FOODS OF THE SHUSWAP PEOPLE

SHUSWAP CULTURAL SERIES - Book Two

SECWEPEMC CULTURAL EDUCATION SOCIETY

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Introduction

The Shuswap people of the interior relied on a wide variety of plants, animals and fish to provide them with food. Although the people of the Fraser River division relied more heavily on salmon as the main source of food, the Shuswap people generally made meat the biggest part of their diet.

The continual search for food led to a nomadic lifestyle for most of the Shuswap people. They travelled, throughout the spring, summer and fall, to areas where they knew certain plant, animal or fish foods were available. Because this search was more difficult during the long, interior winter, many items of food were preserved and stored, to ensure a winter food supply. From the time of the first snow to the earliest thaw, the Shuswap people lived together at the winter villages. Even in the winter, however, food was secured. Fish were caught from the nearby river, many animals were hunted, trapped and snared within a short distance of the winter village, and the men made longer hunting trips for larger game.

The women prepared most of the foods although the men cooked when they were away hunting. Usually, the women and children also took part in the trapping and snaring of small animals. At the fishing grounds, everyone took part. The men and boys worked to catch the fish while the women and girls prepared the fish for eating or storage.

For the children, learning to secure food began early, in the form of games. Little girls were given birch bark baskets to tie at their waists on berry picking trips, even though the youngest collected only leaves. Small boys were given small bows and harmless arrows to practise with, shooting at any targets they could find. As they grew older they were encouraged to hunt small game. All of the children watched their elders collect plant foods, set snares, and fish, from the time they were toddlers.

The plant foods were always prepared by the women, and they usually prepared the meals for the family, as part of the household tasks. It was not unusual, however, for a man to prepare all fresh meat. Fish was usually prepared by the women, and the children took part in chores related to food as they became old enough. As with other areas of Shuswap life, the securing, preparing and storing of food was an activity all members had a great deal of knowledge about.

Plant Foods of the Shuswap People

Although the plant foods were not of the greatest importance to the Shuswap people, these foods provided critical elements of their diet. From the many roots, seeds and nuts used, the people acquired much needed carbohydrates. The berries they used gave them the sugars needed in their diet. A good supply of vitamins and minerals came to them through their use of sprouts from a variety of plants and from their use of the cambium layer of various tree stems.

The securing of plant foods was a major spring, summer and fall activity. Certain Shuswap moons were named for the plant gathering activities. The fifth moon is described as the time when "Snow disappears completely from the lower grounds. A few spring roots are dug". The sixth moon is root digging month and the eighth moon is when "Saskatoon berries ripen". In the earliest spring, roots were dug and the sap and inner bark collected from trees. As summer arrived,

a wide variety of berries began to ripen. The Shuswap followed the ripening berry patches, into their higher elevations and other places of abundance that they had learned of over the years. Throughout the summer, many plant parts were gathered and used or preserved for winter. By fall, the last of the berries were ripening and the gathering was completed for the season.

The tools of gathering were simple, but very effective for the jobs they had to do. One of the most important was the root digging tool. The women and girls dug into the soil to exposed the root, then dug it out, and stripped off its outer bark. The root was placed in a carrying basket to be taken home and cooked, dried or preserved.

Bark peelers were used to obtain the healthy cambium layer of certain trees. Sap was collected with the use of the sharply pointed sap scraper. Berries were collected and boiled in baskets of birch or woven cedar or spruce root. They were dried in the sun and wind on woven mats and stored in containers of rawhide or wrapped in bark. They were sometimes stripped from the branches on wooden combs or shaken onto mats of woven bark or grasses.

The Shuswap people ate 16 varieties of roots, 22 kinds of berries, six shoots or stems and two kinds of cambium layer. They also made an "Indian bread' from tree lichen, gathered mushrooms, ate the spring buds of cottonwood and used plants for confections.

Roots, Bulbs and Corms as Food for the Shuswap People

The most plentiful plant foods of the Shuswap people were the roots, corms and bulbs taken from under the ground. Of these, they relied most on great quantities of the wild onion, the yellow avalanche lily, and the Indian potato, or spring beauty, to fulfill their winter supply needs. It took about 90 kilograms (200 pounds) of yellow avalanche lily to feed a family over the winter.



The Root Gathering Season

The gathering of roots began early each spring, before the leaves were in bud. In early April, as the grasses began to appear, the bulbs of chocolate lily and lavender lily were collected. Yellowbell bulbs were also gathered at this time. By May it was time to collect the balsamroot, bitter-root, biscuit root and the root of water leaf.

As early summer approached the Shuswap people collected wild onion and water parsnip bulbs, Indian potato corms and wild carrot roots. The corms of the yellow avalanche lily and the blue camass bulbs were collected from summer to early fall. In late summer the juicy roots of cinquefoil or silverweed were collected. Indian potato continued to be gathered until the fall, when it tasted the sweetest. Thistle roots and tiger lily bulbs were also collected late in the year.

The Preparation of Roots

After the roots had been gathered they were either eaten raw or prepared in a variety of ways for immediate eating or for storage. Among those eaten raw were the wild onion, wild carrot, biscuit root, lavender lily, yellowbell, water parsnip, and balsamroot. Some of them, including lavender lily, yellow avalanche lily and balsamroot were strung to dry on strings of Indian hemp bark before being used. Others, like Indian potato, biscuit root, lavender lily, and blue camass were set out on woven mats to dry. Bitter-root was strung on Indian hemp or set on mats and took several days to dry. The drying process was often completed before the roots were roasted, boiled or steamed.

The roots or corms of water parsnip, yellow avalanche lily, thistle, and cinquefoil were roasted in hot ashes and eaten fresh. Wild carrot was sprinkled on dry salmon and roasted over the fire. Biscuit root, chocolate lily, yellowbell, yellow avalanche lily and wild carrot were boiled by being set in a basket of boiling water which had been heated with hot rocks. Bitter-root and waterleaf were cooked with yellow avalanche lily. Indian potato was cooked at times with yellowbell and was sometimes hung by strings and smoked over the fire before eating.

The roots were also steamed in a flared shaped birch basket. For this method of cooking, the basket would be half full of boiling water and a network of sticks in a "spoke" design were set in the basket, sitting above a water level. A layer of grass was placed on the platform of sticks and the roots set on this. A lid of bark covered the basket and the vegetable was steamed above the water. Indian potato, biscuit root or chocolate tips, yellow avalanche lily, lavender lily, chocolate lily, yellowbells, water parsnip, waterleaf and cinquefoil were sometimes prepared in this way.

Many roots, bulbs and corms were prepared by baking or steaming in an earth oven. Large numbers of yellow avalanche lily, wild onion, balsamroot, bitter-root and tiger lily were prepared by this method.

The earth oven was an underground pit 80 centimetres to one metre in depth and 75 centimetres across. A flat rock covered the bottom of the pit and four flat rocks, placed upright, lined the sides. Dry wood was placed into the pit with several small stones. The fire was lit and allowed to burn out. The burnt debris was removed and the rocks left. Damp earth was placed



over the stones. A fifteen centimetre layer of leafy branches was placed above the stones.

Next came a layer of fir branches, a layer of yellow pine needles, another layer of fir branches, and the roots to be cooked. They were covered with a layer each of fir branches, dry pine needles, fir branches, then earth, to cover the pit. A large fire was built over the pit and it was left burning twelve to twenty-four hours. Tiger lily took less time, where yellow avalanche lily and balsamroot would take a full twenty-four hours.

Sometimes the roots would be steamed in the oven as well. To accomplish this, a stick was placed, standing upright in the bottom of the pit before anything else was added. It was removed after the pit had been filled in, thus leaving a hole. Water was poured into the hole, creating steam from the heat of the stones in the bottom.

Much larger pits were sometimes used to bake great quantities of tiger lily bulbs. These pits were located at the gathering sites, often in the mountains. A great deal of wood was needed to heat the soil and stones in this type of pit.

The steamed or baked roots were often cooked in combination, to improve the taste. Wild onion was flavoured by being placed next to humming bird plant in the cooking pit. Balsamroot was placed next to penstemon. The pit sometimes contained stems and flowers of wild strawberry to give the roots a better flavour.

The cooked roots of tiger lily and Indian potato were mashed and dried in the form of cakes, ready to be eaten or stored. Often the foods were made into dishes with other kinds of foods. Yellow avalanche lily was prepared with waterleaf and bitter-root and Indian potato with yellowbell bulbs.

Wild onion was used as a flavouring for meats. Wild carrot, with its peppery flavour, was used to add to the taste of dried salmon and meat dishes. Blue camass was eaten with black tree lichen, bitter-root or wild onion. Tiger lily was used to flavour dishes of deer, fish, salmon roe or saskatoon berries in a stew. A thick soup was made by combining bitter-root with saskatoon berries, hot deer grease and black tree lichen. Soups and stews were eaten in birch containers with the use of a spoon-shaped implement. Dried dishes were spread on woven fibre mats and eaten by hand or picked up with a pointed stick.

Storage of Roots, Corms and Bulbs

When the root foods were to be used within a short time, they were placed in baskets or left on their drying strings in the above caches, or storage platforms. They were prepared for eating by steaming or boiling.

A large number of them were stored for several months, in rawhide storage bags or wrapped in bark. The root foods were a critical part of the Shuswap people's winter food supply because of the important nutrients they contained. After preparation by drying or cooking, it was necessary that they be stored carefully, so that they could last for many months.

An underground pit, at least one metre deep, was dug for food storage. It was lined with pine needles, covered over with earth, and was further covered with cottonwood bark to keep out squirrels and other rodents. Indian potato was sometimes stored fresh in such a cache and would keep there, safe from frost, for several months. Most stored roots were dried or pre-cooked. A family's winter storage pit might include quantities of: yellow avalanche lily, Indian potato and lavender lily corms; wild onion, yellowbell, blue camass, tiger lily bulbs; and the roots of wild carrot balsamroot and bitter-root. These foods would be removed as needed and prepared as described above.

The Berries Used by the Shuswap People

Twenty-two different kinds of berries were collected and eaten by the Shuswap people. Although they did not make up as great a portion of the winter food supply as the roots did, the berries were highly valued. About 45 kilograms of dried saskatoon berries, soapberries, blueberries and others would feed a Shuswap family over a winter.

Berries were collected in birch baskets attached to the waist by a deer thong. These baskets were emptied into larger baskets of birch or woven fibre. Birch trays were used to collect cranberries and soapberries at their ripest. The berries were dried on trays of woven tule, bulrush, willow twigs or coarse grasses.



The Seasons of Berry Picking

The Shuswap people looked forward to the first sweet berries of the year with anticipation. Their appreciation for the berry crop was shown each year in the First Fruits ceremony of the Shuswap people.

The Chief was in charge of the opening of the saskatoon berry season and would announce the beginning of picking. All the people gathered at the picking grounds. The first day, the women gathered enough to eat fresh. The next day, the picking began in earnest, with all of the available berries being collected and eaten or preserved. The Chief then directed the women from patch to patch as the berries ripened through the summer.

After the first saskatoons ripened, in June, other berries also came into season. These included the wild strawberries, blackcaps, gooseberries, squaw currant, soapberries and thimbleberries. By mid-summer the people were enjoying newly ripened raspberries, pin chemies and the low lying huckleberries, red-oiser dogwood, chokecherries and blueberries. The low-growing blueberries were picked with a wooden comb which was run through the branches, loosening the berries into a basket placed under the bush. The blue elderberry and the Oregon grape were also collected as summer drew to a close.

In September, the mountains continued to yield blueberries, kinnikinnick, and huckleberries while the lower levels saw the ripening of the fairy bell and false Solomon's seal. In the late fall, the high bush cranberries were gathered on bark trays by shaking the branches over the trays. Ripe soapberries were also collected in this way. The rose hips could be picked right through the winter but were only used when food was scarce because of their bitter taste.



The Preparation of Berries

All of the berries collected were eaten fresh or preserved for winter use. However, hawthorn, pin cherry, gooseberry, thimbleberry, squaw currant, fairy bell, false Solomon's seal, rose hips and Oregon grape were not available in quantity, and were only eaten fresh. The elderberries and huckleberries, if plentiful enough, were mashed with a birch berry masher and dried in cakes on mats of grass, pine needles or woven fibre.

Strawberries, raspberries, red-osier dogwood, and cranberries were sometimes combined, mashed together and soaked overnight, then slowly steamed over boiling water in a birch basket to make a berry pudding. Raspberries, blackcaps, blueberries and soapberries were sometimes cooked before being mashed. After cooking they were set on mats of grasses or fibre to dry and their juices were poured over them during the drying process, giving them jellied consistency. These berry cakes were eaten hard or placed in water overnight to be softened and eaten with a spoon-shaped implement.

The saskatoon was the most important berry of the Shuswap people, and was prepared in all of the above ways. Along with the chokechery, it was also laid on mats fresh and dried like raisins, in a process which took several days. Saskatoon was used as a sweetener when mixed with cranberries, red-osier dogwood, and soapberries, when they were made into Indian ice cream. It was also added to soups and stew. Dried saskatoon berries were eaten in chunks as treats for children or re-soften in water for a winter dessert. They were combined with tiger lily bulbs, deer meat or bear grease and cooked. A thick soup was made from soaked saskatoon cakes and bitter-root or salmon eggs. Black tree lichen was sometimes added to this dish. The juice from the dried cakes was sometimes used as a marinade for black tree lichen, bitter-root or dried salmon.

Chokecherry cakes were also important. They were used to mix with salmon eggs, heads, and tails to make a stew. The kinnikinnick berry, though not as plentiful, was also used as a flavouring. It was cooked with salmon oil or bear grease and used in soups. It was boiled with deer, moose or salmon to make a stew.

The soapberry was used to make a festive dish, called Indian ice cream. About one cup of fresh berries was combined with one quarter cup of cold water in a cooking basket. The mixture was beaten by hand. It became a foam, to which strawberry or saskatoon was added for a sweetener. It was beaten until it looked like pink whipped cream. The Shuswap people still enjoy this ice cream.

Berry cakes of different kinds were pounded with deer meat and mixed with hot deer grease. These cakes were eaten by hand when cool or stored. Berries were mixed with deer blood and boiled to make a thick broth. Often, the berry mixture was boiled in large temporary baskets of spruce bark.

The Storage of Berries

After thorough drying, berries or berry cakes were placed in rawhide storage bags or wrapped in bark for storage. The common method of storing berries was to place them in underground pits. About one half of the berries picked were preserved in cakes. The most important berries for storage were saskatoons, soapberries, chokecherries and raspberries. The stored berries were taken out as needed and eaten as they were, softened or put into one of many dishes as described above.

Other Plant Foods

Apart from roots and berries, the Shuswap people gathered other plant foods to supplement their diet. The young shoots of balsamroot were dug as early as March, before they were even above the ground. Chocolate tip shoots were also dug before they surfaced in April. Cow parsnip or Indian rhubarb stems, balsamroot stems and fireweed stems were at their best in the spring months, before flowering. Often the stems of prickly pear cactus were collected in the spring, although they could be gathered throughout the year.

Spring was also the time for Shuswap people to gather sap with their caribou antler sap scrapers. With their antler bark peelers, they exposed the nutritious cambium layer of yellow pine, and later, lodgepole pine. Black cottonwood cambium and buds were also added to their diet. Black tree lichen was collected from the branches of lodgepole pine during the summer or fall months, but could be taken through the winter if needed. Seeds of balsamroot were collected in the late summer.

White bark-pine nuts, hazelnuts, Douglas fir nuts and green cones of western white pine were collected as they became available and the mushrooms were ready in the fall.

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Preparation of Other Plant Foods

As the snow left the valleys, the Shuswap people began to dig the shoots of balsamroot, with their diggers of antler or wood. These were eaten raw as they were found. Soon the chocolate tip shoots were dug and enjoyed raw or used as flavouring in boiled meat dishes. Indian rhubarb stems were picked by hand and eaten raw or roasted. They were also steamed in a basket above water heated with hot stones. This method was used to prepare the stems of balsamroot and fireweed as well. Both were also boiled in a basket. Indian celery was also boiled or eaten raw. This stem had a celery taste and was used as flavouring when boiled with meats or roots to make soups. The leaves and seeds were added to stews for an interesting flavour. The other stem used, in the drier areas of the Shuswap territory, was the prickly pear cactus. This juicy stem was prepared by having the thorns burned off as it was roasted over a fire. After roasting or baking in an earth oven the tasty inner stalk was eaten.

Another valuable food source was the cambium, or inner bark, of the lodgepole pine, yellow pine and black cottonwood, which had to be collected at exactly the right time. The sap had to be running, so that the cambium would be thick and juicy. For the pines this was in May or June, as new buds began to form. Horizontal cuts were made at a height of about 120 centimetres and 240 centimetres wide and 60 centimetres long. A large basket at the base of the tree caught the valuable sap and the cambium material.

The sweet tasting cambium was eaten fresh, roasted or dried for later use. Buds of black cottonwood were eaten fresh and juicy, as they were picked.

Protein and needed fats were added to the Shuswap diet through the collection of seeds from cones. By mid-summer the balsamroot flower seeds were ready to collect. These were eaten raw or pounded, in a buckskin bag, into a meal which was eaten with dried saskatoons. Sometimes this meal was mixed with deer fat and water, boiled, and made into cakes. The seeds could be spread in the sun to dry or roasted, to preserve them.

In late summer, seeds or nuts of white-pine bark, Douglas fir, subalpine fir and green cones of western white pine were gathered. These were gathered by shaking them from the branches. Seeds were removed by drying the cones and pounding them against a hard surface. The tasty "peanuts" were then eaten raw immediately or stored. The best way to collect seeds was to take them from the cache of a squirrel.

This was also a useful way of collecting hazelnuts, since those collected by the squirrel were already husked. When they were collected in husks they were buried in the ground for ten days to allow the coating to rot off. The nuts were eaten fresh and sometimes kept in quantity as winter food or for trade.

It was in the fall, as well, that mushrooms were gathered. These were used immediately in soups or strung on Indian hemp bark lines to dry.

An important item of diet among the Shuswap people was the black tree lichen. This black lichen, collected from Douglas fir, or, more often, lodgepole pine, was usually gathered in late summer. It was removed from the branches with long sticks or torn off by having children climb into the trees. It was bundled into bales and taken home for processing.

Too bitter to be eaten raw, the black lichen had to be cooked before use. It was cleaned of twigs and debris, then soaked overnight in water to remove some of the bitterness. It was then steamed in an earth oven lined with grass or leaves. Sometimes it was layered with wild onion to improve its flavour. After several hours it became very dark in colour, reduced in bulk, and was the consistency of bread dough. At this point it could be eaten. It was also dried and cut into loaves, which gave it the name of "Indian bread". It was treated like bread, being used to dip into soups and eaten like a cracker. It was also combined with berries, meat and fish and boiled in soups and stews.

The Shuswap people used some plants as confections. The gum of balsam fir was chewed for enjoyment. Occasionally, the morning sun caught a glint of silver on the Douglas fir branches from which a delicious sweet "sugar" could be sucked. They used labrador tea leaves and stems to make tea. This plant and numerous others, were also used as medicines.

Storage of Other Plant Foods

When they were collected in quantity, several of these foods were stored. Mushrooms were stored in dry form, in hide storage bags, underground in the winter cache. Whitebark pine nuts were packed into deer bags for storage, as were supplies of hazelnuts. Balsamroot seeds were dried or stored in cakes. The most important winter food, however, was the black tree lichen, which was put away into the winter cache in dried loaves.

In preparation for eating, the stored mushrooms and balsamroot cakes were added to soups or stews. The dried seeds were made into a meal for the uses earlier discussed. The black tree lichen could be eaten as it was, soaked and eaten, or added to soup or stew.

Fish Foods of the Shuswap People Introduction

The Shuswap people depended heavily on supplies of fish from the rivers, lakes and streams for food. The people of the Fraser River and the Canon divisions made the salmon their main source of food. They lived within range of the best interior location available for fishing the salmon that migrated up-river from the sea; the area surrounding the mouth of the Chilcotin River.

Although the other Shuswap people did not rely so heavily on salmon, they still regarded them as an important part of their diet, and moved into fishing areas as the salmon moved up-stream. The Lake division of the Shuswap people used large supplies of land-locked salmon, or kokanee, which they took from the large lakes in their area. Many Shuswap people also fished the rivers, lakes and streams for trout, catfish, sturgeon, and a variety of white fish. But the greatest quantity of fish was taken from the Thompson and Fraser Rivers, and the most important food fish was the sockeye salmon. It was a supply of dry, stored salmon that helped the people through the winters when food was scarce, providing needed protein and vitamins to maintain strength in difficult times.

The Season of Fishing

Some of the Shuswap people fished throughout the year, but the most important season for fishing was in the summer and fall, when the salmon migrated up the rivers and streams of the interior. The Shuswap people show how important fishing was to their way of life by naming their calendar moons after this activity. They called the seventh moon, or mid-summer moon, the moon "when salmon arrive". In the tenth moon they "catch salmon all month" and in the eleventh they "cache the fish and leave the river to hunt".

During the winter months, some fishing was done through the ice on the lakes and rivers, but this was not a primary source of food. In the spring, lake fishing was done as fish began to move in schools along the shoals. They were also netted in streams as they left the lakes to spawn. Through the summer, fishing with hook and line, nets or traps continued at streams, lakes or rivers as the people moved to root digging or berry picking areas.

By late summer, it was time to return to the river for the salmon fishing. For two months, the people lived along the river, catching and preserving their salmon supply. For the Fraser division people, this food source was so plentiful that it allowed them to remain on the river throughout the year, since they did not have to search further for other food. For most Shuswaps, however, this made up only part of the food for the long winter.

In the fall, the Lake division Shuswaps fished the large lakes for kokanee, which they preserved in great numbers. Others also did lake and stream fishing until late in the year. By the time the snow was beginning to fall, the fishing season was almost over, and the people did only occasional ice fishing until the waters opened again in the spring.

Shuswap Fishing Methods

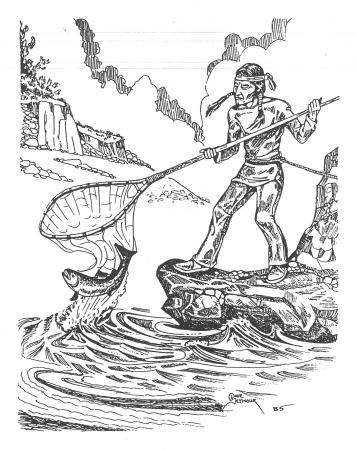
Many methods were used by the Shuswap people to catch a wide variety of fish. They chose from many different methods, and used specially developed materials, to make sure that their fishing efforts would be successful.

A variety of spears, hooks, nets and traps were made for fishing. Nets were constructed with the use of awls and needles made of wood. Holes were drilled in them to draw the thread through.

The netting thread was made of bark of Indian hemp. It was used in weirs, traps and dip or bar nets. The same kind of thread was used to lash together poles, rods or twigs for different types of wood traps and weirs.

Large stone hammers were used to pound the stakes for traps and weirs into place. These were flat stones, driven by holding in both hands.

Salmon fishing was often done with a fish spear. The spear head was made of deer antler, sharpened to points. The prongs were attached to a long fir handle with twine of braided Indian hemp bark.



A shorter three prong spear was used when fishing for trout from a canoe. Single pronged spears were also used, as were hook and line. The small hooks were made of stone and floats were made of dry reeds.

Animal Foods of the Shuswap People Introduction

Animals of the interior supplied the greatest quantity of food for most of the Shuswap people. Although the Fraser and Canon division people relied more on their excellent salmon fishery, all of the others secured large supplies of deer, caribou and elk meat to feed their people. The Shuswap people developed great skill in the hunting of these larger animals, which provided not only larger animals for food. They used a wide variety of mammals and birds to supplement their diet. Those they included, in the order of frequency and quantity of use were: deer; elk; caribou; marmot; mountain sheep; rabbit; beaver; grouse; bear; moose; duck; goose; crane; squirrel; porcupine; and a few turtles.

Seasons of Hunting, Trapping and Snaring

Securing animals for food was an activity that went on all year long. But it, like other areas of food gathering was used in the Shuswap calendar as a way of describing the seasons. They began the year with the first moon being described as the time when "the deer rut". In the eleventh

moon, the people "leave the rivers to hunt" and for the rest of the fall they "hunt and trap in the mountains".

But these were not the only times of hunting. The pursuit of deer, elk and caribou was a major activity for the men of the tribe, and was done throughout the year. Snaring of small game was done by men, women and young people throughout the year, but more often in the winter when they were not busy with root and berry gathering.



Shuswap Hunting Methods

The Shuswap people devised a great many hunting methods for the large animals that made up most of their food supply; the deer, elk and caribou. For successful hunting of these animals, many skills were required of the hunter. He had to know intimately, the habits of his prey. He had to know where they slept, ate, drank and travelled in each season. He had to be skilled at watching them without being discovered by them. He needed the fitness and knowledge to track them, and the ability to get close enough to them to use a weapon. Being within range, he had to have a dependable weapon and needed to use it with skill, before he had secured his food. Usually, the hunter even had to make this for use in hunting. Although spears and clubs were in use, the most important weapon of the hunt was the bow and arrow. Every hunter learned how to manufacture the tools needed for successful hunting.

The arrow, or spear heads, were chipped and flaked from stone, usually basalt, but many other stones as well. A good quantity of arrows were collected from the Bonaparte area. Arrow heads could also be made from beaver teeth or bone. They were carefully shaped with stone hammers, arrow flakers and sharpened with whetstone to a razor edge. The spear and arrow head was hafted to the arrow shaft with a winding or deer sinew, glued into place with pitch. A blunt arrow head was used to hunt birds.

The arrow was made of saskatoon or rosewood, cut about sixty-five centimetres long. It was grooved along its length with a bone grooving tool, to allow blood to escape, which helped when tracking a wounded animal. The arrows were polished smooth with an arrow smoother to ensure swift flight. They were painted with spiral designs, with a mixture of red ochre, to look like lightening, the shooting of a thunder bird, or snakes. Some arrows had detachable foreshafts.

The arrow was assisted in its flight by the even attachment of bird feathers around the end. The feathers were held in place with wrapping of fine sinew smeared with glue or gum from balsam poplar tips. Red paint (micaceous hematite) half way down the feather was the sign of a Shuswap arrow. Details about arrow decoration often told which Shuswap village it came from. Arrows were carried in a quiver made of wolverine or fisher skins, with the tails left on. In the Kamloops area, quivers of buffalo hide were used.

Game calls, made of wood or bone, were carried in the quiver, as was the fire drill. Bull elk and bird calls were made from bone tubes and stems of cow parsnip. The mountain sheep ram was called by striking two hollow sticks together to sound like other rams. Males of different kinds were called by imitating their horns rubbing against a tree, with the use of sticks. Buck deer and elk were imitated vocally, to attract them. Hunting calls of these kinds were used when hunting in dense brush, when the hunter hoped to attract the animal to him without being seen.

The bow was usually made out of juniper wood and was 120 to 150 centimetres long. Sometimes yew or birch wood was also used. The back was reinforced with a half inch thickness of sinew from the back of a deer. The sinew was glued into place. It was then covered with snake skin or dyed quills. The inside of the bow was covered with sinew or a wrapping of bird cherry bark. On either side of the hand grip was a braid of quill work, going around the bow. From each side of the handgrip, tails of red shafted flicker protruded.

The bow string was made of deer sinew, sometimes stretched. It was strengthened by rubbing with glue made from salmon or sturgeon skin. If sinew was not available, twisted Indian hemp bark was used. The Shuswap bow was reported to be the strongest in the interior. It was held horizontally when shooting.

4

Clubs were used in hunting and war. These were made of stone, some of jade, and could be used to kill food or foe. A tomahawk of stone with a wooden handle was used as well. Clubs made of whale bone, incised with designs were used in the Kamloops Shuswap area. Bone and antler daggers were used. Some of the daggers were designed with lines and circles. Beaver spears, with detachable handles, were made of bone or antler.

Winter hunting was made easier with the use of snowshoes. These were framed with maple or fir and had cross sticks of birch. The coarse mesh was strips from the neck skin of buck or elk and the fine mesh was thin strips of caribou or deer skin.



Hunting was also aided by the construction of traps, snares and barriers constructed of carefully selected wood twigs, stakes or poles which were usually held together with Indian hemp bark twine.

Most effort was put into hunting for deer. To secure great quantities of meat for the village, hunting was done in small groups, and by the whole village, depending on the season and the type of hunt.

Often, dogs were used in the deer hunt. Hunting dogs were kept on leashes during the early part of the hunt, until a fresh track was chosen. The dog was used to track the deer and hold it at bay or chase it into the water, or a prepared area, where it could be shot. A well trained dog was of great value to a hunter.

A single hunter might go out at any time of the year to get meat. In the winter, he was up before dawn, dressed in deer skins with tails attached and a dear-head skin cap, and travelled into the mountains, without extra food or clothing, to get food. In the winter months, as well, large groups went to the mountains and worked together to drive deer to one area. For this method, a leader would be chosen to direct the hunters. They would then spread out, surrounding a gully or gulch where the deer were known to winter. The best shooters waited near the gully bottom, hidden from view. When the deer entered the gully they were shot. If they tried to escape up the hillsides, the pursuing hunters would meet with them and shoot them. If too few men were available for such a drive, the women and children helped. Elk were sometimes driven over cliffs by large groups of hunters. Deer and sheep were driven, by large numbers of hunters, to small mountain tops, where they were surrounded and shot.



Snowshoes were used when the snow was deep. The hunter could actually run down the deer or elk, and shoot or club it. If the snow was crusted, dogs could lead the chase, tiring the deer which were too heavy and small hoofed to be carried by the snow. The hunter could then approach the exhausted deer and kill it.

The Shuswap people knew all the travelling routes and drinking places of the deer. When the deer came to drink, or swam the rivers, they pursued them in canoes and held them under water with forked sticks over their necks or antlers, drowning them. Small groups of hunters could work together, with some tracking the deer dogs, driving them to the water crossings, while others waited with canoes or bows to kill the animals.

In the spring and summer, much use was made of the travelling routes as locations for shooting, trapping and snaring deer. On moonlit evenings in the summer, hunters hid at the salt licks used by the deer and shot them when they came to eat. If no cover was available, the hunter dug a pit, just large enough to lie in, and covered himself, or was covered, with brush. In the spring, many deer could be shot as they came to their drinking spots in the evening. Deer and caribou were caught in nooses, by the neck or leg, which were set on their travelling route.

Deer were often trapped by the means of deer fences. These were brush, stick and pole barriers which directed the travel of the deer. One type was used in the fall, set where the deer moved from mountain to mountain through a pass or in a narrow part of the route they travelled down the mountain for the winter. The fence was about 140 centimetres high and could be as much as two kilometres long. Every seventy to one hundred metres, a gate was left, where a single deer could pass through. At the end of the gateway, a spring tap was set.

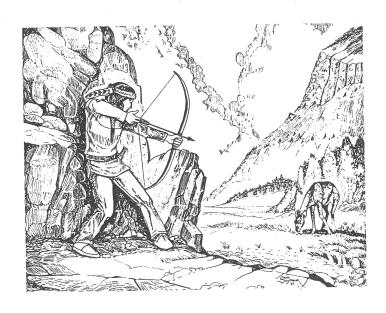
The spring trap consisted of a pit and construction of poles and rope arranged to entrap the deer. The shallow pit, covered over with needles, contained a rope snare. A log placed just before it forced the deer to step over, and into the snare. When the deer stepped on the sticks, they pressed on the stick, which released the trigger stick. The spring pole snaps up, lifting the deer, caught by its leg, with it. If the deer was too large to be lifted, it would try to run, but with its leg pulling the pole it soon became entangled in the brush and was captured.

A variety of methods were used to entrap deer during the fall migration, when large numbers were moving together, all trails that the Shuswap people were familiar with. The people of the Lake division made ready use of deer corrals at water crossings to enclose the deer. They built "wings" of brush, trees, poles and twigs along the edges of the trail leading to the water crossing, confining the deer to a narrow entry-way to the water. In the water, they formed a corral, by driving stakes in a circle, close enough together to keep deer from passing through. These were sometimes further supported with ropes, to hold the deer in. One opening was left in the corral, to allow a canoe to pass into it. Men entered the corrals and drowned or clubbed the deer. If no one was attending the corral, a net covered the canoe opening, which would entangle any deer that tried to escape.

Other corrals were set to catch deer as they left the water. Wing fences directed the deer into these corrals and their only line of escape were narrow chutes. They were killed when they entered the chutes or caught in nooses set at the end of the chutes. Other water corrals had very narrow chutes, which kept the deer from turning to escape. These had bag nets which entangled the deer. The deer were clubbed or drowned from canoes.

Sometimes spears were set up, at the point of water crossings, to kill deer. These were set where the deer landed when leaping small streams. Three sturdy spears were firmly planted in the ground, where the deer was expected to land. The deer was caught in the breast by the middle spear, and while struggling, were speared in both sides. Often the hunter simply waited at water crossing and shot the deer as it emerged from the water.

In the fall, two or three men hunted by walking over an area where deer were known to be. They would travel a planned distance, meet, and travel a different area, until they were successful.



Most large animals were shot with bows and arrows, but caribou, elk, moose and sheep were sometimes snared as well. Bears were hunted with the bow and arrow and trapped in the spring trap. This was similar to that used for deer, but heavier. The spring pole was about six metres long. The salmon bait was placed so the bear stuck his head through the noose, releasing the spring pole, to get it. Grizzly and black bears were also caught in dead falls, which were deep pits, baited with salmon. The bear fell into the pit and was unable to get out. Most animals were considered easy to kill, but when a lone hunter killed a silver-tipped grizzly bear it was believed to be a great feat.

Most small animals were shot, trapped and snared along their runways and trails. Rabbits, grouse and squirrels were shot with blunt tipped arrows. The snare for lynx, fox, coyote, wolf, marmot, grouse, rabbit and marten was made of Indian hemp bark twine and held open by very fine pieces of string with a spring pole about two metres long. The lynx trap was baited but most were simply set in carefully planned spots on the animal's trail.

Beaver were hunted with dogs and killed with bone point spears. Beaver and muskrat were sometimes taken in bag nets set over holes in the ice which they tried to escape to after hunters had disturbed their houses. Coyotes and foxes were sometimes smoked from their dens and shot.

Eagles, captured mainly for their tail feathers, were caught from pits. A hunter hid himself in a pit above which stood a crossbar held by stakes at each end, behind and above his head. Salmon hung from this bar, as eagle bait. When the eagle came for the bait, the hunter tried to grab both legs in one hand and pull out the tail feathers with the other. The bird was then released. Most birds were shot, with blunt tipped arrows.

Small animals and birds were usually transported home in netted game bags. They were also carried on a thong strung through a wing or around a leg.

The animals were cleaned and skinned at the hunting grounds. The meat of a large animal was cut into nine pieces. The neck and head were further quartered. The back piece was cut in two at the shoulder. In the winter, large game was cut up and put into the skin. The skin was sewn up one edge and attached to the tumpline, then dragged over the snow. The meat was also cut into pieces and strung, by slits made in it, onto a thong. It was then packed on the back, a layer of fir branches being used between the back and meat, for comfort and cleanliness. The meat was sometimes secured between the snowshoes and packed on the back. Often, it was folded carefully into the skin, so that the long parts from the leg and head ends could be folded in, making a secure package. It was then attached to the tumpline and carried.

Preparation of Meat

Deer and other meat was eaten fresh, by roasting over the fire. Small animals could be roasted whole, whereas larger animals were roasted in pieces skewered on sticks. Often the fresh meat was cooked by the men. The first meat of a hunt was eaten by the shaman or the leader of the hunt. Hunters depended mainly on the results of their hunting to get food while they were away from camp. They made kettles, for boiling or storing water, out of spruce bark or a cleaned deer stomach. These were placed near the fire, and had hot rocks added to them to cook the meat. The deer stomach baskets were held in shape by sticks threaded around the tip of them, and a frame of

sticks down the sides and across the bottom.

Fresh meat was also boiled into soups flavoured with wild onion, chocolate tips and Indian celery. Deer stew was flavoured with saskatoon, tiger lily or chokecherry.

Deer grease was added to various dishes for flavouring and nourishment. Scups were made with a combining of bitter-root, saskatoon, black tree lichen and deer grease. Cakes were made by boiling together balsamroot seeds and deer grease.

Fat was cut off bear, deer and elk, spread flat with sticks threaded into it, and set above a fire, on a pole held by forked stakes, to melt down. The fat was caught in bark trays and stored in deerskin bags.

Marrow was collected by breaking up large bones and melting it out of them. It was stored in cleaned deer or caribou bladders. Beaver tail and tongue were split and dried over a fire.

Deer blood was a delicacy. It was mixed with roots, berries and deer fat and boiled until a thick, nutritious broth was made.

A great quantity of the meat was dried, so that it would keep. For the drying process, the meat was cut into narrow strips, which were then slit across and pierced, so that the meat was quite thin. The meat was placed on drying racks and dried by the sun and wind. It was also dried in warm shady spots. In the winter, the meat was dried in the smoke above the cooking fire, or was heat dried in the sweat houses or other drying houses. This was the quickest way to preserve the meat.

The dried meat was eaten as it was, or was pounded together with berries and mixed with deer grease. The resulting cakes were eaten when cool, or wrapped in bark or skin to keep.

Storage of Meat

The dried meat kept for many months, in rawhide bags, in the underground food cache. It was also stored in the form of the cakes described above. These caches also contained supplies of fat, marrow and tongue or other animal parts which had been dried.

To serve, the dried meat could be added to soups of stews or eaten just as it was. The stored fat provided valuable nutrients which were not found in the lean animals killed during the long winter months. The rich bone marrow was another strength-giving source of food.

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