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## NUTRITION CULTURE AND ETHNICITY OF THE PEOPLES OF YAKUTIA

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### *Abstract*

Nutrition culture is universal language of popular diplomacy, strengthening the positive image of the ethnic region and the whole nation. Nutrition culture is a face of any ethnic group and a recognizable image, brand. The article presents results of a sociological survey conducted as part of the project "The problem of valorization and popularization of nutrition culture of the peoples of the North in modern conditions (on the example of Yakutia)." Important issues of valorization and popularization of nutrition culture of the northern peoples are analyzed, both in the historical past and in the modern globalizing world subject to serious transformational processes. It was shown that the traditional nutrition culture of Yakutia is preserved due to the fact that it plays a role in modern ceremonies and is one of the symbols of ethnic identity. 23 % of respondents prepare daily food in a traditional way. About half of the respondents learn recipes of other nations and prepare new dishes, as they "want something new, unusual." Half of the respondents named national traditional dishes as their favorite ones. However, when receiving guests, only 23 % of the inhabitants of Yakutia cook their national dishes using special traditional technologies, the majority (64.4 %) try to cook a variety of dishes. A quarter of the respondents said that when preparing their national dishes, they try to comply with traditional cooking technologies. 15 % of the inhabitants of Yakutia admit that life is developing and cooking technologies are changing.

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**Keywords:** Cultural heritage, national identity, ethnicity, indigenous peoples, organic food.



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## 1. Introduction

The Arctic and the North, which are rich in natural resources, ensured the development of the peoples of the North in the conditions of severe climate and permafrost. Northern peoples have original culture and a high degree of socio-biological adaptation. The development of a national identity through food and nutrition culture are a problem which affects various aspects (Debbi, Elisa, Nigel, Dan, & Eva, 2014).

The issues of traditional nutrition have turned into a global problem of many social groups, communities and states. Specialists associate the actualization of interest in traditional nutrition with an increase in ethnic identity and popularization of a healthy diet. The modern fashion for eco-friendly nutrition, bio products puts traditional local products produced without chemical fertilizers to a new level.

Traditional food is regarded as an organic part of culture of the peoples of the North (Olmoeva, Hamnaeva, Garmaeva, Kholodova, & Gudkova, 2017). Food, its composition, preparation technologies, ceremonial dishes reflect the conditions and landscape of the permanent residence of the peoples of the North. One of the main conditions for a successful life of a person in extreme conditions is high-quality nutrition, which compensates for the negative impact of climate; therefore, the northern peoples pay great attention to healthy food. The culture of traditional nutrition is related to the development of an ethnic identity and a regional brand, which is important for the overall image of a nation (Petrova et al., 2018; Symons, 2010). The transformation of new dishes becomes a positive element in the development of a positive regional identity (Table 01, Table 02). In this regard, the culture of traditional nutrition is a circle of interests of food professionals and ethnologists, historians, sociologists, psychologists, teachers, philologists (Table 03, Table 04). Being a significant part of the ethnos culture, nutrition is of decisive importance in the life of every individual, his ethnic identity. Psychologists attribute this to the fact that personality socialization is impossible without the development of ethnic identity (Bianquis & Borissova, 2015).

**Table 01.** In cooking, does your family use (more than 100 %, because the respondents chose several answers)

№	Options	Total	By districts					
			Mirny	Nam	Oymyakon	Suntar	Tompon	Aldan
		870 persons	216 persons	200 persons	98 persons	258 persons	54 persons	44 persons
1	Cooker	40,2	45,4	33,0	42,9	44,6	25,9	34,1
2	Blender	30,5	32,9	34,0	13,3	36,4	14,8	25,0
3	Microwave oven	53,7	61,1	50,5	56,1	50,0	51,9	50,0
4	Mixer	43,6	46,3	46,0	32,7	48,8	24,1	36,4
5	Electric frying pan	34,9	43,1	12,5	44,9	39,5	48,1	31,8
6	We don't use anything, we cook in a traditional way	22,6	17,1	30,5	19,4	21,3	24,1	27,3
7	Other	0,1		0,5				

*Other: double boiler*

In the Nam district, food is cooked in a traditional way every day (31%).

**Table 02.** Why do you cook dishes of other nations? (more than 100%, because respondents chose several answers)

№	Options	Total	By districts					
			Mirny	Nam	Oymyakon	Suntar	Tompon	Aldan
			870	216	200	98	258	54
1	I want something new, unusual	49,7	50,0	57,5	37,8	53,5	29,6	40,9
2	There are fast to cook dishes	12,1	12,5	13,5	8,2	11,6	18,5	6,8
3	There are many products used to prepare a variety of dishes	18,3	20,4	21,5	10,2	19,8	13,0	9,1
4	We buy dishes rather than cook them	4,0	5,1	3,5	4,1	3,1	3,7	6,8
5	Now on the Internet there are many different cooking methods, we use them	19,2	16,7	32,0	8,2	19,0	11,1	9,1
6	Friends and relatives suggest new recipes for cooking	16,3	16,7	15,5	14,3	15,9	33,3	4,5
7	In our village / city there are skilled cooks, we consult them	1,6	0,9	2,5	3,1	0,4	5,6	
8	Other	0,6	1,9		1,0			
	<i>We do not cook dishes of other peoples</i>	24,1	24,5	23,5	25,5	24,4	7,4	40,9
	<i>No answer</i>	5,9	7,4	4,5	3,1	7,0	1,9	9,1

*Other: the daughter studied in China, there she learned to cook Chinese dishes – they are delicious*

41% of people living in Ust-Aldan district do not cook dishes of other nations

**Table 03.** Do you personally favorite dishes? (more than 100%, because respondents chose several answers)

№	Options	Total	By districts					
			Mirny	Nam	Oymyakon	Suntar	Tompon	Aldan
			870	216	200	98	258	54
1	Yes, I like our national traditional dishes.	50,3	44,4	54,0	52,0	49,2	68,5	43,2
2	There is no particular preference, I like meat dishes	46,3	51,4	44,5	31,6	50,0	35,2	54,5
3	I really like fish dishes	25,6	19,0	28,0	16,3	30,6	40,7	20,5
4	I love pastries	37,0	42,1	42,5	32,7	38,0	11,1	22,7
5	I prefer dairy products	20,7	19,9	30,0	12,2	20,5	5,6	20,5
6	I love dairy products, suorate, kefir, cottage cheese	11,8	14,4	15,0	3,1	13,2	1,9	9,1
7	I love jam, wild fruit drink	12,6	9,7	19,5	8,2	10,9	14,8	13,6
8	Other	0,2				0,4		2,3
	<i>No answer</i>	7,6	11,6	4,5	6,1	7,0	3,7	13,6

*Other: vegetables*

69 % of the population of Tompon ulus prefer national traditional dishes.

**Table 04.** What do you usually use to treat your guests? (more than 100 %, because respondents chose several answers)

№	Options	Total	By districts					
			Mirny	Nam	Oymyakon	Suntar	Tompon	Aldan
			870	216	200	98	258	54
1	We prepare our national dishes using special traditional technology.	23,1	21,3	23,0	41,8	19,8	11,1	25,0
2	We try to cook a variety of dishes, including dishes of other peoples	64,4	65,7	68,0	50,0	65,9	64,8	63,6
3	We buy dishes prepared by our order	5,2	6,0	7,0	3,1	4,3	5,6	2,3
4	We invite a skilled relative or hire a specialist who can cook special dishes	1,4	0,9	2,0	3,1	0,8		2,3
5	Other	1,7	2,3	0,5		1,9	7,4	
	No answer	8,2	6,9	5,0	8,2	9,7	14,8	11,4

*Other: it always happens in different ways; I cook those dishes that guests like; do not invite guests; everyday food; we buy food in the store; I rarely invite guests; we cook ourselves, what we can do*

In Oymyakon ulus, people often treat guests with their national dishes using special traditional technology (42 %) (Table 05).

**Table 05.** If you cook your national dishes, which technology do you usually use?

№	Options	Total	By districts					
			Mirny	Nam	Oimyakon	Suntar	Tompon	Aldan
			870	216	200	98	258	54
1	We try to comply with traditional technologies for the preparation of national dishes, we use special utensil	25,4	23,1	22,5	39,8	24,8	24,1	22,7
2	We use modern technology and household appliances to speed up cooking, although the taste of dishes changes	22,5	26,9	18,5	35,7	16,7	25,9	20,5
3	We do not know traditional technologies, we use modern technologies	7,0	7,9	7,0	2,0	9,3	5,6	2,3
4	We don't see a big difference in cooking technologies, so we use modern technologies and equipment	16,8	13,4	24,0	2,0	21,3	7,4	18,2
5	Cooking technologies change	14,7	10,2	16,0	13,3	14,0	33,3	15,9
6	Other	0,6	0,9				3,7	2,3
	No answer	13,0	17,6	12,0	7,1	14,0		18,2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100,0</b>						

*Other: we do it yourself; eat raw food; in a stove, in an electric stove; I do not cook national dishes; in different ways*

In Oymyakon Ulus, people often comply with traditional cooking techniques and use special utensil (40 %).

## 2. Problem Statement

The relevance, novelty and originality of the problem and the methodology of its solution scientific valorization of gastronomic culture of the peoples of the North and popularization of the northern food brand.

### **3. Research Questions**

1. To identify peculiarities of the nutrition tradition of Evens, Evenks, Yukagirs, Yakuts (Sakha);
2. To study the transformation of food culture on the example of the indigenous peoples of Yakutia;
3. To identify features of northern cuisine in the context of adaptation of traditional cuisine in modern conditions.

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

Comprehensive study of nutrition culture of the peoples of the North living in Yakutia

### **5. Research Methods**

The sociological survey of the population of various regions of Yakutia: in the western, central, and southern regions of Yakutia - Mirny, Nam, Oymyakon, Sunta, Tompon, Ust-Aldan uluses (n=870.)

### **6. Findings**

The majority of respondents (53.7%) answered that they cook food using a microwave. However, 22.6 % answered that they cook in a traditional way." To the question "If you cook dishes of other nations and why?," the majority (49.7%) answered: "I want something new, unusual"; at the same time, 24.1 % of respondents answered "We do not cook dishes of other nations.

Half of the respondents (50.3%) prefer traditional national dishes.

However, when receiving guests, only 23 % cook their national dishes using special traditional technology, the majority (64.4%) cook various dishes.

When preparing their national dishes, the majority of respondents said that they try to comply with traditional technologies for preparing national dishes and even use special utensil (25.4%); 22.5% of respondents said that they use modern technology and household appliances to speed up cooking, although they note that the taste of dishes changes; 14.7% say that the cooking technology is changing

Everyday traditional food is often cooked in the Nam ulus (31%). In Ust-Aldan ulus, 41% of people do not cook dishes of other nations. 69 % of inhabitants of Tompon ulus consider their national traditional dishes favorite. Residents of Oymyakon Ulus try to comply with traditional technologies of cooking national dishes and use special utensil (40%). They often treat guests with their national dishes cooked by a traditional technology (42%).

### **7. Conclusion**

Although some ethnic dishes, rites, and customs have been lost, and the national cuisine has been influenced by culinary traditions of other peoples, it still exists. It is crucial to preserve cultural uniqueness in the era of globalization.

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