



# Kai Māori, Kai Ora

## Wai Māori, Ngai Māori

Key messages of Toi Tangata are Kai Māori, Kai Ora and Wai Māori, Ngai Māori. We recognise there are many different elements to being well. We support that there are numerous components that need to be weaved together for an individual, whānau, community or nation to reach their potential. We also acknowledge that there is a reciprocal relationship between our culture and the way we move, eat, drink, think and behave. From a health promotion perspective Toi Tangata are advocates of positive health. We constantly strive to achieve and assist Māori to flourish and fulfil their potential.

Whāia te iti kahurangi, ki te tuohu koe me maunga teitei

Pursue that which is precious, and do not be deterred by anything less than a lofty mountain.

We have been researching how to best promote and share how we view kai and wai through Māori concepts, inspiration has been drawn from mauri, whakapapa and mana.

## Mauri

Mauri in this context, depicts that all things have a living component with an energy or capacity to help create and sustain life. Mauri is also the traditional key environmental 'performance indicator'.

By using this basic interpretation it can be generalised that both kai and wai contain mauri. We acknowledge that mauri can be enhanced, preserved and diminished. For example, when you alter something that is pure such as wai, you negate its tapu and diminish its mauri. By drinking or consuming something in which the mauri has been weakened by contamination, less mauri is transferred to you. This then manifests as spiritless, lacking in energy, nutritionally inadequate, fuzziness and a lack of mental clarity or sharpness.

To illustrate how this thinking can be applied to a modern issue we will use the example of wai huka or sugar sweetened beverages. For this specific instance of mauri in wai we use the message *Wai Huka-Wai Takarepa, Wai with added sugar has diminished or corrupted mauri.*

Here are some practical applications of how you can preserve, enhance or diminish the mauri in your kai and wai:

### Wai

- Adding sugar, flavour, colour or alcohol diminishes the mauri of wai.
- Try wai Māori only. For flavour add lemon slices, mint, cucumber, kawakawa leaves.
- Reduce the sugar you have in tea or coffee.
- We are lucky in Aotearoa to have tap water that is safe, cheap and freely available.



## Kai

- Is the kai cooked in a way that enhances or diminishes the mauri? For example, if it is deep fried with excess amounts of salt, sugar or fat, does this diminish the mauri?
- Traditional gathering, processing, storing and cooking methods may ensure mauri is upheld more in comparison to modern methods.
- Reciting appropriate karakia at all stages of kai from procurement to consumption.
- Raw, steamed, boiled or baked may enhance the presentation and mauri of the kai. These methods also ensure that the nutrient value of the kai is maintained and in some instances, enhanced.
- Combining different kinds of kai together is another example of enhancing the mauri we receive. Such as red meat with vegetables, from a nutrition perspective, the vitamin C from the vegetables helps our body absorb the iron from the red meat.
- Fruit and vegetables have just one degree of separation from Papatūānuku. If we add these foods to our diet, our mauri is enhanced.

## Whakapapa

Our interpretation of whakapapa focuses on a connection, having an appreciation of where all things relevant to us come from, and how they are inter-related. That entails an understanding of the past to find relevance in the present and therefore positively influence the future.

Let us have a look at the sources of kai and wai we commonly consume now as a way to explore how these concepts can be applied to a modern context. We can see that contemporary lifestyle presents us with food and beverages that come in packets, boxes or bottles, scarcely in its original state. Most foods and beverages have been overly processed with nutritional components removed or excessive additives. For some of these foods the whakapapa is unknown, for example, what is the whakapapa of a packet of twisties? Others have been so far removed from their original form that its whakapapa is difficult to determine. For example, cornflakes were originally corn but the corn has been modified into something different.

Additionally, there are other foods that we may be able to trace the whakapapa of, such as imported huarākau or huawhenua. However, we don't know what has influenced their journey and what impact they have on the environment. Basically, if we can't see where it came from and what happened to it, how can we determine what influence it will have on the preservation of whakapapa?

Here are some practical applications of whakapapa in relation to kai and wai:

- Reciting karakia before kai to acknowledge the whakapapa of kai and its roles in supporting our oranga.
- Do you know the whakapapa of the kai? Can you identify the kaitiaki or atua that the kai connects to?
- Can you recognise the kai or inu? Do your tūpuna have a connection to this kai or wai?



- Encourage kai to be locally sourced (where possible) from the ngahere, awa, moana, māra or in an urban environment from a local grower, butcher or producer.
- Does what you eat or drink influence the continuation of your whakapapa?
- The whakapapa of many processed and packaged foods are unknown. They have been far removed from their original form and travelled a long way before arriving on your plate. If the whakapapa of a kai is difficult to determine, its mauri may have been corrupted or even cause harm.
- Add more goodness to a meal by adding kai Māori, huawhenua, huarākau and kai close to its original form.

## Mana

Mana is an integral component to every individual and so, it is fitting that manaaki invokes notions of nurturing mana. Of course manaaki means hospitality, generosity and encouragement, and is often demonstrated through actions of love. Toi Tangata also value and aim to uphold these interpretations across all our relationships and delivery. In addition we extend our interpretation to the realms of kai and wai by creating supportive environments for healthy choices and behaviours to thrive. As the flourishing wellbeing of the collective is the intended outcome.

To demonstrate how this concept can be applied to a modern day context at this hui-ā-tau the tangata whenua have asked for a sugar free hui. Toi Tangata are supportive of this as it is one way to uphold the mana of Te Wānanga o Raukawa and allows manaakitanga principles to be upheld. By providing sugar free kai and wai we are ensuring that the wellbeing of the collective is the outcome. This is similar to smoke free, alcohol and drug free tikanga commonly promoted in public venues, marae and workplaces. They exemplify how manaakitanga can be expressed to support the wellbeing and prosperity for Māori.

Here are some practical applications of this:

- Providing nutritious and safe kai to manuhiri that contributes to their oranga.
- Presenting it in a way that acknowledges the mana of the kai and of the manuhiri.
- Providing kai Māori and utilising traditional processing and preparation methods where possible
- Providing a healthy environment for manuhiri or whānau. Whakamanahia te whānau to make healthy choices.
- Para kore also falls under manaakitanga as it can mean organic, rubbish free or low in packaging
  - o Manaaki papatūānuku by reducing waste, sourcing kai and materials locally. This helps to reduce carbon emissions and decrease the negative impact on papatūānuku. Look for a local grower, butcher or producer in an urban environment.