



Native American Recipes

A Taste of History



**SOUTHWEST
RESERVATION AID™**

A program of Partnership With Native Americans
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INTRODUCTION

In our lives, food provides us with so much more than nourishment. It connects us to family and friends, to history and heritage, and to the earth and its bounty.

These six recipes bring a special opportunity to connect directly to Native American heritage. By exploring these dishes, you'll learn about history, understand more about Native American culture and traditions, and expand your own perspective on the world around us.

We are proud to share these recipes, which represent just a small sampling of the diverse foods many American Indians have enjoyed for thousands of years.

As you put them on your own family's table, celebrate your connection to our nation's indigenous people and their lasting influence today!

TRADITIONAL WOJAPI



Wojapi is a traditional berry soup, or pudding, associated with the Lakota of the Northern Plains. It connects us to the traditions of ancient hunter/gatherer societies, before large-scale agriculture was common, when a family might dine on the seasonal bounty they found in nature. Nutritious berries, picked in the wild, could be enjoyed fresh from the bush or vine, but they could also be cooked in a pot or mixed with grain and boiled or baked. Consider serving this traditional wojapi as a topping for cornbread, over ice cream, or even with turkey, duck or goose. If you can't find the wild chokeberries or buffalo berries the Lakota prefer, simply use the seasonal berries you find near you.

- **4–5 cups fresh berries**
(blueberries, raspberries, strawberries, buffalo berries or pitted chokecherries)
- **½ cup water**
- **honey**
- **cornstarch**

Directions

1. Clean the fruit.
2. Place fruit in a bowl and mash.
3. Add fruit and liquid to a large saucepan and bring to a boil being careful not to burn the fruit by stirring frequently.
4. Lower heat to a simmer and cook for about an hour, checking frequently.
5. Taste and see if you need to add honey for sweetness.
6. If you want the mixture to be thicker, continue to simmer or add a small amount of cornstarch. If you decide to use cornstarch, place 1 tablespoon of cornstarch into a small bowl and add cold water. Stir until you achieve your desired thickness and add more water or cornstarch if needed. Slowly add water and cornstarch mixture to the hot pot of berries and stir until the sauce reaches your desired consistency.

“NO FRY” FRYBREAD

Certain foods connect us to pleasant memories of childhood and family. While frybread is a popular food enjoyed by many Native Americans today, it wasn't always that way. In fact, the bread only came to be when natives were forced from their lands, from the crops and hunting grounds on which their livelihood depended. With survival rations consisting of only a few basic ingredients that were unfamiliar to them—including flour—Native Americans made a simple frybread to fill stomachs and provide comfort, though it added little nutritional value. As you enjoy this simple “no fry” frybread, think about how it symbolizes the creativity of Native Americans when faced with tremendous adversity. Frybread can be eaten without toppings, or add powdered sugar, honey, jam or beef. Or, substitute for tortillas to make “Navajo tacos.”



- **4 cups organic unbleached or whole-wheat flour**
- **Extra flour**, for the cutting board
- **2 tablespoons baking powder**
- **1 teaspoon kosher salt**
- **1½ cups warm water**

Directions

1. In a medium-size mixing bowl combine flour, baking powder and kosher salt. Gradually stir in the water until the dough becomes soft and pliable without sticking to the bowl.
2. Knead the dough on a lightly floured cutting board or surface for 4 minutes, folding the outer edges of the dough towards the center.
3. Return the dough to the bowl, cover with plastic wrap and let rest for at least 30 minutes to allow it to rise.
4. Shape the dough into small-sized balls and roll out using a rolling pin or with your hands to a 1/4-inch in width on a lightly floured surface.
5. Stretch or roll the dough out so that it is approximately 8 to 10 inches in diameter.
6. Heat a cast iron skillet or open flame grill until very hot.
7. Place your shaped dough circle onto the hot pan or open flame grill, and let it cook for approximately 2 to 3 minutes on each side until it browns, then turn the bread over and cook another 2 to 3 minutes until bread is completely done. If you are cooking these breads over an open flame or on a grill, cook until the dough starts to turn golden brown and puffs a little.
8. Repeat this process with each piece of dough.
9. Keep warm between two clean kitchen towels.

CACTUS PAD SALAD WITH JALAPEÑO DRESSING

When contemplating cactus as an ingredient, most of us probably grimace at the thought of spines that can easily be caught in our skin. But for centuries, Native Americans of the Southwest, including parts of New Mexico and Arizona, have recognized that the prickly pear cactus could be carefully prepared, cooked and eaten. The pads of the cactus are called “nopales” and can be picked in the spring and used in a variety of ways, including in this recipe. The prickly pear fruit, harvested in late summer, has been a traditional source of dye by the Navajo tribe, adding a rich, deep color for their weavings. With their vast knowledge of the warm and dry region, Native Americans found innovative ways to use local resources and pass those traditions down from generation to generation. For a taste of Southwest Native American heritage, try this regional delicacy for yourself.



Salad

- **3 oranges**
- **6 large cactus pads*** (nopales), cleaned, trimmed and cut into 3-inch strips
- **2 red bell peppers**, roasted, peeled, seeded and cut into 3-inch strips (or 1 jar of roasted red peppers)
- **¼ cup pumpkin seeds**, lightly toasted

Jalapeño Dressing

- **3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar**
- **2 tablespoons organic raspberry jam**
- **1 teaspoon Dijon mustard**
- **½ teaspoon salt**
- **¼ teaspoon black pepper**
- **½ teaspoon red chile powder**
- **1 green jalapeño pepper**, seeded and finely chopped

Directions

1. Peel the oranges and cut into segments, removing the white pith.
2. To clean the whole cactus pads, hold them with a kitchen towel and remove the spines using a knife and scraping the pad away from you. The rounded outside edge of the pads also needs to be removed with a small paring knife or a vegetable peeler and should then be discarded.
3. Blanch the cactus pads in boiling salted water until they turn bright green, 30 seconds to 1 minute. Place in an ice water bath to stop the cooking process. Then rinse thoroughly in cold water until the gum washes off the pads; drain well.
4. In a bowl, toss together the oranges, cactus pad strips, red pepper strips and pumpkin seeds.
5. For the dressing, whisk together all the ingredients. Pour the dressing over the salad, toss and serve.

*Cactus pads are becoming more available in supermarkets. Choose the smaller and thicker deep-green pads because they are the most tender. Usually, fresh cactus pads are sold whole. For convenience, however, they may also be purchased in jars already diced and even precooked in their natural juices.

THREE SISTERS HOMINY HARVEST STEW

Corn, beans and squash, known in Native American agriculture as the “three sisters,” have long been staples in the diets of many tribes. Rather than growing them in separate fields, American Indians plant them together knowing the three plants can share the soil, light and water to grow in harmony. The corn stalks provide strong poles for the beans to climb, while the leaves offer shade for the squash. In addition, the beans helped to nourish the soil for the corn and squash. But these three sisters aren’t only grown together—they can also be eaten together. Here, hominy (which you may know as the main ingredient in grits) is given flavor and variety from the other two sisters in a recipe you may enjoy as a flavorful side or as a main dish any time of the summer, perhaps served with bread and a green salad.



- **1 large yellow onion**, chopped
- **1 green bell pepper**, seeded and chopped
- **Olive oil cooking spray**, to coat cast iron pot
- **2 cups chopped fresh Roma tomatoes**, or (1) 28-ounce can whole peeled tomatoes with basil
- **3 cups cooked tepary beans** (brown or white) (1½ cups uncooked)
- **2 cups cooked corn kernels** (fresh, frozen or canned)
- **2 cups green zucchini squash**, cut into small cubes
- **3 tablespoons dried red mild chile powder**
- **1 teaspoon salt**

Directions

1. Heat the cast iron or soup pot over medium-high heat.
2. Add onions, sauté for 2 minutes until translucent then add green bell peppers and sauté another 2 minutes.
3. Cut each of the whole tomatoes into 8 pieces (a large dice) and add them to the onions and green bell peppers. Cook for another 2 minutes, stirring constantly.
4. Add the zucchini squash and sauté for another several minutes, stirring constantly to prevent burning. Add the beans and the cooked corn and stir well.
5. Bring the tepary beans to a boil, and then reduce heat to low. Stir in the dried red chili powder and salt. Let simmer for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally to prevent burning. Serve hot with “no fry” frybread, or homemade corn or flour tortillas.

BISON CHILI



Bison once roamed the North American continent by the millions. For many Native American tribes, the bison were both a sacred animal and an important source of sustenance. The Lakota prayer Mitakue Oyasin means “all my relations,” and speaks to the close connection the Lakota have long felt to bison. Today, while some wild bison remain in and around Yellowstone Park and on some Native American reservations, you are more likely to find ranch-raised bison at your grocery store. Use it as you prepare this traditional chili and feel the strong connection to indigenous wildlife that was a central part of Native American heritage and culture for centuries.

- **1 pound ground bison**
(can substitute beef)
- **1 medium onion**, chopped
- **1 (15.5 ounce) can pinto beans**, rinsed and drained
- **2 (15.5 ounce) cans tomatoes**
- **½ cup water**
- **2 teaspoons chili powder**
- **½ teaspoon ground cumin**
- **½ teaspoon salt**
- **½ teaspoon ground pepper**
- **¼ cup fresh cilantro**, chopped

Optional Toppings

- **Grated cheese (cheddar, Monterey Jack or queso blanco)**
- **Diced jalapeño peppers**

Directions

1. In a non-stick skillet, cook the ground bison and onion in a small amount of oil until the meat is browned and the onion is tender.
2. Add the pinto beans, tomatoes, water and seasonings. Cover and simmer for 1 hour, adding more water if chili becomes too thick.
3. Add chopped cilantro and simmer an additional 10 minutes.
4. Spoon into bowls and garnish with grated cheese or diced jalapeño peppers, if desired.

BLUE CORN FLAPJACKS



Flapjacks, pancakes or griddle cakes have been eaten in this country, in one form or another, for hundreds of years. For a unique twist, you can try this Native American recipe utilizing blue cornmeal. Blue corn is one of the most unique and nutritious corns in the Southwest. Unlike commercial hybrid corns, blue corn is difficult to harvest mechanically with varying heights and flowering periods, and an overall lower yield. It is, however, much higher in nutrients and 20–30% higher in protein. For hundreds of years, it has been sacred to the Pueblo, Navajo, Hopi and other American Indians. Used in both cooking and ceremonies, it is central to Native American culture with symbolism for every stage of life. As you prepare these blue corn flapjacks, enjoy using this healthy heirloom ingredient. Serve them with jam or syrup.

- 2 eggs
- 1½ cups milk
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- ¾ cup all-purpose flour
- ¾ cup roasted blue (or yellow) cornmeal
- 1½ teaspoons baking soda
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt

Directions

1. Mix all ingredients in a blender. Let stand for 5 minutes. Do not re-mix or stir. Pour serving sized amounts from blender to lightly oiled grill or pan.
2. Wait until bubbles form on top of flapjack, then flip.
3. Remove from grill when second side is cooked.
4. Top with applesauce, butter, marmalade or syrup.



Southwest Reservation Aid (SWRA), a program of Partnership With Native Americans (PWNA), supports vulnerable Native American Elders, families and children in tribes on remote, isolated and impoverished reservations throughout the Southwest. SWRA provides food and drinking water distribution, healthy living resources including community health representatives, winter fuel support, social and community engagement opportunities for Elders and emergency response preparedness for natural disasters.

SWRA recognizes that lasting solutions for healthy living and food self-sufficiency are particularly important to strengthening tribal communities today. Community garden projects bring youth and Elders together for gardening and training. Our Train-the-Trainer program (T3) connects Native American chefs with those who cook on reservations, training them and, in turn, having them teach others in their tribal communities. Mobile nutrition units visiting these remote communities teach healthy cooking and canning methods. Each of these programs focuses on fostering independence, a key element of Native American heritage.



Partnership With Native Americans (PWNA) is a nonprofit organization focused on providing immediate relief and supporting long-term solutions for Native Americans living on reservations today. Through collaboration with hundreds of reservation partners and a robust distribution network, PWNA connects remote, geographically-isolated reservations with the services, goods and solutions they need to build strong, self-sufficient Native American communities.