



# American Indian Cooking Before 1500†

## Objectives

- Understand food storage techniques 500 years ago and compare and contrast with methods today.
- Understand food availability in 1500.
- Understand how a rock was a 'food processor' in 1500.
- Realize the importance of using dried fruits in recipes.

## Introduction

Students take turns reading paragraphs on pages 22 to 24 of *American Indian Cooking before 1500*.

## PEMMICAN‡

### Ingredients

- 1 package (4-ounces) beef or buffalo jerky
- 1 cup mixed golden raisins and dried cherries or other dried fruit mixture
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 3 tablespoons melted lard, or suet, or butter\*\*
- 1 tablespoon butter for greasing paper

### Equipment

- dry-ingredient measuring cups
- small bowl
- food processor
- small, microwaveable dish
- paper towel
- baking pan (8" x 8")
- rubber spatula
- aluminum foil
- sharp knife

## Methods

1. Mix 1 cup dried fruit together in small bowl.
2. In food processor, process jerky until it is in small pieces.
3. Add dried fruit to food processor. Process until fruit is cut into smaller pieces and is well mixed with jerky.
4. In a small, microwavable dish, melt 3 tablespoons butter on high for about 20 seconds.
5. Add melted butter. Process several short pulses until well mixed.
6. Use paper towel dabbed with 1 tablespoon butter to lightly grease baking pan.
7. Using rubber spatula, press pemmican into a thin layer in pan. Cover with aluminum foil and refrigerate.
8. When chilled, cut into small squares.

\*\* Muscle-related fat, i.e., suet, from cattle, or lard, from pigs, are firm at room temperature and are the traditional fats used in Pemmican. If you use those in this recipe, the mixture will hold together. If you use butter, the mixture will be crumbly.

## Demonstration

### Option 1: Hands-On Student Cooking

Students divide into groups of 2-3. Instructor briefly demonstrates equipment use, discusses methods and introduces ingredients. Instructor assigns Pemmican recipe to each group OR assigns each group separate American Indian recipes in addition to Pemmican recipes.

### Option 2: Instructional Cooking

Instructor prepares recipe with students' assistance. Instructor demonstrates equipment use, discusses methods, and introduces ingredients as recipe is prepared. Students actively participate in equipment use, ingredient measurement, and preparation methods.

## Class Discussion Questions

**Hint:** Remember to approach questions from a modern day view as well as from an American Indian standpoint.

- Why would ingredients like dried beef and dried fruit be used in American Indian recipes?
- How does the flavor of suet or lard compare to butter?
- Modern appliances such as the food processor make cooking much easier for us. What types of tools do you think the American Indians used to prepare this dish?
- Would this dried fruit and beef dish most likely be prepared during the summer or the winter?

† Order direct from History Cooks®, SRP \$22.95. Special History Cooks Price: \$14.95 plus shipping.

‡ Recipe reprinted from *American Indian Cooking before 1500* by Mary Gunderson and used by permission from Capstone Press, Blue Earth Books, 2000. ISBN 0-7368-0605-9



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