



Name:
Date:

Native Food Experiences

Source #1: AJ+ Youtube Channel - *Native American Cuisine*

Write down 5 NEW details you learned about Native food from this video.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Source #2: Excerpt from Food in California Indian Culture by Ira Jacknis, chapter titled “Kashaya Pomo Memories of Food.” In this piece, Essie Parrish, a Pomo cultural leader, recalls her family members’ experiences trying **introduced foods** for the first time.

“The First White Food” (told September, 1958)

It was also there at Métini that the white people first discovered the Indians having come up, they found them. After they discovered the Indians, they wanted to domesticate them. In order to feed them food, in order to let them know about the white man’s food, [the white man] served them some of their own white food.

Never having seen white men’s food before, they thought that they were being given poison. Having given the [Indians] their food, they left and returned home but [the Indians] threw it in a ditch. Some they buried when they poured it out. They were afraid to eat that, not knowing anything about it - all they knew was their own food, wild food. They had never seen white people’s food before then. That is what our old people told us.

- 1. According to the text, what were the motives/reasons for giving the Natives “white food”?**
- 2. How did the Native people interpret the situation, and how did they protect themselves from potential danger?**

Source #3: The following excerpt, also from Essie Parrish, describes her community's first experience with coffee. Coffee originates from Ethiopia, Africa. It was first introduced to the Europeans, and then introduced to the Americas.

“The First Encounter with Coffee Beans” (Told September, 1958)

As before, a white man gave them coffee to drink - gave it in a sack. At that time, a long time ago, they ground the coffee themselves. He gave them a grinder too. When he had done so, he taught them [how to use it]. But [the Indians] didn't do it - they still didn't know what it was for. Even though he showed them, they didn't understand what it was for. They didn't want to drink it either.

She boiled it too. Just the way they used to cook their acorns, that's how she boiled [the coffee beans], thinking they would become soft - she boiled them whole. She let it boil and boil - let it boil all day long. She tested them with her fingers, but they never did get soft - they weren't cooked. Then, saying that they must have been bad, that they were just like rocks, she poured them out.

- 3. According to the text, the Native community did not find coffee to be a useful food when it was first introduced. What does this example show us about cultural differences and preferences around food?**

Source #4: Excerpt from Enough for All: Foods of My Dry Creek Pomo and Bodega Miwuk People, by Katherine Rose Smith, a Dry Creek Pomo woman.

Ground/Land/World

[I give] respect, gratefulness, and joyfulness for the good food we have been given by the Creator to eat. It's not just the food alone that's important, but the knowledge [of the] earth that provides it.

In the old days, the gathering and preparing of foods involved preparing the body and spirit with prayers, fasting, songs, and dances, all part of the necessary respect, thankfulness, joy, and sacrifice involved in gathering and use of these foods.

'Food is all around us.' The way my mother said it was lovely, meaningful, and true. It was true in the early 1940's, the years of my childhood, as it is today, more than seventy years later. She would tell me this when I followed along as she tended the plants in her Victory garden: that we Indians could never starve. This wasn't because of the precious vegetables she carefully raised in her garden, but because there is food all around us. All we had to do was know when to collect and how to prepare the many foods that are created for us and all the other beings living here. There is enough for all.

Today, much of the Native foods-plants, birds, mammals, fish, and shellfish-my ancestors harvested are either completely gone, like the Native grasses and clovers, or severely endangered or in decline, like the seaweed, abalone, quail and other birds, rabbits, steelhead salmon, trout, surf fish, wild strawberries, and shellfish.

If you are still lucky enough to be in the right place at the right time, it is still possible to see and taste some food cooked in the old ways at special events throughout California. The job for all of us is to help our home...to be healthy, and to make sure these foods are always with us.

My mother told...that her own mother, my grandmother, taught her that "we had many relatives and we all had to live together; so we'd better learn how to get along with each other."

She said it wasn't hard to do. It was just like taking care of your younger brother or sister. You got to know them, find out what they liked and what made them cry, so you'd know what to do. If you took good care of them, you didn't have to work as hard. Sounds like it's not true, but it is. When the baby gets to be a man or a woman, they're going to help you out.

You know, I thought she was talking about us Indians and how we are supposed to get along. I found out later by my older sister that Mother wasn't just talking about Indians, but the plants, animals, birds-everything on this earth. They are our relatives and we better know how to act around them or they'll get after us."

- 4. In the context of the Dry Creek Pomo people, what does the quote "Food is all around us" mean?**
- 5. According to the text, what is our "job" or responsibility? What are some ways that we can help our "home" stay healthy?**
- 6. According to the text, how is taking care of our environment like taking care of a family?**
- 7. If food comes from the environment in which we live, why do you think it is important to take care of that environment? What can happen when we disrespect or mistreat our environment?**

Source #5: Excerpt from Enough for All: Foods of My Dry Creek Pomo and Bodega Miwuk People, by Katherine Rose Smith, a Dry Creek Pomo woman.

Animal Foods

When I was growing up, fishing and hunting for game birds and mammals were something usually done by men and boys. The gutting and cleaning of these animals were their jobs. The plucking was done by everyone.

Daddy loved to hunt, but I was never part of that experience. Only the boys hunted. I fondly remember my younger brother Doug shooting robins with his new .22, and Momma proudly cleaning the birds and roasting them. Thank you, delicious, lovely birds!

No doves were killed or eaten. The Dry Creek Pomo creation story, which can take all night to tell in all its complexity, sitting around a campfire, says that Dry Creek people were created from the soil at Dry Creek and a feather from the mourning dove placed in that soil. For various reasons, hummingbirds and owls, bluebirds, red-winged blackbirds, or jays either.

By the time I was in my teens in the mid-1950's, my father did not hunt as often as he had in earlier times and, unlike in his younger years, he did not return from the seasonal deer hunt with a kill-although he would still bag a pheasant or mallard around the Suisun or Novato wetlands. Still, he would get his tags and pack up his camping and hunting gear in the fall to go hunting around the far west hunting grounds with his much younger hunting buddies. It was his ritual.

Name 3 Pomo norms or traditions around food that are described in the text.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

How have eating habits changed over time? Reference one example from the text, and one example from your own knowledge or experiences. (continue on the back if you need more space to answer this question)