

Foods, Foodways, and Francisation in Seventeenth-Century Québec

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ABSTRACT: This paper examines the relationship between food and power in a colonial context by focusing on foodways at the Ursuline community of Québec in the seventeenth century. In particular, it considers the role played by food in the larger strategy of *francisation*, the policy of assimilation designed by the French Crown with the goals of convincing the Indigenous inhabitants of Canada to convert to Catholicism and adopt French cultural norms. Drawing upon archival sources, this paper explores to what extent the food culture at the convent school continued French practices or adapted to North American traditions, and it argues that attitudes towards food — like attitudes towards *francisation* more broadly — could be negotiated on the ground in response to the realities of daily life in early modern North America.

In the year 1654, the Ursuline nuns at Québec received from their sister community in Paris some quince jam, apricot marmalade, and several containers of candied fruit paste. The gift came with a condition, or at least a direction: the Parisian donors indicated that these foods (along with the books of religious devotion, candles, and other small items in the package) were destined specifically for the Indigenous schoolgirls.¹ As perhaps they knew, the Ursuline convent in Québec was a key site for the implementation of French colonial policy in seventeenth-century New France. One of the main goals of this policy was assimilation of Indigenous peoples, and both Church and Crown perceived the Ursulines as well placed to contribute to French colonial efforts. In particular, they thought this teaching order of nuns could advance *francisation*, or ‘frenchification’, a process that was centred on Indigenous peoples’ religious conversion to Catholicism and adoption of French cultural norms.

French colonists had a marked sense of confidence about the superiority of French culture: even though they represented only a tiny proportion of the total population in seventeenth-century North America, they were optimistic that cultural and political domination could be achieved without force (Belmessous 2005, pp. 325, 330). This hope was founded on belief in a linear trajectory of human development, with French civilization at the pinnacle of cultural achievement. According to what they thought of as the ‘natural’ progression of human development, Indigenous peoples exposed to French culture would immediately be drawn to, and would ultimately embrace, French customs (Imbruglia 2014, pp. 29–30; Caulier 2005).

As powerful markers of cultural identity and ideology, food and foodways played an important part in *francisation*. While food was regarded by the French as a useful and persuasive tool for *francisation*, it also reveals to the historian the precarious situation of Québec as a small French settlement whose very survival depended on cooperation with Indigenous neighbours. Food culture at the Ursuline convent school continued French practices, but also adapted to North American traditions. Attitudes towards food — like attitudes towards *francisation* more broadly — were negotiated on the ground in response to the realities of daily life in early modern North America.

Retention of French food practices at the Ursuline convent

Sara Melzer (2013, pp. 96, 104–107) argues that the French colonial strategy was a particular brand of ‘soft colonialism’ based on imitation: the French expected to provide a model of civilization that the Indigenous people would strive to imitate and adopt. The large-scale retention of French food and foodways at the Ursuline convent fits with a desire to maintain and model French culture. By educating Indigenous girls through example, the Ursulines were preparing their charges for potential marriage with French partners, and, especially towards the end of the century, for bringing French culture to their native communities (Belmessous 2005, p. 334).

As the Ursulines’ records show, the French model was dominant at the convent in terms of what types of foods were being produced, purchased, and consumed. Production was based on the growing of grain and the raising of domestic livestock, as was the case in France, and the vast majority of fruits and vegetables consumed at the convent were familiar French crops. Furthermore, large quantities of fish found in convent expenditure and inventory records suggest an adherence to Catholic rules about fasting and food abstinence, which may in turn have contributed to the transmission of deeply held cultural beliefs about food.

Wheat and other millable grains

Millable grain that could be transformed into bread was at the heart of the agricultural system of seventeenth-century France and Europe more generally. Wheat, and to a lesser extent rye and millet, were grown on the best plots of land and constituted a staple of the diet. In this ‘*civilisation du blé*’ (‘civilization of wheat’), bread was both an essential food and a culturally-charged symbol. It was closely linked to Christian doctrine through its connection to the

Eucharistic host, and it was used as a marker of social hierarchy – the lighter and whiter the bread, the higher one's social position (Quillier 2007, pp. 26, 28). Not surprisingly, wheat was one of the most important plant species that French settlers introduced into North America, and some colonists might have felt insecure about how their part of the '*civilisation du blé*' was being perceived across the Atlantic. Pierre Boucher, Governor of Trois-Rivières (a settlement to the west of Québec), devoted an entire chapter of his book on the natural and human history of New France to wheat and other grains. His stated reason for doing so was to disabuse the French of the notion that people in New France lived on nothing but roots; he assured his readers that the bread in Canada was as beautiful and as white as the bread in France (Boucher 1664, pp. 81–82).

According to Louise Dechêne's study of daily life in seventeenth-century Montréal, inhabitants' diets were resolutely European in character and based on bread. Wheat accounted for between 60% and 75% of total crop production depending on the year, followed by rye and barley and then by oats (Dechêne 1974, p. 302). A recent bioarchaeological study comparing population samples from seventeenth- and eighteenth-century France, Montreal, and Indigenous Great Lakes communities offers congruent results: isotopic analysis reveals close similarities between colonial and European diets, and significant divergence between colonial and Indigenous consumption of native species (Vigeant *et al.* 2017). Likewise, wheat production seems to have been fundamental to the Ursuline convent, amounting to between 65% and 95% of the total value of crop production between 1672 and 1699.²

The Ursuline community not only produced but also consumed wheat in large amounts, either in the form of porridge or else as bread. Wheat and/or wheat flour constituted by far the biggest annual expense in nearly every year for which records are available.³ For example, from May 1674 to May 1675, wheat flour 'for the food of the Community, the children, and the domestic servants' accounted for 30.6% of that year's total expenditure on food and drink. This is proportionally more than what was spent on all types of meat, poultry and fish combined, which represent only 23% of the annual expenses for food.⁴ Ensuring the continuity of wheat supplies was a constant preoccupation for the nuns. In response to concerns that Iroquois invasions would threaten wheat crops in 1660, they stored large amounts of flour imported from France as emergency supplies (ed. Oury 1971, p. 627). The practise of importing flour from France continued throughout the seventeenth century, as shown by appearances of 'flour from France' in the expenditure and inventory records.⁵ The Ursulines devoted large amounts of energy and resources to producing and purchasing wheat flour, a quintessentially French food to feed the entire community: nuns, servants, and students, including Indigenous girls who were living at the school (Trudel 1999, pp. 58–60).

Fruits and Vegetables

Most of the fruits and vegetables produced and consumed by the Ursulines were types common in seventeenth-century France. Among their fruits were plums, grapes, strawberries, raspberries, apples, pears, and figs.⁶ Vegetables were also familiar French crops, with turnip (possibly rutabaga), carrots, beets, and cucumbers being purchased by the convent.⁷ A list of donations to the Ursulines by local farmers after a fire in 1686 confirms the consumption of fruits and vegetables familiar to the French, such as apples, plums, grapes, cabbage, leeks, onions, carrots, turnips, and root vegetables.⁸ Other edible plants included aniseed, rose, and *capillaire*, a type of fern used mainly for medicinal purposes.⁹ Marie de l'Incarnation, the convent's most prolific letter-writer, articulated the similarity between patterns of consumption in France and Canada to her son in 1668 (ed. Oury 1971, p. 833):

The other garden plants and vegetables are like those in France. They are harvested like wheat, in order to be able to use them all winter long and up until the end of May, when the gardens are covered with snow. With regards to trees, we have plum trees, which when well fertilised with manure and cultivated, bear fruit abundantly during three weeks.

This passage is interesting for the parallels it draws between the types of fruit and vegetables cultivated in France and in Québec, and also for what it says about the retention of French foodways in Québec, namely, growing patterns and conservation. In this harsher climate, Ursulines were reproducing French foodways in production and storage: vegetable gardens, like fields, were intensively cultivated during the warmer season, using animal manure as a fertiliser. Grains, fruits, vegetables, and legumes were then harvested, preserved, and stored in order to last throughout the winter months. Such efforts to produce and keep surplus food were a key organisational feature of sedentary societies generally; the distinction between this mode of subsistence and that of non-agricultural societies was significant for the Indigenous people and the French colonists, many of whom believed sedentism to be a key feature of French culture and a necessary precursor to *francisation* (Cowan 2018a; Vincent 2002, pp. 100–102; Vincent and Bacon 2003, pp. 21–25; ed. Campeau 1967, vol. IV, pp. 194, 535–537).

Meat, fish, and other animal products

The Ursuline convent had a typical *basse-court* or poultry yard for fowl that provided meat and eggs. They also raised typically French livestock including pigs (a major source of lard, pork, and suckling pig), milk cows (producing cheese, butter and other milk products as well as veal), beef (for meat and suet), and some sheep.¹⁰

Catholic custom held that healthy adults were expected to abstain from animal flesh, eggs, and butter during Lent and at some other times throughout the liturgical year.

While there was considerable local variation in whether and how early modern Catholics adhered to rules of fasting and abstinence, foodways at the Ursuline convent were no doubt heavily influenced by the restrictions placed upon them by Catholic doctrine. The inventory and expenditure records confirm that large quantities of fish were consumed at the convent, including cod, eel, salmon, sea bass, shad (a North American variety of herring), and trout.¹¹ Fish was purchased either fresh or salted. It is interesting to note that, despite severe salt shortages throughout New France, Indigenous smoking techniques were never adopted at the convent, nor do the Ursulines appear to have purchased smoked fish (Dechêne 1974, p. 102).

Among the cooking fats at the convent were lard, beef and moose suet, butter, and a variety of oils including olive oil and fish oil.¹² Lard and butter seem to have been the most commonly used cooking fats, as was the case in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century French cuisine (Rambourg 2009, pp. 77–84). Particularly throughout the 1670s, large quantities of lard were produced, bought, and even shipped from France.¹³ In the early years of the convent, Marie de l'Incarnation remarked upon the importance of lard to the Ursuline diet, saying that 'if in France one were to eat only lard and salted fish as we do here [in Québec], one would be ill' (ed. Oury 1971, p. 110).

As fasting proscriptions extended to cooking fats, olive oil constituted an important substitute for lard and butter in France. Perhaps due to the rarity and high cost of procuring olive oil in New France, however, colonists received special dispensation to consume dairy products (as well as eggs) during Lent from 1660 onward (Desloges 2009, p. 51; Rousseau 1983, pp. 270–273).¹⁴ Yet in spite of the dispensation, olive oil continued to be purchased by the Ursuline convent, appearing frequently in the expenditure records from 1672 to 1699.¹⁵ This trend may suggest either that the Ursulines strove to uphold the highest standard of Lenten observance, or that they were willing to spend money on a high-status food.¹⁶

Considering the importance of education at the Ursuline convent, whose nuns vowed to offer instruction to girls, one can easily imagine that spiritual teachings about dietary abstinence were inextricably linked to the preparation and consumption of food by students, Indigenous as well as French (Choquette 1992, pp. 637–8).¹⁷ In this way, food may have become a vehicle for religious indoctrination and an instrument of colonial power: control over what foods were eaten when imposed religious obedience on Indigenous students, with or without any measure of agency on their part.¹⁸

The power of sweetness: sugar as a tool for francisation

The Ursulines believed that it was important to provide not only for their students' spiritual education and welfare, but also for their material needs as well, and this sense of obligation extended to food (Fahmy-Eid 1983, p. 60). In

spite of their considerable poverty, the convent purchased and imported sugar from abroad along with a whole host of other expensive foods: vinegar; olive oil; spices like pepper, ginger, cloves, cinnamon, and nutmeg; raisins, prunes and other dried fruits from France; rice; and almonds.¹⁹

Sugar as persuasion

Jesuit missionaries reported that Indigenous people were particularly fond of sweet foods (ed. Campeau 1967, vol. II, p. 473; vol. III, pp. 230, 744; vol. IV, pp. 154, 215). Perhaps in response to these accounts, wealthy French donors often sent loaves of sugar and sugary foods like jam and candied fruit paste to the Ursuline convent at Québec.²⁰ These gifts were sometimes specifically destined for the girls at the boarding school, though whether they were meant more particularly for the Indigenous students is not always clear. In one case, a donor stipulated that any surplus rent from the financing of a mass be given in alms to the 'sauvages', which the nuns chose to put towards the making of king cakes (a traditional dessert eaten in the season of Epiphany) for their Indigenous students.²¹

Indigenous students often circumvented the ideals of cloister life, coming and going from the convent as they pleased (Cowan 2018a). The Ursulines must have hoped that providing the children with these little luxuries at a time when anxieties about poverty, hunger, and famine were common would please and delight them, thereby encouraging them to remain at the convent. But there may have been a secondary motive at play, beyond simply seeking to provide contentment: in this colonial context, the preciousness of sugar became a symbol of French cultural superiority, whose sweetness was offered for Indigenous visitors and students to admire and to enjoy, and whose power was put on display to impress benefactors.

Sugar as coercion

The Jesuits were keenly aware of sugar's appeal in the mission field. In 1637, François Joseph le Mercier wrote of its miraculous power to heal Indigenous patients, even in very small quantities (ed. Campeau 1967, vol. III, p. 736). This type of account is not unique in the Jesuit *Relations* and probably helped reassure readers in France: here was tangible proof that European material culture, represented by sugar and sweets, was indeed having the anticipated and much desired transformative effect on native populations (Melzer 2013, pp. 105, 107–109).

Accounts of sugar thus metaphorically served as proof of presumed European cultural superiority, validating the basic tenets of the colonial project. Sugar could also be used in a very pragmatic, if underhanded, way to advance the Jesuit mission of conversion. Le Mercier admitted that it was often the promise of a few raisins or other sweets that enabled him to enter the homes of Indigenous people, particularly the sick who hoped to benefit from the sweet foods' medicinal virtues (ed. Campeau 1967, vol. III,

pp. 732). Writing in 1637, the Jesuit Paul Le Jeune explained how his fellow missionary Pierre Pijart used sugar as a ruse to conduct non-consensual baptisms. Upon gaining entry to the home of a sick child, Father Pijart would offer to administer sugar dissolved in water as a medicinal remedy. This situation – namely the close physical proximity to a child combined with access to water – allowed him to covertly baptise children against the explicit wishes of their families. In one case, he intentionally allowed a few drops of plain water to fall upon the child's brow while pronouncing the sacramental words necessary for baptism (ed. Campeau 1967, vol. III, p. 777). Le Mercier may have been alluding to the use of similar techniques when he confessed 'that some little innocents were baptized in their last moments, in deceit and against the wishes of their relatives, under the pretext of wishing to give them similar sweet things' (ed. Campeau 1967, vol. III, p. 743). Some Indigenous leaders clearly distrusted the Jesuits' use of sweets and encouraged members of their communities to refuse offers of 'French snow', as sugar was sometimes called. It is difficult to know the precise nature of these suspicions, but they seem to have been linked to a perceived correlation between sugar, baptism, sickness, and death (Cowan 2018b; ed. Campeau 1967, vol. III, p. 781).

Adoption of Indigenous North American foods and foodways

The Ursulines were aware of food's utility in advancing the mission of *francisation*, but they also knew that the climate of Canada sometimes favoured different diets from what they had known in France, and that the right food could help foster good relations between the nuns at the convent and their Indigenous neighbours. While the retention of French food culture was an undeniable feature of convent life, the Ursulines also adapted their practices to the environmental, political, and cultural realities of seventeenth-century North America. Some Indigenous foods became regular features of the Ursuline diet, while aspects of North American food culture were adopted into convent custom. As with other aspects of life at the convent, so too with food, a hybrid culture developed within the cloister (Dunn 2012, 112; Davis 1995, 120).

Additive and combinative attitudes towards Indigenous foods

Marie de l'Incarnation was under no illusions that the foodways in New France could be transferred directly from France. To her son in 1644, she wrote that the climate and food supplies were entirely different, and to the Superior at Saint-Denis in 1670, she wrote that they were in a country that did not yet resemble France and would not come close for a long time (ed. Oury 1971, pp. 229, 891). In contrast to the fearful attitudes towards native foods sometimes found in English and Spanish New World colonies as discussed by Eden (2001) and Earle (2010), the Ursuline sources betray no such anxieties regarding the consumption of North American

plants and animals in New France. On the contrary, Marie de l'Incarnation's letters reveal a distinct curiosity and openness towards trying and incorporating new foods. In 1668, Marie de l'Incarnation sent a package of North American pumpkin seeds to her son. In the accompanying letter, she spoke highly of this food, whose indigeneity she made clear, calling it 'pumpkin of the Iroquois'. Describing its deliciousness once roasted, she likened the pumpkin's taste to a variety of French apple (ed. Oury 1971, p. 832). This native variety of pumpkin seems to have been adopted as a regular part of the Ursuline diet, appearing in the expenditure records of 1681–1682 and 1691–1692 as well as in the list of food donations given after the fire of 1686.²² The 1668 letter also sheds light on how the Ursulines incorporated this North American species into their repertoire of French cooking by preparing it according to European cooking techniques and combining it with European ingredients. The pumpkin could be roasted in the oven or on hot coals, in keeping with typical Indigenous cooking practices, but it was also commonly fried or prepared with milk to make soup, in a combinative approach to cooking (ed. Oury 1971, p. 832).

North American turkeys (*poule d'inde* or *dindons*) were eaten at the convent alongside fowl of European origin, such as chickens and capon.²³ Traditionally hunted by Indigenous peoples, the turkeys consumed at the Ursuline convent were domesticated and fed on a diet of *poix*, likely a catch-all term for a variety of legumes (Desloges 2009 p. 14, Dechêne 1974, p. 302).²⁴ Through the domestication of a formerly wild species, this North American bird was added to the Ursuline farmyard and diet, while respecting the French preference for domestic over game meats.

Moose was another North American species consumed in New France, prized as much for its skin as for its meat (ed. Campeau 1967, vol. VII, p. 373). This Indigenous food source appears frequently in the Ursuline records, but, unlike turkey, was procured through hunting. Wild game could be sold in public marketplaces as well as directly to individuals, and moose was hunted both by French and Indigenous populations (ed. Thwaites, vol. 45, pp. 193–4).²⁵ Moose meat was purchased by the Ursuline convent every year from 1673 to 1681 and possibly also in subsequent years.²⁶ On two occasions, the records specifically mention the purchase of moose tongues and muffles (the nose of the animal), considered a delicacy in Indigenous food culture (Nation-Knapper 2017).²⁷ The price of moose meat in the accounts varied between 2 *sols* 6 *deniers* and 3 *sols* 3 *deniers* per pound, making it considerably cheaper than beef, whose price during the same years hovered around 5 *sols* per pound.²⁸ The lower price of this wild game probably reflects the continued French preference for domestic meat throughout the colony. The fact that moose was regularly consumed at the Ursuline convent for a period of about eight years, but in quantities varying from year to year, may indicate that this food was adopted out of necessity and used to supplement other sources of meat, such as beef.

It was perhaps also out of necessity that small amounts of maize, or *bled d'inde* (Indian wheat) as it was known, were incorporated into the Ursuline diet. Maize was regularly eaten in the early years of the colony, and some contemporary observers believed its simplicity (as they perceived it) was actually good for the health of European and American populations alike. Writing in 1648, the Jesuit Paul Ragueneau described the Indigenous dish *sagamité*, a stew of boiled cornmeal seasoned with powdered smoked fish, as being more fortifying and health-bestowing than the richness and variety of European foods (ed. Campeau 1967, vol. VII, p. 373). Nevertheless, the popularity of maize among French settlers quickly diminished as European crops became well established; by the eighteenth century, maize consumption was marginal at best among the French in New France (Desloges 2009, p. 62; Audet 2001, p. 103).

At the Ursuline convent, *bled d'inde* is mentioned twelve times in the expenditure records between 1672 and 1699. It must be noted, however, that quantities were very low and, proportionally, maize never made up a large part of annual expenditures.²⁹ For example, a total of 16 *livres* were spent on maize for the year 1694–1695, compared to the 2996 *livres* spent on wheat. As was the case for oats, European farmers cultivated *bled d'inde* both in France and in New France mostly as animal feed in the late seventeenth century. Not surprisingly then, *bled d'inde* is specifically identified as being fodder for animals in half of the Ursuline entries.³⁰ Nevertheless, maize could be added to wheat or other grain mixtures in small quantities when necessary, such as when crops failed or in other cases of economic hardship (Dechêne 1974, p. 302; Quellier 2007, p. 199).

Accommodationist attitudes towards Indigenous foods: the case of sagamité

In contrast to the meagre presence of cornmeal in the Ursuline financial accounts from the second half of the seventeenth century, maize occupies a more central place in other sources that show *sagamité* being served by the Ursulines to attract Indigenous visitors and honour Indigenous codes of hospitality. Such was the Ursulines' desire to cater to Indigenous expectations that they were prepared to break with tradition and introduce feasting to the parlour. Marie de l'Incarnation was perhaps justifying this choice when she admitted in a letter to the Mother Superior at the Ursuline convent in Tours that although it was not the custom in France to offer feasts in the parlour, it would be considered 'a shameful thing', according to aboriginal custom, to send away a visitor without having first presented him with food (ed. Oury 1971, p. 123). This food was prepared with Indigenous preferences in mind. In a letter written in 1640, Marie de l'Incarnation described a typical parlour feast (ed. Oury 1971, p. 113):

It seems to me that when preparing a feast for our Indians, and to feed sumptuously sixty or eighty of

them, we use no more than a bushel of black prunes, four loaves of bread costing six *livres* a piece, four measures of pea or Indian wheat flour, about a dozen sticks of melted suet, two or three pounds of lard, so that the result is quite greasy, for this is the what they like.

Indigenous food in this particular colonial context thus became a means for the colonists to attract those whom they wished to assimilate. Something of the deceitfulness of the means is betrayed by the words of Marie de l'Incarnation herself: 'This is how we win them over to us,' she wrote, 'and thanks to this worldly bait, we draw them toward the grace of Jesus Christ' (ed. Oury 1971, p. 113). It is certainly possible that *sagamité* was served to students within the convent too, particularly during the early years of its establishment. But, based on the very small quantities of maize present in the inventory records from 1672 onwards, it does not seem plausible that the corn-based soup was a regular feature of the nuns' or the students' diet in the last quarter of the century. While serving *sagamité*, an Indigenous dish made primarily with native ingredients, may seem counterintuitive to the idea of promoting a French model of material culture, 'Frenchness', as understood by the Ursulines and by Marie de l'Incarnation herself, was not so narrowly defined in the earlier part of the century (Cowan 2018a; Belmessous 2013, p. 31–6; Havard 2009; Belmessous 2004). Becoming French did mean adopting certain norms, behaviours, and beliefs, but it did not necessarily require the abandonment of aboriginal customs, so long as these were not in conflict with Christian doctrine. Girls at the convent school retained certain elements of their Indigenous identity. For example, traditional dancing was permitted within convent walls and students were encouraged to maintain their native languages in addition to learning French (Cowan 2018a).

Much of the food at the Ursuline convent in seventeenth-century Québec, whether produced locally or shipped across the ocean, would have been familiar to a visitor from France. The reproduction of European foodways in Canada was part of a deliberate effort by the French Crown and Church to create an improved France, a New France, in North America. Whatever the colonising ideals, however, the food culture of France could not be transplanted so easily. Marie de l'Incarnation wrote to a nun in Tours in 1670 that all the winters were cold in Canada, but the most recent one especially so. Their trees with exquisite fruits had died, and the orchard of the Augustinian nuns who ran the hospital had been very hard hit. Marie went on to report that some fruit trees survived. The phrase she used to describe the fruits was 'fruits sauvages', which can be translated as 'wild fruits', but which perhaps also implied indigeneity, employing as it does the same adjective ('sauvages') as French settlers used to describe the Indigenous people. Marie provided a theological interpretation of this winter's effects: God,

depriving them of delicacies and leaving them with necessities, wanted them to remain in their mortification and give up the pleasures that they had come to expect. She might have been making a virtue of necessity, but enough time had been spent in New France that she could accept it. 'We have become accustomed to it during the thirty-one years that we have been in this country,' she wrote, 'so that we have had enough time to forget the pleasures and the delights of old France' (ed. Oury 1971, pp. 877–878). This nun, who had come to Canada as a colonist working towards *francisation*, came to believe that God chose to provide them with foods that were *sauvage*.

French colonial strategy may have been founded upon notions of presumed French cultural superiority, but in responding to the challenges of life in New France, attitudes towards food needed to be more flexible than a strict colonial ideology would allow. The gap between metropolitan theory and colonial practice left space for additive and accommodationist behaviours at the Ursuline convent, whose sisters adopted certain North American foods and Indigenous foodways, incorporating them into their diets and habits in culturally-acceptable ways that altered their own foodways in the process.

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Notes

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1. Québec, Archives des Ursulines de Québec (AUX), *Dons*, IE, 3, 4, 6, 1, p. 5v. French sources of the seventeenth century often call the Indigenous people 'sauvage'. This word derives from the Latin *silvestris*, meaning 'of the forest' or 'wild'. Readers may be more familiar with 'American Indian' or 'Native', but current usage in Canadian English tends to favour 'Indigenous'.

All translations from French, unless otherwise specified, have been provided by the authors of this paper.

2. Québec, Archives des Ursulines de Québec (AUQ), *État de comptes*, 1E,3,3,1,2, pp. 2r, 56v, 86r, 92r, 137r, 143v. These figures do not include what may have been produced in vegetable gardens, for which no empirical data is available.
3. AUQ, *État de comptes*, 1E,3,3,1,2, pp. 4r, 25r, 39r, 48v, 58r, 65r, 73v, 79v, 86v, 92v, 107r, 123v, 126r.
4. AUQ, *État de comptes*, 1E,3,3,1,2, p. 39r.
5. AUQ, *État de comptes*, 1E,3,3,1,2, pp. 67r, 73v, 79v, 86v, 92v, 94v.
6. AUQ, *État de comptes*, 1E,3,3,1,2, pp. 3r, 25r, 31r, 38r, 41r, 47v, 50v, 57v, 58r, 59r, 64v, 66r, 67r, 72v, 74r, 80r, 81r, 87r, 92v, 94r, 94v, 132r, 134v, 141r.
7. AUQ, *État de comptes*, 1E,3,3,1,2, pp. 57v, 59r, 74r, 80r, 94r, 123v, 126r, 129r, 132r.
8. AUQ, *Dons*, IE, 3, 4, 6, 1, pp. 12v, 13r, 14r, 15r.
9. AUQ, *État de comptes*, 1E,3,3,1,2, pp. 59r, 66r, 74r, 78r, 81r, 87r, 94r, 137v–139v; *Asplenium trichomanes*, commonly known as maidenhair spleenwort, was used to treat respiratory inflammation as early as the 16th century. According to *Le dictionnaire de l'Académie française* published in 1694, the best *capillaire* came from Montpellier and Canada, and could be consumed in the form of a syrup.
10. AUQ, *État de comptes*, 1E,3,3,1,2, pp. 2v, 3r, 3v, 24v, 37r, 38v, 47r, 48r, 56v, 57v, 58r, 64r, 64v, 65r, 72v, 73v, 79v, 86r, 87r, 92r, 92v, 93v, 94r, 100r, 100v–105v, 107r, 108v–122v, 123v, 126r, 129r, 132r, 134v, 137r, 137v–139v, 141r, 143v.
11. AUQ, *État de comptes*, 1E,3,3,1,2, pp. 3r, 3v, 6r, 18r, 24v, 25r, 38r, 38v, 48r, 50v, 58r, 60r, 65r, 67r, 72v, 74v, 77v, 79v, 86v, 89r, 92v, 100v–105v, 107r, 108v–122v, 123v, 126r, 137v–139v. AUQ, *Dons*, IE, 3, 4, 6, 1, pp. 13v, 14r, 14v. Beaver was categorized as fish in discussions of religious food restrictions (Rousseau 1983, pp. 270–273).
12. Not all oils were consumed as food. In 1677–1678, 25 pots of walnut oil were purchased as fuel for the church lamps. In 1681–1682, fish oil was used for the same purpose. AUQ, *État de comptes*, 1E,3,3,1,2, pp. 64v, 92v.
13. AUQ, *État de comptes*, 1E,3,3,1,2, p. 6r; AUQ, *Dons*, IE, 3, 4, 6, 1, pp. 2v, 3r, 3v, 4v, 5r, 5v.
14. Scarcity and expense of olive oil was used as the basis for similar dispensations in parts of France and elsewhere in Europe. See Jean-Louis Flandrin (1983, p. 380).
15. AUQ, *État de comptes*, 1E,3,3,1,2, pp. 3r, 24v, 38r, 47v, 57v, 64v, 72v, 80r, 86v, 92v, 141r, 143v, 137v–139v.
16. For a discussion of how a more discerning taste for olive oil was developing in non-olive producing regions in the seventeenth century, see Flandrin (1983), p. 382.
17. Québec, Archives des Ursulines de Québec (AUQ), *1647 Constitutions rédigées par le R. P. Jérôme Lalemant...*, 1E, 1,1,1, 5.237, fol. 159, pp. 1r, 61v–64v.

18. Jesuit missionaries reported instances of Indigenous Christians who were determined to observe fasts, even while on the hunt, sometimes against the advice of the missionaries who urged less severity (ed. Campeau 1967, vol. IV, pp. 300–301, 592; vol. V, pp. 88).
19. AUQ, *État de comptes*, 1E,3,3,1,2, pp. 3r, 3v, 6r, 6v, 18r, 18v, 24v, 25r, 31r, 38r, 41r, 41v, 47v, 50v, 51r, 57v, 60r, 60v, 64v, 67r, 70v, 72v, 74v, 75r, 77r, 80r, 81v, 82r, 86v, 87r, 89r, 92v, 94v, 95r, 100r, 107r, 108v–122v, 123v, 126r, 129r, 132r, 134v, 137v–139v, 141r, 143v.
20. *Dons*, 1E, 3, 4, 6, 1, pp. 2v, 3r, 3v, 4v, 5r, 5v, 6v, 7v.
21. Québec, Archives des Ursulines de Québec (AUQ), *Annales*, 1E, 1, 3, 2.0001, p. 7r.
22. AUQ, *État de comptes*, 1E,3,3,1,2, pp. 94r, 123v; AUQ, *Dons*, 1E, 3, 4, 6, 1, p. 15v.
23. AUQ, *État de comptes*, 1E,3,3,1,2, pp.56v, 58r, 64r, 64v, 73v, 86r, 86v, 92r, 92v.
24. AUQ, *État de comptes*, 1E,3,3,1,2, p. 65r.
25. On the laws regulating the sale of wild game in New France, see Audet (2001, p. 116).
26. AUQ, *État de comptes*, 1E,3,3,1,2, pp. 6r, 18r, 25r, 38v, 41r, 48r, 57v, 60r, 64v, 72v, 74v, 79v, 86v.
27. AUQ, *État de comptes*, 1E,3,3,1,2, pp. 6r, 28r.
28. AUQ, *État de comptes*, 1E,3,3,1,2, pp. 6r, 18r, 25r, 38v, 41r, 48r, 57v, 60r, 64v, 72v, 74v, 79v, 86v.
29. AUQ, *État de comptes*, 1E,3,3,1,2, pp. 4r, 28v, 58r, 65r, 73v, 79v, 87r, 93r, 123v, 129r, 132r, 134v. Years when maize is not mentioned often correspond to periods where the bookkeeping practice was less descriptive, which may in part explain its absence.
30. AUQ, *État de comptes*, 1E,3,3,1,2, pp. 28v, 65r, 73v, 79v, 87r, 93r.

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