



Hello, World!

THE GCI
NEWSLETTER

PROGRAM PLANNING IDEAS FROM THE GLOBAL CULINARY INITIATIVE COMMITTEE

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Honoring North America's Native Cuisines

by The Global Culinary Initiative Committee

The [Global Culinary Initiative](#) embraces global communities through culinary connections. In this issue, we explore the food traditions and heritage of North America's [Indigenous Peoples](#), specifically the Native cultures within the Continental United States and Canada. (Mexico was a focus of The Latin Issue, October 2016.) Currently, there are 567 American Indian and Alaskan Native tribal governments federally [recognized](#) by the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs and 634 recognized [First Nations](#) governments in Canada. Under the provisions of the 1794 Jay Treaty, Indigenous Peoples can freely travel across the U.S./Canadian border. [Vancouver](#), B.C. has one of Canada's [highest populations](#) of Indigenous Peoples with over 52,000 of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (Arctic area) ancestry.

American Indian or Native American?

According to the [National Museum](#) of the American Indian, the terms American Indian and Native American are acceptable. American Indian and Indigenous American are sometimes favored over [Native American](#), since anyone born in America is native to America. "Indian" is a [legal term](#) used in U.S. federal law. Confusingly, it also refers to a person from the Indian subcontinent. Most Native Peoples prefer to be identified by the tribe they belong to; each one has its own history, culture, and language.

Native American Contributions

Early Native Peoples lived in organized societies with their own forms of government. Originally hunters and gatherers, they began cultivating plants to supplement their diets. Their vast [contributions](#) to our modern way of life include domesticated foods, Native arts and crafts; [pharmaceuticals](#), and activities like lacrosse, canoeing, and sign language. We use countless Native words like opossum, kayak, caribou, avocado, papaya, persimmon, and squash. Of U.S. [state names](#), 26 are Indian words. Because of a deep respect for the land, [conservation](#) methods are practiced and encouraged.

Indigenous Foods

After years of seeking out food secrets from China to India, Sweden to Brazil, Americans have discovered a rich [culinary heritage](#) in their own backyards with foods that owe their origins to the American Indian. Canadians are also turning back to the [indigenous](#) ingredients of the First Nations, e.g., caribou, ptarmigan, muskox, yak, and whale blubber.

Twenty-five years ago, kitchens in the Indian nations and professional chefs began putting their own stamp onto traditional American Indian dishes to bring them into the [modern kitchen](#).

Native cuisines are now returning to their [roots](#); chefs are reaching back for the healthier, sustainable meals of their ancestors.

Pre-Columbian, indigenous [foods](#) from the Americas included tomatoes, potatoes, wild rice, pumpkins, peanuts, [bison](#), quinoa, chocolate (Mesoamerica), and blueberries. Foods varied according to the environment where each [Native group](#) lived. [Sacred corn](#) (maize), a gift from Mexico, was cultivated over 7,000 years ago. One of the most important foods, corn is roasted, cooked with beans and squash and dried for making popcorn, hominy, grits, and cornbread. Black walnuts, chestnuts, hickory nuts, and acorns, prized by the [Northeastern Natives](#), are used for breads, puddings, and even baby food.

Native peoples shared their culinary gifts with the world: barbecues, clambakes, steamed lobsters, Brunswick stew, succotash, and Boston

Follow the trail of blue links to find stories, inspirations, and ideas for developing chapter educational programming, training programs, and cultural exchanges.

baked beans. Raw cranberries were eaten with maple syrup or pounded with deer meat and dried to make [pemmican](#). The Three Sisters (see photo) is a holiday-worthy [dish](#) of maize, beans, and squash. When Europeans arrived in America in the early 1600s, the Iroquois (Haudenosaunee Nation) had been growing the vegetable trio together over three centuries.

Spiritual rituals and celebrations are often connected with food. Tribal groups in the Pacific Northwest Coast of the U.S. and Canada celebrate with a ceremonial gift-giving feast called a [potlatch](#).



Native American Chefs

Navajo Chef Freddie Bitsoie is the first Native American executive chef at [Mitsitam](#) Native Foods Café in the National Museum of the American Indian. Mitsitam means, “Let’s eat!” in the language of the Delaware and Piscataway.

Oglala Lakota Chef Sean Sherman’s work is part of a slowly gathering [movement](#)—“new Native American cuisine”—to revive Native food cultures in contemporary kitchens. He finds culinary inspiration in the indigenous foods of the [Upper Midwest](#).

Navajo Chef [Walter Whitewater](#), Red Mesa Cuisine, explains that traditional foodstuffs can be used to create gourmet meals and they’re also good for the environment.

Native American Recipes

- Traditional and semi-traditional recipes from the American Indian [Health and Diet Project](#).
- Thanksgiving recipes from the Mitsitam Café Cookbook include [Three Sisters Salad](#) (photo page 1) and Roasted Maple Brined Turkey Breast.
- Native American Chefs Lois Ellen Frank and Walter Whitewater make a healthier version of Navajo fry bread—No-fry Fry Bread. [Fry bread](#) is called [bannock bread](#) in Canada.
- [Manataka](#) American Indian Council® recipes.
- A [collection](#) of Native American recipes
- Native Web [Resources](#): Food
- [Native recipes](#)—a tribal enterprise of The Pueblo of Santa Ana, Bernalillo, New Mexico.
- Native American recipes contributed to [NativeTech](#) over the last decade. We petition experienced, knowledgeable cooks to share their Native American or First Nation recipes on these pages.

Native Foods, Health and Food Sovereignty

The loss of culture and the rise in diet-related ailments have created a movement among

Native American tribes to return to an indigenous American cuisine that includes a [rich, colorful palate](#) of heart-healthy foods.

Here is a compendium of stories from the Indigenous [food sovereignty](#) movement in American Indian and Alaska Native communities.

[Seeds](#) of Native Health is “A Campaign for Indigenous Nutrition.”

The Native American Food Sovereignty Alliance ([NAFSA](#)) is dedicated to restoring, supporting, and developing indigenous food systems.

The [Indian Health Service](#) encourages action among American Indians and Alaska Natives to fight obesity and raise their physical, mental, social, and spiritual health.

Chapter Programs

Learn about [Powwow etiquette](#). Host a chapter activity to rejuvenate Dames with herbal [teas](#).

Holly Arnold, a Colorado Chapter founding member, owns The Fort restaurant in Morrison, Colorado and founded the [Tesoro Culture Center](#). Invite her to host a podcast about the center and its programs, several of which feature heritage foods.

Create a program around the history of the development of the Native American diet from this [website](#).

[Tocabe](#) is a restaurant in Denver that serves Native American dishes. Chapters could use this menu (or a similar restaurant menu) for inspiration to create a potluck dinner. Search our section on Native American Recipes to find similar dishes and recipes.

Beverly Cox is a Colorado Chapter member. Secure a copy of her James Beard, award-winning [cookbook](#) (listed below in Cookbooks) for a chapter review, tasting, and discussion.

Cookbooks

- ◆ **Cox, Beverly** and Martin Jacobs. *Spirit of the Harvest: North American Indian Cooking*. Stewart, Tabori and Chang, 1991.
- ◆ **Hetzler, Richard**. *The Mitsitam Cafe Cookbook: Recipes from the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian*. Fulcrum Publishing, 2010.

- ◆ **Divina, Fernando**, Marlene Fernando and Smithsonian Museum. *Foods of the Americas: Native Recipes and Traditions*. Ten Speed Press, 2010.

- ◆ **Evenson, Teri**, Lauren Lesmeister and Jeff Evenson. *The Sacagawea Cookbook*. Whisper’n Waters Publisher, 2001.

- ◆ **Kavasch, Barrie E.** *Native Harvests: American Indian Wild Foods and Recipes*, Dover Publications, Inc., 2005.

- ◆ **Rosin, Elizabeth**, *Blue Corn and Chocolate*. Knopf, 1992.

- ◆ **Sherman, Sean** and Beth Dooley. *The Sioux Chef’s Indigenous Kitchen*. University of Minnesota Press, 2017.

- ◆ **Weatherford, Jack**. *Indian Givers: How the Indians of the Americas Transformed the World*. Ballantine Books, 1988.

For Further Study

A Powwow is a [cultural/social gathering](#) featuring Native dances and singing. Dancers wear traditional regalia that embody their tribal affiliation and ancestry. Many traditional foods are served.

[Native Net](#) is dedicated to Native American Indians and other Indigenous Peoples and their rich culture, history, and food.



Global Culinary Initiative

GCI Committee Susan Fuller Slack (Charleston) and Roberta Duyff (St. Louis), Co-chairs; Teresa Farney (Colorado), Martha Marino (Seattle), Trina Kaye (Los Angeles), Gail Forman (Washington, D.C.). Advisors: Sandy Hu (San Francisco) and founder Suzanne Brown (Atlanta).

Photos, Page 1: Delores Patencio was a Cahuilla Indian in Palm Springs. A noted basket maker, she is shown grinding corn in a hopper. Dame Nancy Cohee (Palm Springs); Three Sisters Salad and Cedar-Planked, Fire Roasted Salmon (*The Mitsitam Cafe Cookbook*). Photographer Renée Comet, (D.C.).

Page 2: Dame Zola Nichols (Palm Springs) shares this 1957 photo of herself and her uncle Harold dressed in regalia just before he dances at a Powwow. Zola, an enrolled member of the Eastern Band of Shoshones, was born on Wyoming’s Wind River Reservation.

Our exploration of Native American cultures will continue at the 2018 GCI Conference Breakfast in Seattle.