

Tī Kōuka

Mahinga Kai Web Series Transcript

English

I became aware of the tī kōuka a lot later in life.

Most whānau around here were kai people, and, um, so, a lot of our kai activities were basically on the rivers, on the lakes and that it was more and the tuna and fish and watercress and that type of stuff.

It'd be 30 odd years ago when I remember asking Uncle Joe “What was the reason that our people lived here?”

It was because of our ability to harvest tī kōuka, the cabbage tree, and aruhe, the bracken fern. And it was harvested in huge quantities

mihi

This is where we are, we're ah, we're at Craigmore Station. The area's called, ah, Maungatī. And it literally means, ah, the mountain of tea trees.

So there were thousands of hectares of tī kōuka here pre-European.

From a Māori perspective it was an absolute resource, particularly in this area, for those reasons of kai, ah, rongā, the building of whare, as marker posts for, um, trails, and also an important part of it was because of its fibrous content.

It was a great, um, smouldering branch to carry around when you were travelling around the motu, um, as a firestarter so you had, um, instant fire, you were carrying it with you, so, it had all those values, for people.

karakia

So this is, um, one that, um, it's young, it's probably about five years old.

Te Reo Māori

I taku pakeketanga i matenui au ki te tī kouka.

Ko te nuinga o ngā whānau o konei, he tangata mahinga kai, i ngā awa, i ngā roto hoki arā te hī tuna, te hī ika, te kōhi watekerehi, ērā tū mahi.

Toru tekau tau ki muri, i whiua te pātai ki a Uncle Joe ' He aha i noho ai tō tātou iwi ki konei?'

Nā tā mātou mahi kōhi tī kouka, aruhe hoki, me te mahi hauhakenga

mihi

Kei konei tātou i Craigmore Station, i Maungatī, he wāhi e kī ana ko te maunga o ngā tī kōuka.

I mua rā i te taenga mai o te Pākehā he manomano heketea kīkī i te tī kōuka.

ki a mātou, he tino taonga te tī kōuka, he maha hoki ōna whakamahinga hei kai, hei rongōā, hei hanga whare, hei tohu, ka mutu, he tūmomo ranga ō roto.

He pai hoki hei rākau mōunga i a koe e tipi haere ana i te motu, he māmā hoki ki te whakakā i te ahi, he tino taonga, rauemi hoki mō te tangata.

karakia

Āhua rangatahi tonu tēnei nā, e rima pea ōna tau.



Tī Kōuka

English

So what we're going to be doing with this, this piece here, we're actually going to do a modern concept of, um, boiling it with tītī, um kamokamo, moimois and some watercress.

But in the old days we're talking about them harvesting from the roots as well, digging them up, stripping them down, and then they were left to dry out for about 8 weeks, up to 8 weeks.

Then the umu tī, the giant hāngī was made, 30 foot long, 20 foot wide. They wrapped them in bundles in kete, covered with whāriki, water poured over them, then covered and a 48 hour steaming process.

We're going to start stripping the leaves off.

So as you can see, you peel these back, we can take all the tips off here.

Now, they say you can eat it, um, straight off the tree like this.

Ever so slightly bitter taste but you can actually taste the sugar in it.

But it's actually reasonably tasty.

And into the longer piece here we've got of the trunk, there's several layers of, um, rings of it, but the very centre, the pito, has become fibrous and I believe that when we cook this, this is where we'll be able to get the kauru out of it.

As for the leaves we're going to, ah, cut the ends off, and we'll utilise them later on when we cook the dish up.

Okay this is the big piece, ah, we're going to start with.

Um, we're moving into the unknown because, um, the old way of doing it was, ah, in an umu tī umu in the ground.

We are going to be boiling it, so it's going to be a longish process.

I can see why they hangi-ed them.

I have, ah, eight brothers and four sisters so we're a family of thirteen.

Te Reo Māori

Nā reira kua whai whakamahinga hou mō tēnei kauati, ā ka kohua ki te tītī, te kamokamo, ngā moimoio, me ētahi watakerehi.

I ngā rā o mua, i kohia ngā tāmore, i hauhaketia, i tangohia te kiri, i whiua ki te taha mō ngā wiki e waru pea, kia maroke rāia.

Kātahi ka hanga umu tī, he tūmomo hāngī nui, āhua 30 putu te roa, 20 putu te whānui. Ka rāua ngā kauati tī ki ngā kete, ka horaina e tētahi whāriki me te wai, ā, ka korohūtia mō ngā rā e rua.

Ka tīmata tātou ki te tango rau.

Mārake te kite ka hihoretia ngā rau, ka tangohia hoki ngā pito koi ki konei.

Ka taea e koe te kai te rākau nei i nāia tonu nei.

Ahakoā te kawa, ka rongu tonu i te reka o te huka.

Āhua pai tonu te rongu.

Kia tahuri ake tātou ki te kauati roa nei nō te kōhiwi, he maha ngā papa o ngā porowhita heoi kei te pito, kua rangaranga o roto, ā, nō tēnei wāhanga ka whai kauru.

Mō ngā rau, ka tangohia ngā pito, ka whai take ēnei hei te horanga o te kai.

Ka tīmata tātou ki te mea nui nei.

Kāore au i te mōhio me pēhea rā tēnei, i te mea i ngā rā o mua, ka hangaia te umu tī i te whenua tonu.

Heoi, ka kohua e tātou, nā reira he roa te tukanga.

Mārake te kite te take i tunua i te hāngī

Tokowaru ōku tuākana, tokowhā ōku tuāhine, nā reira tekau mā toru o mātou.



Tī Kōuka

English

To supplement our, um, my parents' income and food in the house, um, like a lot of the whānau over the pā here we supplemented our kai with mahika kai, so, um, at a very very young age we were kai gatherers and, um, that was a constant in our lives of, um, kai gathering amongst our whānau.

And, um, it was sometimes a weekly process where we were gathering kai.

Mahinga kai is part and parcel of our lives now.

I've put the potatoes, um the moimois, um, there's silverbeet in there, tītī, and of course, the main ingredients that we're talking about is, um, I'm going to put, um, ah, tī kouka in that we've had, so, that's pretty much the process we're at for this stage.

This is a very modernised process of how our people would possibly have, um, beaten the tī kōuka to get the kauru out of it, so, never done it before so this is purely an experimental process to see if we can get it done.

Texturally, it's still reasonably hard.

My gut feeling is the boiling process has, um, changed the, the structure of it. I, I'm just trying to think that, um, obviously the umu tī is the way it has to be done.

Like we've had it going for about three or four hours so we're talking the old way was 48 hours.

But we have got some of the kai out of it. And um, I'm just going to try a wee bit and see what the, what it tastes like...it's sweet and nice!

And ah and the bitterness is extremely mild. There's no strong burny taste in my mouth and throat and on my palate. It's actually very nice. Mmmm.

I can imagine it now being made, formed into cakes and them adding some tutu juice or juice from the harakeke, the, the, the nectar from the harakeke.

I can see it being cooked on stones, hot stones and made into little cakes.

They would be very nice to eat.

Here you go brother, here's some kai for us...(karakia)... here you go brother, tuck in!

Te Reo Māori

Kia māmā te taha utu, te hoko kai hoki, i kohia te kai e tōku whānau, pērā i te nuinga o ngā whānau, i tīmata mātou nō mātou e kōhungahunga ana.

I ētahi wā, ka kohi kai i ia wiki, i ia wiki.

Ko te mahinga kai tō tātou oranga.

Nāku ngā riwai i raua, ngā moimoi, he korare ki roto, ngā tītī, me te mea matua. Koirā te takunga i tēnei wāhanga.

Nō tēnei ao tonu tēnei takunga, tērā pea i patua te tī kouka e ngā tīpuna kia maringi mai te kauru. He pūreirei whakamatuatanga tēnei, kia kite inā ka whai hua.

Āhua mārō tonu te hanga.

Tāku whakapae, nā te mahi kōhua, kua rerekē haere te hanga. Mārake te kite mā te umu tī te takunga tika.

Kua tunua mō ngā hāora e whā pea, i ngā rā o mua e rua rā te roa.

Kāore kē he tiro tiro ka whāi kai tātou, ka tika! Ka haupatua tēnei kia pā mai te rongo, ā, he reka, he pai hoki.

Āhua pūngoungou tonu. Kāore anō te hīwera kia pā mai ki tōku waha. He reka rawa atu.

Kei te pohewatia e au te mahi tunu keke ki te wai tūtū, te waiharakeke rānei.

Ka tunua e ngā toka wera.

Kāore e kore he reka!

Nāia nei e te tuakana, he kai mā tāua....(karakia) Nāia e hoa, e kai.



Tī Kōuka

English

Mm, yeah it's beautiful. That is actually nice.

It's, it's still got that bitterness in it. But the sweetness is coming out and it's, it's like when you put citrus with, um, fish and all that type of stuff.

It gives it a bit of bite. Well this has got the bite, and we're adding ingredients that are reducing that bite when you eat it, so it's actually quite nice. It's quite nice.

It'll be interesting the um, the effect on the puku, an hour or so later if you have a good kai of it, to see if it actually, um, has a reaction. Because it's known for its cleansing powers as well.

The tī kōuka are a very resilient plant, tree, rākau, whatever you want to call it.

Very resilient and I think it's hand in hand with the resiliency of, um, of our Māori people. Still growing with pride.

Te Reo Māori

Āe, he reka.

He pūngoungou o roto heoi e puta mai ana te reka, pērā i te rēmana me te ika.

He kawa tonu heoi kua raua atu e tātou ētahi atu mea hei whakareka ake i te kai nei.

Ka raru pea te puku ā kō kō ake nei, kua mōhiotia whānuitia te tī kōuka mō tāna mahi whakatiko.

He rākau matatū te tī kouka.

He kaha hoki nōna, māua māua te iwi Māori me te rākau nei, e whanake matatū ana.

