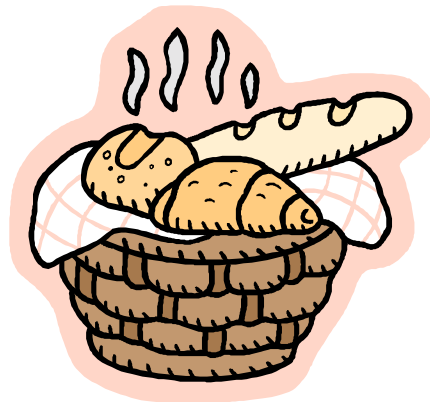


WEEK 6
FOOD



We all need to eat, right? So what's for dinner?

Everybody and everything needs to eat. Our bodies use food to create energy to run at recess or to stay awake in class. Without food, our bodies would become tired and eventually die. The same rules apply for animals. Many animals spend their entire day (or night) searching for food. It's what's most important to them, because without it, they may become another animal's food.

Think about what you ate for breakfast. Was it enough? Are you still hungry? Do you think if you had eaten more you might not have forgotten about the homework assignment you were *supposed* to finish before you came to school?

Dave and Eric need lots of food to keep their bodies working well. **Getting sick on the trail isn't very much fun, but if we think about what we eat, we can improve our chances of staying healthy.** Your body is like a car. It needs fuel and proper maintenance to keep going. By eating foods that give us energy and staying away from the foods that might slow us down, we have a better chance of not stubbing our toes on portages and not having sore muscles at the end of the day.

Since we've decided to make the boreal forest our home for the next few weeks, we wondered what the people who came before us might have eaten. It would be a good start to planning for what to bring on our canoe trip. **It's hard to imagine that the forest holds everything that the people who came before us ate.** When I look around, the forest seems so dense, and from a distance everything seems to be the same.

But upon closer investigation, you begin to notice the changes in the plants. They all take on their own personalities, and they are all different. The animals notice these changes and use the changing seasons to hunt for different foods. Of course most animals eat different foods. Beavers enjoy trees, but you'd be hard-pressed to find a moose making a birch dinner. **Some animals prefer meat as the basis of their diets, while others wouldn't dream of eating another animal.** Animals who eat only plants are called *herbivores*. Animals that eat only meat are called *carnivores*. And of course, there are animals that prefer to eat both plants and animals; they are called omnivores. What type of eater are you?

Ojibwe Food

The Ojibwe used the forest to provide them with all their needs. And since they needed to eat, they had better find food. That's an awfully difficult thing to do when there are sometimes six feet of snow on the ground. But, sometimes the forest is very plentiful. During the warmer months, flowers bloom and tremendous growth and change occur in every plant.

Meal-time at Ojibwe camps often varied due to differing circumstances: the weather, what was available to eat, etc. However, there was always a morning meal. This was probably the largest meal of the day, and cooked over a long period of time. **A typical complete meal for the Ojibwe was fish or meat, broth, rice with maple sugar, and dried berries.**

The winters are a tough time to be a plant. As a result many plants and trees have to develop a way to defend themselves from the cold, harsh environment. The Ojibwe knew this, and used the warmer months to travel in search of food so that they could stock up on food for use during the winter.

Wild Rice is the staple of most Ojibwe food. It was cooked in many different ways and mixed with all sorts of different foods. Wild rice is very versatile. It can be eaten by itself or made into soups, breads, and other foods.



Corn, pumpkins, and squash were grown in gardens. When the food was ready to be harvested, most of it was dried for use in the winter.

During the spring and summer, the Ojibwe used maple trees to create maple sugar and maple syrup. Syrups and sugars were used to flavor foods.

Not only were there plenty of plants to eat, but the Ojibwe also knew how many animals lived in the boreal forest. Fish, moose, bear, deer, and ducks provided the meat of the Ojibwe diet. Men of the family would leave their camps in search of animals. **They also were experts at fishing.** Fish were usually caught in nets, or *seines*, and then either eaten fresh or stored for future use. Now, of course, this was long before refrigerators, so how do you think they stored their fish and other meat?

By making a rack out of sticks, the fish were dried over a slow fire, or dried in the hot sun. The fish weren't cooked, because then it would have to be eaten right away. Have you ever had smoked fish?

During the long, harsh winter months, young Ojibwe men set traps in the woods to snare smaller animals, such as otter, beaver, rabbit, and muskrat. Their furs were used for clothing, and later to

trade with the voyageurs and other fur-traders, but the fresh meat also provided a welcome relief and necessary nutrients.

Everything the Ojibwe hunted, caught, or harvested was used. There were never any left-overs. Everything from fish heads to deer intestines were used, and often eaten. Every part of the animal was used, because the Ojibwe knew that they had to respect the animal.

Voyageur Food

The Voyageurs were not known to be the cleanest, most-hygienic folks who ever lived, but they did get by pretty well. The work of the voyageur was difficult, and their days were long. Sometimes they would paddle for 14-15 hours. This meant that they had to have plenty of food to keep them going. Unlike the Ojibwe, the voyageur was always on the move. Their days would begin at sunrise, and often end after sunset. There were generally two meals served per day, and depending where they were in the Interior, these meals generally consisted of throwing whatever was available into a big pot and boiling it. They would then use bread to soak up the soup or stew concoction.

When the men would arrive at a campsite for the night, a fire was made and the canoes were overturned on shore (making their shelter!). The clerks, or *bourgeois*, were the members of the canoe trip who didn't have to paddle, didn't have to portage, and didn't do much but invest their money into the fur-company. For this reason, they got special treatment. **Not only did they get a piggy-back ride to shore to keep their feet dry, they also got the luxury of tea.** The common voyageur's daily ration consisted of a quart of dried corn or peas and an ounce or two of grease, pork, or bacon. Not too much to eat if you ask me. This is why voyageurs are sometimes referred to as pork eaters, or in French, *mangeur de lard*.

The voyageurs didn't use spoons to eat their daily soups. Instead they would slop up the stews with biscuits or bread, called *galette*. This was pretty simple, and probably very bland bread, made only of flour and water. Of course, bowls were rarely used to eat out of either. There are stories of men eating soup out of their hats, handkerchiefs, and even their shoes!

Of course eating the same meal for weeks on end became a bit boring for the voyageur. Paddling all day long and portaging through the woods often gave the men the ability to find food as they traveled. Raspberries, blueberries, small animals, birds' eggs, turtles, muskrats, rabbits, honey were all easily found as they marched. It has been said that a beaver's tail was considered the finest of delicacies.

Voyageurs also ate pemmican. Pemmican is like beef-jerky, made from pressed buffalo meat. Hot grease was added to the meat that kept it from spoiling or rotting. Though, meat and grease were not always the only things added to make pemmican. The scientist Kennicott wrote, "I am authorized to state that hair, sticks, bark, spruce leaves, stones, sand, etc, enter into its (pemmican) composition, often quite largely." It is said that when pemmican was properly made, it could remain safe to eat for more than one season. Pemmican was eaten alone or made into a dish called Rubbaboo. Rubbaboo was pemmican and flour soup, and was enjoyed by all voyageurs in the Interior of Canada.

So, what do Dave and Eric eat?

Planning meals for a long canoe trip can be fun, as well as a lot of work. We don't have a refrigerator, so things that need to be kept cold must be dried. We have a food de-hydrator that takes all the water and moisture out of the food. Not only does this make the food lighter in weight, but it also gets quite small.

To make the dried food look like it would normally, we have to add water back to the dried food. Nobody likes crunchy peas, so we add them to boiling water and cook them for a few minutes until their soft.

We eat three meals a day. Breakfast and lunch are usually light, because we don't really have the option of cooking a big meal in the middle of the day. In the morning we're usually in a hurry to break camp and get out on the water. We like to start the morning with a cup of tea or coffee and a bagel or Pop-Tart. These provide us with the calories, or energy, that our bodies will quickly use up as we paddle and portage.

Lunch usually consists of a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, a few snacks like nuts or dried fruit, and maybe a candy bar. Since fall in the northcountry can be cold, our bodies need more food to keep warm. This means that we get to eat more food than we normally would without running the risk of falling out of shape.

For dinner, we eat the same things that we would eat at home, but prepare them a little differently. We cook on the stove just like we would at home. Some of our favorite dishes include spaghetti, macaroni and cheese, any kind of hearty soup, and burritos. All of these dishes are easy to prepare and are very filling. Dave has also brought his fishing gear along in the hopes of catching a lake trout or walleye for dinner. However, we have to get used to eating everything all mixed up together. Since we don't have a dishwasher, dinner table, or plates, everything we eat is in a bowl. Washing our dishes properly keeps us from getting sick, so the fewer dishes we have to wash, the sooner we can get to work on the chores that need to be done around camp.

Unlike the voyageurs and Ojibwe, Dave and Eric have the luxury of using spices to flavor our food. Salt and pepper, garlic, onion, and chili powder keep our meals from all tasting the same.

Water is also very important. Possibly the easiest way to keep your body from getting sick is to keep drinking lots and lots of water. The areas that we are paddling through are known for some of the cleanest water in the world. In most areas, the water is safe to drink straight from the lake, which makes it really easy to keep our bodies hydrated. We simply plunge our water bottles into the middle of the lake and have a drink. Sometimes we add Kool-Aid or Tang to the water for some variety.

What do you think you would eat if you were to embark on a long canoe trip? Where would you find your food? What do you like to eat at home, and would you be able to bring this along with you on your canoe trip?

IDEAS FOR THE CLASSROOM

The food we eat is very important, because it gives us energy. More specifically, the calories that make up the food we eat is what gives us energy. Below is a table of what Dave and Eric eat during a typical day. Use the internet or any other resources you can to help us figure out how many calories we consumed today.

BREAKFAST

| FOOD | # of Calories |
|--------------------------------|---------------|
| 1 large bowl of Quaker Oatmeal | |
| 1 8 oz. Cup of Black Tea | |
| 1 Bagel with 1 tsp. of butter | |

LUNCH

| FOOD | # of Calories |
|--|---------------|
| 1 Peanut Butter and Jelly Sandwich 2 slices of Butter Top Whole Wheat Bread 2 oz. of peanut butter 1.5 oz. of raspberry jelly | |
| 2- 2 oz. Snickers Bars | |
| 4 oz. Dried apricots | |

DINNER

| FOOD | # of Calories |
|----------------------------------|---------------|
| 10 oz. Kraft Macaroni and Cheese | |
| 4 oz. Corn | |
| 4 oz. Dried Broccoli | |
| 6 – Chewy Chips Ahoy! cookies | |

Now it's your turn!

Keep track of your food consumption for a day. Make sure to be accurate. Make sure you count all those snacks you've eaten. Research the food you ate. Could you have chosen more wisely? Did you really need all that Mountain Dew?

BREAKFAST

| FOOD | # of Calories |
|------|---------------|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

LUNCH

| FOOD | # of Calories |
|-------------|----------------------|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

DINNER

| FOOD | # of Calories |
|-------------|----------------------|
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| | |
| | |

RECIPES FOR THE CLASSROOM OR FOR HOME

Below are some of the most authentic recipes for Voyager and Ojibwe food we can find. Some of the ingredients are a little out-dated (ie. lard), and might take some searching for.

Ojibwe Fried Bread

Offered by Charlen Shingobe of the Mille Lacs band of Ojibwe, MN

Ingredients:

- Flour (1 5 ob. Bag)
- Salt (Approx. 1 Tsp)
- Baking Powder (2 Tsp)
- 2 C. warm water
- 1 C. Milk (warmed)
- 1 lb. Lard

Preparation:

1. Put the entire amount of flour into a large mixing bowl.
2. Make a hole in the middle of the flour. Pour warm liquids into the hole
3. Add the salt and baking powder
4. Mix with a large spoon. Slowly add the flour from the sides. Keep adding water, until it's big clump, and you can knead it with your hands.
5. Knead the dough until it doesn't stick to your hands.
6. Let the dough rest for ½ hour.
7. Break off a golf-sized ball of dough and put in on a floured plate.
8. Heat the lard in a large cast iron skillet
Note: To test the temperature of the lard, sprinkle drops of water on the lard. If it dances quickly, the bread frying is ready to begin.
9. Flatten your individual balls of dough and fry them on both sides to a golden brown
10. Serve with maple syrup.

OJIBWE WILD RICE AND EGGS

This was a common early day meal for the Ojibwe. It has been updated with the use of mushrooms and salt and pepper.

Ingredients

- 1 C. Water
- Salt (Optional)
- 1/3 cup wild rice – well rinsed
- 4 strips bacon, thinly sliced
- 4 green onions, thinly sliced
- 3 to 6 fresh oyster mushrooms, morels, chanterelles, or shitake mushrooms (optional)
- 6 eggs
- 1/8 tsp ground pepper

Preparation

In a medium sized saucepan, heat water, rice, and pinch of salt. Bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat to low, and continue to cook gently for about 20 minutes. The rice will become tender. If water remains, drain the rice. Fluff the rice with a fork and set it aside.

In an 8 to 10 inch non-stick or well-seasoned skillet, over medium heat, cook bacon until crisp. Drain off all but 2 Tsp. of drippings. Add green onions, mushrooms, and wild rice and sauté briefly. In a mixing bowl, lightly beat the eggs with ¼ tsp. of salt and pepper. Add eggs to skillet and stir with a fork to scramble.

Wild Rice Johnny Cakes

This type of bread is a combination of Ojibwe and Voyageur tastes. Traditionally it was eaten with duck, venison, or any other type of white meat. Instead of blueberries, you can use green onions.

Ingredients

- 1/3 cup wild rice, well rinsed
- 1/3 cups of water
- 3 Tsp. cornmeal
- 3-4 Tsp. dried or fresh blueberries
- 1 beaten egg
- 2-3 Tsp. bacon drippings or corn oil, for the more authentic taste. Otherwise, any oil will do.

Preparation

In a medium saucepan, heat 1 C. of water, rice, and salt. Bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat to low, and continue to cook gently for about 20 minutes, until rice is just tender. Stir in cornmeal, mixed with 1/3 C of Cold water and cook, stirring gently, for 2-3 minutes until cornmeal turns creamy. Stir in the egg and gently add the blueberries. Heat oil over a medium skillet. Drop batter by rounded tablespoons into skillet and flatten with a spatula or pancake turner into cakes about 3" in diameter. Fry for 2-3 minutes on each side, until golden brown. Serve with bacon and maple syrup.

French Canadian Voyageur Pea Soup

Ingredients:

- 1 lb. Dried peas
- ¼ C. grated carrots
- 8 C. Water
- ¼ C. Parsley, fresh, chopped
- ½ lb. Salted pork – preferably all in one piece
- 1 small Bay leaf
- 1 Onion, Large, chopped
- 1 tsp Savory, dried
- ½ C. Celery, chopped

Preparation:

Since this is the food that Voyageurs ate at camp, the preparation is fairly simple. First, wash and soak the peas in cold water. To do this well, let the peas sit overnight. Add the peas to a large Dutch oven or large pot. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer until the peas are tender enough to eat enjoyably.

Basically add all ingredients to a large saucepan or Dutch oven. Cook most of the flavor out of the ingredients and enjoy out of your hat!

After cooking, the pork is usually chopped and returned to the soup. You can also slice the pork and eat it alone. Some variations of this soup add garlic, salt, pepper, leeks, and other vegetables.

For a thicker consistency (though this is not traditional) a cup or two of the cooked peas can be pureed, and returned to the soup.

WEEK 6 Chat Room Session

WHERE/WHEN: October 28, 2002 10 AM – 11:00 AM Lac du Bonnet

TOPIC: Food! What are you guys eatin'?

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR THE CHAT SESSION:

What are your favorite foods while you're on the trail?

How do you cook in the tent?

What's the food you miss most?

What do the Ojibwe like to eat? How do they gather it?

Are there many fish in lakes you paddle through? What kinds?

How do you keep food fresh without a refrigerator?

Where do you get all of your food?

How do you get water?

How did the Voyageurs eat? Where did they get their food?

Do you have to eat more when you canoe?

How do you keep your food warm?

Who eats more, Dave or Eric?

Why can't you bring all the food you want to?

Do you ever find food in the forest? If you do, how do you know it's safe to eat?