

Native American cuisine

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Native American cuisine includes all food practices of the indigenous peoples of the Americas. Modern-day native peoples retain a rich culture of traditional foods, some of which have become iconic of present-day Native American social gatherings (for example, frybread). Foods like cornbread, turkey, cranberry, blueberry, hominy and mush are known to have been adopted into the cuisine of the United States from Native American groups. In other cases, documents from the early periods of contact with European, African, and Asian peoples allow the recovery of food practices which passed out of popularity.

Modern-day Native American cuisine is varied.^{[2][3]} The use of indigenous domesticated and wild food ingredients can represent Native American food and cuisine.^[4] North American native cuisine can differ somewhat from Southwestern and Mexican cuisine in its simplicity and directness of flavor. The use of ramps, wild ginger, miners' lettuce, and juniper berry can impart subtle flavours to various dishes. Different ingredients can change the whole meaning of Native American cuisine. A chef preparing a Native American dish can adopt, create, and alter as their imagination dictates.^[5]



Frybread is a staple food of Native American cuisine.^[1]

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Native American cuisine of North America

Eastern Native American cuisine

The essential staple foods of the Eastern Woodlands Aboriginal Americans were maize (also called "corn"), beans, and squash. These were called the "Three Sisters" because they were planted interdependently: the beans grew up the tall stalks of the maize, while the squash spread out at the base of the three plants and provided protection and support for the root systems. A number of other domesticated crops were also popular during some time periods in the Eastern Woodlands, including a local version of quinoa, a variety of amaranth, sumpweed/marsh elder, little barley, maygrass, and sunflower.

Southeastern Native American cuisine

Southeastern Native American culture has formed the cornerstone of Southern cuisine from its origins till the present day. From Southeastern Native American culture came one of the main staples of the Southern diet: corn (maize), either ground into meal or limed with an alkaline salt to make hominy, using a Native American technology known as nixtamalization.^[6] Corn was used to make all kinds of dishes from the familiar cornbread and grits to liquors such as whiskey, which were important trade items. Though a lesser staple, potatoes were also adopted from Native American cuisine and were used in many ways similar to corn. Native Americans introduced the first non-Native American Southerners to many other vegetables still familiar on southern tables. Squash, pumpkin, many types of beans, tomatoes (though Europeans initially considered them poisonous), many types of peppers, and sassafras all came to the settlers via the native tribes.

Many fruits are available in this region. Muscadines, blackberries, raspberries, and many other wild berries were part of Southern Native Americans' diet.

“ To a far greater degree than anyone realizes, several of the most important food dishes of the Southeastern Indians live on today in the "soul food" eaten by both black and white Southerners. Hominy, for example, is still eaten ... Sofkee live on as grits ... cornbread [is] used by Southern cooks ... Indian fritters ... variously known as "hoe cake", ... or "Johnny cake." ... Indians boiled cornbread is present in Southern cuisine as "corn meal dumplings", ... and as "hush puppies", ... Southerns cook their beans and field peas by boiling them, as did the Indians ... like the Indians they cure their meat and smoke it over hickory coals. ”

— - Charles Hudson, *The Southeastern Indians*^[7]

Southeastern Native Americans also supplemented their diets with meats derived from the hunting of native game. Venison was an important meat staple, due to the abundance of white-tailed deer in the area. They also hunted rabbits, squirrels, opossums, and raccoons. Livestock, adopted from Europeans, in the form of hogs and cattle, were kept. Aside from the meat, it was not uncommon for them to eat organ meats such as liver, brains, and intestines. This tradition remains today in hallmark dishes like chitterlings, commonly called chitlins, which are the fried large intestines of hogs; livermush, a common dish in the Carolinas made from hog liver; and pork brains and eggs. The fat of the animals, particularly of hogs, was rendered and used for cooking and



A 19th-century illustration, "Sugar-Making Among the Indians in the North". Aboriginal peoples living in the northeastern part of North America were the first people known to have produced maple syrup and maple sugar

frying. Many of the early settlers were taught Southeastern Native American cooking methods.

Northwestern Native American cuisine

In the Northwest of what is now the United States, Native Americans used salmon and other fish, seafood, mushrooms, berries, and meats such as deer, duck, and rabbit. Rum was popular, having first been introduced to the Western Hemisphere by Europeans.^[8] In contrast to the Easterners, the Northwestern aboriginal peoples were principally hunter-gatherers. The generally mild climate meant they did not need to develop an economy based upon agriculture but instead could rely year-round on the abundant food supplies of their region. In what is now California, acorns were ground into a flour that was the principal foodstuff for about seventy-five percent of the population,^[9] and dried meats were prepared during the season when drying was possible.^[10]

Dishes

- Acorn bread
- Acorn mush, from the Miwok people^[11]
- Akutaq, also called "Eskimo ice cream", made from caribou or moose tallow and meat, berries, seal oil, and sometimes fish, whipped together with snow or water
- Bean bread, made with corn meal and beans, popular among the Cherokee
- Bird brain stew, from the Cree nation^[12]
- Black drink or *asi*, a Southeastern ceremonial drink made from the yaupon holly
- Buffalo stew, from the Lakota and Cherokee people, also called *tanka-me-a-lo*^{[13][14]}
- Chinook olives, a type of cured acorn eaten by the aboriginal people of the Columbia River Valley
- Cornbread and corn pone—the word *pone* derives from the word for 'bread' in some Eastern Algonquian languages, such as Powhatan *apon*^[15] and Lenape *ahpòn*^[16]
- Dried meats like jerky and smoked salmon strips
- Filé powder, made from sassafras leaves, used by the Choctaw for flavoring and thickening soups and stews as well as for herbal medicine
- Frybread, a dish made from ingredients distributed to Native Americans living on reservations and also from ell
- Green chili stew
- Hopi tea, an herbal tea made from *Thelesperma megapotamicum*
- Indian ice cream (Alaska) from the Alaskan Athabaskans and Indian ice cream (Canada) from the First Nations in British Columbia
- Mutton stew, from the Navajo people
- Nokake, Algonquian hoecakes, made of cornmeal
- Pemmican, a concentrated food consisting of dried pulverized meat, dried berries, and rendered fat
- Piki bread, from the Hopi people
- Psindamoakan, a Lenape hunter's food made of parched cornmeal mixed with maple sugar
- Pueblo bread
- Salted salmon, an Inuit dish of brined salmon in a heavy concentration of salt water, left for months to



Cornbread



Succotash

soak up salts

- Sapan (pronounced [ˈsaːpːʌn]),^[17] cornmeal mush, a staple of Lenape cuisine
- Stink fish, an Inuit dish of dried fish, kept underground until ripe, for later consumption; also done with fish heads
- Succotash, a dish of beans and corn
- Tiswin, a term used for several fermented beverages in the Southwest, including a corn or fruit beer of the Apache and a saguaro fruit beer of the Tohono O'odham
- Walrus flipper soup, an Inuit dish made from walrus flippers
- Wojape, a Plains Indian pudding of mashed, cooked berries.

Native American cuisine of the Circum-Caribbean

This region comprises the cultures of the Arawaks, the Caribs, and the Ciboney. The Taíno of the Greater Antilles were the first New World people to encounter Columbus. Prior to European contact, these groups foraged, hunted, and fished. The Taíno cultivated cassava, sweet potato, maize, beans, squash, pineapple, peanut, and peppers. Today these groups have mostly vanished, but their culinary legacy lives on.

- Ajiaco, same as pepperpot, a soup believed to have originated in Cuba before Columbia's arrival. The soup mixes a variety of meats, tubers, and peppers.
- Barbacoa, the origin of the English word barbecue, a method of slow-grilling meat over a fire pit;
- Jerk, a style of cooking meat that originated with the Taíno of Jamaica. Meat was applied with a dry rub of allspice, Scotch bonnet pepper, and perhaps additional spices, before being smoked over fire or wood charcoal.
- Casabe, a crispy, thin flatbread made from cassava root widespread in the Pre-Columbian Caribbean and Amazonia;
- Bammy, a Jamaican bread made from cassava and water; Today this bread is fried and made with coconut milk.
- Guanime, a Puerto Rican food similar to the tamale; made with cornmeal or cornmeal and mashed cassave together.
- Pasteles, this dish may have also been called *guanime* and originated from Puerto Rico. Pasteles were once made with cassava and taro mashed into a *masa* onto a taro leaf. They are then stuffed with meat and wrapped.
- Funche or fungi, a cornmeal mush;
- Cassareep, a sauce, condiment, or thickening agent made by boiling down the extracted juices of bitter cassava root;
- Mama Juana, a tea made in Hispaniola (Dominican Republic and Haiti).
- Pepperpot, a spicy stew of Taíno origin based on meat, vegetables, chili peppers, and boiled-down cassava juice, with a legacy stretching from Cuba, Colombia coast and to Guyana;
- Bush teas, popular as herbal remedies in the Virgin Islands and other parts of the Caribbean, often derived from indigenous sources, such as ginger thomas, soursop, inflammation bush, kenip, wormgrass, worry wine, and many other leaves, barks, and herbs;
- Ouicou, a fermented, cassava-based beer brewed by the Caribs of the Lesser Antilles;
- Taumali or taumalin, a Carib sauce made from the green liver meat of lobsters, chile pepper, and lime



Jerk chicken with plantains, rice and honey biscuit

juice.

Native American cuisine of Mesoamerica

The pre-conquest cuisine of the Native Americans of Mesoamerica made a major contribution to shaping modern-day Mexican cuisine, Salvadoran cuisine, Honduran cuisine, Guatemalan cuisine. The cultures involved included the Aztec, Maya, Olmec, and many more (see the List of pre-Columbian civilizations).

Some known dishes

- Alegría, a candy made from puffed amaranth and boiled-down honey or maguey sap, in ancient times formed into the shapes of Aztec gods
- Balché, Mayan fermented honey drink
- Champurrado, a chocolate drink [18]
- Chili
- Corn tortillas
- Guacamole
- Huarache
- Mezcal
- Mole
- Pejelagarto, a fish with an alligator-like head seasoned with amashito chile and lime [19]
- Pozole
- Pulque or octli, an alcoholic beverage of fermented maguey juice
- Pupusas, thick cornmeal flatbread from the Maya/Pipil culture of El Salvador
- Salsa
- Tacos
- Tamales
- Tepache, pineapple beer
- Tlacoyos (gordita)
- Xocolātl



Tamales



Pupusas

Native American cuisine of South America

Andean cultures

This currently includes recipes known from the Quechua, Aymara and Nazca of the Andes.

- Grilled guinea pig, a native to most of the Andes region, this small rodent has been cultivated for at least 4000 years.
- Fried green tomatoes, a nightshade relative native to Peru;
- Saraiaka, a corn liquor;
- Chicha, a generic name for any number of indigenous beers found in South America. Though chichas made from various types of corn are the most common in the Andes, chicha in the Amazon Basin frequently use manioc. Variations found throughout the continent can be based on amaranth, quinoa, peanut, potato, coca, and many other ingredients.
- Chicha morada, a Peruvian, sweet, unfermented drink made from purple corn, fruits, and spices.
- Colada morada, a thickened, spiced fruit drink based on the Andean blackberry, traditional to the Day of



Roast guinea pig (cuy)

the Dead ceremonies held in Ecuador, it is typically served with *guagua de pan*, a bread shaped like a swaddled infant (formerly made from cornmeal in Pre-Columbian times), though other shapes can be found in various regions.

- Quinoa porridge;
- Ch'arki, a type of dried meat.
- Humitas, similar to modern-day Tamales, a thick mixture of corn, herbs and onion, cooked in a corn-leaf wrapping. The name is modern, meaning bow-tie, because of the shape in which it's wrapped.
- Locro (from the Quechua ruqru) is a hearty thick stew popular along the Andes mountain range. It one of the national dishes of Argentina and Bolivia.
- Masamora morada, a thick, sweet pudding made from ground purple corn and fruit. Sold in mix form in Peru.
- Mate de coca, a Peruvian tea made from steeped coca leaves. It is commonly sipped by indigenous people living at high altitudes in the Andes to prevent elevation illnesses.
- Pachamanca, stew cooked in a *hautía* oven;
- Papas a la Huancaína, Peruvian potatoes covered in a spicy, peanut-based sauce called Huancaína (Wan-ka-EE-na) sauce.
- Pataska, spicy stew made from boiled maize, potatoes, and dried meat.
- Ceviche, raw fish marinated in lime juice. One of Peru's national dishes.
- Cancha or tostada, fried golden hominy.
- Llajwa, salsa of Bolivia;
- Llapingachos, mashed-potato cakes from Ecuador;
- Tocosh (Togosh), a traditional Quechua food prepared from fermented potato pulp.



Ceviche



Cheese-filled arepa



Chipa, cheese bread

Other South American cultures

- Angu, an indigenous Brazilian type of corn mush
- Arepa, a maize-based bread originating from the indigenous peoples of Colombia and Venezuela
- Bori-bori, a Paraguayan soup with cornmeal dumplings.
- Cauim, a fermented beverage based on maize or manioc broken down by the enzymes of human saliva, traditional to the Tupinambá and other indigenous peoples of Brazil
- Chipa, a wide variety of corn flour or manioc-based breads traditional to Paraguay.
- Curanto, a Chilean stew cooked in an earthen oven originally from the Chono people of Chiloé Island
- Kaguyjy, a Guarani-derived locro corn mush that become part of the national Paraguayan cuisine.
- Kiveve, a sweet or savory dish from Paraguay consisting of pureed pumpkin and other ingredients cooked over a fire.
- Lampreado or payaguá mascada, a starchy, manioc-based fried cake from Paraguay and the northeast of Argentina.
- Lapacho or taheebo, a medicinal tree bark infusion
- Maniçoba, dish of boiled manioc leaves and smoked meat indigenous to the Brazilian Amazon

- Mate (beverage)
- Mbeju, a pan-cooked cake utilizing manioc starch.
- Merken, a ají powder from the Mapuche of Patagonia
- Mocotó, a Brazilian stew with cow's feet, beans, and vegetables.
- Moqueca, a Brazilian seafood stew
- Paçoca, from the Tupi "to crumble," describes two different dishes of pulverized ingredients: one with peanuts and sugar, and the other with dried meat, ground manioc, and onion.
- Pamonha, a Brazilian tamale
- Pira caldo, Paraguayan fish soup
- Sopa paraguaya, a corn flour casserole esteemed as the national dish of Paraguay, related to chipa guasu.
- Soyo, shortened from the Guaraní name "so' o josopy," a Paraguayan soup based on meat crushed in a mortar.
- Tacacá, a Brazilian stew of tucupi, jambu leaves, and shrimp, typically served in a dried gourd.
- Tereré or ka'ay, a cold-brewed version of yerba mate
- Tucupi, manioc-based broth used in Brazilian dishes such as pato no tucupi and tacacá
- Yerba mate, a tea made from the holly of the same name, derived from Guaraní

Cooking utensils

The earliest utensils, including knives, spoons, grinders, and griddles, were made from all kinds of organic materials, such as rock and animal bone. Gourds were also initially cultivated, hollowed, and dried to be used as bowls, spoons, ladles, and storage containers. Many Native American cultures also developed elaborate weaving and pottery traditions for making bowls, cooking pots, and containers. Nobility in the Andean and Mesoamerican civilizations were even known to have utensils and vessels smelted from gold, silver, copper, or other minerals.

- Batan, an Andean grinding slab used in conjunction with a small stone *uña*
- Burén, a clay griddle used by the Taíno
- Comal, a griddle used since Pre-Columbian times in Mexico and Central America for a variety of purposes, especially to cook tortillas
- Cuia, a gourd used for drinking mate in South America
- Metate, a stone grinding slab used with a stone *mano* or *metlapil* to process meal in Mesoamerica and one of the most notable Pre-Columbian artifacts in Costa Rica
- Molinillo, a device used by Mesoamerican royalty for frothing cacao drinks
- Molcajete, a basalt stone bowl, used with a *tejolote* to grind ingredients as a Mesoamerican form of mortar and pestle
- Paila, an Andean earthenware bowl
- Cooking baskets were woven from a variety of local fibers and sometimes coated with clay to improved durability. The notable thing about basket cooking and some native clay pot cooking is that the heat source, i.e. hot stones or charcoal, is used inside the utensil rather than outside. (also see Cookware and bakeware)



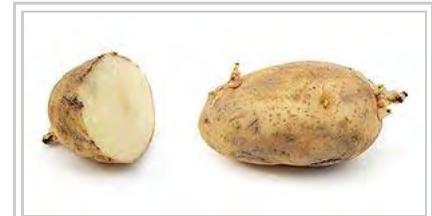
Metate and mano

Crops and ingredients

Maize, beans and squash were known as the three sisters for their symbiotic relationship when grown together by the North American and Meso-American natives. If the South Americans had similar methods of what is known as companion planting it is lost to us today.

Non-animal foodstuffs

- Acorn - Used to make flour and fertilizers for the plants.
- Achiote or annatto seed, seasoning
- Acuyo, seasoning
- Agarita - berries
- Agave nectar
- Allspice or pimento, seasoning
- Amaranth
- American chestnut
- Amole - stalks
- Aspen - inner bark and sap (both used as sweetener)
- Avocado
- Barbados cherry or acerola
- Beans - Throughout the Americas
- Bear grass - stalks
- Birch bark
- Birch syrup
- Blackberries
- Blueberries
- Box elder - inner bark (used as sweetener)
- Cacao
- Cactus (various species) - fruits and young pads (see Nopales)
- Canella winterana, or white cinnamon (used as a seasoning before cinnamon)
- Cashew
- Cassava - Primarily South America
- Cattails - rootstocks
- Century plant (a.k.a. mescal or agave) - crowns (tuberous base portion) and shoots
- Chicle, gum
- Chile peppers (including bell peppers)
- Cherimoya
- Chokecherries
- Cholla - fruits
- Coca - South and Central America
- Coconut
- Cranberries
- Culantro, used as a seasoning before cilantro
- Currants
- Custard-apple
- Datil - fruit and flowers
- Devil's claw
- Dropseed grasses (various varieties) - seeds
- Elderberries
- Emory oak - acorns
- Epazote, seasoning
- Goldenberry
- Gooseberries
- Guarana
- Guava
- Hackberries
- Hawthorne - fruit
- Herba luisa
- Hueinacatzli or "ear-flower"
- Hickory - nuts
- Hops
- Horsemint
- Huazontle
- Huckleberries
- Jambú
- Jicama
- Juniper berries
- Kaniwa
- Kiwacha
- Lamb's-quarters - leaves and seeds
- Lepacho
- Locust - blossoms and pods
- Lúcumá
- Maca



A Russet potato with sprouts



The bean pods of the mesquite (above) can be dried and ground into flour, adding a sweet, nutty taste to breads



A maple syrup tap



Several large pumpkins

- Maize - Throughout the Americas, probably domesticated in or near Mexico, including the blue corn variety
- Mamey
- Maple syrup and sugar, used as the primary sweetener and seasoning in Northern America
- Mesquite - bean pods, flour/meal
- Mexican anise
- Mexican oregano
- Mulberries
- Nopales
- Onions
- Palmetto
- Papaya
- Passionfruit
- Pawpaw
- Peanuts
- Pecan - nuts
- Pennyroyal - American False variety
- Persimmon
- Pigweed - seeds
- Pine (including western white pine and *Pinus ponderosa*) - inner bark (used as sweetener) and nuts
- Pineapples - South America
- Pinyon - nuts
- Popcorn flower, herb
- Potatoes - North and South America
- Prickly pears
- Prairie turnips
- Pumpkins
- Purslane - leaves
- Quinoa - South America, Central America, and Eastern North America
- Ramps - Wild onion
- Raspberries
- Rice - imported by Spanish
- Sage
- Saguaro - fruits and seeds
- Salt
- Sangre de drago
- Sapote
- Sassafras
- Screwbean - fruit
- Sedge - tubers
- Sea grape or uva de playa
- Shepherd's purse - leaves
- Sotol - crowns
- Soursop or guanábana
- Spanish bayonet - fruit
- Spanish lime or mamoncillo
- Spicebush - Used as a seasoning
- Squash - Throughout the Americas
- Stevia
- Strawberries
- Sumac - berries
- Sunflower seeds
- Sweet potato - South America
- Sweetsop or sugar-apple
- Tamarillo
- Teaberry or wintergreen
- Tobacco
- Tomatillo
- Tomato
- Texas Persimmons
- Tulip poplar - syrup made from bark
- Tule - rhizomes
- Tumbleweed - seeds
- Tumbo or taxo
- Vanilla
- Vetch - pods
- White evening primrose - fruit
- White walnuts
- Wild celery
- Wild cherries
- Wild grapes - fruit
- Wild honey
- Wild onion
- Wild pea - pods
- Wild roses
- Wood sorrel leaves
- Yacon nectar
- Yaupon holly leaves
- Yerba buena
- Yerba mate
- Yucca - blossoms, fruit, and stalks



Acorns of Sessile Oak. The acorn, or oak nut, is the nut of the oaks and their close relatives (genera *Quercus* and *Lithocarpus*, in the family *Fagaceae*).

Hunted or livestock

- Antelope
- Armadillo
- Badger
- Bear
- Beaver
- Bighorn sheep
- Bison - Originally found throughout most of the North American plains
- Burro - from Europe
- Camel - Alive
- Cattle - important European import
- Chipmunk
- Deer
- Dove
- Duck
- Elk
- Geese
- Ground hog
- Grouse
- Guanaco - Hunted in South America by hunter-gatherer societies, for ex. in Patagonia until the 19th century.
- Guinea pig - Domesticated in the Andes
- Hog - important European import
- Honey wasp - *Brachygastra mellifica*, *Brachygastra lecheguana*, and *Polybia occidentalis*, a source of honey found from the Southwestern United States to Argentina
- Horse - Although imported by Europeans, the horse was still very important to Native American cultures throughout the Americas (although famously on the North American Plains) in the historic era
- Hutia
- Iguana
- Livestock
- Llama - Domesticated in the Andes
- Locust (cicada)
- Manatee
- Mastodon - extinct
- Moose
- Mourning dove
- Mule
- Muscovy duck - Domesticated in Mesoamerica
- Opossum
- Otter
- Passenger Pigeon - extinct
- Peccaries
- Pheasant
- Porcupine
- Prairie dog
- Pronghorns (antelope)
- Quail
- Rabbit
- Sheep - important European import
- Skunk
- Sloth
- Stingless bee - *Melipona beecheii* and *M. yucatanica*, Mayan source of honey
- Squirrel
- Turkey
- Turtle
- Wood rat
- Woolly mammoth - extinct



Bison cow and calf



Moose

See also

- Tlingit cuisine
- Locavores
- Hunter gatherer
- Wild onion festival

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External links

- Traditional Chiricahua recipes (<http://fortsillapachenation.com/recipes.html>)
- Canadian Wild Foods (<http://www.wildfoods.ca/>)
- American Indian Health and Diet Project (<http://www.aihd.ku.edu/>)

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