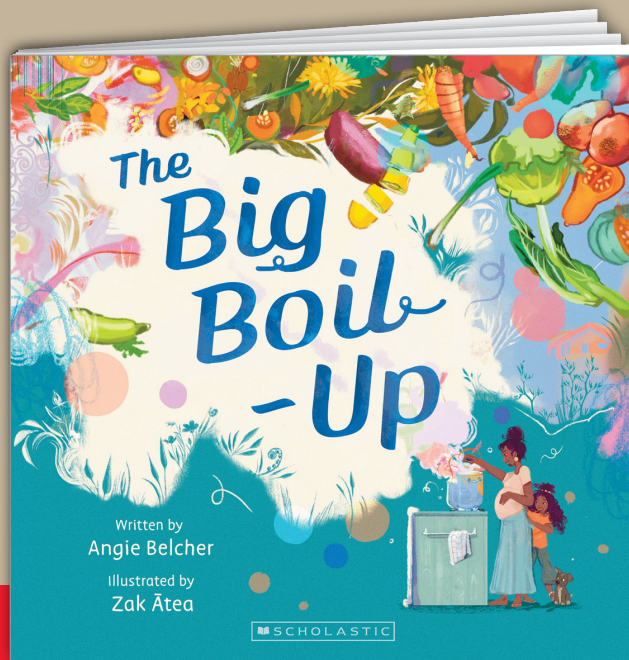


The Big Boil-Up

By Angie Belcher

Illustrated by Zak Ātea

- Reading • Writing • Science • Social Studies
- Art • Māori Traditions



Synopsis

Bubba's mum invites her into the kitchen to learn a special family tradition: how to make a boil-up. Not just any dinner, but a hearty whānau-filled feast passed down through generations. As the pork simmers, Bubba and Mum head to the creek to gather fresh watercress. Nanny arrives with pūhā, and Koro digs up spuds and kūmara to add to the pot. With steam rising and flies buzzing, the whānau prepares doughboys, Bubba's favourite part. As the fluffy dumplings cook, more cousins and neighbours arrive, each bringing their own veggies to share. When the karakia kai is said, Bubba realises that this meal is more than just food. It is about memory, togetherness, and learning to care for your people. And now, the recipe lives with her.

About the Author

Angie Belcher is both a writer and a teacher. Her love of outdoor adventure, including diving, caving and hiking, provides Angie with exciting writing prospects and has become the catalyst for many children's books. Most of her books written for educational publishers can be found in New Zealand schools, but her favourite stories originate from her home at Maketū in the Bay of Plenty. Angie's book *The Girls in the Kapa Haka* won the Gaelyn Gordon Award for a Much-loved Book. Her first book with Scholastic was *Pipi Dance* and the Māori edition was a Te Kura Pounamu Finalist at the 2024 NZ Book Awards for Children and Young Adults.

About the Illustrator

Zak Ātea (she/her), is a published Illustrator and Visual Artist originally from New Zealand, now based in Sydney, Australia. Her work includes editorial illustration, children's book illustration, artist book design and fine art practices created through digital and traditional painting and drawing mediums. This is her first book with Scholastic.



Writing and Illustration Style

The Big Boil-Up is a 32-page paperback book written for the 3–7 age group. In this heart-warming story, Angie Belcher explores the themes of Māori traditional food practices, family and aroha. Her characters gather and hunt kai from the garden, creek, paddock and forest to share with whānau. Angie dedicates the book to all the kaumatua at Maketū in the Bay of Plenty (where she lives) who know how to make a tasty big boil-up. The rhyming text makes the story ideal for reading aloud at home or in a group setting in schools, libraries or the marae. The repetitive rhyming phrases encourage younger readers to join in as they learn it and feel more confident. The rhyming phrases are set on curves in a different font from the main body copy and change slightly depending on the page's content. The text is written in the first person present tense, with the main character Bubba as the narrator. The book is also available in te reo Māori (*Te Kai Kōhua Nui*).

Zak Ātea's realistic and whimsical illustrations celebrate the joy of whānau sharing a boil-up together. She captures the essence of aroha and family with the warmth of her colour palette. The illustrations are expressive, evocative and look good enough to eat! Scenes with flora and fauna of tūi on flax bushes, cabbage trees, toetoe and ferns give the book its unique Aotearoa flavour, enhanced by Zak's lovely use of Māori motifs throughout her artwork. The main body copy type is set in Duper Pro.

Shared Learning and Discussion Points

Read the book aloud and, if appropriate, have the students read alongside you or follow along as you read. Use some of the questions provided to help the students think about the book's themes more in-depth. Questions before, during and after reading encourage the students to clarify meaning, make connections and predictions, understand the author's purpose and better understand the characters and events. Talk about how kai and sharing a special meal together, such as a boil-up, helps to bring whānau together and keep food traditions alive. Encourage the students to talk about the food traditions in their own families and whether the recipes are passed on verbally or written down in a recipe book.

ASK YOUR STUDENTS:

Look at the front cover and read the blurb on the back cover.

- Have you heard of a boil-up before? Have you eaten one? How does it taste?
- Look at the ingredients on the cover. What's going in this boil-up?
- This boil-up is going to be big. Why do you think there needs to be lots of it?
- Why do you think each nanny has a different recipe?
- Have you learnt a special dish from your mum or grandmother? What was it?
- Does someone else in your family make a special dish for you all to share? If so, why do they cook it?

COMPREHENSION:

- Bubba and Mum have been outside gathering ingredients for their big boil-up. Where do you think they have gathered the kai from? Look at what Mum's carrying. What vegetables can you see? (pp.4–5)
- On Lines 1 and 2 of page 4 are the words 'knew' and 'stew'. What do you notice about these words? Explain that rhyming words are words with the same ending sound. Ask the students to watch out for the other rhyming words throughout this rhyming story. (p.4)
- Mum uses the name Bubba as a term of endearment for her daughter. Does your family call you by a special name like this? What is it? (p.4)
- The meat ingredients for the boil-up are listed on page 6. Have you eaten some or all of these before? Which do you like the best? (p.6)
- What is 'pūhā'? Some people think that pūhā, or sow thistle, is a weed and can be bitter. Have you tried pūhā before? Do you like it? Why or why not? (p.7)
- On page 7, we learn that different people use different ingredients for their boil-ups. Some people use ingredients they gather in the wild and some use leftovers, such as the bone from the Christmas ham. Do you think people would always stick to the same ingredients and recipe, or do you think they would use what they have at the time? Explain your answer. (p.7)
- Do you know what a mutton bird is? If you don't, how can you find out more about this animal? (p.7)
- A big boil-up is a practical way of feeding a large group of people at a marae. What other traditional food preparation at a marae is popular for feeding lots of people? (p.8)
- Bubba's cuzzie (cousin) hunts and catches a wild pig and gives some to the whānau. Long ago, people gathered plants and hunted animals because there were no supermarkets. Many cultures made dishes such as stews. Why do you think stews became popular around the world? (p.9)



teacher toolkit

 SCHOLASTIC

- Have you ever gathered watercress from a creek? Have you tasted watercress before? What was it like? (p.10)
- How would long hollow stalks be helpful to wild watercress, which lives in water? (p.10)
- What does the word 'miri' mean? Look at the illustration on page 11 for a clue. Alternatively, use an online Māori dictionary to learn its definition. (p.11)
- Why is it a good idea to wash vegetables and plants gathered in freshwater waterways in tap water before you cook and eat them? (p.11)
- The pūhā in this story is a thistle-like plant that grows in the wild. Why does Nanny teach her moko how to pick pūhā? (p.12)
- What does 'Koro' mean? What do you call your grandfather? (p.14)
- Potatoes and kūmara grow underground. Would you like to grow your own potatoes or kūmara? Why or why not? (p.14)
- On page 15, Bubba and Mum are cooking the boil-up, but Koro, Nanny and Bubba's cuzzie have also helped with the boil-up. How does it work in your family? Does one person cook the evening meal, or do others help out too, or do you take it in turns? (p.15)
- Why do flies often gather in the kitchen? Would you prefer steam in the kitchen or flies buzzing around you and the food? Explain your answer. (p.17)
- Bubba is sitting there watching as the boil-up cooks away. There's an old saying that says 'a watched pot never boils'. What do you think this means? (p.17)
- What does 'e hoa' mean? How could you find out if you don't know? (p.18)
- Have you heard of 'doughboys' before? Which two words in the text describe their appearance? What is another word for 'doughboys' that other cultures use? What do you think the doughboys are made from? (p.18)
- Why might you not want to overmix the doughboy mixture? (p.19)
- The word 'squish', which has been used three times on Line 4 of page 19, is an onomatopoeic word. Onomatopoeia is the use of a word that sounds like the thing it stands for. This word was also selected because it rhymes with the word 'dish'. If you were going to replace the first two instances of this word, what other onomatopoeic words could you use that mean the same thing? For example, you could use 'scrunch' 'squelch' and 'squash'. (p.19)
- Why does the text say 'Don't lift the lid to take a little look'? What do you let out if you lift the lid? How does this affect the cooking time? (p.20)
- Why does the boil-up pot never get empty? (p.21)
- Why do you have to be quick to get a doughboy? (p.23)
- What does the author mean when she says 'or you won't get a lick'? (p.23)
- What is a 'karakia kai'? (pp.24–25)
- What memories is Mum thinking about? Use the illustrations on pages 26–27 to help you. Are there certain meals that you eat that bring back fond memories? What meals and memories are they? (pp.26–27)
- On page 28, you can see some of Mum and Bubba's ancestors, who have passed on their boil-up knowledge down the line. What knowledge have some of your ancestors passed on to you? This can be food knowledge or other kinds of knowledge. (p.28)
- The author ends the book with a two-line repetitive rhyme. If you were Bubba and had to replace this rhyming text, what would you tell the others how to keep the whānau fed? (p.31)

SEE NEXT PAGE FOR ACTIVITIES



Activities

ACTIVITY 1: A BOIL-UP RECIPE

In the book, the big boil-up recipe is not written down. It's passed on down the line throughout the generations. At the end of the story, the knowledge is passed onto Bubba, who tucks it safely in her head. Imagine that you're putting together a recipe book of your family's favourite meals. Use the story to help you create a list of ingredients for your special boil-up. In the book, we learn how different people create different boil-ups. Some use pūhā and pork, whereas others use bacon and celery stalks. Once your ingredient list is complete, collate them all and create a class boil-up recipe book to display in the classroom.

ACTIVITY 2: GROWING WATERCRESS

The small leaves of watercress have a tangy, peppery taste, so they make a great addition to a boil-up. Watercress grows naturally in shallow creeks and other freshwater waterways in New Zealand, but you can also grow it from seeds and stem cuttings. Create a watercress nursery in a sunny spot in your classroom and have a go at growing your own. Watercress can also grow well in partial sun. It's important to keep the soil that it grows in moist with regular watering. Watercress will also thrive in water. As a class, research watercress plants on a garden centre website to learn more about their requirements. Write your name on a wooden iceblock stick so that you can place it in your pot to help identify your watercress plant.

ACTIVITY 3: RHYMING LINES

The author has written some repetitive rhyming text on page 9: 'Let it bubble, let it steam, let the boil-up simmer. We all love a boil-up for our evening dinner.' On pages 11, 15, 20 and 31, she repeats this phrase, but sometimes alters the wording slightly. Work in groups and come up with your own version of the repetitive rhyming text. Ensure that you convey the essence of the text. You don't have to end with the words 'simmer' and 'dinner'. You can come up with a new pair of rhyming words.

ACTIVITY 4: MEMORIES ON A PLATE

The text near the end of the story says that having a boil-up is like memories on a plate. Using a white paper plate as your piece of paper, draw a special meal that your whānau shares in the centre. In fancy lettering, write the name of the meal around the curved edge or border. On the back of the plate, write a short paragraph about why this dish is so special to your whānau and when you eat it. Share your work with the rest of the class and then suspend the paper plates on string so that you can view both sides of the plates.

ACTIVITY 5: MĀORI MOTIFS

The illustrator's colourful artwork features beautiful Māori motifs. Look at page 6 to see how she has incorporated blue Māori motifs with a whole bunch of boil-up ingredients. Design a piece of art based on the illustrations on pages 6 and 19 where a whole bunch of the ingredients tumble down into a large silver boil-up pot. The ingredients could include kūmara, pumpkin, watercress, kamo kamo, celery, pork bones, bacon bones and so on. Incorporate some Māori motifs into your illustration as well. Use the book to help you. Display your finished artwork on a classroom wall.

ACTIVITY 6: A CLASS BOIL-UP

If there are suitable facilities in your school, you could create your own class boil-up for you all to taste and share. For safety purposes, always ensure the pot is never unattended when the boil-up is cooking on the stove top. Ensure there is also an adult caregiver, teacher aide or parent helper assisting you at all times, especially when you're handling sharp knives. Together as a class, decide which ingredients you would like in your boil-up. You could put pork bones, bacon bones or ribs into a large pot and cover with water. Simmer for about one and a half hours. Carefully chop some vegetables, such as kūmara, carrots, potatoes, pumpkin and celery while the meat is cooking. If you would like some doughboys as well, search for a recipe from the Internet if you need to know exact ingredients and measurements. In the book, Bubba and her mum use flour, butter and water to make their doughboys. Other recipes also include baking powder and salt.

Written by Janine Scott

