

Hidden Paradise Chefs Receive Contemporary Island Cuisine Training



Participants cooking during the training.

Chefs from hotels and resorts in Savusavu took part in a week-long Agro-Tourism Culinary Training at Daku Resort in Savusavu this week.

The Agro-Tourism Culinary Training, which is based on the Kana Vinaka Cook Book was organized by the Ministry of Agriculture, in collaboration with the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism, and co-sponsored by Fiji Gas, Daku Resort and Maravu Meats to promote the use of Fiji's fresh produce within the tourism sector.

Ministry of Agriculture acting Chief Economist, Ms. Sera Bose highlighted the importance of using local produce in the tourism sector, as there was great potential in developing the linkages between the agriculture and tourism sectors to maximize economic benefits for the economy.

"This training will assist in addressing issues of sustainable tourism by expanding the backward economic linkages by training our local chefs and promote the use of locally grown products in their menu.

"As demand increases, farmers are encouraged to plant and supply Fiji's tourism industry with local agricultural

products, indigenous fruits and vegetables and thereby generating an income for their livelihood and communities," she said.

The training also supports the development of local cookbooks that highlight Fiji's unique culinary offerings, as well as offers an opportunity for the conduct of hotel food surveys to better understand hotel needs, creating an information database of middlemen and farmers supplying the respective hotels.

"Many efforts to maximize the economic benefits of tourism have largely focused on increasing the tourist arrivals, increasing the average length of stay, and increasing the overall expenditure of tourists," she said.

"However, to enhance economic and host community benefits, while addressing the broader issues of sustainability, it is important to continuously strengthen linkages between the tourism and agriculture sectors.

The training included contemporary island cuisine philosophy and concepts, presentations and discussion of local produce usage and techniques.

The five-day training was a comprehensive chef on-hands training, training participants used Daku Resort

kitchen to discuss, demonstrate, and produce appetizers, canapés, entrees, salsas, dips, and aiolis.

"More on local food cooking demonstrations such as Ota, Moca, Taro and Bele Hashcakes, Ura, Pumpkin, Eggplant chutney, Mango Cheese Cake, Banana Cake and many more," said CE.

"I, therefore, wish to thank all chefs for availing themselves to be a part of this important training to promote local foods in hotel cuisine."

"I wish to acknowledge the support from the tourism industry and hotel representatives that continue to support market access of our local foods to the Tourism food market.

The training for the Savusavu Tourism Association chefs was held to incorporate Fiji's fresh produce in contemporary cuisine and menus.

Grow Tomato for Cash

Tomatoes fetch higher returns if planted in the right place at the right time with good management of the crop.

1. Varieties

- Alton - tolerant to bacterial wilt
- Alafua Large - tolerant to bacterial wilt
- Redland Summer Taste - tolerant to bacterial wilt.
- Raising Sun No. 2 - tolerant to bacterial wilt
- Melrose – resistant to tomato mosaic virus

2. Growing condition

- Germinate well at temperature between 28°C - 30°C
- Well drained fertile soil with rich organic matter
- Adequate sunshine

3. Yield

- 10 to 15 tonnes/ha

4. When to plant

- Can be grown all year round.
- Best results in the cool season.
- Sow seeds every month for a regular supply of produce.
- Fruiting will be affected in temperatures of more than 32°C.

5. Seed Rate

- 300 g/ha

6. How to grow good seedlings

- Prepare seedbed on a well chosen site.
- Incorporate poultry manure in the soil 2 weeks before sowing seeds.
- Sow seeds thinly in rows 3 to 6 inches (7.5 - 15cm) apart in the seedbed.
- Water the bed after sowing.
- Healthy seedlings can be raised using seedling trays.
- Seed must be sown thinly to avoid over growing of seedlings and out break of damping - off disease.
- Use 30 grams of seed for every 4,000 plants you want to plant.

7. Land Preparation

- Two ploughings and two harrowings are recommended for good soil tilth.

8. Field planting

- Transplant when seedlings are about 3 to 4 weeks old or when they reach 3 to 4 leaf stage.
- Seedbed should be watered half an hour before lifting the seedlings.
- Dig don't pull seedlings out.
- Have your land well prepared before planting.
- Best results are obtained by planting on ridges during off-season.
- The seedlings are planted 60cm x 30cm apart on top of the ridges.
- Transplanting of seedlings needs to be done late in the afternoon or on a dull day.

9. Staking

A-shape staking is recommended where plants are planted in rows 60cm -1.0m apart and within rows of 30-40cm. Bind the stem loose onto the stakes with raffia. Determinate varieties e.g Alton need no staking

10. Pruning

To produce high quality tomato fruit, leave 1-2 stem for table tomato and 2-3 stems for cherry tomato is enough. Remove the rest lateral shoot to reduce the redundant foliage and fruits. Pruning should be done once per week. Small lateral shoots can be removed manually; if not pruning frequently, it will grow big and needs to be removed by tool.

11. Fertilizer

- Apply 10-12 tons/ha of poultry manure 2-3 weeks before planting.
- Apply 200kg/ha NPK before planting and 100kg/ha of Urea in 2 split applications (2 weeks and 4 weeks after transplanting).

12. Weed Control

- Hand weed or hoe.
- Inter-row cultivation when plants are still small.
- Mulch the plants to avoid weeds.

13. Pest Control

i) Spider (Tomato) Mite - most damaging pest of tomatoes, feeds on surfaces of foliage, stems and fruits. Blossoms are

shed, fruits stunted and skin becomes rusty or corky looking. High spider mite infestation causes defoliation, which leads to production of smaller fruits.

Control:

Monitor plants regularly. Practice proper field sanitation. Apply Malathion at 30ml/15L of water.

ii) Fruitworm or Fruit Borer

- Attacked the developing and mature fruits. They usually bore into the fruit from the stem end, and feed on the inner parts of the fruits, causing extensive fruit damage.

Control:

- Spray with Steward at 7.5ml/15L of water or Delfin at 14g/15L of water.
- Avoid planting tomatoes near maize to prevent heavy pest infestation.

14. Disease Control

i) Leaf mould

- Fungal disease that causes yellow spots on top of the leaves and the layer becomes mouldy and plants may finally die.

Control:

- Spray with Benomyl at 10g/15L of water (Sold as Benlate).

ii) Bacterial wilt

Caused by bacteria resulting in wilting and death of tomato plants.

- Use tolerant varieties
- Remove and burn diseased plants

iii) Nematodes

- Small worm like pest that cause swelling on the roots of tomato plants.

Control:

- Implement crop rotation programme i.e. after harvesting the first crop do not plant that same piece of land with tomatoes or the crops of the same family.

15. Harvesting

- 10 to 12 weeks from transplanting, tomatoes are ready to be harvested and picking continues for 6 to 8

weeks depending on the varieties.

- Pick fruits at colour break to avoid bird damage

16. Cultivation/Management

- Keep field free of weeds, but be careful not to break the ridges down when weeding if planted on ridge.
- Stake the plants when they are well established. (Alafua large, Redland Summertaste and Raising Sun).
- Prune to allow only one or two sub-branches plus the main branch to

grow. (Pruning is only recommended for stake crops)

17. Grading and Packing

- Good quality and clean fruits can be packed in cases for sale.
- Pack same size and shape fruits together to avoid damage during transportation.

18. Returns

- Expected income is \$8,400/ha at a price of 60c/kg.

