

Smoking Deer Meat

TEACHER RESOURCE BOOKLET



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Secwepemc Cultural Education Society

Prepared by Janice Dick Billy

Smoking Deer Meat

TEACHER RESOURCE BOOKLET

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355 Yellowhead Highway
Kamloops, B.C. V2H 1H1

Smoking Deer Meat

OVERVIEW

The Secwepemc people obtained all their food from the natural environment. Deer and other wild game were an important part of their diet. Much time was spent on hunting and preserving meat. Deer not only provided meat to the Secwepemc, but also provided materials for making clothing, tools and implements.

Deer still provide an important source of meat for the Secwepemc diet, but hunting methods, meat preparation and preservation techniques have changed.

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Teaching Suggestions

Lesson 1

INTRODUCTION

Brainstorm and record the questions "What foods do you think the Secwepemc people ate long ago? Remind students that all food was obtained from the natural environment - plants and animals. Accept all ideas. When brainstorming is complete, categorize foods into - birds, fish, game, vegetables, berries, seeds, nuts.

ACTIVITIES

Tell the students they are going to learn about smoking deer meat. Show the video, "Smoking Deer Meat".

After viewing the video, the students may explore the following:

1. What do you suppose the parts, other than the meat, was used for? Make a list.

Part	Use
Fur	
Skin	
Bones	
Antlers	
Hooves	

2. List all the steps taken to smoke the deer. Begin when the deer is slain and continue to the ready-to-eat smoked meat stage.
3. Describe the importance of using the right type of wood, fire, and amount of smoke to cook the deer meat.
4. Explain why it is an important skill to know exactly how to skin a deer.
5. Plan a meal using foods Secwepemc people ate. Include meat, vegetable, fruit and drink.

Lesson 2

INTRODUCTION

Ask students "How does your family prepare and preserve food for winter". List all responses.

Tell the students that food preservation was very important and necessary for the Secwepemc to survive the long, harsh winters of long ago.

ACTIVITIES

Present the information 'Food Preparation and Preservation', Appendix A, to the students.

After examining the information they may explore the following:

1. Compare the smoking method described in the video, "Smoking Deer Meat" to the smoking method described in the sheet 'Food Preparation and Preservation'.
2. Explain why preservation of all the parts of the deer was so important to the Secwepemc.
3. Make a chart showing the uses of the deer parts.

Part	Method of Preparing	Fresh Method of Preserving

4. Describe the importance of natural materials in the preservation and storage of meat.
5. Describe a storage cache for dried meat.
Consider the following:
 - Storage must be cool
 - Food must be kept dry
 - Animal-proof
 - Easily accessible to Secwepemc people

Lesson 3

INTRODUCTION

Tell students that Secwepemc people had to hunt large numbers of deer at once. Ask students, "How do you suppose the Secwepemc hunted deer?" Ask students to think of as many methods as possible. List all responses. Keep for reference.

ACTIVITIES

Present students with the information 'Hunting Methods' on pages 13-16 in "Foods of the Shuswap". It is a rather long selection but it contains important information. The teacher may read it aloud to students or the class may be divided into groups of four and each take turns reading a section.

Ask students to cluster the following information as they read.

- Skills hunters need
- Hunting methods used
- Equipment used and how it was made

After examining the information, the students may explore the following:

1. Describe ways the Secwepemc hunters knew the environment such as land forms and deer habits. Why was this knowledge so important?
2. Describe the qualities and skills of a good hunter.
3. Illustrate and label the hunting methods. Compare it to the list of hunting methods the class thought of during the introduction to the lesson.
4. Make a chart which illustrates and describes animal tracks. Research deer, moose, mountain sheep, mountain goat, black bear and grizzly bear tracks.
5. Make a booklet of small wild animals that Secwepemc people hunted. Research the following small animals: rabbit, squirrel, marmot, beaver, weasel. Include information on how Secwepemc used the animals.
6. What aspects of Secwepemc culture have changed? What has stayed the same?

PROJECT SUGGESTIONS

1. Obtain some fallow deer meat. Wild meat is not suggested as it is not health inspected.

Fallow deer meat may be obtained from:

Silver Spring Fallow Deer Farm
Dennis and Debbie Keeping
Savona, B.C. Telephone: 373-2550

Use the deer meat in the following recipe:

Venison Stew

3 - 4 lbs venison
5 medium potatoes
2 1/2 quarts water
3 small onions
3 medium carrots, diced
1 1/2 tsp. salt
1 stalk celery, diced
1/8 tsp. pepper

Cut meat into 1 1/2" cubes. Put meat in 5 quart kettle; boil until tender. Remove meat from kettle and put on plate. (This prevents meat from being overcooked). Add vegetables to hot liquid and cook until tender. Then put meat back in kettle and make gravy by thickening liquid with flour. Turn stew down to simmer. Serve with bannock.

2. Watch the video "Tanning Hides" by Mary Thomas. Available from Secwepemc Cultural Education Society - 355 Yellowhead Highway, Kamloops, B.C. Telephone: 828-9779.

Make a chart illustrating the steps involved in tanning a deer hide.

3. Invite a resource person from the local Fish and Game Club to visit the class. Ask him/her to talk about various hunting methods and various game calls used.

Practice making calls using the following materials:

- a blade of grass; blow between lips
- birch bark rolled into a cone and sewed; blow into
- two dry hollow-sounding sticks: strike together to make a sound like rams fighting
- two sticks - make a sound like deer rubbing antlers on a tree.

4. Make a mural showing all the steps involved in hunting. Begin the mural with the deer alive in the forest. End the mural showing the deer meat being put away in the storage cache.

5. Invite a conservation officer to the class. Ask him/her to give information on the following topics:

- conservation of deer and moose populations
- hunting regulations
- why it is important to monitor hunting

6. Invite a Native Resource person to the class. Ask him/her to talk about hunting deer for food.

See "We Are the Shuswap" Resource Binder, School District #24 (Kamloops).

7. Collect wild game recipes. Make a cookbook. Copy and give to each student.

RESOURCES NEEDED

1. Foods of the Shuswap. Shuswap Cultural Series. Book 2 Secwepemc Cultural Education Society. 355 Yellowhead Highway, Kamloops, B.C. V2H 1H1
2. Video "Tanning Hides" by Mary Thomas. Available from Secwepemc Cultural Education Society.
3. We Are The Shuswap, Resource Binder. School District #24.

REFERENCES

1. Indian Food. A cookbook of Native foods from B.C. Medical Services, Pacific Region. Health and Welfare Canada.
2. Wild Game Cookbook. Chase and District Fish and Game Club.
3. Shuswap Stories by Randy Bouchard and Dorothy Kennedy. CommCept Publishing, Vancouver, B.C. 1979.

APPENDIX A

FOOD PREPARATION AND FOOD PRESERVATION

Deer meat was a very important food for the Secwepemc. When a deer was caught, nothing on the deer was wasted. The meat and other parts were eaten fresh or dried. The brain was boiled to make a solution for hide tanning. Antlers were boiled and made into buttons, needles and other tools. Bones were also used for tools. Sinew was used for thread. The bladder was used for storing dried meat. The fur and skin was used for clothing.

Smoking Deer Meat

A rack for smoking the meat was built using Douglas fir and red willow sticks. The rack had horizontal poles which were about five feet above the ground. A fire was made beneath the rack using hard wood such as alder or cottonwood. The fire had to burn slowly and produce lots of smoke in order to smoke and cure the meat properly.

Directions to smoke meat are as follows:

1. Cut a large slab of meat 1 1/2 inches thick.
2. Lay the meat with the grain going from left to right on a cutting surface.

3. Starting at the top edge and cutting to within 1 1/2 inches of the bottom edge, cut a 1 1/2 inch strip of meat. Cutting across the grain makes the meat more tender.
4. Turn the meat completely around, 180 degrees, and again cut across the grain from the top edge to within 1 1/2 inches of the bottom edge.
5. Repeat the procedure of turning and cutting until the entire slab of meat is cut at 1 1/2 inch intervals.
6. The meat can be opened into one long strip, about two feet long.
7. Salt the meat well and hang over the smoking rack.
8. Dry the strips of meat over a constant, low fire for 1 - 2 days. Turn the meat every so often.

When necessary, cover the top of the rack with tree branches to protect the meat from rain and excessive heat from the sun. The drying time depends on the amount and degree of smoke. Smoking meat this way gives it a smoky flavour. It is still soft and can be eaten immediately if cooked throughout. It can also be frozen for later use. At the full smoked stage, the meat is dry with a smoky taste and ready to be stored.

Storage of Meat

Long ago dried deer meat was stored in cedar root or birch bark baskets. Dried meat was also wrapped in a piece of birch bark. The meat was placed on the inner side of the birch bark. The bark was warmed over a fire until it softened and could be folded over the meat. The bundle was tied together with the inner bark of the maple tree. The strands of bark were obtained by removing the bark from young maple trees when the sap was running. The inner bark was scraped off in one long continuous motion - yielding a long string. The dried meat could also be kept for months in a rawhide storage bag in an underground food cache.

Uses of Deer

Fresh pieces of meat were roasted over an open fire. A enough to support the meat was pierced through the centre of the meat from one edge to the other. The opposite end of the stick was embedded in the ground about 1 1/2 feet from the fire at an angle. The meat was about 1 foot above the flame. The stick could be moved closer to or farther away from the fire depending on the size of the meat. The meat was turned every so often. The meat was done when it was thoroughly brown and tender when tested with a stick.

Fresh deer meat was also cooked in a kettle made of spruce bark or cleaned deer stomach. The kettle of water was put near the fire and hot rocks were added to boil the water and cook the meat.

The meat was also boiled with various wild vegetables to make a soup. Sometimes the soup was flavoured with saskatoons or chokecherries.

Uses of Other Parts of the Deer

The head was skinned after the tongue and nose were removed. The eyes and antlers were then removed. The centre of the head was pierced onto a 3 foot long stick. The stick had to be strong enough to support the head. The other end of the stick was stuck in the ground, 1 foot from the fire, at an angle which placed the head 1 foot over the fire. The head was turned every so often as it roasted until the meat was tender.

Deer Shins

The lower section of the leg was removed at the knee joint. The hoof was severed from the leg by laying it on a rock and striking it sharply at the upper edge with a second rock. The hair was singed over an open fire. The remaining hair and scorched skin were scraped away. The shins were then boiled in a basket for one hour and eaten with wild vegetables.

Bone Marrow

The meat was removed from the long bones. The bones were placed directly on the coals of an open fire to cook until they cracked. The lard-like marrow showed through the cracks and was then eaten.

Deer Intestines

The small intestine was removed, cleaned, washed and turned inside out. A small amount of fat was left for flavour. The intestine was put on a rack about 2 feet above an alderwood fire and turned frequently until dry. It then could be sliced into strips and eaten.

Deer Blood

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

Deer Fat

The deer fat was boiled until the grease rose to the top. When the grease cooled it hardened. The hardened fat was stored in deerskin bags for later use. The fat was also boiled and mixed with balsamroot seed and made into cakes. The fat was also boiled and mixed with bitter-root, saskatoons and black-tree lichen to make a soup. Fat was important for flavour and nourishment. The dried fat provided valuable nutrients which were not found in the lean animals killed during the winter.

OTHER RESOURCE MATERIALS

AUDIO VISUAL PRODUCTIONS

(teacher resource booklets available)

- The Saskatoon Berry (7 min.)
- Smoking Salmon (16:30 min.)
- Spearfishing on the South Thompson (8:30 min.)
- Smoking Deer Meat (7:00 min.)

SHUSWAP COMMUNITY HANDBOOK

The "Shuswap Community Handbook," was developed to present information on the culture, history and contemporary lifestyle of Secwepemc people. It is intended that this manual will serve as background information and as a resource for teachers of Shuswap First Nations children.

SHUSWAP MAPS

A series of wall maps (30"x40") and small working maps (8 1/2"x 11") for students have been developed in the following areas:

- Shuswap Nation Fishery Management Plan
- Shuswap Traditional Place Names
- Residential Schools Attended by Shuswap People
- Shuswap Fishing Methods
 - Dip Nets and Spearing
 - Weirs
 - Gill Nets and Set Nets

COYOTE AS THE SUN

and Other Shuswap Stories

Coyote as the Sun is the first in a series of books of legends that will be published by SCES. Most of the stories included were told to anthropologist James Teit by Shuswap storytellers in the early 1900s. The stories describe a mythological time when “animal people” lived in Shuswap territory. Many of these beings used their special powers to shape the natural world.

ISBN: 0-921235-21-6

Book size: 8" x 10"

Full-colour illustrations

For a order form or more information contact:

SCES Publishing

355 Yellowhead Highway

Kamloops, B.C. V2H 1H1

Phone: 828-9783 FAX: 372-1127

OTHER SCES SERVICES

Make a booking now for your school group to tour the new Secwepemc Heritage Park on the Kamloops Indian Reserve. Call 828-9801

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