

# NATIVE AMERICAN FOODS & RECIPES



**N**ative Americans ate a wide variety of foods before there was any contact with Europeans. Tribes like the Iroquois, Algonquin, and Cherokee grew corn, beans and squash as a major part of their diet. These three foods were called the three sisters and were often grown together. Corn and squash were both only found in North and South America before trade with Europe. Tomatoes and chocolate were both only found in the Americas too. Many tribes in Mexico and South America cultivated them and the Mayan civilization famously made a drink out of chocolate. Many other tribes were hunter gatherers, who did not farm. Some followed herds of buffalo, deer, or other game for food, and picked berries and other edible plants. Others, in the north and on the coast, hunted seal and other sea life and ate sea plants.

No one knows exactly what was eaten when the Wampanoag had their famous meal with the Pilgrims, but it was likely they ate squash, corn, beans or venison. Modern-day native people eat variations of traditional foods, and some foods, such as fry bread, are still an important part of Native American social gatherings.

## **BOILED CORN BREAD**

*The Iroquois and other Native American tribes made a bread out of corn. The corn (or maize) is dried out and ground into a flour. The flour is mixed with water and kneaded into a dough. It is then boiled. It can also be baked on clay tablets in a fire, or fried in sunflower oil.*

### **Recipe:**

Mix flour and water with a little salt and it. Turn it out on a floured board. Keep kneading until you can touch the bread without it sticking to your fingers, then either boil or fry it. To make it puffy, add some baking soda.



# AKUTAQ



*Akutaq is a popular recipe from Native American tribes in the Pacific Northwest. It is sometimes described as a kind of ice cream, though it has no milk in it.*

*Akutaq can be prepared many different ways. The base ingredients are traditionally moose or caribou fat and walrus oil. Recipes varied from family to family, but often included berries and fruits to make a sweet food, or putting in meats for a more savory flavor.*

*For this recipe, we are replacing the fat and walrus oil with shortening and vegetable oil. Mashed potatoes can also be added to decrease the amount of shortening you need.*



*A collection of berries native to Alaska.*

## **What You Need:**

*The measurements for ingredients are all approximate. You should change them as you go to make the texture and flavor you want.*

- 2 cups shortening (mashed potatoes can be used to replace some of the shortening, but not all of it)
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil (add more as needed)
- ½ cup sugar (use more or less to taste)
- 1 cup berries – blueberries, cranberries, and salmonberries were traditionally used (use more or less to taste)

## **What You Do:**

Add the shortening, oil and sugar into a large bowl. Using your hand, with all four fingers and the thumb touching, whip the ingredients. It may take a few minutes but you want the ingredients to mix into a smooth creamy texture.

Add berries (or meat, or whatever you want) and fold them into the creamy mixture with your hand the same way as before. Keep doing this until there is an even mix.

The akutaq can be eaten right away, or put in the fridge and served cold.

# SUCCOTASH



*Succotash was first cooked by Native Americans on the East Coast of the United States. In their recipes it used the traditional “three sisters” – corn, beans, and squash. The three were boiled together with lard and any other ingredients and spices that seemed tasty and were on hand. It was an easy food to make and had high nutrition value.*

*For this same reason, versions of the recipe were popular during the Great Depression in the United States. Families often had very little money and the ingredients were cheap and easy to find, and offered great nutrition. The recipe is still commonly cooked during Thanksgiving in parts of New England.*



*Example of some of the kinds of corn grown by Native Americans in the Northeast.*

## **What You Need:**

2 cups fresh or frozen lima beans  
6 cups water  
2 tablespoons vegetable oil  
2 cups fresh or frozen corn  
5 stalks green onion  
1 ½ teaspoons salt  
¼ teaspoon pepper  
2 teaspoons sage  
2 tablespoons butter

## **What You Do:**

Boil the lima beans in the 6 cups of water for 10 minutes. Meanwhile, heat the oil in a pan and add the corn.

Stir the mixture until the corn turns light brown. Then add the green onions and stir until they are cooked.

Drain the lima beans and add to corn and onion mixture. Add butter, salt, pepper, and sage. Mix well and serve hot.



*Example of some of the kinds of beans native to North America.*