

# Native Heritage: Food

## LESSON 1

# CHICKASAW TRADITIONAL Recipes

The Chickasaw Nation is one of the largest federally recognized tribes in the United States with more than 66,000 citizens.

Throughout history, farming, agriculture and, therefore, food have been an integral part of the Chickasaw way of life. In ancient times, Chickasaws lived in villages where they grew corn in communal fields and divided the harvest among the villages. This was the primary crop, and it fed the villages year-round. After European settlement and colonization, Chickasaws established family farmsteads. On these farms, they cultivated cotton and raised livestock such as cattle, hogs and horses. They used horses and oxen to pull wooden plows with iron plowshares. They used the scythe and other hand tools for tending and reaping. The United States established agents and blacksmiths to provide tools and to make repairs. The tools made large cultivation easier to produce superior crops.

Chickasaws depended upon the crops raised in household gardens and common fields to sustain them throughout the year. Seeds were saved from each year's harvest and vegetables were planted in rotation with the seasons, with any excess preserved for later use. Each Chickasaw family built a corn crib to protect food kept in storage. They set four tall posts deep into the ground and built a timber floor on top of the posts, high above the ground. A small, four-sided building constructed of timber walls covered in clay daub sat on top of the floor. This design kept the food cool and dry. A removable ladder allowed access to the food stored inside. By rubbing oil on the posts, they kept the dried corn and squash, nuts and seeds, and dried meats and fruits safe from rodents and other small animals.

## STUDENT ACTIVITY

Choose one (or more) of the recipes shared in the Native American Heritage: Traditional Chickasaw Foods series and, under supervision of an adult, make and try the food.

Recipes can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/y8tahuwp>

To watch videos and learn more about Chickasaw foods, visit [Chickasaw.net/Food](https://Chickasaw.net/Food).