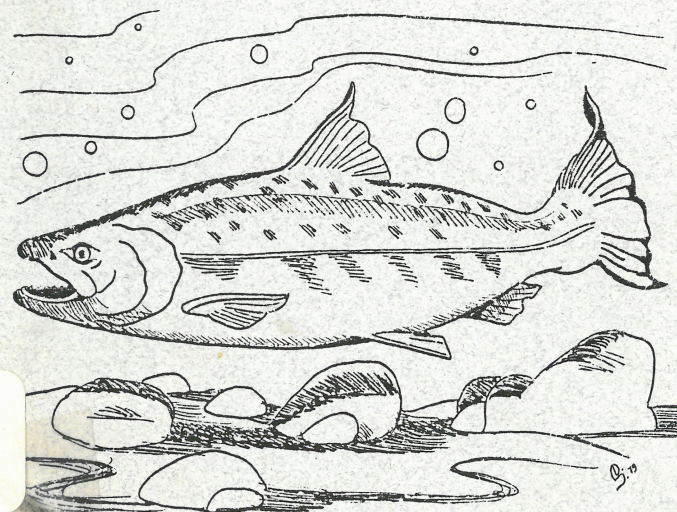


# Salmon Smoking

## TEACHER RESOURCE BOOKLET



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Secwepemc Cultural Education Society

Prepared by Janice Dick Billy



# Salmon Smoking

## TEACHER RESOURCE BOOKLET

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## Salmon Smoking

Salmon was a very important food for the Secwepemc people. Different types of salmon and fish were caught depending on the season. During the fall, the sockeye salmon was speared in the rivers. The lessons contain information about the fishing preparations, spearing process, methods of preparation, preservation, storage and uses of the sockeye salmon. An important aspect of food gathering to the Secwepemc was the thanks given to the natural elements such as the moon and to the salmon for letting itself be used for food. The rituals and celebrations surrounding the food was an integral part of the food gathering process.

N.B. Please preview the lessons beforehand to find out what materials and resources are needed. Contact Secwepemc Cultural Education Society Library to help locate resources. Lessons #1 and #3 are

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dependent on the resource, "Small One and the Fall Fishing", by Ursula Surtees as told by Mary Thomas, Secwepemc Elder. This is an excellent account of the traditional method of spearing salmon. Lessons #2 and #4 make use of the video, "Salmon Smoking". However, using all four lessons ties the theme together nicely.

### *Teaching Suggestions*

## **Lesson 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Read the story, "Small One and the Fall Fishing", in Vol. 3 Lak-La Hai-ee from page 1 to the end of page 13. Before beginning the reading, ask students to listen and cluster the following points:- preparations before fishing

- steps involved in the fishing Students may cluster alone or in groups.

### **ACTIVITIES**

1. Students may work individually or in groups to explore the following questions:
  - a. What evidence did you find in the story that showed Secwepemc people respected and appreciated the natural environment?
  - b. Illustrate the preparations taken before the fishing began.
  - c. Role play of the situations;
    - You are a boy about 8 years old. What is your job?
    - You are a skilled fisherman. What jobs will you do?
    - You are a grandmother. What jobs will you do?
    - You are a girl about 7 years old. What kind of work and play will you do?Observe the picture on page 52 and 53 in, "We Are The Shuswap". The picture shows trout spearing. Salmon was speared the same way in the fall. List all the equipment needed for spearing and the materials used to make them.



Equipment	Materials
canoe	cottonwood tree
torch	pine wood containing pitch
spear	handle from hardwood
spear	bone and deer antler
eyeshade	birch bark

- Students share with the class their role-playing situations. A group could work together - all the men and boys involved in the fishing and the role of the women and girls.

## Lesson 2

### INTRODUCTION

Recall the story, "Small one and the Fall Fishing". Small One wondered how they could store all the fish for the long, cold winter. What ways can you think of to prepare the salmon so the Secwepemc would have lots to eat in the winter? How does your family preserve salmon and meat? After students have discussed the concept of preservation, tell them they are going to learn how the Secwepemc preserved the salmon for winter use. Show the video, "Salmon Smoking".

### ACTIVITIES

- Illustrate steps in smoking salmon. Begin with the whole, freshly caught salmon.
- List all the materials used in smoking salmon.
- Illustrate the salmon as it looked when it was ready to put on the racks in the smoke house.
- Describe how the weather affected the smoking process.
- Long ago smoked salmon was a main item in the Secwepemc diet. Today it is considered a treat. Explain how this may have occurred.

## Lesson 3

### INTRODUCTION

Briefly review the video, "Salmon Smoking". The video shows how salmon is smoked today. Many of the traditional methods are still used. You will now learn about the traditional way salmon was smoked long ago. Read the story, "Small One and the Fall Fishing" from pages 14 to 20 to the students. As students are listening ask them to list the steps taken in smoking salmon. Keep list for future reference.

### ACTIVITIES

1. Compare the smoking method described in the video "Salmon Smoking" to methods described in the story.

	Story	Video
Tools Used		
Method of Cutting		
Method of Hanging		
Salmon in Smoke House		
Type of Smoke House		
Smoking salmon heads		

2. List all the materials and equipment needed for smoking salmon and their uses.

Equipment	Use
Mats	Putting salmon on
Cutting tools	Cutting salmon
Large flat rock	Placing salmon on to cut
Sticks	Salmon spreaders
Rush house	Smoking the salmon
Wood	Fire in smoke house

3. Smoking salmon was an activity which involved the whole family and community working together. Explain the role of each of the following people:

- father
- grandfather
- the man wise in the way of fish
- young men
- little boys
- grandmother
- mother
- young girls
- little girls



## **Lesson 4**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Ask students the following questions:

- How do you suppose storage caches were made?
- Where were storage caches built?
- Present the following information about storage caches and uses of smoked salmon to the students. You may read the information to them, or give them copies to read by themselves or in groups of four.

### **Storage Caches**

The Secwepemc made use of two different types of storage caches. One cache stored dried foods that were used on a daily basis. The other cache stored dried foods that would be used late in the winter or for food that was being saved in case of famine.

### **Daily Supplies Food Cache (Elevated Food Cache)**

To build the frame, four poles about 9 feet high were put in the ground to form a square shape. Each pole was forked at the top. Two main cross poles were placed in the forked frame parallel to each other. Douglas fir ponderosa pine or aspen poles about 1 1/2 inches in diameter were then fastened side by side between the two cross poles from one side to the other. This formed the table of the cache. Funnel-shaped cones were clasped around each of the four frame poles just under the table. These cones were made by wrapping a half-circle of birch bark, smooth side out, around the pole. The mouth of the funnel was pointed toward the ground. This prevented rats and mice from reaching the stored food. After the food was placed in the cache, it was covered with a tule mat. A ladder was made by cutting a tree with many limbs. The limbs were cut off about 1 foot away from the trunk. It was placed in the ground near the cache in order to easily reach the food. The cache was built away from trees so squirrels could not jump at it.

## Long-term Supplies Storage Cache

A four to five foot hole was dug in a hillside where there was good drainage. The sides and bottom of the hole were lined with birch bark. Layers of smoked fish and birch bark were then placed alternately in the cache. When the cache was filled, the top layer of birch bark was covered with dry pine needles and timber grass. The mouth of the cache was covered with thick red cedar slabs. The slabs were longer than the width of the hole. Finally a two to three foot mound of dirt was set on top of the cedar slabs. This prevented the cache from freezing.

## Uses of Salmon

The smoked salmon was very hard. For elderly people who had poor teeth, the salmon was put in a rock bowl and pounded into a fine powder. The salmon was also put on a barbecue stick by an open fire. The heat drew oil to the surface of the flesh, making it softer and easier to swallow. The salmon was also soaked overnight in water and then boiled. The salmon heads, which were also smoked, contained rich oil which was used to flavour food. The salmon backbone was also smoked and dried. It was boiled to make a broth for soup. The eggs from the female sockeye salmon were prepared in three different ways:

- The eggs were eaten fresh after being boiled in a soup.
- The eggs were hung on a pole in the smoke house. The smoke dried eggs were kept in birch bark baskets until ready to use. The eggs were then boiled with saskatoon berries.
- The fresh, loose eggs were squeezed from the fish into an air tight birch bark basket to about 3/4 full. The basket was buried about 1 1/2 feet underground. It was left for about 3 to 4 weeks before being dug up and stored in a cool place. The eggs, which were very smelly, were boiled until the mixture was thick like batter.

## ACTIVITIES

1. Design a storage cache. Consider the following points:
  - a. sturdiness
  - b. frost, wind and snow-proof
  - c. animal-proof
  - d. type of food to be stored
  - e. length of time food is to be stored
  - f. way to obtain food when needed
  - g. where to place cache



2. Make a model of an elevated storage cache. Use as many natural materials as possible. Red willow or saskatoon branches and twigs may be used.
3. Make a chart showing the uses of the smoked salmon and its parts.

Parts	Method of Preparation	Use Meat
Backbone		
Heads		

## PROJECT SUGGESTIONS

1. Research the life cycle of the sockeye salmon.  
Include:
  - description
  - habitat in various stages of the life cycle
  - life expectancy
  - food
 Include an illustration.

2. Visit the Secwepemc Museum located at the Chief Louis Centre on the Kamloops Band Reserve. View and study:
  - cottonwood dugout canoe
  - the fishing spear
  - the basket for the fire when spearing

Describe how the spear and basket are different from the traditional equipment used.

3. Buy or obtain a fresh or frozen salmon with head attached. Prepare it for smoking according to directions in the video, "Salmon Smoking". When finished, remove the stretchers. Cut in pieces and boil with peeled and cut potatoes and onions. Eat and enjoy.
4. Visit a forested area. Observe and collect samples of pitch from: the fir tree, pine tree, spruce tree. Contact resource person to assist. Names are listed in, "We Are The Shuswap" resource binder. If a visit to a forested area is not possible, bring samples to classroom. Research properties of pitch which make it useful for fires.

5. View the video, "Making a Spear" with Louie Matthew. Available at the Secwepemc Cultural Education Society Library. Compare the spear making shown in the video to the traditional method of spear making.

## RESOURCES NEEDED

1. Video, "Salmon Smoking" Secwepemc Cultural Education Society.
2. Lak-la Hai-ee Vol. 3, "Small One and the Fall Fishing", by Ursula Surtees, June, 1979. Available for loan at Secwepemc Cultural Education Society Library.
3. "Adams River" pamphlets and salmon posters. Available from Fisheries and Oceans, Canada.
4. Video entitled, "Making a Spear" with Louie Matthew. Available from Secwepemc Cultural Education Society library.
5. "We Are The Shuswap", Heather Smith Siska. Grade 4 text, Secwepemc Cultural Education Society, Kamloops, B.C., 1998.



## REFERENCES

1. Utilization of Fish by the Chase-Shuswap Indian People of B.C., Randy Bouchard and Dorothy Kennedy, B.C. Indian Language Project, 1975.

## 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.

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