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# The Knowledge keepers Diary

## METIS NATION OF ALBERTA REGION 1

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WE MUST CHERISH OUR INHERITANCE. WE MUST PRESERVE OUR NATIONALITY FOR THE YOUTH OF OUR FUTURE. THE STORY SHOULD BE WRITTEN DOWN TO PASS ON... LOUIS RIEL

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Photo taken at Lawrence Berland's cabin

**Acknowledging our Nationhood and preserving our culture through storytelling.**



Photo taken on Lawrence Berland's trapline

How many times have you warmed your hands around a camp fire sharing stories after a long day of hauling water from a icy river, or checking your traps on the trapline and sharing with each other stories of days gone by? Perhaps you talked about the bear cub that lived with your mothers family in their cabin or the Sasquatch you swore you saw so long ago. Maybe you took a moment and with a smile on your face, talked about watching your kokoms tears roll down her cheeks as her 'cackle' earned knee slaps while she shared tales of her youth and her mischievous ways.

Or the time you stood on your tippy toes at your Moshums kitchen table in the cabin, eager to learn how to make the bannock recipe that had been passed down from generations.

### **Stories told, memories to be cherished**

Storytelling is an age old favourite pastime of the Métis culture. Sharing wisdom and teachings gained and passing down to our youth so they too, can keep our culture and traditions alive. We honour our history with truth by sharing stories that live in all of us. We remember the good times and the hard times, the lessons and traditions as well as respecting our past, our ancestors and the gifts we have been given and received because of them. Share your stories, so they keep living in all of us.

# BANNOCK MAKING WITH MOSHUM

Photo taken of Harvey Boucher showing our youth how to make Bannock



## The History of Bannock

The History of Bannock means so much to so many different people. It's more than a necessity, it's attached to history, culture, family, community and love. The term bannock itself comes from the Gaelic word bannach, which literally translates to "morsel." In Old English, the word bannuc was used. There are also several Indigenous terms across the country: in Inuit it's palauga, the Mi'kmak call it luskinikn, and the Ojibwa say pass the ba'wezhiganag when they want more. Across the United States, it's mostly known as fry bread. It has been said the Scottish fur traders brought the recipe with them on their journey to Canada in the 18th or 19th century.

The Scots initially made bannock with oatmeal or pea-meal and it was almost scone-like. One thing is for certain: the need for sustenance was paramount to the rise of bannock's popularity. Its high-fat, high carbohydrate content and the long shelf life of its components were essential to the survival of the early fur traders. Although First Nations peoples adopted bannock, there's historical evidence indicating that they made a pre-colonial version of it. Known as sapli'l, it was made from ground bulbs of a plant called camas cooked on an open flame, which resulted in a much denser and flatter version than we know today.

The advantages of bannock are obvious. Besides, tasting delicious, it is a quick and simple carbohydrate-rich food. Bannock soon became a staple for First Nations, voyageurs, fur traders and prospectors. Many would just mix the dough right into their flour bag, and toss it onto a pan whenever the need arose. Many hikers and backpackers today use very similar methods. Bannock also grew out of necessity. As Indigenous peoples were removed from their land, and thus their traditional sources of food, the Canadian government supplied them with rations of things such as flour, lard, sugar and eggs. Once a quick and easy meal to be made in the bush, bannock became a necessity to prevent starvation on reserves.

## Bannock Recipe

- 4 cups all-purpose flour.      -2 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp salt.                      -1 ½-2 cups warm water
- ¼ cup lard or butter (for baked bannock)

oil for cooking (for stovetop bannock) In a large bowl, stir together the flour, baking powder and salt. For baked bannock: Make a well in the middle of the flour mixture and pour in the water, then stir just until combined. Spread the dough into a greased or parchment-lined 9×13-inch pan and drop three dollops of lard (or butter) onto the top of the batter. Bake in a preheated 400°F oven for 20-25 minutes, turning once to brown the other side. For stovetop bannock: Gradually add enough water to moisten the ingredients and bring the mixture together in a ball. Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface and gently knead about 10 times. Shape the dough into round patties about ½-inch thick. Cook on an oiled skillet for 3-4 minutes per side, until golden brown.