Alexeyeff (2004) Love Food Exchange and Sustenance in the Cook Islands Diaspora

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Kalissa Alexeyeff’s “Love Food: Exchange and Sustenance in the Cook Islands Diaspora” is an article in which you will find that the main focus is on the importance of food within the culture of the Cook Islands and how it can be used symbolically within their society. The author describes a society where food represents more than just a means of nourishment but more a way to reach a deep connection between individuals. A culture is described that puts stress on sharing with one another and being doing what one can to be charitable towards others. Simplify your writing. Sentences are needlessly complex.

When observing this prominence of food inside their culture it is easy to see that food can serve as a form of expression (again, this sentence could be simplified). It is discussed within this article. Avoid passive voice "it is discussed" etc. The author notes that the Cook Islands lack words for many different expressions such as love (Alexeyeff 2004). Therefore they often show affection through the giving of gifts. For example, it is given that many Cook Island citizens venture to New Zealand for school, and are often sent with a plethora of Cook Island treats that will serve as not only a memento of their homeland but also quite possibly an emblem of those that they have left who will miss them. This can very much be related to our culture’s use of either a goodbye card or perhaps a photograph.

The Cook Islands represent a civilization (culture would be a better word here) that would seem rather peculiar to those not familiar with it. The culture itself has a high emphasis on gift giving. With this being said, food exchange is one of the most important parts of their society. In some cases it is accurate to say that it is even expected. The author explains that when a member of the Cook Islands civilization ventures from the island with plans of visiting a family member that may have perhaps formerly lived in Cook Islands, it is anticipated that they will bring with them gifts of food that can perhaps only be obtained within the Cook Islands (Alexeyeff 2004). In addition, when these individuals return it is customary to bring foods from their visited lands that are inaccessible on the Cook Islands.

Staying within the concept of gift giving as a vital part of their culture, it can be seen in many cases that this is not always limited to those that would be considered immediate family members. For example, that was displayed within the text is that it is not at all uncommon for someone to observe a stranger walked down the street, and to then invite the aforementioned stranger into their home for a meal, whether their food quantity was plentiful or not (Alexeyeff 2004). This kind of behavior would be considered completely atypical in a society positioned within the United States. This could be perhaps why the average Cook Islands resident views most people of light skin to be greedy and unwilling to help their fellow man.