

SHEFA TOURISM

WORKSHOP: COOKING FOR TOURISTS



10 - 11 November 2015 - Worearu Village, Pele Island



WORKSHOP - Cooking for Tourists

Two Day Workshop - Cooking for tourists using available local ingredients

The 'Cooking for Tourists' Workshop was requested by Nguna / Pele / Emau Tourism Association.

We chose to hold the workshop in Worearu Village on Pele Island because this area receives the most tourists. There are two new operators here and feedback from visitors has been that the food was not up to standard. Also, there have been reports of tourists being sick after staying at the bungalows, so there was a strong emphasis in the workshop on food hygiene and providing safe drinking water. This is especially relevant because water sources on the island were contaminated during Cyclone Pam. The problem has been compounded by El Nino. When we did the workshop Pele and Nguna had had no rainfall for months and there were severe water shortages.

The drought has severely impacted on people's gardens. Their crops have failed and they have to go to the markets in Port Vila for fresh produce. Normally we would conduct the workshop using fruit and vegetables provided by the participants from their own gardens. The idea behind this is to cater for tourists using just local produce. It is not only a healthy and economical option, we know it is what tourists prefer.

Although we hadn't budgeted for this, we decided to buy produce from the market in Port Vila and take it with us to Pele for the workshop. Otherwise we would have had to postpone the workshop until next year or cancel it altogether.

The workshop was very well attended. Participants came from Takara and Emua Villages on the mainland, all four villages on Pele Island, and from Taloa and Unakapu Villages on Nguna. Many of them overnighted with friends and relatives in Worearu Village. On both days there were at least 30 attendees. It was interesting to note that almost a third of these were men who were just as engaged as the women. NiVanuatu love cooking.

The workshop facilitator was Odile Guiomar, who is well-known to the participants.



WORKSHOP - Cooking for tourists

Workshop Description

The workshop began with all the participants being presented with salu salus and was formally opened by the chief of Worearu Village.

The food was prepared in the community area on Worearu beach and cooked on open fires nearby.

Basic hygiene was discussed ie. washing hands, wearing a hair net, clean utensils, boiling water.

Everyone participated in the preparation of the food. Recipes included salads, chicken and island cabbage, bread made with yeast and pan-baked over a fire, fruit juices, ginger syrup and assorted jams. No rice was used at all. The idea was to minimise the amount of ingredients bought from the store. When gardens are productive, the only items that would need to be purchased would be flour, yeast, oil and sugar.

Odile showed participants how to cook vegetables such as eggplants, which NiVanuatu don't like very much, in a way that will appeal to tourists. Participants were able to copy all the recipes from a book she supplied.

Food was presented traditionally using banana leaves and clam shells and decorated with flowers. Leaves were used as plates. Taste-testing the results was the highlight at the end of each day.



WORKSHOP - Cooking for tourists

Outcomes

- The workshop will result in an improved tourism offering. The daily tariff for all island bungalows includes three meals. Odile taught participants new recipes that use local ingredients and will appeal to international tourists. They can all be prepared on an open fire or a very basic bush kitchen.
- Food hygiene and the provision of safe drinking water were discussed at length. The hope is that this information will also be applied within the community, not just to tourists.
- The workshop contributed to both the strengthening of the Nguna, Pele, Emau Tourism Association and the relationship between the tourism operators and the Shefa Tourism Office.
- It provided an opportunity to discuss tourism issues such as the volcano tour on Nguna which is under dispute, and to come up with options and solutions.
- Odile was able to give additional training in housekeeping, showing operators the correct way to arrange furniture and make beds in a nearby bungalow.
- We assisted individual operators to fill out the self-assessment forms required to obtain their tourism permits.
- As always with these workshops, the money for transport, food and accommodation went in to the community, providing much needed revenue.

