

# New Internationalist

# Wild food

New Internationalist Easier English wiki Ready lesson:  
Intermediate level



# This lesson:

- speaking
- reading
- grammar: hypothetical language
- writing



# If...

- there were no food shops, markets or farms,
- what would you eat?
  - how would you find your food?
  - what would you refuse to eat?

# Focus on grammar:

What tense do you use for imagining / improbable situations?

Find and correct the errors:

1/ If no food in the shops, I'd eat fruit.

2/ If we hadn't farms and shops, I'd find wild insects.

3/ If there wasn't no food in shops, I'd go and catch fish.

4/ If there hadn't food to buy, I'd find some tasty plants.

5/ I'll catch some animals if there isn't any food to buy.

# Focus on grammar:

**If + past simple, + would + infinitive / base form**

Did you find these errors?

- 1/ If **there wasn't any** food in the shops, I'd eat fruit.
- 2/ If we **didn't have** farms and shops, I'd find wild insects.
- 3/ If there wasn't **any** food in shops, I'd go and catch fish.
- 4/ If there **wasn't any** food to buy, I'd find some tasty plants.
- 5/ I'd catch some animals if there **wasn't** any food to buy.

**Are we talking about the past? the present? or the future?**

Would you eat the following?

If so, why, if not, why not?

How would you cook them / prepare them for eating?

- snails
- wild fruit and berries
- wild mushrooms
- beetles and insects
- cactus plants
- birds
- nuts
- small wild animals (eg. mice, squirrels, foxes)
- wild flowers and leaves
- fish
- anything else wild?

Who? Where? What? When? Why? How?



## Back to wild food in Mexico

*Natalia Torres Garzon writes from the Mexican desert. There knowledge of ancient desert foods is helping with the economic shock of Covid-19.*



*Socorro Aguilar works with a cactus in Real de Catorce, Mexico. She cooks it with onions, tomato, and chillies or drinks it in smoothies*

- a) Predict: what do you think (before you read)
- b) Quick reading (to check): 30 seconds only!

1/ When did Mexico lose its tourism?

2/ How old is Socorro?

3/ What percentage of adults are now obese?

Covid-19 has caused a global economic crisis. But it has also opened the door to a more sustainable way of living in Real de Catorce, Mexico. This semi-desert town is in the mountains of central Mexico. It lost its tourism suddenly in March 2020.

The town's people returned to the wild cacti, flowers, and fruits of the desert. 77-year-old Socorro Aguilar was one of the people going back to the old ways. She has the old knowledge of how to collect wild foods and make agave syrup. The Aztecs called it 'god's drink'.

Over the years, people have eaten fewer and fewer wild plants in this area and they have forgotten traditional knowledge as foods come in from other places. Aguilar worries about poor health in the younger generation in Mexico. Over 30 per cent of adults are now obese. 'They only want food from packets,' she says. 'They don't want the great value of cacti, flowers, and medicinal plants.'

Covid-19 and climate change is showing the value of wild foods. National policy usually does not include them. The Opuntia cactus produces prickly pears everywhere from Brazil to Madagascar. The Food and Agriculture Organization wants to change the Opuntia cactus from a food that people go to when there is nothing else to an important part of agriculture.

The cactus grows well in difficult environments and has fixed problems with water. It is an important way of fighting food shortages and drought. When added to cultivated crops, a wide range of local foods like this may be the answer to feeding people in future crises.

- a) Predict: what do you think (before you read)
- b) Read carefully to find the answers – 3 minutes

1/ Covid-19 has brought one benefit to this area of Mexico – what is it?

2/ What is agave syrup?

3/ Why don't people eat the wild plants and cactus so much now?

4/ Find 3 benefits of the Opuntia cactus

# Writing: Write an article for a college magazine

Title: 'If we couldn't buy food .....

1/ **Plan** your article carefully: eg. you could link the topic to COVID-19 food shortages in the introduction? / you could talk about wild food, growing our food, bartering or exchanging services for food / would we be healthier? / would we share more? / would there be more equality? How do you plan to conclude: would this be more positive or more negative?

2/ **Write**: up to 45 minutes / up to 180 words

3/ **Proof-read** very carefully to check for the errors you know you often make

# Homework:

Read another article about food – make notes on the problems and the solutions:

[https://eewiki.newint.org/index.php?title=Very old forest gardens are stopping hunger in Ethiopia](https://eewiki.newint.org/index.php?title=Very_old_forest_gardens_are_stopping_hunger_in_Ethiopia)

