances and songs are performed by different age groups during the day and night prior to and during the burial.



▲ Dancers perform using traditional instruments to celebrate the life of the deceased. This is done prior to and during the burial- day and night.

▲ A cow is slaughtered very early in the morning on banana leaves to feed the mourners, visitors and family members. One or more cows may be slaughtered.

▲ The stomach contents are removed and the stomach washed. Internal organs (and some meat) are shared between the relatives of the deceased. The rest is cooked for guests at the burial.

▲ Before cutting into small pieces, the internal organs are removed and processed separately.

▲ Some meat is dried on a charcoal burner and kept for the relatives who live far or who would arrive late.





► Some chickens are slaughtered for important guests and family members.

► A lot of ugali is cooked for the stream of visitors arriving from all regions where the deceased has relatives. Another important dish during ceremonies is mahenjela as it is easy to prepare and is cheap. It is eaten with tea.

► Neighbors and mourners are served with ugali, soup and vegetables for lunch. For the mourners who are left to sleep overnight are served with mahenjela and some tea

► Religious leaders, guests and family members are served in the sitting room. Here they are eating chicken with ugali and some mahenjela. Later they will be served with tea.



Appendix I

Glossary of Pokot terms used

Adango	A type of traditional dance.
Akipiret	Stirring stick with a star-shaped tip and usually cut from a branch of komolwo.
Alepit	A wooden jug with a handle used while milking.
Amkanga	Stirring spoon
Aperit	Men's hut constructed near an animal enclosure.
Apolong	Traditional stool given to those who have performed sapana ceremony.
Asachaa	A bag made by joining two flaps of woven skin and stitching them together to form rucksack.
Ateker	A trough made from a tree trunk and used for watering animals.
Choo	Milk
Kahaat	Milking
Kamol	A small leafy tree that bears large shiny edible fruits. <i>Vangueria madagascariensis</i> .
Kamurmur	Small climbing plant with an edible tuber.
Karinn	Beads
Kogh	Stone
Kokoo	Grandmother
Kondongosoi	Plastic containers
Kresuo	Tree euphorbia (<i>Euphorbia candelabrum</i>)
Kupuritin	Cup
Lakatetwo	<i>Carissa edulis</i>
Loma	<i>Balanites rotundifolia</i> , <i>B. pedicellaris</i>
Motoku	Traditional bag made from hides.
Mroror	Girls
Mukopapo	Gourd
Ngaror	Goat
Ng'okoi	Termite
Nguutian	Insect pest that attacks loma
Otupo	Traditional bowl
Panta	Ugali (maize meal)
Peny	Meat
Psiaya	Flour
Pures	Livestock dung
Ripka	Skin mat used for placing food especially meat.
Siroo	Market
Tor	Pan (sufuria)
Toropochon	Pot(clay pot)
Trim	A bracelet made from skin.

Appendix II

Glossary of Isukha terms

Gorogoro	2 kg tin/container used as a measure of grains in the market.
Ikasundi	The tail end of the back of the chicken.
Ilimisi	Unwanted characteristic smell of meat dishes.
Imondo	Gizzard
Itavala	Tea which has more milk compared to water.
Khubasta	Peeling of tubers.
Khufukha mushenye	To mash mushenye.
Kuhisa vindu	Washing utensils.
Khukaba	To serve or divide.
Khukabula	Serving any mashed food while at the fireplace using mwikho.
Khukalanga	Frying of food using fat or oil and other ingredients such as onions and tomatoes.
Khulachila	The act of eating ugali.
Khumanyula	To remove chicken feathers.
Khumeka obusuma	Eating ugali with bare hands.
Khuneka milavi	Harvesting sweet potato vines for planting.
Khunyola	To pluck individual leaves from the main stem of vegetables.
Khuraka	Replant
Khushela ingombe	Milking a cow.
Khutonya	Cutting chicken into small pieces.
Khutumba	Consistent turning of mashed food to avoid burning.
Khuvumba	Making ugali into a dome shape when serving.
Khuyeva mapuoni	To harvest sweet potatoes.
Khwaya miroo	To harvest mitoo.
Khwihila likhubi	To harvest cowpea leaves.
Lilungu	Firewood rack built near the roof in the kitchen.
Liru	Banana leaf.
Lusherekho	Special pot used for filtering mushelekha.
Mahenjela	A cooked mixture of maize and beans.
Mama Mboga	A woman who sells vegetables in the market.
Muchuru	Tea which has more water compared to milk.
Mudangu	Kitchen garden.
Mutulele	Metallic pipe blown to rekindle fire at the fireplace.
Mwikho	Wooden serving spoon.
Shibambala	Dried open fish.
Shilibi	A basket used to store and transport food stuff.
Shiloo	Stick used for digging out sweet potato tubers.
Shitalasi	Wooden rack made for drying utensils.
Tsindabo	Bowl.
Tsinduma	Taro.

Appendix III

Resource persons

Resource persons in Pokot

1. Brian Kapeta, teacher Churo primary school
2. Pupils and teachers of Churo and Chemolingot primary schools
3. John Lukea (Churo)
4. Samson Lokudoit (Amaya)
5. Sharon Nyoru (Chemolingot)
6. Mike Kukat (Nginyang)
7. Joel Kapkomor (Orus)

Resource persons in Isukha

1. Olivia Imbanyi
2. Scholastica Shiamola
3. Blandina Museba
4. Ann Soita
5. Zipporah Ayuma
6. Jenafefa Achitsa
7. Julia Ombonya
8. Ruth Adeka
9. Geoffrey Ombonya
10. Pupils and teachers of Muraka and Shihuli primary schools

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About the book

This photobook provides invaluable information on the foods and food culture of the Isukha and East Pokot communities of Kenya. Using photographs to tell the story, it gives a rare insight into how such food is sourced, processed and consumed while attempting to explore food related customs including beliefs, taboos, gender issues and also when certain food related activities are carried out. Only 22 themes have been treated here, selected on the basis of their importance.

This book will be valuable to anyone interested in traditional foodways and particularly those of the Luhya and Pokot communities. Some of the features of the book are:

- 22 food themes
- Over 50 photostories of food processing
- 330 Colour photographs to show specific foods and food related activities
- A glossary of Pokot and Isukha terms with over 70 entries explained

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