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**THE DISCOURSE AND PRACTICE OF NATIVE AMERICAN CUISINE:
NATIVE AMERICAN CHEFS AND NATIVE AMERICAN COOKS
IN CONTEMPORARY SOUTHWEST KITCHENS**

BY

LOIS ELLEN FRANK

B.A., Photography, Brooks Institute of Photography, 1985
M.A., Anthropology, University of New Mexico, 1999

DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy
Anthropology**

The University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico

July, 2011

DEDICATION

To my husband,

Sean Chauncey Casey,

for his unyielding support and for believing in me.

To my family:

my mother, Jeanne; my father, Henry; my stepmother, Arlene;

my sister Cynthia; and her husband, Lars;

my brother, Gregory; my sister-in-law, Eliana; and my niece, Talia;

my brother, Glenn, and his family,

who are always there.

To Chef Walter Whitewater,

for all the food he has cooked with me on this project and the cooking he continues to do in the field and in the kitchen with Native foods, Native American cuisine, and with his traditional foodways.

And to all the Native American cooks, Native American chefs, and chefs, preparing Native American cuisine, who shared their traditional foodways, dishes, Ceremonies, and Feasts, opened their homes and hearts, invited me into their kitchens to cook and to eat at their tables, and to all those who carry, share, and revitalize the knowledge of ancestral cultural Native American food traditions.

Thank you.

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for their support and help with this project.

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Chef Bertina Cadmin, Chef Nephi Craig, Chef Fernando Divina, Chef Arlie Doxtator, Chef Sandy Garcia, Chef Franklin George, Chef Richard Hetzler, Chef Franco W. Lee, Chef Mark Miller, Chef Loretta Barrett Oden, Chef Michael O'Dowd, Chef Orson Patterson, Chef Michelle Roetzer, Chef John Sharpe, Chef Jack Strong, and Chef Walter Whitewater.

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Marie Begay, Linda Begay, Tedra Begay, Marlene Divina, Margie Mermejo,
Richard Mermejo, Norma and Hutch Naranjo, Calandra Willie, Caroline Willie,
Grandmother Alice Willie, and Grandmother Susie Whitewater Begay.

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Dr. Karl Schwerin and Dr. Steven Feld

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation analyzes the emergent Native American cuisine of the American Southwest. It consists of an ethnography of both Native American cooks, who are largely self-taught and practice in noncommercial settings, as well as Native American chefs, some self taught and some professionally trained and working in commercial settings. The ethnographic work includes both extensive and intensive field interviews with chefs and cooks, and close attention to their work in home and professional kitchens. Particular attention is paid to histories of food knowledge, as well as to food preparation concepts, techniques, performance, and aesthetics.

The foods employed by these cooks and chefs are further analyzed in relation to their geographic, ecological, and socio-cultural histories in the Greater Southwest. This includes food and crops that date back thousands of years as well as those introduced within the past five hundred years after initial contact. Additionally it includes foods issued by the U.S. government and food introduced or assimilated in the process of cultural contact over the past one hundred and fifty years.

The discourses and practices associated with these foods are intricately linked to the construction of Native identity. Even when the Spanish or others introduced the

sources or techniques, food is intimately associated with local knowledge and cultural expression for Native cooks and chefs.

Two theoretical approaches are highlighted in the ethnographic analysis: the study of performance and of the senses. Food is an expressive symbol of the self-identity of cooks and chefs, and performance is central to its expressive practice. Food is also a medium of cultural knowing and a mechanism for embodying cultural memory, with deeply sensuous connections to place.

This research advances the anthropological understanding of Native American cuisine, its history, discourse, and practices. In addition to its value as the first history and ethnography of the emergence of the Native American cuisine movement, it is also a foundational document for assessing how food practices affect contemporary Native communities, with implications for future studies of Native American nutrition, health, and wellness.

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Chapter 1

Introduction to the Practice of Native American Cuisine

Beginning in the 1990s, the study of food, culture, and society, and specifically the ability of food to express social issues such as identity, has become an important area of anthropological inquiry. Within the past decade, numerous professional conferences, organizations, anthropological publications, and many new books outside the discipline of anthropology have focused on food's cultural importance, its history, social identity, politics, and food policy in communities on a global level (Arellano 2006; Berry 1977, 2009; Civitello 2008; Coe 1994; Gabaccia 1998; Inness 2001; Jacobson 2010; Mintz 1996; Nabhan 1989, 1997, 2002, 2004, 2009, 2010; Nabhan, Rood, and Madison 2008; Nestle 2002, 2006; Scapp and Seitz 1998; Sonnenfeld, Flandrin, and Montanari 1999; Trubek 2008; Winne 2008). Some of these studies have linked the biological and nutritional aspects of food with its social and cultural symbolic aspects, making it a central topic for ethnographic investigation (Counihan and Van Esterik 1997; Douglas 1975, 1984, 1997; Korsmeyer 1999; Mead 1997). Other writers have focused on individual aspects of food systems, food policy, and food politics (Nestle 2002; Pollan 2001, 2006, 2008; Winne 2008). Food studies have illuminated such broad societal processes as political-economic value creation, symbolic value creation, and the social construction of memory and identity (Ackerman 1990; Brown and Mussell 1984; Counihan 1999; Humphrey and Humphrey 1988). Such studies have opened an important and contested area for debate. This debate between structuralist or symbolic explanations for human behavior and cultural or historical materialism has refined our understanding of variation in our informants' responses to the ethnographic questions being posed (Mintz and Du Bois 2002).

Anthropologists are beginning to investigate food as it relates to the senses (Geurts 2002; Howes 2003; Stoller 1989, 1997) and the culinary arts (Adapon 2008; Frank 2002, 2011) and are incorporating research from ethnobotany, history, journalism, and ethnic studies, including Native American studies. Ethnographic studies exploring the notion of cooking as an embodied skill and artistic practice, and the integral role of "flavor" in everyday life, and investigations of professional chefs who reproduce

“traditional” foods in restaurant settings have also recently emerged. Journals such as *Gastronomica*, published by the University of California Press, have broadened their reach beyond academic audiences, opening up the topic of food and culture to the general population.

Organizations focusing on agriculture, food, its importance, and its health effects on contemporary communities have emerged all across the United States.¹ In the Southwest these include the Traditional Native American Farmers Association (TNAFA), begun in 1990 in Gallup, New Mexico, with financial support from Native Seeds/SEARCH. Formed to aid Native communities, it offers workshops on seed saving, health, wellness, and best farming practices to revitalize traditional agriculture. Cooking with Kids in Santa Fe, New Mexico, motivates and empowers elementary school students to develop healthy eating habits through hands-on learning with fresh, affordable foods from diverse cultural traditions through cooking and tasting classes (<http://www.cookingwithkids.net/>). Nancy Davis, (Turtle Mountain Chippewa) with the Santa Fe Public Schools, (SFPS) as part of their Indian Education Program (IEC) kindergarten through 12th grade, implemented healthy Native American cooking classes in the summer of 2011 as part of their kids camp program. Farm to Table, also in Santa Fe, is dedicated to promoting locally based agriculture through education, community outreach, and networking (<http://www.farmtotablenm.org/>); the Farm to Restaurant project, part of the Santa Fe Alliance, promotes a viable food system by facilitating local food sourcing between Santa Fe restaurants and caterers and regional food producers and educates the public about the benefits of supporting locally grown and prepared foods (<http://santafealliance.com/farmtorestaurant/>).

Projects with a Native American focus include the 2004 Native Foods Summit entitled “First FOOD Nations: Creating a Recipe for Change” in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, a major component of the Native Agriculture and Food Systems Initiative sponsored by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation (<http://www.firstnations.org/Publications/NativeFoodSummit2004Report.pdf>). The Cultural Conservancy’s seminal 2005 project “Decolonizing Our Bodies/Nourishing Our Spirits: Native Foods Think-Tank at the Occidental Arts and Ecology Center”

(http://www.nativeland.org/native_circle.html) was instrumental in bringing together Native American cultural practitioners, scholars, teachers, activists, and chefs to explore the vital connection between Native American mental and community health and the restoration of traditional native foods. In 2007, Rescuing America's Food Traditions (RAFT) held a "Native Foods Celebration and Retreat" sponsored by the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy, the Center for Sustainable Environments, Chef's Collaborative, Cultural Conservancy, Native Seeds/SEARCH, Seed Savers Exchange, and Slow Food USA. It featured Native American chef food demonstrations and tastings as well as traditional food demonstrations and booths and was held at the Institute of American Indian Art (IAIA) in Santa Fe. Also in 2007, the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center (IPCC) held the "Connecting Communities: Native Foods and Wellness" event featuring many of the Native chefs included in this ethnography, with food demonstrations and breakout sessions addressing issues of sustaining community and preserving traditional foodways. It featured Winona LaDuke as the keynote speaker and also a participant on a panel with Andrea Hanks from the White Earth Land Recovery Project (WELRP; <http://www.welrp.org/>), Jonette and Danny Sam from the Picuris Pueblo Bison Program (http://www.itcbison.com/featured_tribe.php?id=461), Jill Martus-Ninham and Jeff Metoxen of Tsyunhehkwa from the Oneida Nation (<http://www.oneidanation.org/Tsyunhehkwa/>), and Terrol Dew Johnson and Karen Blaine from Tohono O'odham Community Action (TOCA) in Sells, Arizona (<http://www.tocaonline.org/www.tocaonline.org/Home.html>). As a final example, the Mitsitam Café at the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) opened on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., in 2004. It features Native American foods from the Northern Woodlands, South America, the Northwest Coast, Mesoamerica, and the Great Plains.

This nationwide community includes food producers, chef, cooks, academics, educators, and Native foods advocates and activists who focus on innovative approaches to Native American cuisine and exploring Native American and other methods of food production—an approach that is attentive to environmental resources, global balance, and product quality.

In 2008, through a subsidiary of Slow Food USA and the international Slow Food movement,² the first American collaborative food event to unite the growing sustainable food movement took place in San Francisco. The Slow Food Nation event, with more than eighty-five thousand people in attendance, spanned a three-day period. It included a Victory Garden, a farmers' market, a food bazaar, tastings, workshops, lectures, film screenings, and more, with the common goal of creating a framework for a deeper environmental connection to our food and of inspiring and empowering Americans to build a food system that is sustainable, healthy, and delicious. It also included Native American food exhibits and programs, and an audio exhibit in a traditional California Indian tule hut made by Diana Almendariz (Maidu/Wintun) and Bernadette Zambrano where people could listen to stories from the Traditional Foodways of Native America-Oral Histories Project. The Native foods pavilion, sponsored and curated by The Cultural Conservancy (TCC), provided Native American food tastings to thousands of people for the three-day festival. Native chefs Walter Whitewater (Diné), Sandy Garcia (Ohkay Owingeh and Santa Clara Pueblo),³ and I (Kiowa) prepared bison chile stew, blue corn posole with red chile honey sauce, and Ojibwe wild rice cakes (http://www.nativeland.org/native_circle.html).

In September 2003, the University of Gastronomic Sciences was officially founded with undergraduate and graduate degree programs in economics, communications, and a historical and scientific approach to food culture. Areas of study include international trade and management of food products, and economic and social values of gastronomy, including food ethics and social evaluation, food policy, visual identity, history of food culture, and regional products. The University of Gastronomy, the first of its kind, has included ethnobotany and indigenous food policy from the start, engaging the likes of Nancy Turner (1995, 1997, 1998, 2003, 2005), Carol Counihan (1997, 1998, 1999), and Gary Nabhan (1982, 1985, 1989, 1997, 2002, 2004, 2009, 2010).

Responding to the increased interest, the Maricopa Community Colleges in Tempe, Arizona, began in the spring of 2010 to offer a certificate and a degree program in Applied Science in Sustainable Food Systems. The Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA), a four-year accredited college in Santa Fe, has recently added an Indigenous

Liberal Studies (ILS) degree program, defining Indigenous as “the first peoples who inhabited a region or place prior to colonization, and their values, culture, and way of life” (<http://www.iaia.edu/academics/degree-programs/indigenous-liberal-studies/>). Their degree program is rooted in the experience of American Indian/First Nations of North America, and classes on Native American ethnobotany, traditional food systems, and the anthropology of food are included in their curriculum, which is primarily geared to Native American students from throughout the Americas (<http://www.iaia.edu/cle/>). According to Gary Nabhan (2011), Texas Tech University has more than two hundred and fifty Native American cookbooks in their Southwest Special Collections spanning one hundred and ten years (<http://www.swco.ttu.edu/location/Manuscripts/guide.htm>). Native or indigenous chefs and cuisine are also emerging in Mexico, Peru, Canada, and Australia (Nabhan 2011).

Ethnographic studies of food have also recently appeared. Joy Adapon’s *Culinary Art and Anthropology* (2008) focuses on taste and flavor using an original interpretation of Alfred Gell’s theory of the “art nexus” (Gell 1998). Her research examines the cottage industry barbacoa makers in Milpa Alta, an outlying district of Mexico City. Here women’s work and local festive occasions are examined against the backdrop of material on professional chefs who reproduce “traditional” Mexican cooking in restaurant settings (Adapon 2008). Linda Berzok’s *American Indian Food* (2005) is an extensive look at American Indian food in the United States from the past to the present and an excellent reference book which was used in the Anthropology of Food class taught at IAIA by Stephen Fadden (Mohawk) in 2007 (<http://www.iaia.edu/cle/about/staff/>).

The culinary industry and professional chefs are a new area of ethnographic study. Although books do exist on chefs and what it takes to make a chef, or the soul of the chef (Dornenburg and Page 1996, 2003; Ruhlman 1997, 2000), I have been unable to find studies similar to the work I present here. However, investigating chefs and cuisine is drawing increased attention both from inside the academy and in the general public.

Native American Cuisine’s Discourse and Practice

The discourse and practice of Native American cuisine is a culturally complex phenomenon and a career specialty that is dynamic, fluid, and emergent. By exploring the

notion of cooking as a culturally specific embodied skill and an artistic practice, the biographies included herein provide individual vignettes of chefs and cooks and also set the stage for defining a part of a greater whole, one that defines what Native American cuisine is and how it has evolved over at least the past ten thousand years. It investigates the cultural landscape of food by examining issues of gender, indigenous identity, education, class, access to opportunity, local knowledge, sensory experience, place, performance, and it explores Native American cooks preparing food for ceremonial feasts as well as chefs who cook in five-diamond, five-star, and other award-winning resorts exploring symbolism and meaning. This investigation of cooks and chefs presents each individual story with equal attention and depth. The ethnographic text examines the deep connection between the study of food and the study of the senses. It looks into identity, place, and ways of bodily knowing (Geurts 2002; Stoller 1989, 1997) via foodscapes focused through the senses as experiential knowledge.

The senses are a means for understanding how the cooks and chefs perform and how deeply performative the foods they prepare are. Part of this investigation looks at both the hybrid character of the Native food world and how it is interacting with high cuisine and how high cuisine is interacting with the Native food world in multiple ways. This exploration considers how the fusing of components from both worlds is a large part of how Native American cuisine is being defined. Through deep local knowledge, many of these chefs are combining ingredients in unique and innovative ways to create a new Native American cuisine, which has elements of the past fused with elements from the present. I also examine the traditional indigenous diet of the past, how this diet interacts with place, and how using traditional food knowledge and a traditional diet may help solve contemporary health problems for modern Indian communities now and into the future.

This account is compiled from many years of research, from participant observation spanning 2004 to 2010, and is presented through the eyes of an ethnographer, a chef, and a photographer. It explores Native American cuisine from the perspective of an active practitioner in the culinary arts who cooked alongside many of these chefs during this investigation. I focus on the interrelated themes of a chef's place and his or

her connection to place, and the intercultural aesthetics and performance of Native and non-Native chefs and Native American cooks in contemporary kitchens that are actively practicing Native American cuisine.⁴ *Native American cuisine* is not just a mode established by Native Americans for Native Americans but a series of practices related to foodstuff contexts and histories, which comes out of the encounter with each chef. The non-Native chefs included in this ethnography are from a multitude of backgrounds but all are working with foods that can be defined as Native American cuisine.

I include in this study how each chef “senses” his or her culinary surroundings and investigate each chef’s *bodily interpretation* of what and how they cook.⁵ But this study also includes the themes of cultural identity, health, wellness, relationship to the environment, environmental restoration, and traditional Native and organic foods as parts of a greater whole. As such, I have selected the chefs’ and cooks’ “stories” that provide an essential basis for understanding how Native chefs play a central role in both the maintenance and the expansion of Native American cuisine, Native American traditional foodways, and the passing on of traditional knowledge and cultural practices. I also look at how sustainable living can be achieved and maintained within Native communities, with each of the chefs studied as catalysts for and within Native communities, as well as within the communities where these chefs serve their foods.

I see this as one of the first ethnographic studies of Native American cuisine and the community of Native cooks and chefs that prepare it. I have investigated professional chefs who prepare contemporary foods (foods and food preparations that did not previously exist in Native communities and involve culinary techniques that are primarily based on the French standard). I focus on preparations of what could be perceived as “traditional” foods from Native American communities in the Southwest. The traditional foods to which I refer, which have no doubt changed through time, and in many cases involve ancient culinary techniques, are the foods that existed in these communities prior to any contact with European cultural groups. However, it is not only “tradition” that I emphasize. This is where the intersection of past and present come together and the hybridity becomes recognizable and exposed in the defining of Native American cuisine. What these chefs and cooks are doing is creating innovative and dynamic dishes using

ancestral foods of the Americas. This process is emerging now, as I am researching it. The changes these cooks and chefs are making do not make the foods any less Native; they just make them different than what existed in the past. This is part of the forming of new “traditions” in the area of Native American cuisine.

Precontact foods and their adaptations are explored in detail below, with a focus on their importance and the diversity that existed well before contact with Europeans. This discussion is based on the vast anthropological and historical work that has taken place in the Southwest. Much of the precontact history is based on artifacts, archaeological remains, linguistic and biological evidence, plus tribal folklore that has provided information on past foodways (Berzok 2005; Cajete 1999; Cohen 1977; Galinat 1992; Gumerman 1979; Gunnerson 1979; Hodgson 2001; Mangelsdorf 1964; Mangelsdorf and Reeves 1939; Martin 1963; Mayes 1989; Nabhan 2004; Nelson 2008; Root and De Rochemont 1995; Weatherford 1988, 1991; Winter 1974). Archaeological excavation has yielded remains from storage pits and refuse, including charred faunal and floral remains as well as traces of foods (especially pollen) that have been found in baskets and pottery storage jars, and cooking vessels and utensils (Cordell 1984, 1994; Ford 1975, 1985a, 1985b; Wills 1988). Although this era can also be referred to as “precolumbian,” another Eurocentric term, I have chosen to use the term *precontact*.

The Native groups with whom I work are oral cultures in which information was imprinted and passed on through the spoken tradition of myths, histories, stories, and legends. Tribal historians have committed to memory the details of past experience on food and food cultivation. They know how to plant a variety of heirloom and heritage varieties and protect the fields from predators. These tribal historians know which wild plants are edible and where to gather them. They have knowledge of how to prepare and preserve specific foods, how to hunt and fish, and how to store foods from one season to the next, to ensure that the foods can be eaten throughout the year. And they know how many seeds to save so there is enough to plant the following season. This memory is what provides Native communities their history (Berzok 2005; Cajete 1999, 2000; Mohawk 2008; Nabhan 2004; Nelson 2008).

The multicultural significance of these contemporary foods indicates the hybrid, dynamic, and innovative dimensions that are part of Native American cuisine. The traditional foods and techniques, still evolving, are those that were used prior to contact with Europeans. First-contact foods were introduced into the Southwest by the Spanish and other groups, and five hundred years or so later they are also referred to as traditional (even though they are multicultural) because they are an entrenched part of Native American cuisine and the regions and communities to which they were introduced. Thus, Native American cuisine is a series of practices related to foodstuff contexts and dynamic histories, combining precontact food practices and those that have emerged from encounters with the Spanish, Moors, Jews, etc. This contact between Native communities and the other cultural groups who entered this region more than five hundred years ago can only be defined by addressing the many layers that emerge as they relate to food use (Herrera 1513; Arellano 2006; Nabhan 2004, 2010). It is not one contact but many, with many cultures, over a period of many, many years. The residue in the history of the Southwest from these encounters has evolved to the present day.

In order to set the stage for understanding this encounter, I must stress the very dynamic, very fluid, very emergent, and non-stereotypical components that make up Native American cuisine. This culturally complex picture brings to life the unique biographies of each chef and cook recounted in this ethnography and the stories that are unpacked. Each chef or cook is the synergy of all the components that have historically taken place, from the indigenous foods that were initially present to the foods the Spanish and others brought with them when they first entered the Southwest to the foods imposed on these communities by the U.S. government during the reservation era, when commodity foods were issued to displaced and forcibly relocated tribal communities.

I see this study of foodways as a cultural system, a system of components that contribute to the larger food system that exists today. This larger food system could be construed as a form of global cuisine. *American cuisine*, then, would minimally include contributions from all of the indigenous and immigrant populations that have come to inhabit the United States. I use this definition for American cuisine throughout this work.

My analysis of Native American cuisine begins with the historical trajectory originating approximately ten thousand years ago. I utilize a comprehensive food continuum that includes precontact, first contact, and government-issued foods as a structural component to form a foundation for the research. This provides the background for my own original research, including texts from Native scholars and the ethnographic stories and histories of each chef and cook who prepares this food. The community of contemporary chefs and cooks I studied illustrate culinary expressions, rituals, and practices. Traditional foodways are set in a comparative context between their European counterparts and the Indigenous communities.

And so, my comparative analysis asserts that the modern Native American mind-set must integrate the understanding of Native peoples' evolving traditional relationship with the land, one in which the land is mother, nurturer, and healer and the people are the custodians of the land (Berzok 2005; Cajete 1999; Mohawk 2008; Nelson 2008), with that of the dominant society of the United States where these communities now exist. The Native ideology of the past supported the belief that by taking care of the land people could achieve long-term sustainability. Vandana Shiva stated in her opening speech to the Terra Madre congress of 2006 that

The current system enshrined in the World Trade Organization [and] also enshrined in the World Bank uses the conditionality of structural adjustment and assumes that everything is a commodity, everything has a price, nothing has value. Seed is a commodity, land is a commodity, water is a commodity, people are commodities and food is a commodity. Seed is our life, the land is our life, and every one of us has significance (Shiva 2006).

Similarly, the late John Mohawk, a leader and scholar of the Six Nations Iroquois Confederacy, in an essay entitled "From the First to the Last Bite: Learning from the Food Knowledge of Our Ancestors," states that foods were thought of not only as nutritional sources but also as medicine. Food was a part of a larger system of wellness. He advocated that this wellness was for all members of the community or tribal entity, not just a select few. It wasn't until first contact that food became a commodity that could be bought and sold, thus changing Native ideological views on food and with it the concept of food as medicine.

Indigenous peoples who are part of the food distribution system today, including Native American farmers, indigenous food producers, and chefs and cooks who prepare these Native foods, must often find their own Indigenous ideological views in conflict with that of the multinational food corporations that are primarily ruled by finance.

For some contemporary Native communities as well, a tension exists between these two views: the Indigenous perspective versus the more recent, more industrial viewpoint toward the land and the food that comes from it. While this is not the only outside perspective, it is one of the points of view with which Native communities contend today. These two perspectives are among the many that can be used to define and illuminate components of both the discourse and practice of Native American cuisine. They set the stage for this ethnography and provide an understanding of the depth and social complexities that exist in each chef's individual story and the complexities he or she must face when choosing to work in a commercial kitchen setting while attempting to serve the Native American foods of his or her ancestors.

In many cases, the Native American chefs I interviewed expressed this as a concern. The majority phrased this as "walking between two worlds." Some of the chefs believe their profession exists in a world different from the world or community into which they were born. Their professional life is, for them, a balancing act between the two. I have illustrated these contrasting social views as comprising a multitude of layers that are woven inextricably in the stories of each of the chefs and cooks presented in the following chapters.

As the ethnographer, I have used this dissertation as a unique opportunity to present perspectives not previously documented in an academic environment. In many instances, Native chefs, with very traditional Native American values and ethics, are working and practicing the art of Native American cuisine in commercial kitchens. These kitchen settings are founded on Western ideologies, including Western values and ethics, as well as culinary techniques that follow the French standard of cooking (Escoffier 1903, 1907). Yet these chefs retain portions and components of their own Native ideologies in everything they do and present these through their culinary art form and approach to food.

By working side-by-side with each of these chefs and cooks in a collaborative capacity and using the methods of participant observation, as a professional Native American chef myself I have been able to see, taste, touch, feel, and smell components of their cooking that would not have been possible had I not had professional culinary training. Being in the kitchen, preparing food for Native culinary events, including the Tohono O'odham Community Action (TOCA) fundraiser at LON's at the Hermosa in Scottsdale, Arizona, Kai Restaurant in the Wild Horse Pass Resort and Spa on the Gila River Indian Community outside of Phoenix for two years, in Tucson at Loew's Ventana Canyon Resort, and for the California Indian Basketweaver's Association (CIBA) on the Pala Casino and Resort at the Pala Indian Reservation, for groups ranging from twenty to more than one thousand people, to name a few, has given me a unique perspective to see what each chef does and how each chef operates. I have been able to work with each chef in a kitchen environment as part of a group of Native American guest chefs for a specific event as well as having had the opportunity to work with each chef in his or her own kitchen environment for a variety of events. This research has given me an opportunity to illuminate intimate details of how each chef approaches his or her craft, explore the creative process of how each chef prepares his or her menus, and how each chef expresses the individual aesthetic aspects of their food, making this ethnography unlike any that have preceded it. This is the core of my ethnographic contribution.

Through the multiple layers in this ethnography, I have been able to reveal how each chef gains access to the food they use in their kitchen; how the animals were raised, slaughtered, and processed; where and how the produce was grown; and whether or not the foods they use are from local sources, including farmers that have relationships with companies such as Veritable Vegetable,⁶ a distributor of certified organic produce that offers a large-scale collective alternative to the corporate food system, or from large food corporations such as Sysco and Sodexo.^{7,8} I investigate what issues the chefs must face, specifically concerning the handling of certain types of foods, many of which are considered to be traditional Native American foods, food products, as well as wild or hand-harvested foods. Foods used in a commercial setting that are constructed in Native culture as [sacred] medicine(s) (Buhner 1996) in addition to being a food source are

illuminated in the intricacies of the ethnography that is carefully woven together from each chef's individual biography.

In weaving together these stories, I present them as I would a meal, beginning with the first course and moving on to each successive course so as to present each unique part of the entire meal. My goals have been to weave together each course of this ethnography as distinctly different components that are still part of the entire meal.

The contemporary chefs and cooks work in a range of environments from very traditional outdoor kitchens composed of adobe bread ovens, earthen cooking pits, and open-flame cooking to haute cuisine venues of the highest-quality restaurants and resorts in the United States. This community encompasses Native Americans that range from self-taught chefs and cooks to trained professionals with degrees from the best culinary schools in the United States and abroad, now working in commercial kitchen environments.

This is also a study of how Native American and non-Native chefs and Native American cooks use specific ingredients from a particular region (primarily from the Southwest) and prepare traditional Native American foods. In some instances they prepare their Native ingredients in the same way(s) that their European counterparts established as the standard of contemporary professional cuisine, and in others they prepare their food in both very old and very new, eclectic, unique, and innovative ways. This analysis provides a point of departure from which to conduct an ethnographic study of foods that have existed in this part of the United States for thousands of years yet can be prepared in a contemporary kitchen. Sometimes these foods are prepared exactly as they have been for centuries and in other cases they are altered or adapted to fit the modern kitchen environment. For example, a chef may use a technique or method differently in a contemporary kitchen setting but may seek to retain the inherent flavor of the ingredient's traditional counterpart.

This research also presents a discourse for understanding what this new community of Native American chefs consists of and what this new cuisine is that they are defining via their food preparation. Much of this cultural phenomenon can be interpreted as an expression of their own individual identities, with strong influences

from within each of their Native communities (Lamphere 2007) and their own sense of place (Feld and Basso 1996; Geurtz 2002; Nabhan 1997).

The chapters that follow describe the foods these chefs and cooks prepare. They also explain why they prepare them, while investigating how and why they do so from both an aesthetic (Salvador 1997) and a performance (Bauman 1984, 1986) perspective. I weave together these first elements with each chef's individual sensory components that make up his or her individual approach to Native American cuisine. Since preparing and consuming food is a multi-sensory experience, questions engaging the personal and biographical information, place and connection to place, aesthetics and performance, the senses and bodily interpretation, and identity and community were asked during the fieldwork to understand how each cook or chef uses these components and their senses in the foods they prepare. These sensory issues include the way the body figures in the range of cultural phenomena and focuses on the interplay of the senses rather than on each sense in isolation (Geurts 2002; Howes 2003). This research explores how the senses interact with each other in each chef's relationship to food, what each chef sees or doesn't see when he plates his food (visual), what each chef hears (auditory) (Feld 1982) where the culinary artistry is performed (Dornenburg and Page 1996), what each chef smells (olfactory) and how these smells factor into the food being prepared (Classen, Howes, and Synnott 1994; Nabhan 1982), what each chef likes to touch (tactile) when cooking, and why, as well as how the distinction of individual taste (Bourdieu 1984; Synnott 1993) affects the final dish. I then tie how all of this together and discuss the role place plays in these cooks' and chefs' approaches to food (Jacobsen 2010; Trubek 2008).

The senses are considered in this research not just from a physical perspective but as a physical sensation that is shaped by each chef's personal history. Rather than asking them to reminisce about and focus solely on favorite childhood smells (e.g., Ackerman 1990; Gonzalez-Crussi 1989), I focus on how sensory experience for each chef may be collectively patterned by cultural ideology and practice. In this research, therefore, the senses become a window into cultural expression, a medium in which the values and practices of each chef are enacted and an arena for structuring social roles and interactions (Geurts 2002; Howes 2003).

This study also has implications for investigating such traditional anthropological topics as community, cultural transmission of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) (Nelson 2008:12),⁹ identity, and aesthetics as an expressive mode of communication. The basic premise of this research is to investigate how the chefs' and cooks' expressions help to define Native American cuisine, and to illustrate how the foods they prepare are tied not only to place-based ingredients but to the production of their own cultural identities. Each cultural identity, thus, becomes a component in the aesthetic expression externalized in the foods the chefs and cooks prepare and becomes representative of who the cooks and chefs are. These intricacies are woven together in the chapters of this ethnography.

During my research I conducted open-ended and structured interviews with the cooks and chefs, which provided the majority of the ethnographic information on each participant. Much attention was given to cooking with each of the cooks and chefs, with some of the information coming from observations made while preparing foods for a variety of events. Participant observation included time spent in a commercial kitchen, a community or home environment, and in some instances both. I also participated in the planting, growing, and harvesting of food, which was documented as well.

Because of my status as a professional chef, with professional training in the culinary arts and an active role as chef and owner of my own Native American catering company, Red Mesa Cuisine, LLC, I was permitted (literally—I have the necessary permits) to prepare food and to cook with chefs and cooks in diverse settings. Cooking with them in commercial and or outdoor kitchen(s) for professional as well as community ceremonial events gave me a unique perspective, yet at the same time raises a question of bias stemming from the fact that I am ethnically mixed with Native American and Euroamerican roots,¹⁰ a professional chef, a professional food photographer, and a James Beard Award-winning author.¹¹ Although I acknowledge that the information I present is subject to this bias, the information presented, and the means of getting it, also draws uniquely from this unique positionality.

The Ethnographic “I”

As with ethnographers of the past, positioning myself to report on activities of chefs and cooks has come with advantages and disadvantages. Like Dorrine Kondo in *Crafting Selves: Power, Gender, and Discourses of Identity in a Japanese Workplace*, I find that the eye/I perspective puts the ethnographer in a unique position. Whereas Kondo worked at the Sato Confectionery as a part-time laborer for a year, I first studied the culinary arts just after high school, outside of any Native community, and then began working in restaurants, first in continental cuisine restaurants on Long Island, near where I grew up. Then I moved to the West Coast to attend photography school at Brooks Institute in Santa Barbara. While I attended Brooks, from 1982 to 1985, I cooked nights at the Good Earth Café and then worked double shifts on weekends, cooking at the Summerland Omelet Parlor in the morning and at the Good Earth at night, to put myself through college. Cooking in a commercial kitchen seemed to come naturally to me. I transitioned from cooking to primarily food photography after receiving my BA in 1985, and it seemed natural to move from the commercial kitchen to taking commercial photographs of food for the advertising and publishing industries.

After working for two of the best food photographers in the advertising industry, Gary Sato and Henry Bjoin, as well as running my own advertising studio, I moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico, at the end of 1991. I continued to work with Native communities on documenting their foods and recipes, a project I had begun with members of the Native community in Los Angeles. I now own and operate Red Mesa Cuisine, which features Native-sourced foods and ingredients from a variety of indigenous nations from across the Americas as well as locally sourced and organic foods. I started Red Mesa Cuisine with one of the chefs included in this ethnography, Walter Whitewater from the Diné (Navajo) Nation. Of the Native chefs represented here, Walter is the one I have known the longest and with whom I have worked the most, both in a professional culinary setting and in a ceremonial setting. We have participated in the same Sun Dance for eight years, and I have known his family and extended family for many years.

Chef Walter Whitewater and I met at an Apache coming-of-age ceremony, called a Sunrise Dance, through Gina Thomas, a friend who is San Carlos Apache, Gila River

Pima, and Tohono O'odham. Her daughter, Aleshia Co-Nei-Sen-Ney, was having her Sunrise Dance, and I was asked to help prepare the food for the four-day ceremony in July 1990. This was one of the largest and most important ceremonies for Aleshia, as she transitioned into womanhood. Her mother needed help with the food that needed to be prepared, and she also needed help with the other tasks that had to be done to complete the ceremony. Walter's uncle, Bobby Begay, was dating Gina at the time, and Walter came to help out his uncle. We met while working together on the ceremony and have remained friends and worked together in a variety of circumstances ever since.

I have also known some of the other chefs and cooks presented in this ethnography for many years. They have accepted me as both a colleague and an ethnographer. As noted above, cooking alongside these individuals has given me a unique perspective. This ethnography switches from the "I" to the "eye," and includes the rest of the senses—touch through the chef's hands, smell by the aroma of foods and the actual use of smell in the cooking process, taste through the chef's use of his or her palate, sounds that each chef's hears and experiences in the kitchen, and vision, how each chef looks at and presents his or her food. This last component features the visual and sometimes symbolic components of each serving. My reporting of the senses includes my own as well as how each chef or cook describes them in his or her own words. These experiences have influenced what I see, how I present this work, and give a unique presence to the ethnography. In essence, this is not just a documentation of chefs and cooks, it is an ethnographic work that brings awareness to the shared experiences that are at the same time being studied anthropologically.

Working with other Native chefs has made me more aware of my own identity, my gender in a commercial versus a ceremonial kitchen setting, and my class—how I grew up and how that has impacted what I do and how I do it. This awareness is presented throughout this ethnography with reflexivity between the interaction of the people I am speaking to and myself. That of chef and anthropologist are the identities that I present here. Unique to this ethnography is that, like some of the chefs, I too am managing multiple identities as I conduct my research and as I present it. And although I

am transformed in the process of researching and presenting this material, my interviewees are also transformed.

Thus, as I set the table to present the courses of the meal that make up this ethnography, what emerges is the discourse and practice of Native American cuisine. This process is as “emergent” as the work I conduct. The stories I present are unique in that I am a part of the story, I heard the same sounds of the drums in a ceremonial setting as well as the roaring fans in the commercial kitchens that the chefs did. I worked in the kitchens for hours, collaborating with the chefs in prepping and preparing meals. I tasted the dishes we served and worked collaboratively on how present them to the diners and patrons at fundraiser dinners and special events. I felt nervous in the same way that each chef did as we prepared and plated our food to go out to guests at high-end resorts. I looked at the plates as they came back into the kitchen after each course to see if the food had been eaten. And I presented a course for each of the events I documented, as did all of the chefs I interviewed. This experience was part of my own professional identity as a chef at professional events and a cook at ceremonial events.

What I accomplish here is to take these experiences and transform them into a “backstage tour” of the chefs/kitchens with a detailed eye and closeness that defines a moment that would otherwise not be available. This synthesis of multiple perspectives sets the stage for this ethnography. It enables me to synthesize the history and culture of Native American foods of the Southwest from previous archaeological, ethnobotanical, historical, and ethnographic research as described above. This material informs my ethnography of Native chefs and cooks, which incorporates a method that is new, in the sense that I am a Native American chef and cook studying other Native chefs and cooks in the kitchen. While the contemporary components documented in this ethnography are crucial to the discourse and practice of Native American cuisine, the traditional elements incorporate the ceremonial aspects of Native cooks and chefs, their views and concerns on Native American foods and cuisine, and their role in the discourse and practice of traditional Native foodways.

Dissertation Outline

This dissertation covers a mass of information encompassing a period that spans more than ten thousand years. Theoretical frameworks that include the tradition shaped by Geertzian interpretivism (Geertz 1995; Kondo 1990) is a foundational point of departure for this work, though I make few specific references to it in the text that follows. This work also draws from theoretical approaches that have traditionally been applied to interpreting foodways, such as semiotic, structuralist, materialist, and cultural approaches. I also include a sensory framework, which is relatively new to the anthropological discipline. I use previous works to help structure and frame the original research with the contemporary chefs that I present here. I also use a traditional foods framework in my discussion of the ancestral foods in a contrast comparison approach to the dialogue of Native American cuisine. In one form or another, all of these theoretical frameworks have influenced me, and components of these frameworks are intricately woven into this one ethnography (e.g., Ackerman 1990; Adapon 2008; Bauman 1984; Civitello 2008; Clifford and Marcus 1986; Counihan and Esterik 1997; Feld & Basso 1996; Gabaccia 1998; Geertz 1995; Geurtz 2002; Howes 2003; Jacobsen 2010; Kondo 1990; Korsmeyer 1999; Mauss 1967; Mintz 1996; Nabhan 1982, 1996, 1997, 2004; Nabhan and Fitzsimmons 2011; Nelson 2008; Stoller 1997; Synnott 1993; Tedlock 1983; Trubek 2008).

In chapter 2, I present a history of early food and cooking (Coe 1994; Civitello 2008; Flandrin and Montanari 1999; Tannahill 1988). In chapter 3, I focus on the historical context of the ideas of cuisine, and I define the term *chef* using the professional standards set by the French as well as other Europeans in Europe (Adapon 2008; Arnott 1975; Bottero 2004; Child 2001; Civetello 2008; Dornenburg 1996, 2003; Douglas 1975, 1997; Fischler 1988, 1993; Flandrin 1999; Goldstein 2008; Inness 2001; Kelly 2004; Larousse-Bordas/HER 2000; Ruhlman 1997, 2000; Sonnenfeld, Flandrin, and Montanari 1999; Tannahill 1988).

In chapter 4, I describe and summarize the history of Native foods history in the Southwest. I draw from ethnographic works by key scholars in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries (Barreiro 1989; Berzok 2005; Bottero 2004; Castetter and Underhill 1935;

Castetter and Bell 1942; Civetello 2008; Coe 1994; Cordell 1984, 1994; Cushing 1920; Driver 1961; Dunmire and Tierney 1995, 1997; Flandrin, Montanari and Sonnenfeld 1999; Ford 1975, 1981, 1985a, 1985b, 1994; Foster & Cordell 1992; Galinat 1992; Gunnerson 1979; Mangelsdorf, MacNeish, and Galinat 1964; Martin 1963; Mangelsdorf and Reeves 1939; Moerman 1998; Olsen and Schaal 1985; Root 1980; Root and De Rochemont 1995; Sonnenfeld 1999; Stahl 1984, 1989; Stevenson 1915; Tannahill 1988; Weatherford 1988, 1991). I also present the food continuum of Native American cuisine that I have used as a model for interpreting historical and contemporary Native American cuisine: what it was in the past, how it has evolved, and where it is going. This continuum is based on original research and is the basis for my definition of Native American cuisine. This historical continuum is founded on the trajectory of the evolving Native American diet from 10,000 years ago to the period of first contact with Europeans to foods issued by the U.S. government, and finally to the emerging Native American cuisine that chefs and cooks are preparing today.

The indigenous diet of the American Southwest is rich, diverse, and highly developed. The complex cuisine was based on a combination of local foods from wild sources, both plants and animals, as well as a sophisticated and intricate agricultural system of cultivated plants, including corn, beans, and squash and limited domesticated animals such as the turkey. My research is founded upon the work of ethnobotanists and anthropologists as well as by other culinary professionals, nutritionists, and food educators that have focused on Native American foods of the Southwest (Barreiro 1989; Barnard 2010; Barnard and Brown 2003; Berzok 2005; Buhner 1996; Calloway 1981; Castetter and Underhill 1935; Castetter and Bell 1942; Cattle and Schwerin 1985; Coe 1994; Cohen 1977; Cordell 1984, 1994; Cox 1991; Dunmire 1995, 1997; Ford 1981, 1985a, 1985b, 1994; Foster & Cordell 1992; Galinat 1992; Hodgson 2001; Kuhnlein, Erasmus, and Spigelski 2009; Martin 1963; Moerman 1998; Nabhan 2004; Nelson 2008; Ortiz 1983, 1994; Robson 1980; Root and De Rochemont 1995; Weatherford 1988, 1991; Wills 1988; Winter 1974).

The new foods introduced after contact with the Spanish changed the indigenous diet in this region forever. “Old World” as well as Mesoamerican foods were

incorporated into the existing diet just as indigenous foods from this region were incorporated into the diet of the Spanish settlers. Many of these first-contact foods have been intricately woven into the fabric of Native communities and are now inseparable from the identities of those tribal nations and local communities. A good example is the introduction of sheep to the Diné (Navajo). Sheep have become so intricately woven into almost every aspect of Navajo lifeways that they are now a traditional Native food (Zolbrod 1984).

Approximately one hundred to one hundred and fifty years ago, depending on the tribal community, the U.S. government began issuing foods to dislocated and forcibly relocated tribal groups on Indian reservations. These commodity foods included white flour, lard, white sugar, blocks of cheese, and coffee. In many instances, the land that had previously been used for hunting game or planting crops was taken away as part of treaty agreements, making traditional food sources scarce for the Native peoples who once occupied those ancestral homelands.

With this displacement, and the government-issued commodity foods, the Native diet changed once again. Foods such as fry bread and the Indian taco, now iconic, were born from these foods. Commodity foods have been particularly detrimental to Native people's health and wellness.

The most recent category is the emerging Native American cuisine, which is part of the larger Native American foods movement that aims to move away from the use of these introduced foods and to return to the traditional and ancestral foods of the precontact and early contact periods (Harjo 2005; Mihesuah 2003; Milburn 2004; Nelson 2008). This new Native American cuisine, also called the Native food revitalization, of which Native cooks, Native chefs, intercultural chefs, farmers, food producers, and food procurers are all a part, is a fusing of culinary elements from the past with contemporary food components. It contains innovative uses of Native foods and place-based ingredients as well as traditional uses of Native food dishes, recipes, and food ingredients. It is a "new tradition" (Frank 2011), culture-specific to the Native communities of the Southwest. Here we see a vital, emerging, dynamic movement of Native food advocates working together to keep culinary traditions of the past alive and move these foods and

practices into the future, literally to save them from extinction, while at the same time maintaining cultural identity and place-based relationships with them. In other words, by drawing from tradition and using innovation and creativity to construct something new, tradition becomes dynamic. Thus, traditional and contemporary knowledge and practices are fused into a hybrid. This new Native American cuisine is deeply performative. This interaction links the senses to performance in new ways while also being embedded with deep local knowledge. Because this new Native American cuisine is still emerging, more work in this area of culinary anthropology needs to be conducted.

The food continuum model I present here, and use to define Native American cuisine, is now being incorporated into the curriculum in several institutions. It is being used in professional culinary schools such as the Classic Cooking Academy in Scottsdale, Arizona. The Classic Cooking Academy has a Native American curriculum as part of its culinary program. The model is also being used at the Santa Fe Indian School culinary program (grades 7 thru 12) and at the Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA), a four-year college in Santa Fe, New Mexico, to help students define indigenous traditional foods and decolonize modern Native American diets (Mihesuah 2003; Wilson and Yellow Bird 2005). At IAIA, Thomas Antonio, in the Essential Studies Department, is planning to implement a required “Indigenous Concepts of Traditional Foods and Wellness”, class (Email to author, May 25, 2011) in the spring of 2012.

In chapter 5, I show how the traditional Native American diet is being revitalized for improved health and wellness among tribes in the southwestern United States. Information is presented from doctors (Barnard 2003, 2007, 2010) and tribal community members on what this means in their own communities. The Native American cuisine movement and Native foods movement are discussed in detail.

In chapter 6, I describe the research I conducted in my fieldwork with Native cooks, Native chefs, and intercultural chefs. The performance and practice of Native American cuisine in the ethnography is examined by investigating food and ceremony, native cooks (women), professional chefs, the difference between Native American cuisine and Native American foodways, and foods that are meant to be shared and foods not to be shared. I present an example of an important Native American traditional food,

piki. I discuss how food is intimately associated with local knowledge and cultural expression. I introduce how the role of food in ceremony, in the construction of place, in ritual, and in the construction of individual identity plays an important part in defining what and how the Native cooks and chefs prepare food and how these foods when brought into the contemporary kitchen setting retain their meaning. I define what Native American cuisine is in relationship to Native American foodways and discuss how, as I present the individual portraits of Native cooks and chefs, these portraits help define what Native American cuisine is and how it is emerging.

In chapter 7, I focus solely on the Native cooks (who in this study were all women), introducing who they are and what local food knowledge is to them. They represent various communities: Seba Dalkai, Arizona, on the Navajo reservation; Pinon, Arizona, also on the Navajo reservation; and Ohkay Owingeh (Pueblo) and Picuris Pueblo, both in New Mexico. Components of Native American agriculture and wild plant conservation are also described. Here I introduce two distinct types of plant food procurement: cultivating crops and the gathering and stewardship of wild foods (Berzok 2005; Brascoupe 1999; Buchanan 1997; Buhner 1996; Nabhan 1989). This information is woven into the Native women cooks' stories through the types of food they are using and how they are using them. I link place, performance and storytelling to how the Native cooks express themselves and how traditional foodways are an important component of culture and the perpetuation of Native American culture. I present the intangible essence of cooking, something that goes into the food via touch, and illustrate how the taste of place or *terroir* (Trubek 2008; Jacobsen 2010) plays a role in the place based Native foods these cooks prepare. I establish in the individual portraits how food for these Native cooks is representational of who they are in terms of identity.

Chapter 8 describes three specific events: a Native American Church Peyote Ceremony Feast,¹² a Sun Dance Ceremony Feast, and the Feast Day of San Lorenzo at Picuris Pueblo. This chapter weaves together the idea of food as a symbolic marker of identity that extends beyond ethnic and regional boundaries. Food in these three ceremonial feasts becomes the element that binds together community and extended community members through the act of eating and is representational of local knowledge.

Place plays an important role in each of these ceremonies and is discussed. The performance and practice of Native American foodways is examined by investigating how the senses are a way of cultural knowing and a mechanism for triggering bodily memory.

In chapter 9, I introduce the experienced Native American chefs of both genders who are performing Native American cuisine in contemporary Southwest kitchens and address the important role they play as pioneers in the development of the practice of Native American cuisine. Chapter 10 presents the younger generation of Native American chefs, again of both genders, who are recent culinary graduates moving into the professional field of cooking and are still in the process of developing their careers. Chapter 11 establishes the non-Native or intercultural chefs in commercial kitchens and contextualizes the role these chefs play in the Native American cuisine genre. I focus on two of the most important chefs in the place-based Southwest foods movement and briefly introduce other key players.

In chapter 12, I describe specific events in which the chefs performed in a variety of venues and collaborative dinner events. Woven through each chef's ethnography are stories of who they are and how they perform their foodscapes. I address issues of gender, indigenous identity, education, and place and connection to place while also interweaving components of the study of food and the study of the senses. I show how the two are deeply connected through and with each chef's story. Experiential knowledge via sensory acts is used to interpret and understand ceremonial events and collaborative guest-chef dinners. In both cases, multiple cooks and chefs are working together in a single location for a single event or ceremony. In the case of the chefs, the events focus around fundraising dinners for the Tohono O'odham Community Action (TOCA). These events set the stage for analysis, introducing the experience the chefs and cooks make while performing, as well as understanding their performance acts as expressions of identity and as a part of their bodily way of knowing via their senses. These stories illustrate each cook and chef's place and connection to place. They expose their aesthetics and performance, their sensory and bodily connection to their foods and food

memories, as well as illustrating how identity and community are integrally tied to who each chef is and how he or she expresses him- or herself through food.

I present information on the modern Native American diet and look at health issues. A variety of concerns were shared by both the cooks and chefs, and through these ethnographic accounts I am able to analyze how indigenous foods have the potential to promote health (Cajete 1999; Calloway 1981; Kuhnlein 2009; Mohawk 2008; Nabhan 2004; Nelson 2008). This concept, though not a major theme, is woven throughout the ethnographic portraits. More important in this work are the chefs' and cooks' foodscapes and stories, and the emergence of the new Native American cuisine.

Finally, in chapter 13, the conclusion, I examine how Native American cuisine fits into the global context and discuss what lies ahead. Where do Native chefs fit into the larger cuisine of the United States, into American cuisine? How will Native foods be defined in the future? I conclude by looking at this research in terms of practical outreach through public anthropology. Issues of concern include the contemporary practice of traditional agriculture in the Southwest, the Native foods revitalization movement, what role Native American and non-Native chefs and cooks play in changing American food habits and possibly food policy issues in their own communities, and how they are working toward health and wellness using traditional food knowledge to solve contemporary health problems.

Chapter 2

A History of Early Food and Cooking

Evidence from prehistory suggests that humans have been cooking their food for hundreds of thousands of years. Linda Civitello, in *Cuisine and Culture* (2008), suggests that once humans had fire, cooking began. Archaeologists generally agree that fire was used first for cooking (Flandrin and Montanari 1999) and that other uses appeared later. But how, then, did cooking really begin? Some anthropologists suggest by accident. One early but long-since discarded theory in Charles Lamb's "A Dissertation upon Roast Pig" (1823) proposed that an out-of-control fire burned a hut down and accidentally cooked some pigs. The owner tried the cooked meat and liked it. Another theory is that hungry hunters subsequently ate meat from animals killed by forest fires. Still others think that cooking was a more deliberate, controlled act (Civitello 2008:3; Flandrin and Montanari 1999:17).

For this research, however, the more important question is, once cooking began, when did it change from cooking to cuisine? Historian Michael Freeman's defines *cuisine* as "a self-conscious tradition of cooking and eating . . . with a set of attitudes about food and its place in the life of man." Therefore, cuisine requires not just a style of cooking, but, according to some historians, it also requires an awareness about how the food is prepared and consumed (Civitello 2008:3; Flandrin and Montanari 1999). It must also involve a wide variety of ingredients, more than may be locally available, as well as both cooks and diners who are willing to experiment, which means that they are not constrained by tradition. Civitello states, "Since early humans were still eating to survive, and had no control over their food supply, it was not cuisine" (2008:3). Whether or not it came as a gastronomic revelation can only be guessed, but because heat does help to release proteins and carbohydrates and break down nutritional fiber, cooking increases the nutritive value of many foods and also makes some foods edible that would otherwise not be (Tannahill 1988). Not knowing exactly how people mastered the art of cooking with fire, archaeologists can only pinpoint approximately when cooking with fire occurred: somewhere between five hundred thousand and one million years ago (Flandrin and Montanari 1999). Carleton Stevens Coon argued that cooking was "the decisive

factor in leading man from a primarily animal existence into one that was more fully human” (1955:63). Some scholars argue that improved health must have been one of the many results from the discovery of cooking (Tannahill 1988).

Food has played a part in religion by means of dietary taboos, distinguishing one belief system from another. In science, it has played a part as the foundations for early chemistry. In technology, the waterwheel, originally used for milling grain, became a tool of the industrial revolution. And in medicine, where food(s) were considered to have medicinal qualities, healing was based largely on dietary principles well into the eighteenth century (Tannahill 1988).¹³

Prehistoric hunters may have disguised themselves in skins to hunt herd animals such as deer, elk, reindeer, and bison, much like the Native Americans did well into the nineteenth century. When it came to hunting, however, the strongest and most active members of a community, usually the young men, were the ones who qualified as hunters, leaving the fishing, gathering, and plant collecting to the women and the young. Elder members of the community are believed to have been occupied with making tools, brewing medicinal potions, and caring for and instructing children. Foodstuffs such as mollusks on the coast, seaweed, snails, small turtles, roots, greens, acorns and other nuts, and berries were gathered according to the season and the region in which a tribe or community lived.

After the last glaciers receded approximately 10,000 years ago, farming and a sedentary lifestyle allowed humans to have foods that they did not have access to as nomads or hunter-gatherers. Techniques such as roasting over an open fire, pit roasting (digging a hole and putting food into the pit with burning embers or hot stones and then covering it), and spit roasting (placing a carcass on a stick and turning it over a fire until it was completely cooked)¹⁴ became established cooking methods.

As a result of changes in climate and the extirpation of several indigenous species in the Americas, including the mammoth and the giant sloth, which were wiped out by about 9000 BC, possibly because of overhunting, meteor showers, or climate change, the descendants of the first Americans began to rely on primitive forerunners of vegetables like the potato, the cush-cush yam, and the sweet varieties of manioc (Tannahill 1988).

In the Tehuacan Valley of Mesoamerica, about 7000 BC, people who were living in rock shelters and gathering wild maize had already begun to use stone cooking utensils. These were situated in the center of the cooking hearth, and because they were too heavy to move they were left there even when the inhabitants moved. In other areas of the Americas, animal stomachs and other materials were made into heatproof and waterproof containers that could be hung over or placed in the fire for cooking (Tannahill 1988:15).

It is impossible to know exactly when human beings first began to dig for their food as well to gather above-ground plant parts. While gathering plants became an integral part of early survival, the ability to cook plants using fire opened up new possibilities for human nutrition. Plants that are toxic in their raw state could be consumed after cooking. Many new types of plants became important both nutritionally and economically, especially after they had been domesticated (Flandrin and Montanari 1999; Stahl 1989).

Plants that are poisonous in their natural state but edible after a variety of preparations could now be used. For example, cassava, also called yuca and manioc, requires extensive processing, including washing, soaking, and/or cooking in order to eliminate bitter or toxic juices. Indigenous populations in the American tropics several thousand years BP were already using it. It was most likely first domesticated in west-central Brazil, where wild populations of *Manihot esculenta* sp. *flabellifolia* can still be found (Olsen 1999). By 6600 BC, manioc pollen appears in the Gulf of Mexico lowlands and was probably cultivated there by the ancestral Maya (Olsen 1999).¹⁵ Rouse and Cruxent reported finding manioc griddle shards from the period around 2700 BC at Rancho Peludo in the Lake Maracaibo Basin.

Corn, *Zea mays*, also called maize, derived from the Taino name for the plant, is another very important domesticate, and among the most important of the cultivated foods, especially for Native populations in the Americas. Since its domestication, diets in much of the Americas (not in the Northwest, in low-lying deserts, or on the coasts) have been centered almost entirely around this plant. Complete domestication—the propagation and maintenance of plants that could not survive or reproduce in the wild—

came fairly late in the sequence of historical food events. However, the use of corn ultimately led to the practice of agriculture in some regions of the Americas, and to the cultivation and tending of plants that are now genetically different from their wild ancestors (Coe 1994). Scientists are still debating the date, but evidence from San Marcos Cave in the Tehuacan Valley of southern Puebla in Mexico suggests it was first cultivated thousands of years ago (Mangelsdorf 1964:538-545). Other sources suggest that domesticated corn may be even older, dating back as far as 9,000 years ago. This conclusion is based on field interviews (1996) conducted with indigenous elders on corn and corn varieties in Tarija, Bolivia. Dr. Tito Claure Iriarte of the Instituto Boliviano de Tecnologia Agropecuaria (IBTA) suggests the older dates are more likely accurate for this region. His findings are supported by similar interviews in Pueblo, Mexico, conducted by Roman de Jesus Barajas Carlos of the Campo Agrícola Experimental Tecamachalco (1996), suggesting that corn is older than some scientists suggest.

Sometime around 5500 BP (Nabhan 2004), inhabitants of the Tamaulipas Mountains in Mexico had begun to domesticate a number of plants, including the summer squash (*Cucurbita* spp.), in which both the flesh and seeds are eaten; the field pumpkin (*Cucurbita pepo*); the crookneck squash (*Cucurbita moschata*); the chilli¹⁶ pepper (*Capsicum*), a spice¹⁷ now used more than ever for seasoning; and the bottle gourd (*Lagenaria siceraria*), whose young fruits can be harvested and used as a vegetable but in the mature plant the dry, hard-shelled fruit is highly valued for use as a water container in many tribes and communities, including the Havasupai, Hopi, Keres, Mohave, Navajo, Papago, Pima, and Yuma (Moerman 1998:294). Foods such as runner beans (*Phaseolus coccineus*) and agave (*Agave americana*), also called the American century plant, as well as *A. decipiens*, *A. deserti*, *A. palmeri*, *A. parryi*, *A. schottii*, and other agave varieties were gathered by the San Carlos, Mescalero, Western and White Mountain Apache, Comanche, Hualapai, Havasupai, Mohave, Navajo, Paiute, Papago, Pima, Ute, Yavapai, and Yuma (Moerman 1998:52-54) as an important food alongside these early domesticates.

Although processes such as heating, seasoning, marinating, grinding, slicing, filtering, and other cooking techniques were intended to preserve food, they also made it

more digestible and safer to eat. New techniques, such as the use of earthenware pottery, made it possible to cook food in boiling water. At first these techniques may not have been used to enhance the taste of food, but over time they led to the beginnings of gastronomy, and out of this came distinctive cuisines (Civitello 2008). Cooking no longer served just to make food edible.

Nabhan suggests that the process of fermenting goes back 9,000 years. In the Americas, corn is made into *tesguino*, a fermented corn beer, by the Tarahumara (Raramuri). *Chicha*, another fermented corn beverage, is made in the Andes region of Bolivia and Peru. The Apache also made corn into a fermented beverage. Agave was processed into *pulque*, a milk-colored, fermented sap of the maguey plant and a traditional native beverage of Mexico (Moerman 1998). The Western Apache made a drink of fermented agave juice (*Agave palmeri*). The crowns were cooked, fermented in a vessel, ground, boiled, and the liquor again fermented. The juice was strained and mixed with “tiswin water,” a liquor of fermented maize. The White Mountain Apache used *Agave decipiens* and *A. americana*, which they fermented into an intoxicating drink (Moerman 1998:52-54).

Squash was stored underground in earthen coolers, and other types of squash were dried in rings or strips to be eaten throughout the year. Legumes and maize were mixed together to make a nutritious meal and also formed a complete protein. In parts of Mesoamerica, boiling water was added to ground acorn kernels, often in a mixture with a variety of herbs and ground seeds, which was eaten as a meal itself or used as the base for a beverage. Called *pinole*, by the Spanish, it comes from an Aztec word for coarse flour made from ground, toasted acorn kernels. In southeastern Mexico and Central America it is known as *pinol* or *pinolillo*, and it is considered the national beverage of Nicaragua.

Ground corn is used by the Hopi to make wafer bread. At Isleta Pueblo, ground corn was used to make a slightly intoxicating beverage. The Navajo make corn into cakes, which are baked in a pit, and the Pima boil corn with ashes, dry it, parch it with coals, and make it into a gruel (Moerman 1998:610-611).

Animals were cooked “barbacoa” style, which originated in the Caribbean with the Taino *barabicu*, from which the term “barbecue” derives. Utilizing the many and

varied *mole* sauces (derived from *mulli* or *molli*, the Nahuatl word for sauce or stew) and *salsa de molcajete*, the first barbecue sauces, game, turkey, and fish along with beans and other side dishes were cooked together slowly in a pit for many hours. The barbecue evolved over time and is a truly American technique.

With the introduction of new cooking implements, new techniques were utilized. Because many of these techniques required special skills, cooks, particularly in Europe, became a highly skilled professional class who served apprenticeships to learn their trade. They were specialized, with cooks being distinct from bakers or pastry cooks. Their services were affordable only by the wealthy; a royal household might have several hundred cooks and pastry chefs who assisted in the preparation of meals (Civitello 2008; Bottero 2004).

By the first millennium BC, Mesopotamians were giving elaborate banquets to advertise their power and wealth (Civitello 2008; Flandrin and Montanari 1999), and in the Americas Mesoamericans had developed intricate dishes and elaborate meals from the vast array of ingredients and culinary processes they had developed. In the cuisine of the upper-class Romans, breakfast and dinner were the main meals. Dinner was often quite elaborate, with courses that included appetizers and desserts. It was called a *convivium*. The Romans, like the Greeks, emphasized the guest-host relationship and used the word *hospes*, meaning “guest” or “host,” which is the foundation for our word “hospitality.” It was not uncommon for an elaborate convivium to last all night (Civitello 2008:40).

People in every region have chosen among the different foods that nature has offered. These choices are reflections of the different cultures and their food preferences, techniques, and preparations. For example, Europeans never developed a taste for insects, yet people in some cultures in South America, Africa, and Asia do. An analysis of digestive remains from one prehistoric site shows that indigenous Mexicans were not averse to a meal of grasshoppers, ants, or termites (Brothwell 1969). The Scottish eat haggis, a traditional dish made from the organs of sheep mixed with oats; the English have a specialty of turtle soup; and the French eat frogs and snails. Since sheep, turtles, frogs, and snails are found throughout Europe, these differences are primarily cultural.

By the same token, animals such as pigs, shellfish, and crustaceans are considered impure by Jews and Muslims, while Hindus are forbidden to eat the flesh of any animal, making these acts a religious taboo. Thus, although many foods were available to humans, cultural and religious rules guide their choices (Flandrin and Montanari 1999). These distinct choices have become the unique characteristics that make up the cuisines of the regions occupied today by each cultural group.

Chapter 3

Historical Context of Cuisine and the Defining of a Chef

The word “cuisine,” which we use today to define food from various geographic regions, is often associated with a specific culture. The word in English was borrowed from the French, meaning “cooking, culinary art, kitchen.” Its Latin root is the word *coquere*, meaning “to cook,” and it refers to a specific set of cooking traditions and practices. For example, *cuisine de Provence* is the food of the Provence region in France. Ingredients that are available locally, or through trade primarily influence cuisines. They usually vary by season and can also be affected by religious food laws and fasts. World cuisines are traditionally divided into regions based on the use of major foodstuffs, especially grains.

For example, in Central and South America, maize (corn), is the dominant grain, used in both its fresh and dried forms; the cuisine(s) from these areas almost all have corn as the dominant ingredient. In northern Europe, wheat and rye and some animal fats predominate. In contrast, southern Europe’s use of olive oil has influenced the cuisine of that region, and rice is now a very important grain there. A more localized example of this is illustrated in the cuisines of Italy. In some parts in the north of Italy, butter and rice dominate the cuisine, while in some parts of southern Italy, wheat pasta and olive oil are dominant. However, in Liguria, farina, chickpeas, bread, and polenta are major food ingredients. The regional cuisines of these areas can be defined by the use of these major ingredients combined with other seasonal local ingredients.

As cuisine(s) become more regionalized, these provincial dishes are termed “traditional cuisine” and are very specific to a region of a country, distinct from the cuisine of the country as a whole. A good example is the southern coast of Sicily, which only recently became part of southern Italy. While wheat pasta and olive oil are used in the cuisine of that area, as in most of southern Italy, traditional cuisine(s) borrowed from Arabs, Greeks, Irish, and Albanians (Nabhan 2011) are apparent in the use of specific seafood ingredients found only in that part of the country. According to John Gambini,¹⁸ the chef and owner of Baby Moon Restaurant in Westhampton Beach, on New York’s Long Island, a nationally known Sicilian dish made with pasta and sardines, called *pasta*

con le sarde, is from the area where he grew up. “Every year in the spring, bluefin tuna return to the Mediterranean, and we have a spring tuna fishing festival called ‘mattanza del tonno,’ when the bluefin return.”¹⁹ The origins of this bluefin tuna rite are Phoenician and Arabic; it is also reported in Morocco, Tunisia, Lebanon, Crete, Cyprus, and Malta (Nabhan 2011), and it is now a part of the area where Gambini grew up. Thus, while the area where he grew up uses ingredients consistent with the cuisine of southern Italy, localized traditional cuisine(s) exist as well. A food festival in his village focuses solely on the migrating bluefin tuna, and the people there have created numerous dishes that feature this ingredient, which the villagers prepare only in the spring when the tuna return to the area. Ritual, thus, plays an important part in the cuisine of this area. These traditional cuisine(s) represent a coherent tradition of food preparation arising from the kitchens and lives of the people in a localized area over an extended period of time.

Festive meals, special holiday foods, and traditional food activities are integral to the Italian way of life (Rauche 1988:208). “The symbolic power of food is celebrated in the expression, *A tavola mai s’invecchia* [At the table no one ever grows old]. Food has the power to stop time and the normal passing of life.” In his essay on an Italian-American festival in Hartford, Connecticut, Rauche describes how Sicilian immigrants, arriving primarily between the late 1800s through 1925, brought their ideas of the importance of food and food festivals with them to the United States.

Although the definition of “cuisine” is European in its origin, it is applicable not only to European cultures but also to indigenous cultures all over the world. A major part of my research is based on the idea that indigenous cultures, specifically Native American tribes in the American Southwest, have cuisines, including local “traditional cuisines,”²⁰ which developed over time and are distinct to specific areas. These Native American cuisines have traditionally used a variety of foods specific to each culture group and are primarily based on ecological regions zones. Native American cuisine(s) utilized seasonal ingredients that were cultivated, gathered, or hunted in a local radius of about twenty-five to two hundred and fifty miles (Nabhan 1987, 1996, 2002, 2004). These culture groups had culinary techniques that allowed them to dry, save, store, and utilize harvested foods in their daily diets (Cordell 1984, 1994). The development of

these cuisines enabled ancestral Native American cultures to settle in specific regions, remain primarily sedentary (although some groups did have and still have summer and winter camps), and develop cultural practices around the harvest of specific foods, all of which were unique to the Southwest region (Castetter and Bell 1942; Castetter and Underhill 1935; Coe 1994; Cohen 1977; Cordell 1984; Cushing 1920; Dunmire and Tierney 1995; Ford 1985a, 1985b; Gunnerson 1979; Martin 1963; Moerman 1998; Nabhan 1984, 2004, 2009, 2011; Ortiz 1979; Whiting, Dobyns, Hevly, and Euler 1981; Wills 1988).

One example of a food traditional to the Pueblo communities of the Southwest is blue corn flour. This precontact foodstuff existed before contact with the Spanish or any other European group. It is grown in all nineteen existing Pueblos of New Mexico, among the Hopi in Arizona, on the Diné (Navajo) reservation in New Mexico and Arizona, in areas of the Indé (Apache), on the Hualapai reservation, and by the Rarámuri or Tarahumara of northern Mexico, to name a few. Varieties of blue corn adapted to the upland or mountain environments are grown throughout the region.²¹ For example, blue corn is primarily grown in the uplands of the Mogollon Rim, the upper Rio Grande, the White Mountains, and the Sierra Madre, where the blue pigments are adaptations to shorter cooler growing seasons. The blue pigments are seldom seen in the desert corn of the Yaqui, O'odham, or southern New Mexico (Nabhan 2011). This corn has a distinct flavor. Depending on where it is grown and the type of corn, different dishes are created from the cornmeal.²² On Tesuque Pueblo in northern New Mexico, a traditional blue corn porridge called *chaquewa* in the Tewa language is made from finely ground blue corn flour, culinary ash,²³ and water (Frank 2002; Kavena 1981). It is cooked over a flame until it has thickened and it is served hot, sometimes alone and sometimes with red chile powder, red chile sauce, sweetened with a little sugar, or served with fresh fruit. In the small town of Pinon, on the Diné (Navajo) reservation in Arizona, the same dish made with the same ingredients is called *taa' niil* in the Diné language. In both communities it is made with these three ingredients or, when culinary ash is not available, with just finely ground blue cornmeal flour that has been toasted, and water. This recipe is an example of a traditional cuisine dish that is found nowhere else in the United States.

Traditional cuisines are shaped by climate and by human genetic need (Nabhan 2004:4). Climate in large measure determines the native raw materials that are available in a particular region, as well as economic conditions. In the case of human genetics, there are dynamic connections between our culinary predilections, our genes, the diets of our ancestors, and the places that our ancestral cultures called home for extended periods of time (Nabhan 2004:1). Economic conditions influence trade in imported foods. They also affect foods considered to be a delicacy that are not abundant in a specific region. Religious laws also affect foods of a particular region when there are precise dietary rules requiring or prohibiting certain foods, thus affecting the traditional cuisine of a particular culture group.

Place also plays an important role in cuisine, taste, and ultimately food. The fundamentalist mode always begins with a defined place, tracing the taste of place back from the mouth to the plants and animals and ultimately the soil. Amy Trubek uses the French term *terroir* as a category that frames perceptions and practices—a foodview with agrarian roots for framing and explaining people’s relationship to the land, be it sensual, practical, or habitual (Trubek 2008:18). As the agriculturalist Olivier de Serres stated in his seventeenth-century treatise, places (whether the land of your ancestors or land that has recently been acquired) make unique tastes, and in turn such flavor characteristics and combinations give those places gastronomic renown (Trubek 2008:19). Thus cuisines are at the heart of the soil and the roots of the plants and animals that have traditionally fed culture groups of specific regions, or *terroir*. Jacobsen, in *American Terroir*, states that locavores tend to use *terroir* as a means of promoting local foods, but that regionalism, tradition, and *terroir* are not the same thing. “Tradition is a good indicator of *terroir*, especially in Europe, where they have had centuries to work out which agricultural products do best in a given place, but *terroir* need not be traditional” (Jacobsen 2010:5). He gives the example of American wines, which come from new and surprising places that have no history of growing grapes.

As cuisines became more culture-specific over time, defining cuisine becomes increasingly important in professional cooking. This was especially evident in Europe, where the aristocracy and dominant class influenced elite cuisines and who had access to

them (Bourdieu 1984). Definitions were developed within the cooking profession to provide structure and consistency in foods created for and consumed by the aristocracy and later by the bourgeois class. These “high cuisines,” which became known as *haute cuisine* (literally, “high cooking” in French), were prepared primarily by professional chefs in commercial kitchens in the finest hotels, castles, palaces, and grand restaurants (Bourdieu 1984).

Classical cuisine was conceived and popularized in the early 1900s by Georges Auguste Escoffier (1903, 1907). His guide, *Le Guide Culinaire*, issued in several editions, remained the dominant orthodoxy until it was undermined by the *nouvelle cuisine* movement (“new cuisine” in French), an approach to cooking and food presentation that is characterized by lighter, more delicate dishes and an increased emphasis on presentation. Nouvelle cuisine and classical cuisine are both forms of haute cuisine.

In the 1740s, the work of Vincent La Chapell, Francois Marin, and Menon was described as nouvelle cuisine, and even in the 1880s and 1890s the cooking of Escoffier was described using the same term. The modern usage is often attributed to Henri Gault and Christian Millau, who in the 1960s used the term *nouvelle cuisine* to describe the cooking of Paul Bocuse, Jean and Pierre Troisgros, Michel Guérard, Roger Vergé, and Raymond Oliver, who were students of Fernand Point, considered by many to be the father of modern French cuisine (Mennell 1996:163-164). In the United States, the term is used to describe a type of cuisine which took shape in the 1970s.

Escoffier conceived of classical cuisine as a codified grammar of culinary practice: a *product* can be *cooked* in different ways, *served* with different sauces, and *accompanied* with different fillings. He is a legendary figure among chefs and gourmets and was one of the most important leaders in the development of modern French cuisine. Much of Escoffier’s technique was based on that of Antoine Careme, a French chef and author in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries who is often thought of as the first celebrity chef (Kelly 2004). He is most well known for simplifying and codifying the style of cooking known today as haute cuisine, the high art of French cooking central to France’s national cuisine. Haute cuisine, also classified as *grande cuisine*, is

characterized by elaborate preparations and presentations; large meals of small, often very rich courses; extensive wine cellars; and large, hierarchical, and efficiently run service staffs as are primarily found in the grand restaurants and hotels of the western world. Antoine Careme was primarily a chef to members of Parisian high society, including Napoleon, and he is credited with many aspects of culinary genius in Europe from trivial to theoretical, and for thoroughly revising the culinary tastes of the upper classes of Europe (Bourdieu 1984).

Escoffier recorded and invented many recipes; his *Le Guide Culinaire* (1903) contains 5,000 recipes and is a standard cookbook and textbook in classical French cooking even today. One of his major contributions to cooking, however, was to elevate it to the status of a respected profession. He introduced organized discipline to his kitchens, with each section run by a *chef de partie* or “station chef.” He also replaced the practice of serving the dishes all at once, *service à la française*, with serving each dish in the order printed on the menu, *service à la russe*. In 1898 Escoffier opened the Hotel Ritz in Paris and introduced the practice of the *à la carte* menu, making a variety of choices available to patrons (Escoffier 1907).

Claude Fishler (1988, 1993), a French academician and director of the Centre d’Etudes Transdisciplinaires–Sociologie, Anthropologie, Histoire (CETSAH), identified five dimensions useful for understanding the institutional logic and role of classical cuisine: culinary rhetoric, rules of cooking, archetypal ingredients used, role of the chef, and organization of the menu. The culinary rhetoric of classical cuisine reveals an emphasis on conservatism and preservation. Often dishes are given the names of places, noblemen, or mythological characters. European models of cuisine set the standard in the culinary industry. All other practices either conform to these standards or are compared with them. These standards are still in practice today.

Haute cuisine today is not defined by any particular style, as haute cuisine restaurants can serve fusion cuisine, regional cuisine, and postmodern cuisine. Today haute cuisine focuses on careful preparation, elaborate service, critical acclaim, and obsessive attention to detail, and is often characterized as *modern haute cuisine* (Dionot 2009).

Nouvelle cuisine differs from classical cuisine or haute cuisine in that it has a specific formula that was developed by Gault and Millau. Ten characteristics make this style of cooking distinctive: (1) a rejection of excessive complication in cooking, (2) specific cooking times for fish, seafood, game birds, pâtés, and vegetables to preserve their natural flavors, (3) cuisine made from the freshest possible ingredients, (4) shorter menus, (5) lack of strong marinades for meat and game so the delicate flavors of the meats and vegetables are not masked, (6) fresh herbs, quality butter, lemon juice, and vinegar replaced the use of heavy sauces thickened with flour-based roux, (7) regional dishes serve as inspiration instead of menus being based solely on haute cuisine dishes, (8) new techniques utilizing modern equipment, (9) chefs pay closer attention to the dietary needs of their guests, and (10) chefs are encouraged to be inventive and create new food combinations and pairings (Mennell 1996:163-164).

Whether or not nouvelle cuisine has been abandoned is still being debated in the culinary world. Many of its original features, particularly the preference for fresh flavors that are lightly presented in smaller menus, have been so assimilated into mainstream restaurant cooking that it has become the norm. Some food writers in the 1980s stated that this style of cuisine had reached exhaustion. They proposed that many chefs had begun to return to the haute cuisine style of cooking, although the lighter presentation style and many of the new techniques incorporated from the nouvelle cuisine movement's origins have typically remained (Mennell 1996:163-164).

American cuisine has traditionally been defined using European—specifically French—standards of cooking. American cuisine was originally derived from the foods of the Americas but, over time, has come to mean foods from the United States. This cuisine is more intricate and historically more difficult to define because the United States is made up of many Native and immigrant populations.

According to *Larousse Gastronomique*, a *cuisine classique* or a classic cuisine is one that encompasses “all the cookery techniques of traditional French cuisine, which every chef should know and master, yet also, includes the inheritance of traditional regional recipes. Many Chefs of the present have drawn heavily on this melting pot to create some of the greatest contemporary dishes” (Larousse-Bordas/Her 2000:384).

Webster's Dictionary defines cuisine as a style of cooking or a manner of preparing food. This definition provides a starting point from which I can make a comparative analysis between European cuisines and Native American cuisines of the Southwest.

Native American cuisine (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Native_American_cuisine) includes all food practices of the indigenous peoples of the Americas. Information about Native American cuisine comes from a great variety of sources. Modern-day native peoples retain a rich body of traditional foods, some of which have become iconic of present-day Native American social gatherings—for example, fry bread—while foods such as cornbread, turkey, cranberry, blueberry, hominy, and mush, to name just a few, have been adopted into the cuisine of the United States from varying Native American groups (Niethammer 1974). I identify Native American cuisine from specific regions: the Eastern Woodlands, the Northwest Coast, the Southwest, the Southeast, the Great Plains, the Lake Regions, and the Western Coastal Region, but I also include smaller and more detailed regions within these larger ones. The foods from these regions are what make up contemporary Native American cuisine in the United States. Other sources suggest that Native American cuisine should include the foods of the Circum-Caribbean, Mesoamerica, and South America. However, for the purposes of this study, Native American cuisine will constitute only foods from the tribal groups that are in what is now the United States.

The Center for Sustainable Environments at Northern Arizona University, in conjunction with members of Renewing America's Food Traditions (RAFT), has drawn a regional map based on food traditions of the United States (Figure 3.1). The map labels the various foodsheds that define and illustrate American cuisine regions (Nabhan 2008).²⁴ It is a good example of place-based food regions in the United States, Canada, and northern Mexico and focuses primarily on native foods that existed in these regions prior to European contact.

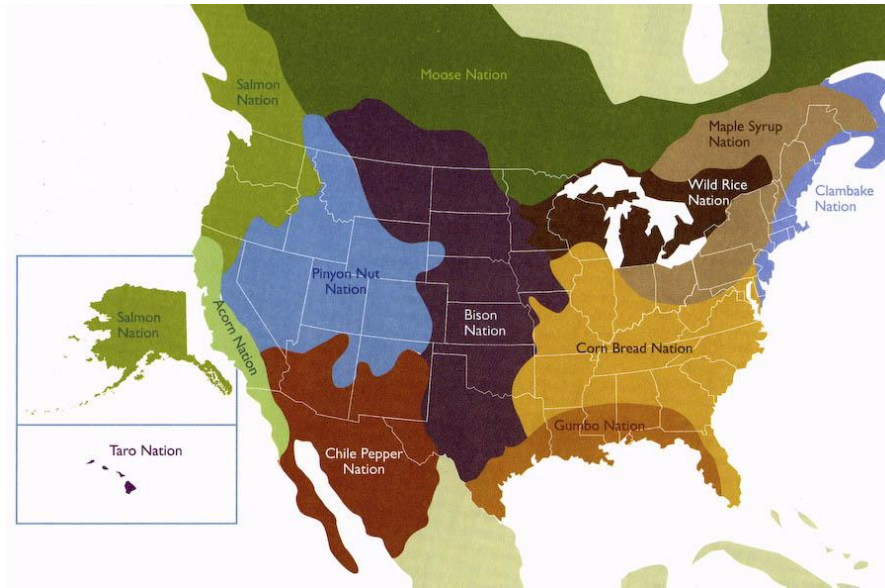


Figure 3.1 Map of America's place-based food traditions compiled and introduced by Gary Paul Nabhan, founder of Renewing America's Food Traditions (RAFT) Consortium. Published by the Center for Sustainable Environments, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, in 2007.

I argue that Native American cuisine has contributed to what is now considered American cuisine. Foodstuffs given to the immigrant populations that now inhabit Native American ancestral lands are the foundation of the traditional cuisines of those regions. A good example to illustrate place-based foods is maple syrup and crystallized maple sugar, taken from trees that are found in the Eastern Woodlands. This specific food is now iconic with the region and the people who occupy the areas where this food is abundant, whether they are Native or of immigrant descent (Casey 1993; Feld and Basso 1996; Nelson 2008). Native people had a multitude of ingredients and culinary techniques dating back many centuries before first contact, and Native peoples from these specific foodsheds have always had a distinctive cuisine (Arrellano 2006; Barreiro 1989; Bakker 1999; Berzok 2005; Coe 1994; Cordell 1984, 1994; Cox 1991; Dunmire 1995, 1997; Foster and Cordell 1992; Frank 2002; Harrison 1969; Nabhan 2010a; Neithammer 1974; Rootand de Rochemont 1995; Vaughan, Geissler, Nicholson, and Dowle 2009; Weatherford 1988, 1991).

This work is centered on place-based foods of the Southwest. I am concerned with how these foods have defined the cuisine of this area, influenced the cook/chefs who

cook these foods, and held their place-based importance regardless of where they are prepared (Feld & Basso 1996; Nelson 2008). This point can be illustrated with Southwest ingredients, such as corn, beans, squash, chiles, and cacti. When these ingredients are used in another part of the country by a chef who is not from this region, he or she is still considered to be a Southwestern chef preparing Southwestern foods. Bobby Flay, a fourth-generation Irish American and very successful American celebrity chef, restaurateur, Iron Chef, and television personality, is best known for his own style of Southwestern cuisine, incorporating ingredients such as chile, corn, and beans. His innovative cuisine is featured in the Mesa Grill, which he opened in New York City in 1991, and which quickly won him much acclaim (2010 Great Chefs) as a Southwestern chef.

It is this definition of cuisine, which includes “the inheritance of traditional regional recipes,” that, for my research, links Native Americans to their foods in precisely the same way as that of Europeans and, for that matter, all cultures that have developed distinctive cuisines. Based on its definition, I also conclude that a cuisine has cultural ties to the people and places of a particular region. Place-based names for foods are not uncommon in many Native American languages and have been used for millennia. The fact that Native American foods are distinctive to a particular region is also evident in much of the traditional cuisine of the Southwest. Thus cuisine is derived from a partnership between person, plant, and environment, which brings something unique from a specific region. As Jacobsen states regarding his description of *terroir*, “The soil and climate set the conditions; the plants, animals, and fungi respond to them; and then people determine how to bring out the goodness of these foods and drinks” (2010:4). *Terroir*, then, influences cuisine because it encompasses the entire ecology of a place, whether a French vineyard or the bosque along the Rio Grande.²⁵ Ultimately, it is the human response to what nature has offered, from the Yukon salmon in the Northwest to the sugar maple of New England. Regardless of how ingenious the farmers and plant breeders are, specific plants and animals are only found in specific regions, or foodsheds. The foods are natural outgrowths of their environments, and they tell us something

fundamental about life in those regions (Jacobsen 2010:4). This conclusion is particularly relevant to my research on regional chefs and cooks.

The role of the chef has changed throughout history from the first cooks of ancient times who prepared and often experimented with foods of their day to the contemporary chefs who enjoy a celebrity status; so too have the duties and status of other persons involved in food preparation. Butchers, for instance, used to be the persons who actually killed the animals, but today the word has come to mean the person who cuts the meat and other animal parts into sections that are sold to the consumer.

Some of the earliest known recipes come from Mesopotamia in the second millennium B.C., and the ancient Egyptians also were able to record their recipes, but we do not know how many other cultures had recipes that were not written down but passed on through oral traditions (Cajete 1999, 2000). Certainly the specific processes for preparing native dishes among the Nahuatl-speaking Aztecs of Central Mexico, who made a variety of *mole* sauces,²⁶ or the recipe for *piki* bread, a tissue-paper-thin cornbread made at Hopi Pueblo and dating back millennia, may not have been written down until recently. We do know, however, that these recipes were passed down from one generation to the next via oral tradition (Bayless 1987; Berzok 2005; Cajete 1999; Kavena 1981; Nelson 2008).

Interest in gastronomy and sophisticated culinary techniques in ancient times is documented for other parts of the world, including Arabs and Persians (Nabhan 2011), but printed cookbooks have only existed for about five hundred years. Originally, chefs wrote down recipes for other chefs, but they often didn't include specific amounts or detailed instructions until about two hundred and fifty years ago (Civitello 2008).

A chef is defined as “a skilled cook who manages the kitchen (as of a restaurant)” www.merrian-webster.com while other definitions for chef include “a cook, especially the chief cook of a large kitchen staff, and someone who is responsible for planning menus, ordering foodstuffs, overseeing food preparation, and supervising the kitchen staff.” The word's root is from the Latin *caput*, and it is the abbreviated form of the French phrase *chef de cuisine*; it originated in nineteenth-century France during the haute cuisine period.

The French term *chef de cuisine* literally means “head of the kitchen.” *Executive chef*, while having no formal dictionary entry, is accepted within the culinary profession and in a professional kitchen today to mean “the one person in charge of everyone else in the kitchen.” In the hierarchy of the professional kitchen, the *sous chef de cuisine* is the under-chef and the assistant to the executive chef. This person is the second in command. Other positions include the *expediter*, the person who brings the orders from the dining room into the kitchen and assigns them to the various kitchen stations, and the *chef de partie*, the “station chef” or more commonly today the “line cook,” who is in charge of a particular area of production: for instance, grill, sauté, pantry, etc. These stations are based on the brigade system (*brigade de cuisine*), which was introduced into the commercial kitchen by Auguste Escoffier (1903, 1907). In the United States, the word *chef* is sometimes used to mean any professional cook, regardless of rank or position in the professional cooking field and/or commercial kitchen.

Using either the original definition of a chef or certainly its contemporary meaning in the United States, a Native cook in a traditional Native American community setting could also be classified as a chef. Although many Native cooks have probably never thought of themselves as chefs in the professional sense, when I deconstruct the definition and compare it with the duties historically performed by Native cooks in the communities researched for this study, I conclude that Native cooks were some of the earliest chefs in the Southwest (Dornenburg and Page 1996, 2003; Frank 2011; Ruhlman 1997, 2000).

The logic and role identity of chefs became institutionalized through a network of training schools. Cooking schools began a little more than one hundred years ago. Today cooking schools in France and the United States have set the standard for contemporary professional chefs.²⁷ Only very recently have Native Americans been professionally trained as chefs.

The Classic Cooking Academy, in Scottsdale, Arizona, is presently one of the few cooking schools that offer a Native American curriculum as part of their culinary arts program. This academy trains culinary students with a classic French approach, which the chef/owner Pascal Dionot believes is the foundation of contemporary culinary culture,

but it then also focuses on Native American culinary history and culture to demonstrate how indigenous foods play a vital role in today's diet. Chef Dionot was formally trained at Hotelfachschule in Hotel/Restaurant Management in Speiser, Germany. His professional cooking experiences include executive chef positions in a number of historic hotels and fine restaurants on the East Coast. He developed and taught the professional culinary program at l'Academie de Cuisine in Maryland for eighteen years. The professional culinary program at the Classic Cooking Academy gives Native American and non-Native students an awareness of traditional and contemporary Native American culinary customs and technologies and includes concepts of sustainable agriculture, health, and nutrition. The Native American culinary program at the Classic Cooking Academy was established in 2008 as a response to the need for well-trained Native American culinary professionals.

The idea of Native Americans being chefs in the European sense is relatively new, and there are not a lot of renowned, professionally trained Native American chefs in commercial kitchens in the United States today, but the interest in Native communities in training to cook professionally is growing, and this number is changing. This phenomenon is so new that this genre of chefs is still in the process of defining what Native American Cuisine is and why this research is so essential to the Native American cuisine movement.

I maintain that there are no original "recipes" today. Someone's grandma's grandma's grandma at some point has cooked virtually every recipe in the past. Several other chefs in this ethnography insisted the same thing. Professionally trained chefs may use culinary techniques not practiced before, but the combination of ingredients was likely used sometime in the past. Cuisines have developed over centuries, and regional foods have been woven into the life fabric of cultures all over the world.

When Native American recipes were first recorded, by immigrant Europeans and new Americans, the indigenous "recipes" had already been irretrievably changed due to changes in Native culture. Even the observations of early anthropologists undoubtedly documented situations that were much altered from the diversity and richness that must have existed prior to contact. Some tribes were forcibly removed to areas totally different

than their ancestral homelands, and over a few generations, many memories of recipes as well as their original ingredients were lost. Southwestern Native cultures are said by anthropologists to have retained more original formulas of foods and recipes because these groups were not forcibly relocated from their ancestral homelands, as were the tribal groups from the Eastern Woodlands and other areas in the United States (Berzok 2005).

As noted in chapter 1, it is important to differentiate between four types of foods: precontact recipes are historical and traditional, with ingredients that existed before any contact with European cultures, such as wild game meats, wild fruits, and wild plants as well as cultivated crops.

First-contact foods include recipes that have developed over the past five hundred years. These foods originate from contact with Europeans—in the Southwest, with the Spanish—and foods that were brought north from Mesoamerica. Foods introduced at contact had ingredients such as lamb, pork, beef, wheat, and stone fruits brought from Spain, and some chiles, tomatoes, beans, avocados, and prickly pears that were brought north with the Spanish from Mesoamerica (Nabhan 2011). The Spanish first introduced these foods to the Southwest. These recipes may combine precontact and introduced ingredients or they may only be made of first-contact foods. A good example of a traditional recipe in this category is a lamb or mutton recipe from the Diné (Navajo) in which ground meat is stuffed inside a roasted green chile and served with a sauce.

Next are government-issued foods that were distributed to tribal groups in the United States and were only introduced to tribal communities between one hundred and one hundred and fifty years ago. These foods include white flour, lard, dry milk powder, blocks of cheddar cheese, and white sugar. A good example of a recipe that uses government-issue ingredients is the Indian taco. It is a piece of fry bread (made from white flour, dry milk powder, and lard) topped with ground meat (usually beef, although sometimes lamb or bison is used), roasted and chopped green chile, lettuce, tomato, and grated cheddar cheese. This recipe, from a culinary standpoint, illustrates a creative use of some of the U.S. government-imposed ingredients along with ingredients that were already being used by Native American communities in the region. This particular dish

has become iconic with contemporary Native American identity and is served at almost every social gathering, whether it is a Pow Wow,²⁸ an arts and craft fair, or a Pueblo Feast Day.²⁹

Finally, the Native American dishes being created by chefs and cooks today exemplify ingredients from one or all three of the previous periods. They are a fusion of the hybridity and interaction of the past with the present. The ingredients, typically indigenous to the Americas, can include bison from the North American plains, salmon from the Northwest Coast, wild rice from Minnesota, cactus cholla buds from southern Arizona, quinoa from South America, or shrimp from the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico. As Native chef Loretta Barrett Oden states,

While I may not be doing regional cuisine, there are dried seeds, grains, etc., that could have traveled in trade, and we know that the trade routes groups made were much more extensive than people are aware of today. . . . Native cuisine was much more complex than what has happened to it since contact.

Thus, these foods are a part of the new Native American cuisine but from a pan-Indian perspective rather than a regional tribal cuisine. They are analogous to the chicken scratch or waila music of the Tohono O'odham.³⁰ This acoustic fiddle music, which evolved in the southern Arizona Sonoran desert, is tribal-specific, in contrast to the music from an American Indian Pow Wow, an intertribal event that includes traditions, songs, regalia, and so on, from many tribal groups spanning a much larger area (Nabhan 2011).

Another chef interviewed for this ethnography, Nephi Craig, described Native American cuisine by saying,

I think Native American cuisine, it's a way of telling history honestly, it's a way of retaining culture, it is a way of developing culture, and it's a method to teach, it's a method to feed, it's a method to nurture. It's everything that we rely on to communicate and thrive and live as human beings. . . . I think that all cuisines are like that, but I think what makes Native American cuisine so unique is the fact that it is one of the world's greatest cuisines that's overlooked and still not taken seriously. . . . I believe that it is the total representation of all the people from South America up to Alaska . . . and their stories and their efforts and all of their flavor combinations—this is the big picture.

American Indian-inspired recipes or modern recipes based on Native American ingredients that include components from outside the Americas, are also used by some

contemporary chefs. Some may argue that these “inspired” recipes push the boundary of the new Native American cuisine into the area of appropriation, and that this cuisine has little or no relationship to the foods of the Native peoples of this continent and provides little or no benefit to them. The majority of the chefs and cooks who were a part of this ethnography strongly advocate that in the new Native American cuisine the indigenous agenda must take priority and the focus must be on ingredients originating in the Americas.

An example might be Northwest Coast wild salmon with a pineapple-mango salsa. This dish is based on wild-caught salmon, which is endemic to the United States, but it also features a pineapple-mango salsa. While the pineapple is believed to have originated in the Americas, the mango did not. Furthermore, these two foods have never been used by any of the tribal groups in the Southwest, and the majority of the chefs with whom I worked emphasize foods of the Americas with a regional priority given to local, sustainable, place-based foods. These “inspired” dishes are not the focus of this research and have not been included unless specifically mentioned by the chefs interviewed during the fieldwork.

Men have traditionally dominated the cooking profession, and I have found very little documentation of women “chefs”³¹ in the early history of the profession in Europe. In the United States, women began moving from secondary positions to executive chef and chef/owner in the 1970s and 1980s, opening the door for other women.³²

Julia Child,³³ the famous American cook, author, and television personality who introduced French cuisine and cooking techniques to the American mainstream, attended Le Cordon Bleu in Paris in the late 1940s, long before women in America were considering positions of chefs in commercial establishments. Although Julia Child began the movement of women into professional cooking roles, one of the most famous and most influential chefs in the United States today is Alice Waters,³⁴ founder and co-owner of the legendary Chez Panisse in Berkeley, California. She is often credited with single-handedly creating a culinary revolution in the United States. She formulated the original “California cuisine” and has become a champion of using locally grown and fresh ingredients in her cooking, writing many books on the subject. She has also promoted

organic and small-farm products in her restaurants, cooking, and books, and she has worked to change restaurant and food policy in the United States. She advocates eating organic, locally produced foods that are in season because she believes the international shipment of mass-produced food is harmful to the environment and does not produce as good a final product as foods produced locally (Burros 1996; Wilson and Marcus 2000).

In summary, culinary roots have now been established in the United States. The resulting American cuisine encompasses distinctive food regions from around the United States. These culinary professionals set standards of excellence, against which all others are compared, and which are still taught to young professionals. Professional chefs of both genders can be found in contemporary kitchens, and both men and women have won with high acclaim for their contributions to the culinary practices and the food flavors that constitute American cuisine.

Several things have changed since the original culinary standards were established. The first change is that the emphasis on only a western or European (specifically, French) perspective has opened to include the contributions of indigenous peoples of color from all over the world in the academies. Organizations such as the Black Culinary Alliance (BCA) in New York City have emerged with a mission to create exposure and provide educational and professional opportunities for culinary and hospitality professionals of color. BCA is working to accomplish this objective by providing quality educational and employment resources, job coaching, mentoring and assistance with placement, and networking support. In addition, BCA exposes inner-city high school students to the culinary arts through a series of workshops that introduce the culinary profession as a viable career option. Recently, BCA has focused its attention on changing the curriculum in professional culinary schools to include the history of a variety of chefs of color who have influenced American cuisine, including Native Americans (Askew 2008).

The Classic Cooking Academy in Scottsdale, Arizona, is now training Native American students for the professional job market in the Southwest. Future professional cooks who aspire to be chefs are entering the job market with a firm grasp of both basic and advanced culinary skills, theoretical knowledge, a good attitude, and technical and

practical experience (Dionot 2009) in fine dining establishments and Indian-owned and operated casinos.³⁵ This is linking place-based American Indian foods with the Indian casinos that have the means to serve them to the general public. Cultural centers have formed programs to revitalize traditional foods and regional Native American cuisine(s) all over the Southwest.

These initiatives are motivated by two driving forces; economic enterprises within the tribal communities, and health and wellness concerns among tribal members. These communities are literally decolonizing their diets by recovering their ancestors' gardens and using traditional food knowledge to solve contemporary health problems (Bernard 2010; Brand, Cordain et al. 2005; Brand, Snow, Nabhan, and Truswell 1990; Mihesuah 2003; Milburn 2004).

A new paradigm is being established around complex issues of community, cultural awareness, environmental health, and concerns about food. Culinary techniques combined with alternate ideologies from these indigenous nations are being explored in great detail, with the ultimate goal of understanding food culture, sustainability, agriculture, health and healing, and environmental and social activism. This investigation has also initiated concerns regarding food, health and wellness, and social and food policy issues and changes that need to be implemented on the tribal, state, and national levels for the health and wellness of entire native communities (Winne 2008).

The second factor that is changing in the professional culinary arena today is that Native American cuisine chefs and cooks who are being trained with the same standards as their European counterparts are actively taking roles as commercial chefs in professional establishments, providing an outlet, for the first time, where Native American cuisine is made available to the general public. Native American chefs and non-Native chefs preparing Native American cuisine are providing a voice in the professional culinary world on the discourse and practice of Native American culinary traditions.³⁶

Chapter 4

Native Foods History in the Southwest and the Food Continuum of Native American Cuisine

This chapter is focused on the distant past and then moves forward into the present along the food continuum of Native American cuisine. The first period has sometimes been referred to as the “prehistory” or “preliterate” period, focusing on a time before written accounts were known to have existed. I have decided not to use these terms. Instead, I use the term “precontact” to refer to the time period before the encounter with Europeans. I realize that this term does not accurately describe what actually happened in the Americas, but it is the best descriptor I can find of the period before Native American encounters with groups from outside the Americas.

Native Peoples belonged to oral cultures that passed cultural information down from one generation to the next through the spoken tradition of stories, histories, legends, and myths. The elders imprinted these historical accounts on the youth. Where foods were concerned, the women of each groups traditionally served as the tribal historians. They committed to memory a body of past experiences and cultural traditions relating to food, which included how to find wild plants, which plants were edible, their names, their uses for food and medicine, how to prepare and preserve them, how to grow them, how to prepare them, how to store them, how to prepare wild game meats and fish, as well as a multitude of information relating to food and its uses.

I have included data from anthropological, ethnobotanical, and archaeological accounts and research from scholars as well as tribal folklore in the information I present on traditional foodways. Archaeological excavation has provided a substantial amount of data from remains in storage pits, refuse, organic matter and seeds found in pottery jars and baskets, pollen, charred plant remains, and artifacts such as cooking vessels and utensils. Radiocarbon dating provides evidence of when specific items may have first been used.³⁷ Native peoples used petroglyphs and pictographs to document historical events, such as epidemics, food shortages, droughts, and wars, but these accounts are difficult to interpret. The images scraped and painted on rocks have in many instances been altered or removed from their original locations, making it impossible to decipher an

accurate historical account of what occurred. I have therefore utilized multiple forms of evidence to present my historical research.

The American Southwest is a land of contrasts and diversity. The physical landscape includes extensive mesas, rugged mountains, and low-lying deserts. Within this region one moves from the lands of the Yumans (Cocopa, Havasupai, Maricopa, Mojave), Paiute, Pascua Yaqui, Pima, (including the Akimiel O'odham, "Salt River People," and the Tohono O'odham, "Desert People") to the Hopi, Zuni, and other Pueblo farmers, and the Ute (Ortiz 1983). The elevation of this region extends from a few hundred feet above sea level to more than 8,000 feet above sea level. Yavapai and Walapai people, known as "Upland Yumans," and the Athapaskan-speaking Indé (Apache) and Diné (Navajo) also share this diverse land. Three of these four traditions—Piman, Yuman, and Pueblo cultures—developed in the Southwest over ten thousand years (Ortiz 1983). The Indé and Diné are relative newcomers, according to most anthropologists (Cordell 1984; Gunnerson 1979), although many of their oral traditions document a lengthy presence in the region.

From approximately AD 700 to 1350, four dominant archaeologically identified cultures thrived in this area. The Anasazi, also called the Ancestral Puebloans, lived in the Four Corners area of New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, and Utah. The Mogollon area stretches from southern New Mexico to central Arizona. The Hohokam lived in the southern Arizona desert, where they developed sophisticated systems of canals and irrigation, enabling them to plant diverse crops. Their canal system is believed to have covered approximately 1,750 miles. Along the Colorado River and in northwest Arizona lived the Patayan. These cultures grew in size and sophistication until a series of droughts and invasions caused the Mogollon to disappear from the archaeological record of the Southwest (possibly moving to northern Mexico) and the other three to be transformed (Berzok 2005:5; Cordell 1984, 1994). The village at Oraibi, on the Hopi reservation in Arizona, and the Pueblo at Acoma known as Sky City in New Mexico are two of the oldest continuously occupied settlements on the American continent north of Mexico. By the time the Spanish arrived in the Southwest, they encountered the descendants of these four original cultures.

As noted in previous chapters, I focus on four food groups that make up Native American cuisine today: native foods, which includes both cultivated and wild plants that were used precontact; (2) traditional foods introduced upon first contact but now inseparable from the group's identity, as in the case of sheep for the Diné; (3) commodity foods introduced by the U.S. government during the Reservation period and still being distributed today; and (4) foods that share components of the previous three categories and are innovatively combined or "fused" into a new Native American cuisine. This new cuisine utilizes elements that are contemporary and elements from the past. The Native American chefs and cooks in this ethnography are using ingredients from this fourth category to keep their foods vital, dynamic, and in some cases to revitalize foods and knowledge that is in danger of no longer being practiced.

Precontact Foods and the Ancestral Diet

There was a multitude of both cultivated and wild foods from the precontact period. While I focus on the Southwest, foods in other parts of the Americas also contributed to the numerous components of this intricate cuisine. The groups in the Southwest harvested and prepared ancestral ingredients into complex dishes.

Traditionally, and until quite recently, the vast majority of foods upon which culture groups from the Southwest subsisted were gathered and collected from the areas around where they lived. Extensive trade routes have been documented, especially with Mesoamerica, but primarily dried goods would have been traded. The tribal groups within the Southwest exchanged both subsistence and trade items through this extensive network. Obsidian from west of the Rio Grande, for example, has been identified in Paleoindian sites in the area of Clovis, New Mexico, and long-distance trade for saltwater shells is known for the subsequent Archaic times (Ford 1983). Hundreds of years before cotton was known to have been grown by the Pueblos, it was grown by the Hohokam and traded all the way from southern Arizona to the Colorado plateau. By AD 1000, turquoise, copper, and macaws were added to the other types of stone, marine shells, and ceramics that were already being traded (Ford 1983). Pottery from a variety of villages, was also exchanged throughout the Southwest (Shepard 1965; Warren 1969).

A recent analysis of ceramics from Pueblo Bonito, the largest site in Chaco Canyon,³⁸ in northwestern New Mexico, documented for the first time the presence of theobromine,³⁹ a marker for *Theobroma cacao* or chocolate, indicating that cacao was consumed in the American Southwest around AD 1000 to 1125 (Crown and Hurst 2009). Items such as seeds, shells, beads, turquoise, and feathers were traded between the tribes from this region and tribes to the south, which supports the idea that several trade mechanisms operated simultaneously (Ford 1983). The area utilized for subsistence was perhaps a few dozen to a few hundred square miles, with trade routes extending much farther. This subsistence area influenced not only what foods were eaten, but also how they were prepared.

The physical environment of the Southwest is characterized by unpredictability and great variation. A bumper crop of corn in one area might be followed by several years of drought, and a good piñon nut harvest by the Diné (Navajo) or the Havasupai might not be repeated for another three to seven years. Under these conditions, a basis for exchange and good relationships with trade partners became a requisite for survival (Ford 1983).

Foods of the Southwest therefore have a history that is closely tied to the people and the land. Food production may have brought surplus and security (Ford 1985a, 1985b), but it also brought famine and inequity (Cohen 1977). Some Southwestern groups cultivated only a few crops, deriving most of their food from wild plants and animals. Other groups engaged in irrigation agriculture supplemented by hunting and gathering. Settlement patterns were and are equally diverse among Native Americans of the Southwest, and this was reflected in their techniques of food production. The ingredients that the original Native American inhabitants gathered, domesticated, and ate for many millennia before the arrival of the Europeans are multitudinous (Coe 1994; Nabhan 2004; Ortiz 1979; Root & de Rochement 1995).

Wild and cultivated plant products, products from birds and animals, minerals, and an array of finished goods were produced for local consumption and for trade. Sometimes the trade occurred because items were not available locally, but the exchange also confirmed social bonds between groups. Items such as pigments and stone needed

for rituals came from a number of sources. The Utes, Havasupai, Tohono O’odham, and Quechan distributed red ocher for ceremonial uses, and Nambe Pueblo provided other Tewas with mica for kachina dancers (Ford 1983:713). Picuris Pueblo provided Taos, Ohkay Owingeh (San Juan), and San Felipe Pueblos with ceremonial plants. Osha (*Lingusticum porteri*), a medicine used for upper respiratory ailments, was obtained from the Jicarilla Apache. Cotton, an important fiber used by many communities for making cloth, was traded between the Akimel O’odham (Pima) and the Tohono O’odham (Papago), and also between the Hopi and the Diné (Navajo).

Salt was one of the most prized minerals for both food and ceremonial use. It came from the Estancia Basin in eastern New Mexico, from salt lakes near Laguna and Zuni, and the Tohono O’odham obtained salt from the Gulf of California. Most tribes obtained salt from one of these four places (Ford 1983:713). Some people at Zuni, for example, harvest salt for sale on the reservation, and it is also still traded between tribal groups in the Southwest.⁴⁰

Walter Whitewater, a Diné (Navajo) chef who was born in 1959 and grew up in Pinon, Arizona, remembers families from other tribes coming to his house to sell or trade produce when he was a small boy. These families would offer fresh green chiles and dried red chiles from Acoma, peaches and piki bread from Hopi, and “oven bread” (made with wheat flour) from Zuni in exchange for sheep or other livestock. The different varieties of corn grown by each group were also traded. Chef Whitewater thought that they traded corn varieties so they would have a variety of corn to eat, and some to save and plant the following year (Whitewater 2010).

Gary Nabhan, an ethnobotanist dedicated to preserving seed diversity and cofounder of Native Seeds/SEARCH (Southwest Endangered Aridlands Resources Clearing House), has documented informal trade networks among the Tohono O’odham and Akimel O’odham. These networks date back perhaps as far as the ancient Chichimecans, who traded turkeys, seeds, and macaws between Mesoamerica and the desert Southwest, an area regarded by some as the northernmost margin of the great civilizations of the Americas (Nabhan 2002). Harvesting chiltepins (wild chile native to the U.S. Southwest) to exchange for desert tortoises (*Gopherus agassizii*), wild onions

(*Allium unifolium*), and sandfood (*Pholisma sonorae*), was also a way to obtain food sources from the Sonoran Desert (Nabhan 2011). Detailed oral histories of farming cultures have demonstrated that up to four-fifths of what a family ate would come from its own labors and those of friends and neighbors living in the same valley. The remainder might come from trade—in the case of Nabhan’s (2002) research, for example, oranges from more tropical climes, and cranberries from the north.

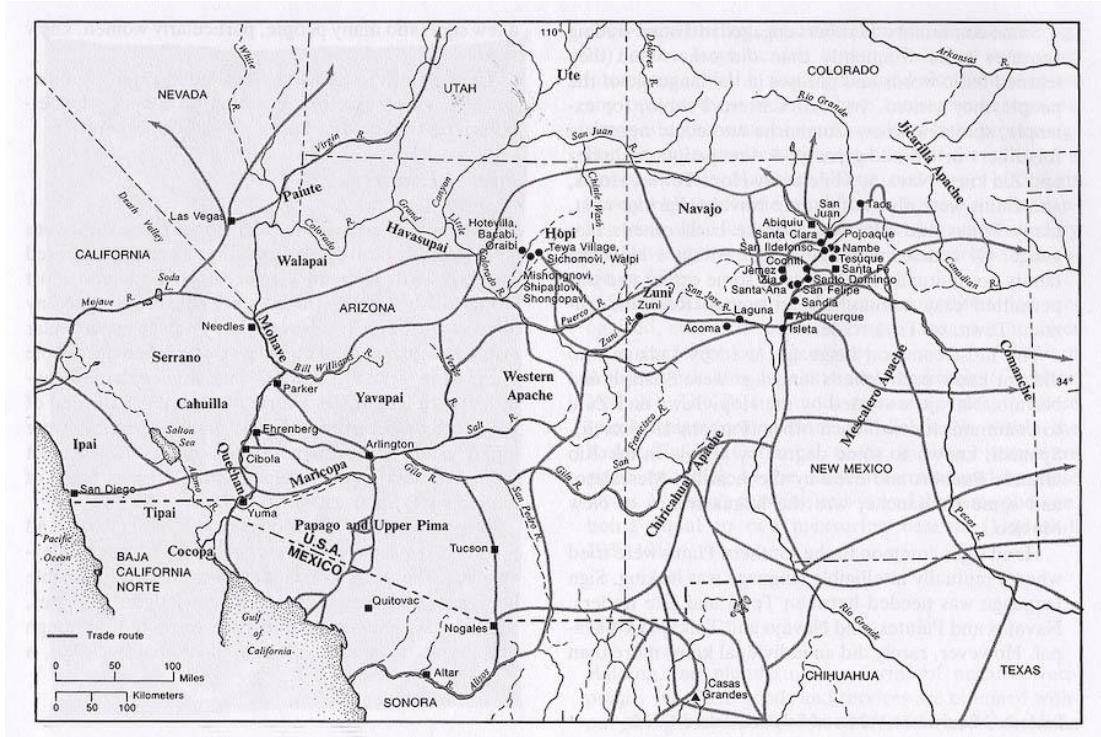


Figure 4.1 Traditional trade routes in the Southwest. From *Handbook of North American Indians, Vol. 10: Southwest*. Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution. p. 719.

Adapting to the unique environment of the Southwest and developing trade relationships with neighboring groups were matters of survival for people in the Southwest. Many foods, plants, and animals acquired meaning beyond their use for sustenance. Among the Yoeme (Yaqui and Mayo), Akimel O’odham, and Tohono O’odham, jimsonweed or datura is recognized as a dangerous plant, but it has also played a role in shamanistic curing and song (Neithammer 1974). Among the Pueblos, with their intensive agriculture, corn is still the most important crop, followed by beans and squash. The stories of its origin and the meaning of its variously colored strains are different in

the Puebloan communities than in other tribes in the Southwest. Because of the lack of large game, Native Americans in some parts of the Southwest had a diet of mostly plants. They were able to obtain sufficient nutrients from nuts, fruits, grasses, roots, and seeds. “Desert plants produce great quantities of seeds, and thus manage to propagate themselves in an area of uncertain growing conditions” (Neithammer 1974:xxi). With the use of grinding stones, seeds, nuts, and corn were ground into flour for breads, mush, and other uses (Frank 2002). As much as 85 or 90 percent of the Pueblo diet consisted of calories consumed from agricultural products, with wild fruits, greens, nuts, and small game making up the balance. Because large game was scarce, textiles and corn were traded with the Plains Indians for bison meat (Berzok 2005:6; Frank 2011).

From his studies of the site of Jemez Cave, located just above the piñon-juniper ecozone in the Jemez Mountains, renowned ethnobotanist Richard Ford concluded “small groups of farmers occupied the shelter for a few weeks [each year] to plant and later returned to harvest whatever grew. Selective breeding [of corn] was not evident, competition with field weeds was permitted, and some years the corn was picked before maturity. Maize simply augmented their fall diet” (Ford 1975). The more nomadic Indé and Diné had summer camps with shelters where corn was planted in the late spring, but the camps were not inhabited on a full-time basis. After the corn had been planted, the camps were left unoccupied until it was time to harvest. This pattern is still evident today in some Indé and Diné communities. Life was centered more on game and wild plants in these communities than on just corn.

Native peoples brought powerful plants offerings and placed taboos on harvesting their products during certain times of the year or at certain places.⁴¹ They loaded meaning into individual plants that may have been genetically aberrant or environmentally deformed. When a community encourages its members to know the characteristics of select plants so intimately, it is also making its own cultural identity known.

For example, in the arid Southwest, many locally harvested foods were dried and stored for use throughout the year, when those foods were not in season. This included corn, beans, chile, squash, wild fruits, wild herbs, wild greens, nuts, and meats. Specific

pottery vessels were designed to store these foods. Ceramics and other goods were often identifiable as to individual villages and, in some cases, to a particular artisan.

In Taos Pueblo, Picuris Pueblo, and among the Jicarilla Apache in northern New Mexico, some community members specialized in making micaceous cooking pots. The high mica content of the locally available clay enhances thermal stability while serving as a natural temper that strengthens the vessels. Where beds of micaceous clay were not available, Pueblo people made a variety of distinctively decorated vessel forms such as water jugs (ollas), seed storage containers, and serving bowls. Almost every tribe in the Southwest wove and traded their distinctive baskets. The Diné (Navajo), Jicarilla, and Utes made coiled baskets, often lined with pitch for waterproofing; the people of Ohkay Owingeh made a wicker form of basket; the Yavapai were known for their dippers and parching trays; the Akimel O'odham made food trays; and the Tohono O'odham wove storage jars. Jemez Pueblo made yucca wheat-washing baskets, and the Western Apache made burden baskets and pitch-covered canteens (Ford 1983:713).

Activities related to foods were, and still are, central to many Native groups in the Southwest. What are now classified as art forms in these communities were originally made for purposes that centered around food. Hunting, growing, gathering, cooking, and eating have taken on a spiritual aspect akin to prayer (Berzok 2005; Cajete 1999; Frank 2002). The relationship between the land and the people is sacred. Foods that are bestowed upon the people are revered and have cultural meanings beyond just representing something to eat. Corn, especially, has taken on the symbolic meaning of Maiden, Mother, Sister, nurturer, medicine, and healer.

Native Americans of the Southwest hold that people, plants, animals, and spirits are interconnected in an unbroken circle of being (Dunmire and Tierney 1995). As noted above, no plant or animal should ever be harvested without an offering being made first. Both domesticated and wild plants are revered. Plants should not be picked randomly or wastefully (Tohlakai 2002; Whitewater 2004, 2008).

The Diné direct a prayer to the largest and healthiest plant to explain why its neighbor will be harvested. An offering of shell, pollen, or other sacred material is deposited near the first plant. Then the herbalist or medicine person picks what he or she

needs. Afterward, the plant remains are buried with a final prayer (Mayes 1989; Tohlakai 2000; Whitewater 2002). Each plant is considered sacred, and they must be respected if they are to continue to be effective in helping to heal humans. Plants were and are harvested not only as medicine but also as food, for making tools, and in some instances for clothing (Whitewater 2004).

The gathering of wild plant foods for sustenance and medicinal and spiritual purposes has always been a part of the lives of American Indians. Plant carbohydrates are known to have provided a valuable, if not essential, nutritional supplement in the diet of virtually every culture. Wild plants began to take on greater importance as a source of food soon after the end of the Pleistocene, and the fauna and vegetation underwent substantial changes. Noted paleoecologist Paul S. Martin (1963), archaeologist Linda S. Cordell (1984), and ethnobotanist Richard I. Ford (1985a, 1985b) suggest that early hunters begin experimenting with native plants over thousands of years, ultimately leading to increasingly skillful techniques of harvesting and gathering and then to the domestication of certain weedy camp-followers, and within the past thousand years to the widespread adoption of floodplain agriculture (Martin 1963).

In the Southwest, a number of adaptive mechanisms enable plants to withstand arid conditions. In order to survive the stressful arid environment, which is often intensely hot in summer and harshly cold in winter, plants of this region have undergone rapid evolutionary specialization. Many have become chemical factories, producing compounds that help them to survive. Some plants, known as drought evaders, remain inactive during dry periods and photosynthesize only when moisture becomes available. These include desert annuals, which produce seeds that remain viable for long periods, and perennial plants that store water and nutrients in bulbs and rhizomes. Drought-resistant desert shrubs persist through drought periods by shedding most of their leaves, stems, and rootlets, which reduces their water requirements. Other plants have the ability to minimize water loss. Still others, such as cacti and succulents, can store water internally. *Phreatophytes* are plants with specialized root systems and long taproots that enable them to reach deeply buried groundwater (Cordell 1984).

Edible plants tend to be widely spread out, and their annual yield of fruits or nuts highly unpredictable. Piñon pines (*Pinus edulis*, *P. flexilis*, and *P. monophylla*) produce nuts in quantity only every few years—sometimes once in six or seven years depending on the amount of water available (Moerman 1998). Thus, individual resource locations aren't likely to have sustained a population of any size for any duration. Archaeological finds have included mortars and grinding slabs that were likely used for pulverizing acorns (*Quercus emoryi* and *Q. gambelii*), piñons, and other wild seeds and nuts (Moerman 1998).

Agriculture was adopted when population densities reached the point where it became an advantageous strategy. The adoption of domesticated plants by foragers and collectors was a result of an intentional decision to reduce environmental uncertainty. The peoples of the Southwest developed means of storing seed crops and probably made migrations twice a year to localities where cultivation was possible—once for planting and early tending, and later for harvesting. By the end of the Archaic period, corn was being grown regularly on valley floodplains, and it had achieved a prominent role in some diets along with wild plants such as prickly pear (*Opuntia engelmannii*, *O. imbricata*, *Opuntia* spp.), which the Spanish later taught the tribes to cultivate; cholla (*Cylindropuntia*); piñon pine (*Pinus edulis*, *P. monophylla*), groundcherry (*Physalis* spp.), various weedy annuals, and grass seeds (Wills 1988).

Although corn was the most important single species in many areas of the Southwest, beans, squash, sunflowers, other wild plants, wild game, and domesticated animals (dogs and turkeys) competed for second place (Driver 1961; Ford 1985a, 1985b). The fact that these foods have in many cases spread around the world (Root 1980) and become part of the culinary heritage of humanity, only adds to the honor due to these original cultivators (Coe 1994).

Scientists are still debating the date of the oldest corn, but evidence from San Marcos Cave in the Tehuacan Valley of southern Puebla, Mexico, suggests it was first cultivated some 5,000 to 7,000 years ago (Mangelsdorf 1964:538-545), depending on whether the evidence is from radiocarbon dating or accelerator mass spectrometer readings. The Native American elders I interviewed said that in their oral histories corn

dates back much farther. Its ancestor, *teosinte* (God's corn, in Nahuatl), is actually a form of a wild grass with a cellular form and genetic structure all but identical to that of corn. After thousands of years of coexistence, *teosinte* and corn remain interfertile, and spontaneous crosses between the two can occur when they grow in proximity (Doebley 1980; Nabhan 1989).

The domestication of corn was probably a rapid process, which took place over a sizable portion of Mexico and Guatemala, where the greatest number of cultivated maize varieties are grown today (Nabhan 2011). Corn is believed to have moved in two directions, with different strains adapting to the climate according to the direction traveled. The migration routes have been referred to as the Northern Flint and the Southern Dent pathways. The Northern Flint pathway took shape in the Rio Grande Valley about 4100 BP and at Zuni, Black Mesa, and the Tucson Basin (Cohen 1977; Nabhan 2009, 2011; Winter 1974), spreading northward on both sides of the Rocky Mountains. The Southern Dent pathway traveled into South America where corn is believed to have reached Ayacucho, Peru, and the eastern slopes of the Andes four thousand or more years ago (Ford 1985a; Galinat 1992).

By the time of Columbus, maize had been established throughout most of continental North America east of the Colorado River, Central America, and the Caribbean Islands, where he first encountered it. The Indians were using at least two thousand different foods derived from plants (Root and de Rochemont 1995) at the time of first contact. More than three hundred strains of corn are believed to have existed. Corn represents a remarkable accomplishment of plant breeding, with a history dating back thousands of years. "Corn was the only staple grown in both the northern and southern hemisphere, and even today it grows in virtually every part of the world where humans can grow crops" (Weatherford 1991).

Other early domesticates in this region included a hard-shelled (*Cucurbita*) squash and beans (*Phaseolus*), which have been dated to 3500 BP (Nabhan 2011). Remains found in a New Mexico cave have been dated to approximately 2300 years ago (Kaplan and Kaplan 1992), although not all scientists agree on the accuracy of this date (Minnis 1981; Nabhan 2011).

Because of the beauty of corn's color and its form, many indigenous peoples of the Americas develop around it a great culture of art, science, literature, and religion. The significance of corn in these cultures' rituals and creation narratives is a part of the story of corn. Each tribe has its own explanations for its origin and its variously colored strains. The story of corn is essentially the story of old America and the many Native cultures that developed around it. Corn is believed to be the plant of the greatest spiritual significance to the tribes of the Southwest. Some of the Pueblos consider corn to be Mother. Rituals using corn are practiced today, much as they have been for centuries. The expressive culture of corn can be seen in pottery, jewelry, carving, painting, a variety of textiles, and in the cuisine.

Hopi and Diné corn is adapted for the deep planting necessary in the desert Southwest. Most corn cannot emerge from depths of more than four inches below the surface, but Hopi and Diné corn has an elongated embryonic organ (mesocotyl) that enables it to sprout from a depth of eighteen inches, where the desert soil retains sufficient moisture to sustain its growth (Galinat 1992). This method is referred to as dry-farming and is still used today. Because of its adaptability and because of the prowess of Native farmers, corn is still a major staple of Native American peoples of the Southwest. It is usually planted with beans and squash, its stalk supporting the runners of the other plants, whose nutritive properties complement its own (Galinat 1992).

Often called the Three Sisters by many tribes, and considered a sacred gift from the Great Spirit, the term originates from the Iroquois of the northeastern United States and is not a traditional Southwest metaphor. The Three Sisters is a relatively new term to this area, although the three plants have been used here for millennia. In the Iroquois creation stories, the plants are described as emerging from the first garden as sisters to help and support each other. The well being of each crop is protected by the Sisters, spirits collectively referred to as De-o-a-ko ("those who support us" or "our sustainers"). The term also refers to the practice of planting corn, beans, and squash together in mounds. The Three Sisters provides an important lesson in environmental cooperation. Corn draws nitrogen from the soil, while beans replenish it. The tall corn stalks provide climbing poles for the bean tendrils, and the broad leaves of squashes grow low to the

ground, shading the soil, keeping it moist, and deterring the growth of weeds (Brascoupe 1999; Frank 2008).

As cooking developed in the almost urbanized Southwest, it was no longer confined to a common pot, and refined specialties were invented. Characterized by intensive horticulture, an elaborate ceremonial cycle, and a cohesive social organization (Ortiz 1979), the people of this region were making fine culinary distinctions (Root and de Rochemont 1995). For example, Zuni women picked male squash blossoms for use in stews and soups. Pueblo people made piñon nut soup from the hand-gathered nuts, and they roasted additional nuts for eating (Root and de Rochemont 1995:35).

The people of Zuni Pueblo used a special technique for planting high-value crops, such as corn, beans, and squash, called the waffle garden. The Zuni used sunken beds with ground-level berms surrounding a one-foot-square to two-foot-square planting area. The berms were usually several inches high and designed so that the depressions would catch and hold water close to the plants' roots. It was not uncommon for Native gardeners to supplement available moisture for growing seedlings with water from the river until the summer monsoon rains came. Large clay pots with gourd dippers were used to carry water from the Zuni River to these gardens. After the Spanish arrival, Zuni gardeners also grew melons (*Cucumis melo*), peaches (*Prunus persica*), and chiles (*Capsicum annuum*) in addition to their traditional crops (Cushing 1920; Stevenson 1904:353, 1915). This type of gardening is perfectly suited to dryland farming.

Pueblo peoples also cultivated terrace gardens with dry-farming techniques in areas of the Southwest where irrigation was not available. The Hopi, famous for their skillful management of scarce productive resources, are known for their ancient terraced gardens. Water from snow and rain falling north of Hopi is trapped on top of the shale and follows its downward and southerly path until reaching the mesas. There the water may seep from the mesa sides, running under a layer of windblown sand, and moistening the heavier soil underneath. The seeps are where fruit trees, melons, squash, gourds, and beans are planted. Archeologists have found parallel lines of stone running at right angles to the contours of the escarpment terraces (Brew 1979).

The Hopis also practiced three other types of farming. Two are floodwater farming methods: in one, fields are planted in the valleys of major streams that overflow their banks during high runoff caused by rapid snow melting or summer cloudbursts; in the akchin type (an O'odham term), crops are planted where water spreads out at the mouth of an arroyo (Bryan 1929). This is the most common type the Hopi have used both in historic times and now. Hopi corn plants are not much higher than the length of the plants' abundant ears, but they may have roots reaching 15 to 20 or more inches into the sand aquifer (Brew 1979). The Pueblos along the Rio Grande are known to have used artificial terraces irrigated by ditch or by hand for their crops.



Photo 4.1 Cornfield at Monica Nuvamsa's family clan farming area of Paa'utsvi, Arizona. This field is approximately 10 miles south of her village. Elmer Satala Jr. and friends helped plant blue, red, and white corn. (Photo by Monica Nuvamsa)



Photo 4.2 Hopi farmer, Wilmer Kavena from First Mesa, Arizona thinning his corn plants and placing dirt around the bottom of the plants for protection.



Photo 4.3 Wilmer Kavena's cornfield with white and blue corn plants; he is using a dry-farming method.

Relationships between Native peoples of the Southwest, their foods, and their methods of gathering were intricate. All foodsheds produce gatherers. The abundant seeds produced by desert plants provide a fairly easy harvest for the people living in the surrounding areas. Many of these seeds can be ground and made into mush, which are either eaten alone or used in soups and stews (Neithammer 1974). Because seed collecting had to be done quickly and intensively for maximum yields, it was often a group activity.

When many families converge in a specific area to harvest a wild crop, some form of organization is needed. Positions of authority emerge, and specific positions are delegated to particular individuals. In many cases, gathering and preparing are done largely by groups of women and children, while the men hunt for game. These activities create social ties amongst both gender groups and create the foundation for social structure within these groups.

Wild foods of the Southwest included game such as mule deer and white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus hemionus* and *O. virginianus*), pronghorn antelope (*Antilocapra americana*), bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*), elk (*Cervus canadensis*), and bison, also called American buffalo (*Bos bison*), although the latter require extensive grasslands and were found primarily in the easternmost margins of the Southwest (Cordell 1984). Smaller game animals included the jackrabbit or hare (*Lepus* spp.) as well as cottontail rabbits (*Sylvilagus* sp.) and small game birds such as quail (*Coturnix* spp.), dove and pigeon (*Columba livia*), and robin (*Turdus migratorius*), several species of ducks (*Cairina moschata*, *Anas acuta*), packrat (*Neotoma* spp.), and cotton rat (*Sigmodon* spp.). Fish, including trout (*Salmoninae*), the Colorado River top minnow (*Fundulus* spp.), and catfish (*Siluriformes*), were found in many of the larger tributaries, and crayfish (*Astacoidea* and *Parastacoidea*) were found in the stagnant areas of some of these waterways. Karl Schwerin (professor emeritus, Department of Anthropology, University of New Mexico) remembers seeing crayfish in the ditches in the North Valley of Albuquerque as recently as 30 years ago, although they are no longer a food source. Some wild game continue to be hunted—I've recently had elk, venison, and rabbit in

ceremonial meals—but the majority of meat used in both daily and ceremonial cooking in the Southwest today is beef, lamb, or pork.

The piñon nut, found in the higher elevations, was a very important food. Many prehistoric villages were located near woodlands, and these nuts provided basic nourishment. Tewa Pueblo tradition holds piñon nuts to be their most ancient food. With more than three thousand calories per pound, piñon nuts constituted the most valuable wild plant food for people living in the piñon-juniper ecozone. The nut also contains all twenty amino acids that make up complete protein, and of the nine amino acids essential to human growth, seven are more concentrated in piñon nuts than in corn (Dunmire and Tierney 1995).

Piñon nuts are still the most sought-after wild plant food by contemporary Pueblos and among many Diné (Navajo). At Ohkay Owingeh (San Juan Pueblo), it is the only plant product that family members still gather as a household activity. Sandy Garcia, one of the Native American chefs with whom I worked, is from Ohkay Owingeh (San Juan Pueblo) on his father's side and Santa Clara Pueblo on his mother's side; he remembers harvesting piñon nuts with his father's side of the family. By raking up the litter beneath piñon trees and picking up the nuts immediately after the seed fall, a husband and wife team could harvest one hundred and fifty pounds of nuts in a single day. Even though half of that weight is inedible shell, that would still leave seventy pounds of nut meat (Dunmire and Tierney 1995).

Walter Whitewater, a Diné, (Navajo) chef, harvests piñon nuts every year with family members. Because the nuts ripen in different places at different times, the family follows the harvest all across the reservation. They keep enough for each family member and sell the rest for extra cash.

In addition to numerous species of cacti, other key sources of wild plant foods in the Southwest include mesquite (*Prosopis* spp.) and agaves (*Agave* spp.). For the southern deserts, these could be considered the staff of life for the inhabitants. There are more than 425 edible species in the Sonoran Desert flora alone, and roughly twenty-five crop species that have been cultivated since prehistoric times (Nabhan 1985). The harvest of the juicy, crimson fruit of the saguaro (*Carnegiea gigantea*) was and is so important to

the Akimel O'odham (Pima) and the Tohono O'odham (Papago) that it signaled the beginning of the new year for both tribes (Neithammer 1999). The desert peoples depended on the fruits and seeds of this cactus, which had coevolved with birds, bats, rodents, harvester ants, and other insects over hundreds of thousands of years (Nabhan 1985). It is still an important food and is celebrated each year with its summer harvest.



Photo 4.4 Saguaro Cactus (*Carnegiea gigantea*) with fruits ready to be harvested.



Photo 4.5 Close up of Saguaro cactus fruit.



Photo 4.6 Ripened Saguaro cactus fruit.



Photo 4.7 The Tohono O'odham harvest cactus fruits in the early morning using ritually important cactus puller (*the kupaid*).



Photo 4.8 Ripened fruit is cleaned and then soaked in a tub of water for 2 to 3 hours. The mixture is then boiled and made into a syrup.

One of the most prized of the southern desert staples is the mesquite, called *kui* by the Akimel and Tohono O’odham. Common species include honey mesquite (*Prosopis glandulosa*), velvet mesquite (*P. velutina*), and screwbean mesquite (*P. pubescens*). This hardy, drought-tolerant tree is well-suited to the southern deserts because of its long taproot, which has been recorded at up to 190 feet in depth. It can also use water on or closer to the surface when it is available and can switch from one water source to the other. Because it is a legume, it fixes nitrogen in the soil (University of Texas 2010). The ripened bean pods are typically ground into flour that is high in protein, calcium, magnesium, potassium, iron, and zinc as well as rich in the amino acid lysine. It is an especially good food for diabetics because of its ability to stabilize blood sugar. Because it is naturally sweet and has a sweet, nutty flavor, it is traditionally used in breads, tortillas, and other baked goods. Prized by desert dwellers who have used mesquite pods as a staple food for centuries, it was also bartered with neighboring tribes (Ehler 1990-2010).



Photo 4.9 Honey Mesquite (*Prosopis glandulosa*) pods are used by many Southwest desert tribes for food. The beans are ground into a meal and mixed with hot or cold water, dishes include beverages, cakes, tarts, and breads.

Many greens grow wild in all parts of the Southwest. In higher elevations, above the Sonoran desert, lamb's quarters, also called wild spinach (*Chenopodium album*); purslane (*Portulaca oleracea*), also called *verdolaga* throughout New Mexico and *peehala* by the Hopi; pigweed (*Amaranthus palmerii*) or *quelites*, as it is known in Spanish, as well as many others grow in abundance. These wild greens have been harvested by the Native peoples of the Southwest for millennia and are still a part of the traditional diet.

Purslane (*Portulaca oleracea*),⁴² once a vital ingredient of prehistoric Puebloan diets, is an extremely rich source of omega-3 fatty acids and is high in Vitamins A and C. Its succulent stems and leaves are most commonly boiled, sautéed, and eaten alone or in soups and stews, but they can also be dried for use in winter. It is one of a number of wild plants that were traditionally collected for food and are now known to have medicinal benefits (Dunmire & Tierney 1995).



Photo 4.10 Purslane (*Portulaca Oleracea*) greens can be eaten raw like spinach or cooked and eaten with green chile, meat, or a broth made from animal bones. It is also dried, stored, and used as greens in the winter.



Photo 4.11 Wild purslane, Summer 2010.

Wild fruits and berries are important as well. Three-leaf sumac (*Rhus trilobata*), a wild berry also called lemonade berry or lemonade-bush, grows in many parts of Arizona and New Mexico and is harvested in the summer. Because of its affinity for prehistoric fields, three-leaf sumac is thought to have been a managed plant—not domesticated, but

encouraged and manipulated. The berrylike fruit is less than a half-inch in diameter, orange to red, and sticky, with short, glandular hairs. The berries are crushed and drunk as a summer refreshment in some Pueblos and by the Diné (Dunmire and Tierney 1995). Some contemporary Native chefs make it into a refreshing beverage and also grind the berries and use them as flavoring in sauces, soups, and stews.

Wild currants (*Ribes inebrians*) and wild gooseberry (*Ribes inerme*) are usually found at elevations above 5,000 feet. All nineteen Pueblos in New Mexico have a tradition of collecting and eating wild currants and gooseberries. The fruit is consumed fresh or dried for cooking. Archaeological remains show that these fruits have been part of the Pueblo diet for at least a thousand years and probably much longer.

The chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*) grows in various areas of the Pueblo province as well as to the north in the traditional Plains Indian territories. It is most famous for its use in pemmican,⁴³ but the Zuni call it the “bitter hanging fruit” and use it as the basis for different sauces. Members of Laguna Pueblo travel to the slopes of Mount Taylor (northeast of Grants, New Mexico) to gather chokecherries, and in Tesuque Pueblo they collect the berries at Rio en Media (a valley northeast of Santa Fe). They, too, are harvested in late summer, when the berries are bright to deep red and in some cases almost black. Drying the fruits of wild cherries concentrates the sugar, making them less bitter and more palatable because as they are very sour in their fresh state. These berries are quite common,⁴⁴ and their pits have been found at several Anasazi sites in northwestern New Mexico (Dunmire and Tierney 1995).



Photo 4.12 Chokecherries are eaten fresh, ground, formed into cakes, and dried. Dried fruits are stored for later use. The purple berries are also used to make dyes.



Photo 4.13 Chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*) ready to be harvested.

Wolfberries (*Lycium* spp.), also known as wild tomatillos, are a spiny, scraggly, branched shrub. They reach approximately three feet tall in the northern regions of New Mexico and are often associated with prehistoric ruins. The wolfberry can be found below cliff dwellings at Bandelier, Jemez State Monument, and along the Cliff Base Trail at Petroglyph National Monument in Albuquerque (Dunmire and Tierney 1995). They seem to like disturbed soil and have been labeled a camp-follower. Matilda Cox Stevenson's Zuni ethnobotany (1915) says that wolfberry's culinary uses included boiling the berries, and if they were not ripe they were sweetened, but the preferred method was to eat them raw when perfectly ripe. Her ethnobotany of San Ildefonso and Santa Clara (1912) states that fresh or dried and reconstituted leaves were used on cuts as a medicine. At Acoma, Laguna, Isleta, San Juan, and Sandia, tomatillo berries are eaten fresh, if ripe, or sweetened and cooked if not quite ripe.

Along the Rio Grande this shrub has been declining owing to invasive species, and there has been an effort to reintroduce the plant to its native habitat. The wolfberry plant is deciduous in winter and during periods of drought; it produces orange-red berries, about a half-inch in diameter, very much resembling miniature tomatoes, and is a member of the same family (Solanaceae).⁴⁵



Photo 4.14 Fresh wolfberries can be eaten right from the shrub. They are also ground, cooked to make a jam, stewed, sweetened, and eaten as a delicacy. The berries can be made into syrup as well as boiled, dried and stored for winter use.



Photo 4.15 Wolfberry (*Lycium pallidum*) bush full of berries.

Cacti such as the prickly pear (e.g., *Opuntia phaeacantha* and *O. engelmannii*) grow at elevations below 6,000 feet throughout the Rio Grande watershed. The prickly pear produces a reddish magenta fruit, called a *tuna* by the Spanish and Berbers, which is harvested in late summer to early fall. Birds and small animals eat these fruits as well, and Native peoples have always left enough in the wild for the other animals and for the plants' future propagation. Prickly pear fruits were one of the few sweets to which Native peoples of the Southwest had access before the arrival of Europeans (Dunmire and Tierney 1995), especially in the north. In the southern deserts the fruits tend to be much larger, and more juice can be extracted. On the Diné (Navajo) Reservation the fruits may only reach the size of a dried plum but are still harvested and prepared into juice, sauce, syrup, and jelly.

The pads of the prickly pear, known in Spanish as *nopales*, are also picked when young and green, usually in the early spring, and eaten as a vegetable. Cholla buds (*Opuntia acanthocarpa* and *O. echinocarpa*), called *ciolim* or *haanam* in the O'odham language, are harvested when young and then roasted and dried by multiple desert communities. Because the flesh of the flower buds, like that of capers, is mucilaginous, a dish prepared from cactus pads and cholla was probably combined with dry ingredients such as cornmeal. This mucilaginous membrane also contains blood sugar regulators, and health practitioners now know that these traditional foods are crucial to health and wellness in Native communities and may be a key food in regulating the effects of Type 2 diabetes (Brand, Snow, Nabhan, and Truswell 1990).

Both prickly pear and saguaro fruits can be made into syrup. Saguaro syrup (*bahidaj sitiol*) and seeds (*bahidaj kaij*) can be purchased from the Tohono O'odham Community Action group (TOCA), and contemporary Southwest chefs serving Native American cuisine have added these items to their menus. Prickly pear juice and syrup are also available commercially from both Native and non-Native enterprises.

We know from ethnographic studies that Puebloan peoples, the Diné (Navajo), the Indé (Apache), the Ute, and the Akimel and Tohono O'odham were not simply gatherers of wild plants: they transported, transplanted, pruned, fire-managed, and selected certain useful plants much as horticulturists, foresters, and plant breeders do

today. Some Southwestern plants long believed to be part of the natural vegetation are now recognized as incipient domesticates. Their seeds or shoots were probably carried from one Pueblo to another and used as trade items among tribes of the Southwest, where they were planted, hybridized, or protected for generations.

The Zuni were said to live with their plants—the latter are part of themselves. The initiated can talk with their plants, and the plants can talk with them (Stevenson 1915). It was customary for the Tohono O’odham to “talk to the plant or tree” when gathering a medicinal substance and also when administering it (Densmore 1929). Songs came from the elements, directly from the plants and the animals. Often dreams about animals might concern power in war or hunting or healing. Because songs were considered to be a source of personal power, they were actively sought through visions or rigorous apprenticeships with others. In such cultures, an apprenticeship in sacred plant medicine might require that the prospective student(s) to spend long periods of time with each plant and learn its song (Buhner 1996). This sonic encyclopedia differed for plants from various places in the Southwest, forming distinctive cultural identities based on each group’s adaptations to their own unique environment.

Because corn adapted and grew so well in the Southwest, and Native Americans developed techniques for storing and preparing corn that would last until the following growing season. These methods were developed because of the significance of corn itself but also because they are central to their ideologies and way-of-being in the world. This way-of-being is a distinctive cultural identity, which evolved from their connection to the earth.

Pueblo farmers in the Southwest have been able to achieve an annual crop with minimal rainfall for centuries. Their dependence on corn, beans, squash, and chiles in desertic conditions has led to a communal way of life and a pervasive religion linked to agriculture. Many of their daily activities, even today, focus on group ceremonies and rituals for rain and fertility. When a Hopi farmer’s corn begins to grow, he watches each plant, singing prayers of encouragement as if singing to child. The Hopi believe that corn was divinely created and that a perfect ear of corn embodies the spirit of Corn Mother, synonymous with Mother Earth. Newborn babies are blessed with ears of corn. All parts

of the corn plant are used in ritual: kernels, stalk, leaves, pollen, and cornmeal. The rising sun is greeted with cornmeal. Deities come during cycles of planting, growth, and harvest. All foods are revered, and for many Pueblos those that are now seldom found in the Southwest today remain alive in winter animal dances. In these ceremonies, the costumed dancers wear antlers, animal skins, and heavy circles of evergreen branches around their necks, recreating the animals amid their forest environment (Cox and Jacobs 1991).

In essence, many Native American farming traditions integrate wild species within their cultivated fields and domestic economies, creating a dynamic balance of nature and culture. This is what modern farmers lose when they cultivate their fields from edge to edge, leaving no hedges, no weeds, and no wildlife habitat. The trend today in industrial farming is a repudiation of wildness (Dunmire and Tierney 1995). Zuni farmers are known for allowing wild plants to have a place in both their waffle gardens and their row-style gardens. Wild plants such as Indian tea (*Thelesperma megapotamicum*), amaranth (*Amaranthus* spp., also known as pigweed), and bee-balm (*Monarda menthaefolia*) are permitted to grow next to cultivated plants. These “weeds” are harvested alongside the cultivars for use as tea, salad greens, and seasoning for soups and stews. Zuni gardeners will sometimes transplant these plants from the wild to encourage them to grow alongside the cultivars. Indian tea, pigweed, and bee-balm all do well in cultivated land or other areas of disturbed soil.

Clayton Brascoupe, a Native American farmer from the Iroquois nation now living in Tesuque Pueblo with his family, and program director of The Native American Farmer’s Association (TNAFA) leaves room at the ends of his garden rows for wild plants to grow. He says that farming teaches community and family responsibility. “Through farming you learn that not only do you have to take care of your fields, but you have to take care of your family and your neighbors. In Iroquois communities most of the celebrations or religious activities are either directly or indirectly tied to agriculture” (Brascoupe 1999:157-158). Agriculture plays a significant role in ties to the natural world for Brascoupe, and farming is a big part of his life and the life of his family. This Iroquois way of being is very similar to that of the Pueblos in New Mexico; both are agriculturally

based and both share religious and spiritual views that include ties to the land and the natural world. He believes this helps to balance his life and helps him to understand his place in the world.

Native science, which encompasses farming, plant domestication, plants medicine, animal husbandry, hunting, fishing, geology, and extends to include spirituality, community, creativity, and technologies that sustain environments and support essential aspects of human life, is the collective heritage of human experience with the natural world (Cajete 2000:3). Native communities depend on these elements as part of their well-being. When this way of looking at the world changes, so do the lives of the community members. Many Native scholars today advocate that these components are essential ingredients in the health and wellness of Native people.

Cultivated and wild foods have always played a significant role in Native people and their communities. It has helped define who they are in the natural world. When agriculture is no longer practiced in the community, maintaining religious ties to the natural world begins to decline. When this cycle is broken, and fewer and fewer people understand the intricate relationships that Native people have had with the natural world for millennia.

The foods from the precontact period are the most abundant and most intricate in terms of their history and contribution to Native American cuisine. Most foods are still available and being utilized by the Southwestern peoples.

First-Contact Foods and the Diet after the Encounter with the Spanish

The second wave on the food continuum consists of the first-contact foods that were introduced to the Southwest primarily by the Spanish, followed by other European groups. In the 1500s Spanish explorers entered the American Southwest from Mexico. This encounter, which I would classify as an invasion, and all of the encounters that followed would change the lives of the Native people in this region forever. By AD 1540, the Spanish conquistador Francisco Vasquez de Coronado and his party arrived at the cornfields of Zuni Pueblo, demanding food, and the demise of Pueblo life as they had known it had begun. Pueblo villages throughout New Mexico and Arizona were altered by the Spanish with the introduction of new foods, a new religion, and a new way of

being in the world. The Spanish changed their traditional way of life and altered an ancestral food history that would never be the same.

The Navajo raided the Spanish settlers and the Pueblos and took sheep that were brought by the Spanish. They were already farming in areas such as Canyon de Chelly, and they had winter and summer camps. When the Diné (Navajo) encountered the Spanish, although they were traditionally nomadic and more of a hunter-gatherer culture than a sedentary one, they were forced to farm European crops, completely transforming their diet and way of life (Berzok 2005). The Diné (Navajo) would eventually become shepherders, which they continue to do today.

The Indé (Apache) and the Comanche acquired horses from the Spanish through trading and raiding, enabling them to reposition bison from a suboptimal food source to a highly desirable staple. Cattle brought north by the Spanish were captured and then raised by various tribes. Beef would eventually become a major food source for the Native peoples of this region. This meant a huge increase in animal protein to the Native American diet, and less of a traditional, plant-based diet, which had been in existence since the end of the Pleistocene.

Foods which came with the Spanish included sheep (*Ovis aries*), goats (*Capra domestica*), cattle (*Bos bos*), pigs (*Sus domestica*), the horse, (*Equus f. caballus*), peaches (*Prunus persica*), apricots (*Prunus armeniaca*), plums, cherries (*Prunus* spp.), melons (*Cucumis melo*), watermelon (*Citrullus lanatus*), apples (*Malus domestica*), grapes (*Vitis vinifera*), and wheat (*Triticum* spp.). The Spanish brought chiles, tomatoes, potatoes, cultivated prickly pears, epazote, and so on, north from the tribes of Mesoamerica. They also introduced the adobe oven or *horno*. This new technology revolutionized Indian baking and incorporated new ingredients for making a variety of new breads. Oven bread made from wheat was introduced to the New Mexico Pueblos, further changing their corn-based diet.

Listed above are just some of the major foods introduced to the Southwest, but many other foods were brought in later. All of them have become an important part of Native Southwestern diets. With the variation in climate, different food sources and crops were adapted to various regions depending on their suitability.

Between AD 1590 and 1690, the Spanish who journeyed north from central Mexico brought into the Southwest more annual crops, additional types of livestock, winter vegetables and grains, fruit and nut trees, as well as novel cooking techniques. New varieties of wheat, barley, lentils, peas, chickpeas, fava beans, melons, and watermelons emerged that were unique to the Southwest (Nabhan 2010). Many of these heritage foods still exist, and a substantial effort has been made to keep these heritage foods vital in the Southwest (Nabhan 2009, 2010a).

New Mexican historian Juan Estevan Arrellano has explained that other influences were brought with the Spanish. Persian, Arabic, Moorish, Greco-Roman, Mayan, and Aztec influences are embedded in every Southwestern garden and kitchen, so terms like “Spanish” or “Indian” do not necessarily capture the origins of all of the foods we find today on a traditional Southwestern table. This diversity is acknowledged for regions of New Mexico, Arizona, southern Colorado, and Utah, but these influences are not a main focus of this work. The focus here is the ancestral foods that existed before contact and the foods from the initial contact with the Spanish.

When the Spaniards went beyond the Rio Grande Valley they encountered other tribes. They referred to the Southern Athapaskans as Querechos but soon settled on the term *Apache*, giving each tribe a regional or descriptive epithet. The people living west of the northern Pueblos, north of the Western Keresans and Zuni, and east of the Hopi were termed the Apaches de Nabajó, their neighbors to the north and northeast the Apaches de Quinía, and those west of the southern Pueblos the Apaches de Gila. Only the Apaches de Nabajó practiced agriculture, at least to such a degree that it was noted in the early Spanish texts (Brugge 1979).

The best indications of the Navajo culture about the time of initial contact in the historical record are the accounts of the Antonio de Espejo expedition of 1582-1583 and the Benavides memorials of 1630. These describe a semi-sedentary people who planted maize and perhaps other crops but moved to areas distant from their fields for hunting. They traded meat, hides, and mineral products, primarily salt, to the Puebloans, and were friendly or hostile with the Pueblos under poorly defined circumstances. Benavides describes an elaborate ritualized encounter between Tewa and Navajo that demonstrates a

sharing of certain ceremonial concepts. The earliest recorded contact of tribal members with Spaniards, that of Espejo at the base of Mount Taylor, was friendly at first but soon led to fighting as a result of the Spaniards' desire to retain Navajo captives obtained from the Hopis. The Navajos have been credited as being closely allied with the Pueblos in their efforts to throw off Spanish rule during the Pueblo Revolt of 1680 (Brugge 1969). During the reconquest of the 1690s, as the Spaniards defeated one minor alliance after another of the divided Pueblos, the people most closely involved in the movement fled, some to the Plains Apaches and others to Hopi, while many poured into the valley of the San Juan upstream from Farmington, New Mexico. Here they camped with their Navajo allies, eventually settling with them when hope of freeing their former homes from the Spanish had been lost (Brugge 1979).

The Spanish first introduced a type of sheep from Iberia known as the churro to North America in the early sixteenth century. By the seventeenth century, churros were popular with the Spanish settlers in the Upper Rio Grande Valley. Other Native tribes through trading and through raids acquired flocks. The sheep thrived in the arid ranges of northern Arizona, and the churro was adopted into the Navajo way of life. Soon after its introduction, it became important to both Navajo economy and culture. This ancient Iberian breed is now called the Navajo-Churro sheep, a name chosen to indicate both the Navajo and Spanish heritage. It is renowned for its hardiness and adaptability to climatic extremes. Its wool consists of a protective topcoat and soft undercoat and comes in a variety of colors, including reds, browns, black, white, and mixtures, which may change with age. The wool can be woven without dying, and many Navajo rugs are woven solely with Navajo-Churro wool. They are known for being resistant to disease, are low maintenance, and they have very lean meat.

The introduction of sheep changed the lifeways of the Diné dramatically. From the time the Diné first acquired sheep, their flocks have been central to their culture and lives. They have become master weavers, their blankets and rugs telling stories of a family's past or present. Newborn lambs are brought into the house when it is cold and fed by hand. Sheep are a sign of wealth; they are given as a bride price or bridal gift to a

woman's family from her prospective husband (Begay 1983; Whitewater 2003; Zolbrod 1984).



Photo 4.16 Chef Walter Whitewater's family's flock of sheep and goats in Pinon, Arizona.



Photo 4.17 The Willie's family's flock of sheep in Seba Dalkai, Arizona. (Photo by Tedra Begay)

Several of the chefs I worked with raise their own sheep, and all of the farmers I interviewed had sheep in addition to their traditional crops. Diné chefs and cooks prepare a multitude of dishes from mutton and lamb, which they consider to be a traditional food even though it was originally an introduced food.

The Indé and Diné groups have maintained a somewhat nomadic existence even in contemporary times by raising sheep and cattle. Many of the families among whom I conducted my research have stationary homes where they spend the majority of their time, but their livestock may winter in one area and be moved to an alternate grazing area for the summer. This requires a camp where the family members stay while they watch their livestock; in many cases it may be just the grandmothers who are still dedicated to their livestock.

For instance, Kenneth Peshlakai's mother, Elsie, who is Diné, keeps her flock in Naschitti, New Mexico, during the winter and moves the sheep into an area on the Arizona side of the Chuska Mountains during the summer. It is usually a two-day production. Elsie herds the sheep up the mountain in the summer and back down the mountain to the flatlands in the winter. She does all this alone, unless her son Kenneth and his wife Marcie can come home and assist her. Elsie is almost seventy years old. She refuses to go on vacation even for only two days with her son and daughter-in-law because she doesn't want to leave her sheep. These deep ties of a traditional elder to her land illustrate her attachment to place (Peshlakai 2007).

The brutal subjugation of the Pueblo Indians, which began in the early 1600s with the first Spanish settlements in the Rio Grande Valley, continued until the summer of 1680. Led by a visionary shaman name Popé, the Puebloans revolted in unison. In total secrecy they coordinated an attack, killing four hundred and one settlers and soldiers and routing the rulers in Santa Fe. All Spaniards were either killed or driven from the Pueblo homeland, the only time in North American history that Europeans were completely expelled from Indian territory. The period of the Pueblo Revolt lasted only twelve years before the Spanish returned. Some have labeled this the bloodless reconquest. Although Native and Spanish-heritage scholars have differing theories on what happened when the Spanish returned, "the fact is that between Puebloans and Hispanics in New Mexico

today, ineradicable ethnic tensions are the legacy of the re-conquest” (Roberts 2004:172). The records kept by the Spanish are numerous, voluminous, and vivid, with documents preserved in archives in Seville and Mexico City, but these represent the testimonies of the friars and governors. In contrast, the Pueblo record of the revolt is unwritten and remains secret. Roberts states, “The Spanish persecution in New Mexico was so severe that it drove the Pueblo religion (and indeed, the very culture) underground. Underground it remains today” (2004:7).

After the Pueblo Revolt, once the Pueblos accepted that the Spanish were going to stay in New Mexico, agricultural knowledge and skills were shared with the Spanish. Foods and agricultural techniques that the Spanish brought with them were adopted into Native communities, much as Native foods and techniques were adopted into the Spanish communities. The two communities have coevolved over the past five hundred years, as is evident in the regional cuisine. For example, a now-traditional green chile stew made in one of the Pueblos might be made with bison or beef, while that same stew in a neighboring Hispano community might be made with pork (Frank 2011). “The anchoring of food systems to locality meant the development of rhythms of work and eating that were to an important extent self-contained; not only were most foods known to all, but even how they were cooked was widely shared knowledge. Cooks and eaters formed the same community; small differences in methods of preparation were magnified” (Mintz 2002).

Trade in domesticated plants included precontact items as well as Spanish-introduced wheat and fruits. Corn was a regular item of commerce between the Pueblos and their nomadic neighbors, and the Havasupai, Sonoran Desert people, and Colorado River Yumans traded corn with the Walapai, Yavapai, Western Apache, and Paipai. The Pueblos along the Rio Grande also traded corn with one another when crops failed. Corn was the most important precontact trade food (Ford 1983:712), and other items for trade were added upon their introduction. Historically, Hopi-grown peaches were exchanged with the Diné (Navajo) and Zuni, and wheat bread, a product of the irrigated fields in the Eastern Pueblos, was traded with the Ute, Jicarilla Apache, and as far away as the Comanche and Kiowa. Tepary beans from the southern part of the Southwest were

traded, gourds grown in a variety of locales were traded for rattles, tobacco was traded for ceremonial uses, and buffalo robes, jerked meat, tallow, and pemmican were all brought in by the Plains tribes and the Eastern Pueblos to trade with groups in the western part of the Southwest. Turkey and macaws were also traded. Chiltepinés are known to have been traded from the Yaqui and Tohono O'odham to the Pima and the Hopi, well beyond their native range (Castetter and Underhill 1935; Castetter and Bell 1942). The hide trade was extensive in the Southwest. Buckskin, made from tanned deer hide, was produced by the Northern Tiwa, the Tewa, Diné (Navajo), Indé (Apaches), Utes, and Upland Yuman people. It was traded with the people in the southern Pueblos, Zuni, Hopi, Tohono O'odham (Papago), and the Colorado River tribes. Elk skins primarily came from the Ute tribe (Ford 1983:713).

Several early researchers described the Hopi gardens they saw at the beginning of the twentieth century. Page (1940) reports chile, onions, sweet corn, beans, and cress as being grown in Hopi gardens. And he noted that fruit trees such as peach, pear, apricot, apple, almond, cherry, and grape vines, all originally introduced by the Spanish, were planted on the lowest garden terrace or on the garden periphery. In 1935 Jones, collaborating with Alfred Whiting on a survey of Hopi agricultural seed sources, listed amaranth, apples, apricots, beets, cabbage, cantaloupe, carrots, chiles, cilantro, gourds, grapes, green beans, lettuce, mint, muskmelon, onions, peaches, peas, radishes, safflower, squash, sweet corn, sunflowers, tomatoes, and watermelons (Jones 1935).

The Pueblo province—including the lands drained by the upper Rio Grande—as well as Hopi and Navajo lands are regions in which diverse cultural relationships with plants remain intact. The ancient traditions have not merely survived, but somehow have weathered economic upheavals and environmental degradation of the past five hundred years. The fragrance of “cedar” or “sage” smoke, the taste of wild celery, the offering of cornmeal, and the sound of a gourd rattle are still being experienced today. These symbolic elements can be seen interspersed with the first-contact foods.



Photo 4.18 Monica Nuvasma's mother's garden in the Hopi village of Shungopavi, Arizona. This photo, taken in late spring of 2010, shows beans on top terrace, squash and melon on the second terrace (farther back), and corn in the front. (Photo by Monica Nuvasma)



Photo 4.19 Hopi corn growing in terrace garden. (Photo by Monica Nuvasma)

Introduced fruits such as peaches, apricots, plums, cherries, and apples are now an important part of Native diets of the Southwest, especially in northern New Mexico and Arizona, and are harvested annually. These cultivated fruits came with the Spanish approximately four hundred years ago but have been so intricately woven into both the Native communities and the Hispano communities who occupy this region that they are now considered to be part of the traditional foods of this region.

Today the Hopi grow a variety of stone fruits in their terrace gardens by dry-farming and with irrigation from snow and rain runoff stored in rock catchment areas on their mesas and in water tanks. Although the fruits tend to be smaller than commercially grown produce, they are very sweet and tasty and are found in many dishes distinctive to this region. The Hopi have mastered farming in their harsh, dry environment and developed plants specifically adapted to grow and produce high yields. The yield from these “poor” plants is phenomenal (Brew 1979:515; Hack 1942).

The Diné (Navajo) also planted peaches and apricots, in the valley floor of Canyon de Chelly, and produce an abundant yield of fruits from these first Spanish cuttings. Stephen C. Jett (1979) states that the Navajo of Canyon de Chelly learned peach cultivation from the Hopi in the early eighteenth century. Navajos planted volunteer seedlings and used the seeds to create orchards located on alluvial terraces that received runoff from cliffs and small tributary drainages. Peach cultivation eventually became a substantial, with apricots, plums, and apples added later and in much smaller numbers (Jett 1979). Fruit production remains an important part of Navajo culture along with corn, pumpkins, melons, beans, squash, and other crops that are grown in the canyon.

The Hualapai (People of the Tall Pine) of Arizona also had successful orchards; today the town of Peach Springs, Arizona, on the Hualapai Reservation, is named after the peaches that were grown by the Hualapai. Descendants of the original trees still exist. Apples were established around Salinas Pueblo mission as early as 1628, and these *manzanos Mexicanos* (Mexican apples) still grow along the streams flowing out of the Manzano Mountains south and east of Albuquerque.

Wheat was another important ingredient that was adopted into Native American culture. Among the groups that took to this new grain readily were the Zunis, the Tohono

O'odham, and the Pima. Soon this grain outranked corn in importance and was used daily, as corn had been. The Tewa burned all of the wheat during the Pueblo Revolt in 1680. However, after the revolt most of the Pueblos in New Mexico and Arizona began to grow and use wheat in greater amounts. Wheat tortillas superseded corn in many tribes after this period.

Today the Pueblos in New Mexico have incorporated wheat into their daily diets and have become renowned bread bakers. Pueblo women devised several methods to make yeast so their wheat loaves would rise. Some used the green parasitic lichen (Lungwort), which is found growing on hardwood trees, steeping it in warm water overnight and mixing it with flour in the morning (Burch 1944).

At Zuni Pueblo, women would make sourdough by mixing up a sponge (a culinary term used for making yeasted sourdough bread) with flour and water and letting it stay overnight. When a successful sponge had been started, a bit of the dough was saved from one baking to the next. The sponge dough usually hardened and the baker either ground it into a powder and mixed it with water or soaked the lump in water to use it in baking (Neithammer 1974). This bread is served at every Pueblo Feast and is often given as gifts to Feast-Day visitors. Ash bread is also made from this dough by burying flat cakes in hot ashes to cook. Wheat is also sprouted and made into a dish called *panocha* in Spanish. It is made in both Native American and Hispano communities today.

In addition to the ingredients discussed above, Spanish priests and colonists brought figs, pomegranates, dates, olives, quinces, and citrus and other fruits. Criollo-Corriente cattle, churro sheep, goats, chickens, and geese were also brought into the region. Corriente cattle, descended from the original Spanish animals brought to the Southwest, have significantly leaner meat than most modern beef cattle. They adapted well to the desert environment, while also having a minimal impact on the fragile environment. With the introduction of cattle for food, tribes of this region, who had previously subsisted primarily on a cultivated and wild plant diet, changed their diet to one that included beef, lamb, and pork. This new diet had much more protein because of the increased consumption of meat and decreased consumption of the ancestral plant-

based foods. This change has had a substantial effect on the tribes of this region, and some of the resulting health adversities can be seen today.

It is almost impossible to think of the Southwest without visualizing its foods. The brightly colored red chile *ristras*, introduced from Mexico after AD 1550 (Friese, Kraft, and Nabhan 2011; Nabhan 2011), hanging to dry outside the earth-colored adobe homes; the four colors of Pueblo Indian corn: yellow, white, blue, and red, which are roasted, dried, and ground into meal; the beans that reflect the subtle hues and tones of the landscape; and the many types of squashes are just a few of the ingredients featured in so many of the food dishes from this region. These foods have become icons that represent the Southwest, a part of the language of this region.

Although chiles are not considered indigenous to the Southwest (Friese, Kraft, and Nabhan 2011; Nabhan 2011), over the past four hundred or so years each Pueblo community and most Hispanic communities in the Upper Rio Grande have adapted a variant of “native chile” to their own soils, water sources, and growing season. They have also selected them for their suitability for different uses. Different culinary qualities were desirable: textures, colors, heat levels, capacity to absorb liquids, suitability for stuffing when fresh (when green) and for making sauce (when dried and reddened), and desired levels of piquancy. Today many of the Pueblos have their own place-based name for their local heirloom: San Juan, Chimayó, Nambé, Santa Domingo, San Felipe, Jemez, Cochiti, and Zia (Friese, Kraft, and Nabhan 2011:131-132).

Corn, beans, squash, and chiles are synonymous with the Southwest and are considered to be the “magical” culinary ingredients of the region, both traditionally and by contemporary chefs (Miller 1989). When these ingredients are taken, for instance, to the eastern United States, the South, or the Midwest, they retain their sense of place and are always referred to as elements in “Southwest” cuisine, or as “Southwest” foods or ingredients. Thus, the ingredients themselves further the connection they have to place and to the people who grow and have always grown these specific foods.

Dried corn *posole* and oven-roasted corn *chicos* are also distinctive to the Pueblos of the Southwest, although similar dishes exist in the Sonoran desert under other names (Nabhan 2011). Another distinctive ingredient is blue corn, which is ground into a meal

and used in breads, soups, stews, dumplings, and *atole*, a traditional blue cornmeal beverage, and *chaquewa*, an Indian porridge. The methods of drying, storing, and preparing corn have evolved over centuries of use (Barreiro 1989), partially because of the unique Southwestern environment.

With foods and cooking techniques introduced by the Spanish, new ways of baking, poaching, roasting, fermenting, and frying introduced new culinary possibilities (Nabhan 2010). Because of these new foods, which were combined with the foods that existed in the region prior to contact, the Indo-Hispanic culinary traditions found today in the Southwest have deep and diverse roots.

Historian Juan Estevan Arrellano calls the type of farming that developed in the Río Arriba bioregion of northern New Mexico, now the heart of the Indo-Hispano country, *agricultura mixta tradicional mestiza*, because it includes land initially settled by the Pueblo Indians and again in 1598 by Spanish colonizers led by Don Juan de Oñate, along with Tlaxcala Indians from the interior of Mexico. This type of agriculture includes elements from all of these cultural traditions, and the foods being raised on these farms now include crops that are ancestral Puebloan as well as crops brought to this region by the Spanish.

The term heritage farming (Nabhan 2010) will be used as well and refers to farming that includes techniques from ancestral farming methods as well as techniques brought to this region by the Spanish and the other European groups that followed.

Government-Issued Commodity Foods and the Forced Relocation of Native Peoples onto Reservations

The last section of the food continuum focuses on the commodity foods that were issued to Native people when they were forcibly relocated onto reservations or forced to move away from their ancestral homelands. This process varied from tribe to tribe. Some tribes were able to keep some of their ancestral homelands; others were not.

The opening of the western frontier, triggered by the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, encouraged many people to move west into what was traditionally Indian country. Congress initiated the Federal Indian Removal Act of 1830, which evicted more than one hundred thousand Native Americans east of the Mississippi River to Indian Territory in

Oklahoma, disrupting their traditional way of life, their ceremonial calendar, and their foodways. The loss of lands was devastating. Native peoples have always called the earth their Mother and revered their association with the land and all that the land provided for them. Being forcibly relocated had severe impacts on Native peoples. The United States would ultimately determine where Native tribes could live, hunt, fish, farm, and eat (Berzok 2005).

In 1838, President Andrew Jackson burned the crops of the Cherokees and forced more than twenty thousand tribal members to walk west at gunpoint during the winter in the tragic march known as the Trail of Tears. Many, many people died. More than four thousand people died along the way from malnutrition, starvation, disease, or were executed by the military guard (Berzok 2005). Within a decade, the eastern states were cleared of the five “Civilized” tribes—the Chickasaw, Cherokee, Creek, Choctaw, and Seminole, all of whom had practiced agriculture prehistorically. Only the Florida Seminole resisted eviction and fought, but their tribe was reduced to approximately five hundred people by the time they were given their present-day reservation along the western coast of Florida. It is estimated that more than sixty thousand Native people were relocated from the East.

In the Southwest, the Diné (Navajo) were also forced to leave their homelands and were consolidated onto a reservation. After the successful U.S. invasion of Mexico and the former Mexican territories, such as New Mexico, in 1848, the U.S. military (and later the Bureau of Indian Affairs of the Department of the Interior) administered the Southwest tribes. All nomadic tribes north of the new border with Mexico were to be settled onto reservations.

On August 10, 1864, Captain John Thompson and Kit Carson destroyed countless crops, including roughly four thousand Navajo peach trees in Canyon de Chelly, on their way to Fort Canby, Arizona (formerly Ft. Defiance) after overtaking Barboncito, the leader of the de Chelly Navajos, who finally surrendered. After the majority of their sheep were slaughtered, their crops burned, and their orchards cut down, the majority of the Navajo people surrendered and accepted deportation to the Bosque Redondo Reservation at Fort Sumner, in southeastern New Mexico (Jett 1974). As a condition of

their surrender the Navajos agreed to abandon their nomadic lifestyle, even though they were already mostly settled by this point in time, and to relocate to a reservation and devote themselves to farming. The approximately eighty-three hundred Navajo who had surrendered were forced to walk to Fort Sumner. They were marched at gunpoint from their traditional lands in eastern Arizona Territory and western New Mexico Territory; this 350-mile walk is known as the Long Walk of the Navajo. The entire period of incarceration on the Bosque Redondo Reservation at Fort Sumner is called Hwéeldi in Navajo. The trip lasted approximately eighteen days, and those who were able to make the long walk arrived sick and starving.

During the four years of internment, there was not enough land to cultivate, too little grass for grazing sheep, and inadequate government rations. By 1868, the Indians at Fort Sumner were completely dependent on rations for sustenance. In one of the few instances in U.S. history, the federal government relocated a tribe back to their traditional boundaries, freeing the approximately seven thousand three hundred survivors who returned on the “Long Walk” back to their homelands, into what now makes up the original boundaries of the Navajo Reservation (Bailey 1970; Bial 2003).

The Confederation of Seven Bands of the Ute Tribe were concentrated onto three reservations: the Mouache and Capote bands now make up the Southern Utes, with headquarters in Ignacio, Colorado; the Weminuches are now called the Ute Mountain Utes, with their headquarters in Towaoc, Colorado; and the last four bands, the Tabeguache, Grand, Yampa, and Uintah, now comprise the Northern Utes on the Uintah-Ouray Reservation, with their headquarters at Fort Duchesne, Utah. The Utes were consolidated on these three reservations between 1864 and 1868 and forced to live in areas much smaller than their traditional ancestral homelands (Ute Tribe 2010).

Other tribes, such as the Mescalero Apache, Jicarilla Apache, and Chiricahua and Mimbreno Apache, in New Mexico, and the Akimel O’odham (Pima), Western Apache, Cocopah, Halchidhoma, Hualapai, Havasupai, Yavapai, Hopi, Maricopa, Mohave, Southern Paiute, Tohono O’odham (Papago), Yaqui, and Yuma, were all concentrated onto reservations, losing portions of their ancestral homelands, their hunting grounds, and in many cases their primary sources of wild and cultivated foods.

Although the Pueblos were able to stay on portions of their ancestral homelands, they too lost land through land grants that were made to individuals and communities during the Spanish (1598-1821) and Mexican (1821-1846) periods of New Mexico's history. The Pueblo Revolt of 1680 destroyed nearly all of the Spanish documents in New Mexico, and only the land grants that were made after the Spanish reconquest of New Mexico exist today. These grants were issued to individuals and to communal groups for the purpose of establishing settlements. In 1849, James S. Calhoun, the first U.S. Indian agent in New Mexico, drew attention to Mexican law under which the Pueblos had been recognized as citizens (Simmons 1979). Eventually all of the nineteen remaining Pueblos of New Mexico—Acoma, Cochiti, Isleta, Jemez, Laguna, Nambe, Ohkay Owingeh (San Juan), Picuris, Pojoaque, Sandia, San Felipe, San Ildefonso, Santa Ana, Santa Clara, Santa Domingo (Kewa), Taos, Tesuque, Zia, and Zuni—would become federally recognized Indian reservations.

The government-issued food rations to relocated tribes originally included beans, beef (sometimes bacon), lard, flour, coffee, and sugar, which were distributed twice a month. This food distribution program led to one of the most dramatic dietary changes in Indian history. The original intention of the U.S. government was to supply rations as an interim solution until dislocated and relocated Native peoples were raising enough food of their own. Instead, many Indian people from a variety of communities all over the Southwest became totally dependent on these rations. Some tribes initially abandoned their traditional food-procurement practices but found that there was never enough of the government-issued food to feed all their tribal members.

Not only did the government issue food rations, it also encouraged cultivation of new crops by providing new seeds and planting instructions. In *Buffalo Bird Woman's Garden*, first published in 1917 as *Agriculture of the Hidatsa Indians: An Indian Interpretation*, anthropologist Gilbert L. Wilson transcribed in meticulous detail the account given by Buffalo Bird Woman. She stated, "The government has changed our old way of cultivating corn and our other vegetables, and has brought us seeds of many new vegetables and grains, and taught us their use. . . . New kinds of seeds were issued to us, oats and wheat; and we were made to plant them in these newly plowed fields."

In the Southwest, during the Spanish colonial period, some Pueblo people were forced to grow crops for the Spanish along with their own crops. The United States chose a different strategy. The federal government still holds about fifty six million acres in trust for 314 federally recognized tribes and groups, with the largest being the Navajo (Diné) at about sixteen million acres. In 1990, the population of Native Americans as a whole was about two million, with a little more than a third still living on reservations and about half living in urban areas (Berzok 2005:35).

Traditional foodways and life among Native people changed dramatically during the Reservation period. Foodways are particularly entrenched into cultural identity. They are the earliest layers of culture to form and the last to erode (Berzok 2005:35). Contextually, then, taste is conditioned to like, desire, and then to seek certain foods, and these preferences are a part of each of individual Native community (Kalcik 1984).

The Native American diet during the distribution period included foods that Native communities struggled to incorporate into dishes and recipes. As time passed, additional foods were issued as part of the commodity food program, such as cheese, egg mix, nonfat dry and evaporated milk, pasta, rice and other grains, dehydrated potatoes, peanut butter, crackers, corn syrup, vegetable shortening, and canned or frozen meat, poultry, and fish.

This program is now entitled the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations or FDPIR. Under the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Service, monthly packages of commodity foods are still distributed to low-income American Indian households living on or near Indian reservations by either Indian Tribal Organizations (ITOs) or a state government agency. Currently some 271 tribes are receiving benefits under the FDPIR. Participating tribal communities can select from more than seventy products to help them maintain a nutritionally balanced diet (http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/programs/fdpi/about_fdpi.htm).

This period in Native American cuisine history has been the most dramatic and most detrimental to Indian people. These distributed foods promote a meaty, cheesy, wheat-based nontraditional diet that has not only altered the way Native people eat but created problems such as heart disease, obesity, and Type 2 diabetes (all of which have

reached epidemic levels in some tribal nations). The journal *Cardiology* in 1991, reported that “with the adoption of Western lifestyles and diet . . . heart disease has become relatively common among a number of Native American tribes.” With cholesterol levels rising, heart disease ranks as the leading killer of Native Americans, causing more than one-fifth of deaths, according to the U.S. Indian Health Service (IHS) figures (Barnard and Brown 2003).

The iconic Indian Taco, one of today’s best-known Indian dishes, is actually a creative use of foods that were distributed to Native people during the Reservation period. Using existing cooking technology (Divina 2004), Native cooks were able to concoct a dish that included foods that were familiar to them with others that were not. Wheat flour, baking powder, lard, and cheddar cheese were several of the commodity foods issued to families on reservations resulting in the birth of the Indian Taco. Beans, meat, green chiles, and tomatoes, which were already being produced by many families in the Southwest at the time, made a natural accompaniment to these new commodity foods. Although a relative newcomer to the scene in terms of Native American foods, the Indian Taco, and the fry bread on which it is served, is now inseparable from what is considered to be a traditional Native American food at national fairs, powwows, and community events, both on reservations and in urban areas.



Photo 4.20 Lamb meat Indian taco, featuring organically raised lamb with two types of organic beans, green chile, cheese, lettuce, tomato on a piece of homemade frybread.

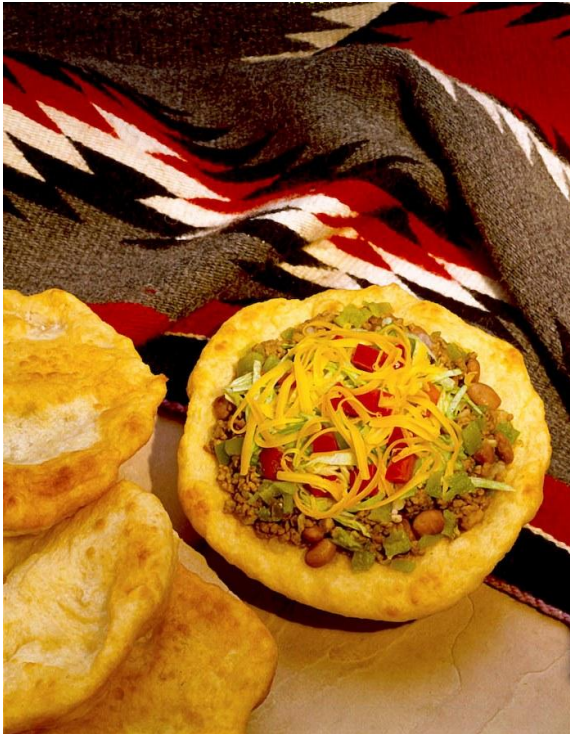


Photo 4.21 Traditional Indian taco made with frybread topped with ground beef, pinto beans, green chile, lettuce, tomato, and cheddar cheese.

The New Native American Cuisine

Based on anthropological and historical accounts of Native peoples from the Southwest, as well as from their own accounts, it is apparent that a “cuisine” did in fact exist from which contemporary chefs are drawing, and chefs and cooks have placed a new focus on these foods in a contemporary context for the development of the new Native American cuisine.

In order to understand those areas of culinary history that are especially relevant to this new cuisine, it is important to account for the theoretical frameworks within this and other relevant disciplines and to foreground this complexity in my own analytical framing. With a focus on Native American and non-Native chefs and Native American cooks, one of the layers to this research is the acquisition of the cooking skills needed to execute the foods this community is preparing. The skills, which involve learning specific cooking techniques, are only the physical execution of becoming a chef or cook. What holds greater symbolic meaning, and an important layer to investigate here, is what lies

beneath those cooking skills, in the multiple layers of the person executing them. This is represented and illuminated in different ways—ways in which place-based memories are voiced and experienced. The process of illustration, performing, and evoking such description, which I draw upon here, involves a broad range of local symbolic materials—verbal, visual, oral, graphic, and written—many of which are tied to memory. I present these materials in a variety of ways and, in doing so, I locate some of the intricate strengths and fragilities that connect chefs and cooks to social imagination and practice, to memory and desire, to dwelling and movement (Feld and Basso 1996). Place-based memories can be evoked in a multitude of ways.

My research extrapolates from models of theoretical and ethnographic work on place by Basso and Feld (Feld 1982; Basso 1996a, 1996b; Feld and Basso 1996) and on the theoretical work of Edward Casey, which is primarily concerned with the phenomenological account of place (Casey 1993) and which engages in dialogue with both social theory and ethnographic inquiry.

Native American cuisine developed because of the significance it had to the people(s) of the Southwest, and it is central to their ideologies and way of being. This way of being is a distinctive cultural identity, which evolved from their connection to place. In many cases in the Southwest food represents who the people(s) are. Chefs and cooks are of the places they are from, and the places of the chefs and cooks are intertwined within the foodscapes that they create. Food is deeply performative, and the senses are used to perform the foodscapes the chefs and cooks create to define this new Native American cuisine.

“American Indians hold their lands—places—as having the highest possible meaning, and all their statements are made with this point in mind” (Deloria 1994:62-63). Their place is who they are; it is expressive of where they have come from, where they are now, and where they will go from here.⁴⁶

Place, then, clearly comes into play here. An example is the case of the Diné (Navajo) people and their sheep; this lived experience exists because of place. It is through the experience of bodily sensation that Diné people know and understand sheep, but it is through expression that they reach heightened emotional and aesthetic

dimensions of sensual inspiration (Feld 1996). Places make sense in good part because of how they are made sensual and how they are sensually voiced. Perceiving bodies are knowing bodies, and inseparable from what they know is culture as it imbues and shapes particular places. It is by bodies that places become cultural entities (Casey 1993). Being with their sheep and raising them on their land becomes tied to the Diné's own experience of being. Food becomes the means of solidifying these social ties with the sheep. The food derived from the sheep becomes a way of solidifying and maintaining human relationships. Food, in this instance, becomes part of a way of life that binds the Diné people together. Sheep here are full of symbolic meanings that are both experiential and aesthetically expressive. They are imagined, held, remembered, voiced, and lived. Thus these expressions are tied not only to place and place memories, but also to identity.



Photo 4.22 Traditional lamb, potato, and green chile stew prepared by Chef Walter Whitewater.

Dishes, prepared from mutton and lamb, are now considered traditional foods that most Diné people know how to cook. Fry bread is also considered to be a traditional food. Walter Whitewater, a contemporary Diné chef who was raised very traditionally on the Navajo Reservation, uses lamb in many of his recipes. Some he learned from his grandmother and others are adaptations of modern techniques he has learned in contemporary kitchens. Whether he prepares a traditional lamb stew or a contemporary

stuffed lamb chile, the use of lamb is integrally tied to who he is, Diné. He has also begun to raise Navajo churro sheep. Chef Whitewater is working with Diné be' iiná, Inc. (The Navajo Lifeway) to educate about Navajo culture and to reintroduce this breed. The foods from across the food continuum are woven together in the case of this chef like an intricate Navajo rug. These worlds of interactions are what have now become the new Native American cuisine.



Photo 4.23 Lamb-stuffed New Mexico green chile served with organic tomato sauce and garnished with sour cream. Prepared by Chef Walter Whitewater.

Other foods, such as the Tohono O’odham brown and white tepary beans (*bawĩ*), cholla buds (*ciolim* or *haanam*), saguaro syrup (*bahidaj sitol*) and seeds (*bahidaj kai’j*), are also unique to that group, yet inseparable from who they are as a people. Certain key species—mesquite, agaves, and columnar cacti—could each be called “the staff of life” to one or more cultures that lived within their range (Nabhan 1985). As the peoples of this region became dependent upon the plants that evolved over hundreds of thousands of years, some of these plant species had their evolutionary destinies altered by those who gathered, saved, and selected their seeds, thereby domesticating them (Nabhan 1985).

As part of the new Native American cuisine in this region, chefs working with the Tohono O’odham Community Action group (TOCA), as well as chefs working at Kai Restaurant at Sheraton Wild Horse Pass Resort and Spa, owned and operated by the Gila

River community, have begun to use traditional foods to create a new Native American cuisine. By combining ancestral foods with foods from the two succeeding periods on the food continuum, the new Native American cuisine emerges. Part of the mission of the chefs is to understand the land and culture that gave rise to the flavors of this region (Betancourt 2009), thereby helping the community members and patrons to understand their importance. By serving the foods from the region, the flavors of the desert become woven into the taste of the food. The increasingly fine distinctions from increasingly specific locales become the *terroir* (Jacobsen 2010) of Native American cuisine.

Native American foods have a rich and long history in the Southwest. The foods are made up of ancient ingredients that existed long before contact with any outsiders, yet some five hundred years ago, ancient ingredients were “fused” with new ingredients. Native communities adopted and adapted these new foods into their cuisine, but the newcomers also adopted and adapted ingredients from Native American communities into their cuisine.

This cuisine, which many refer to as northern New Mexico cuisine, is actually a combination of Native American foods and dishes that existed for centuries with the Spanish and other European foods introduced to the region upon first contact. It is not uncommon to find the same dishes in both communities today, perhaps prepared slightly differently. For instance, red chile stew might be made with bison in Picuris Pueblo and with beef or even pork in the Hispano community of Chimayo, yet the ingredients and cooking processes are all but identical.

In other parts of the Southwest this fusion is apparent where Native groups had contact with the Spanish. Nabhan states “these foods have the flavor of place embedded in every mouthful, and provide residents as well as tourists with a unique experience of the region” (2010:back cover).



Photo 4.24 An example of a traditional red chile stew that is made in both Native American and Hispano communities of Northern New Mexico.

This hybridity and interaction, this fusing of foods from the different historical periods, this innovative approach to weaving together ingredients from the past with the present—this is the new Native American cuisine.

Chapter 5

Revitalizing the Traditional Native American Diet for Native Health in the Southwestern United States

Today, most Americans probably think of fry bread or Indian tacos as the iconic Native American foods because they are served at every Pow Wow ⁴⁷ and at many arts and crafts festivals, Pueblo Feast Days,⁴⁸ and other Native gatherings and ceremonies. But as I have shown, indigenous Native American cuisine is much more complex and evolved over many millennia. The food continuum I presented in the previous chapter is based on this evolution of food in Southwestern Native communities. Four major time periods illustrate this history but do not tell the entire story of the food, the place, and the people.

Multiple historical factors have significantly changed the Native American diet. Native communities modified the indigenous foods in their cuisine and have adopted introduced foods, thereby changing their eating habits, their traditional diet, and inevitably their cuisine. Today we know that one of the healthiest diets a Native person (and, for that matter, any person) can have is the diet that evolved from their place of origin (Nabhan 2004). This includes the traditional foods of the past; the history of which health educators now know is encoded in our bodies (Nabhan 2004:15). The cans of beef, the white flour, and the Velveeta-like cheese the government provided was not only not part of the traditional Indian diet, it was fatty, sugary, salty, and fiber-depleted food that added to the nutrition-related diseases from which Native American communities were already suffering (Nabhan 2004). The introduction and wide distribution of these foods thus created health issues that did not previously exist in these communities.

Because of the disruption of ancestral food traditions caused by the multiple waves of European invasion and colonization which began in the fifteenth century, millions of acres of native lands and waters were taken and traditional foodways were radically and violently disrupted, leading to dislocation, disease, and starvation (Nelson 2010). The loss of protective, low-glycemic, slow-release foods is believed to have quickly tipped Native communities to diabetes and other food-related diseases (Nabhan 2004).

On many reservations today, diabetes, obesity, cancer, high blood pressure, and heart disease are some of the health effects that doctors believe may have been influenced by foods introduced into the diet (Barnard 2010). Yet interestingly, the majority of the chefs and cooks I interviewed had warm memories of eating commodity foods with their families when they were growing up. Ninety percent of diabetes and eighty percent of heart disease cases can be directly attributed to unhealthy eating habits and lifestyles (Barnard and Brown 2003). In a commentary on U.S. dietary guidelines for Native Americans, Neal D. Barnard M.D. and Derek M. Brown stated that the 1995 guidelines (which were reviewed in mid-2000) push a “Westernized” diet that is unlike the traditional diets of Native peoples (Mihsuah 2003). These guidelines ignore the gene-food interactions and the health needs and cultural practices of Native Americans and other minorities. An internet-accessible human genome database prepared by the National Center for Biotechnology and edited by Victor McKusick at John Hopkins known as OMIM (Online Mendelian Inheritance in Man) includes a list of “disease genes” that can interact with the foods we eat and the beverages we drink in ways that make us sick. Some of the resulting “genetic disorders” suggest that certain foods must have interacted with particular sets of genes over the course of human evolution (Nabhan 2004:6-7).

Nabhan states that some conditions that scientists once simplistically lumped together as *genetic disorders* might instead be considered *environmentally specific adaptations* that actually increase our fitness in certain settings or on certain diets (Nabhan 2004:9). More and more scientists now understand that ethnic cuisines have deep-seated ecological underpinnings and evolutionary trajectories that are of great significance to the health status of their community members (Nabhan 2004:10). Thus some gene-food interactions have emerged by evolutionary processes. Ancestors developed their own traditions of ecological knowledge to discern the delicious and nutritious from the toxic (Nabhan 2004:4). Natural selection and other evolutionary processes mediated by food choices have likely played important roles in generating both human genetic diversity and orally transmitted cultural diversity (Nabhan 2004:4).

Meanwhile, the much-adopted Standard American Diet and the fast-food culture—flush with animal proteins, fats, and sugars—exact an increasing toll on Native Americans, as on others. “For Native Americans, current federal dietary guidelines amount to, perhaps inadvertently, the nutritional equivalent of smallpox-infected blankets” (Barnard and Brown 2003).

These guidelines, which govern all federal and many private nutrition efforts, poorly reflect what we know about health (Barnard and Brown 2003). For instance, lactose intolerance, with its gas, bloating, and diarrhea, is a natural warning that this food is not appropriate for all ethnic groups. In fact, the majority of Native Americans are lactose intolerant, but the government still distributes milk powder to them. Nabhan tells the story of members of the Tohono O’odham community at Ak-Chiñ village using milk powder from the federal government’s surplus commodity food program to make the white lines on their baseball field because they couldn’t eat it (Nabhan 2004:17). According to Barnard and Brown there are plenty of non-dairy calcium sources, including dark green leafy vegetables, and beans.

Years ago I worked with Chef Walter Whitewater in Pinon, Arizona, giving several cooking classes to community members who had been given canned salmon as part of the commodity food program. We wanted to teach the residents how to prepare the canned salmon into a healthy low fat meal. The majority of the Navajo elders didn’t know how to use the salmon (being a desert people) and said that they fed it to their cats. The majority of the people in Pinon, Arizona, had never tasted salmon, let alone learned how to cook with it. Yet among many Native communities on the Northwest Coast, salmon is one of their most sacred foods. The government didn’t factor in cultural appropriateness when they distributed the canned salmon to communities on the Navajo Nation.

Foods from the “New World” encompass many of the foods Americans know and eat today. Some of the well-known Southwestern foods that Americans eat today include corn, beans, squash, chiles, sunflowers, amaranth, tomatillos, chenopods, pecans, acorns, black walnuts, varieties of cactus, agaves, and little barley (Mihsuah 2003), and others which developed in Mesoamerica and were brought north hundreds of years ago,

including tomatoes, potatoes, avocado, vanilla, and cacao, the major ingredient in what we now know as chocolate (Foster and Cordell 1992).

Archaeological and oral historical evidence show that Native American groups had a complex and intricate food trade system for millennia prior to contact with European explorers (Ford 1983; Crown and Hurst 2009). Native groups traded with each other for foods they didn't grow, cultivate, or harvest in their local area.

Native American cultures at first contact have been compartmentalized and consolidated into six geographic classifications, each with its own food staples and traditions, and these culture areas are still being used in some academic accounts today. Other scholars use bioregions and foodsheds (Nabhan 2010a; Nelson 2008; Frank 2011), which restore indigenous history and culture back to nature, but this research is relatively recent (Martinez, Salmón, and Nelson 2008).

Native American cultural foodways are fluid and include very intricate systems of commerce and trade between neighboring and distant groups. Each of the six culture areas that were used to define Native cultures in North America—the Southwest, the Northwest Coast, the Great Plains, California, the Great Basin and Plateau, the Northeast Woodlands and Great Lakes, and the Southeast—was accompanied by a list of major tribes and a description of the geography, environment, and food cultural traditions that characterized that specific region. For example, the Southwest was described as having a dominant farming culture that was supplemented by gathering and hunting. While this is somewhat accurate, it does not begin to describe all of the diversity in the tribal communities of the Southwest.

The same is true for the Northwest Coast, which, while equally diverse in tribal communities, has been defined as having a dominant fishing culture supplemented by gathered and hunted foods. And the Great Plains actually encompassed the entire area from central Alberta, Canada, all the way to Texas. It was bounded by the Rocky Mountains on the west and the Missouri River on the east, a vast swath of this continent's midsection. Traditionally, this region was defined by two coexisting cultures, one a culture of farmers who initially settled along the river valleys and grew corn, beans, squash, and sunflowers, and the other a hunting and gathering culture who depended on

the bison. Bison meat was exchanged with members of sedentary groups for maize. Many people today only know of the bison culture. And again, although each of these descriptions contain some accurate facts, the intricate details of who and how these groups lived and what they ate is significantly diffused by defining them by their cultural land bases only.

Biological diversity can be defined using distinct categories, including genetic, species, habitat, ecosystem, and landscape diversity. Cultural diversity is made up of elements that are intertwined with biological diversity and include ethnic (biocultural) diversity (distinct peoples from distinct places), linguistic diversity (including language families, roots, and dialects), and indigenous knowledge, which includes systems of traditional ecological knowledge (TEK), such as subsistence strategies, cultural production, and survival. *Cultural productions* related to physical survival include food, clothing, housing, and medicine, and those related to cultural survival include language, art, music, dance, ceremony, literature, media, and law. All of these forms are interwoven into a system that can be called biocultural diversity. This system encompasses the diversity of life in all its manifestations, which are interrelated within a complex socio-ecological adaptive system. The traditional Peoples' Restoration Network states, "The emerging ethnoscientific approach to TEK fuses the methodologies of anthropology and biology to underscore the past and current relationships between Nature and Culture" (<http://www.ser.org/iprn/tek.asp>). As biodiversity is becoming synonymous with sustainable development, TEK has the potential to provide valuable information and models for resource management. Agricultural techniques based on indigenous knowledge are now being developed including permaculture (mixed cropping and agroforestry systems), water harvesting and soil conservation, fire management (controlled burns), botanical medicines, as well as heirloom grains and vegetables.

This is important in the investigation of traditional Native foodways because it recognizes intrinsic value, practical value, provides place-based materials for cultural solutions, and fosters adaptability and resilience to environmental and social changes. Using this framework I can define traditional ancestral foodways as being inextricably

woven into the very fabric of being if the cultural groups that were occupying differing bioregions and foodsheds upon initial contact.

In their book *Eating in America*, Root and Rochemont state that “While it is not difficult to fall into the habit of referring indiscriminately to what ‘Indians’ ate as though all American Indians were the same; there is as much difference between an Algonquin and a Hopi as between a Swede and an Italian. Swedes and Italians do not eat in the same fashion, and neither did the Algonquians and Hopis” (1995:15). Even in the Southwest, the Hia C-ed O’odham or Sand Papagos, the Tohono O’odham, the Akimel O’odham, the Salt River Pima-Maricopa, and the Mexican Mountain Pima all exhibited substantial differences (Nabhan 2011). When America was “discovered” by Columbus, it could be said “the great majority of American Indians were probably eating better than the great majority of Europeans, if only because Indians shared the available food more equably—a fact noted by Roger Williams” (Root and Rochemont 1995:15).

Indian foods were ill-judged by the colonists from the very beginning because they were comparing it with what the well-fed were eating in their home countries. Most colonists were members of the middle class, and their opinion was colored by the fact that they did not like (and were not familiar with) the kinds of food the Native peoples were eating (Root and Rochemont 1995). The Native peoples, however, were enjoying a varied diet, except when the whims of Nature ruled otherwise, which was more than could be said for the poor of Europe, whose food was often deadly monotonous, in more than the figurative sense (Root and Rochemont 1995:16). Native peoples were actually cooking with considerable finesse at the time of first encounter and had been doing so for centuries. The fact is that these Indian Nations had a lot to contribute to what was to become the cuisine of America.

The Iroquois grew seventeen varieties of corn, seven types of squash, and almost sixty types of beans as a trio of major foods they call the “Three Sisters.” Captain John Smith, who led the English colony at Jamestown, Virginia, wrote in 1607, “Settlers would have starved if the Indians had not brought corn, squash, and beans to us” (Barnard and Brown 2003). Our contemporary Thanksgiving holiday dinner is in large part based on food indigenous to this hemisphere, including turkey, cornbread, stuffing,

squash, tomatoes, cranberry sauce, baked beans and maple syrup, mashed potatoes, peanuts, pecans, sweet potatoes, and pumpkin pie (Mihesuah 2003). The addition of these foods to the world's diet altered the human population significantly.

One large game animal native to North America is making a very strong comeback. The reintroduction of the bison by a number of tribes in the western United States is now a concerted effort. The American bison,⁴⁹ commonly known as the American buffalo, has always held great meaning for Indian people. For some tribes, the buffalo represents the spirit of the people and reminds them of how they once lived. Important ceremonies revolve around the buffalo, and parts of it are used in those ceremonies. In the 1800s, the U.S. government recognized the reliance of Native American tribes on the buffalo. They began the systematic destruction of the buffalo to subjugate the western tribal nations and forcibly move them onto reservations. The slaughter of more than sixty million buffalo left only a few thousand remaining, and the independent lifestyle that revolved around the buffalo could no longer be maintained. The disconnect for people who revered the buffalo has had a substantial impact on them, physically as well as spiritually, emotionally, and mentally (ITBC 2010).

The reintroduction of the buffalo is revitalizing not only an ancestral food source but also the associated cultural traditions, including performance art such as songs, dances, prayers, ritual, and stories. In addition to the food, clothing, shelter, medicine, and tools that the animal provides, the connection to the animal and what it represents, has represented, and can represent is also revitalized. It affects the practices and actions on the native landscape, and in turn perpetuates biocultural diversity and each tribe's individual relationship with the bison.



Photo 5.1 Young Pueblo Indian dancer taken at Eight Northern Pueblo Arts and Craft Show in July 2007.



Photo 5.2 A group of Pueblo Indian buffalo dancers taken at Eight Northern Pueblo Arts and Craft Show in July 2007.

The Inter Tribal Bison cooperative (ITBC), formed in 1990, has a membership of 57 tribes nationally, spanning seventeen states, with a collective herd of more than fifteen thousand bison. In New Mexico, member tribes include Cochiti Pueblo, Jicarilla Apache, Nambe O-Ween-Ge Pueblo, Picuris Pueblo, Pojoaque Pueblo, Sandia Pueblo, Ohkay

Owingeh (San Juan Pueblo), and Taos Pueblo. The Salt River Pima-Maricopa tribe is the only member in Arizona, but other tribes from the Great Lakes, Northern Plains, Southern Plains, and Northwest are members as well. The cooperative produces bison meat for distribution within their own communities as well as for sale to chefs. Richard Hetzler, the executive chef at the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) in Washington, D.C. purchases all of his bison meat from ITBC for the Mitsitam Café. Picuris Pueblo now raises enough bison to supply each member of the Pueblo with bison, sells meat at the local farmers market in Santa Fe, and supplies the Hotel Santa Fe with most of the bison they use at their restaurant, Amaya.

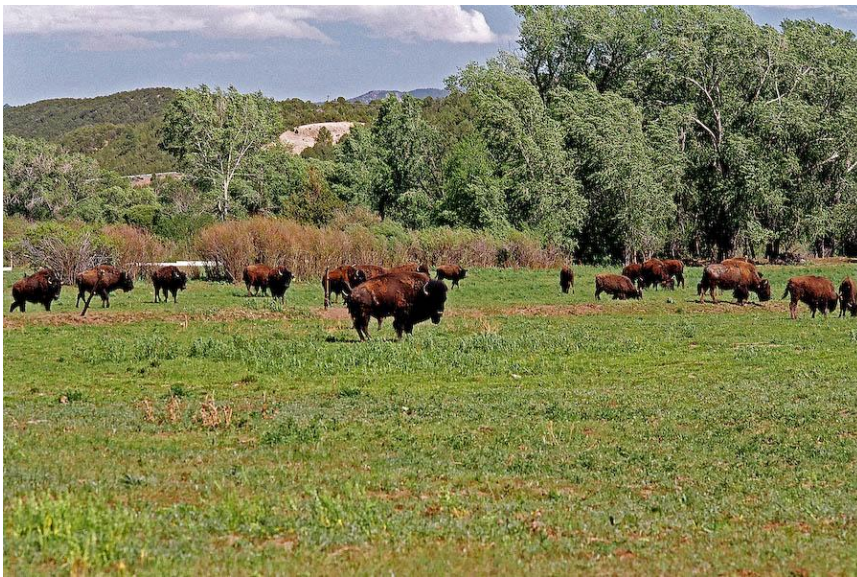


Photo 5.3 Picuris Pueblo bison in spring 2007.

With health disparities reaching epidemic levels, Native leaders, community members, and organizations, including the Association of American Indian Physicians and the National Indian Health Board, are gravely concerned. Native American youth in some communities are wondering not *if*, but *when* they will get diabetes.

The Tohono O’odham reservation with its capital in Sells, Arizona, is the second-largest reservation in the United States. The tribe, with approximately twenty-eight thousand members, has the highest rate of adult-onset diabetes in the world. Tribal health officials say as much as seventy percent of the Tohono O’odham people have diabetes. In a November 2009 article on the Tohono O’odham, Deborah Block states “Until 1960, no

one had diabetes because people ate traditional foods that helped prevent the disease. But with the introduction of foods high in fat and calories, diabetes became widespread, including in children.” Organizations such as the Tohono O’odham Community Action (TOCA) are encouraging the Tohono O’odham to eat their traditional foods and have implemented a number of programs addressing this issue (Block 2009). TOCA has been extremely active and successful in this area, with measurable results (http://www.tocaonline.org/www.tocaonline.org/About_TOCA/Entries/2010/3/12_Program_Focus_Food_System_%26_Wellness.html). The Pima and Cocopa have rates of diabetes as high if not higher than the Tohono O’odham’s (Nabhan 2011). They too are working to address this issue.

In addition to individual tribal efforts, a relatively new movement that is actively responding to the onslaught of obesity and diabetes in Indian Country is giving new life to many of the ancestral traditions. More and more communities are returning to their traditional, ancestral diet. Each tribal community focuses on the ancestral foods of their homelands and foods that were indigenous to the area inhabited by their ancestors and appropriate to that bioregion. These low-glycemic foods (combined with exercise) protect Native community members from wildly fluctuating blood glucose levels that eventually damage the pancreas and trigger diabetes. Local foodsheds help us to understand what foods were traditional to specific regions.⁵⁰ These Native food advocates and activists, including chefs, cooks, food producers, procurers of wild foods, food purveyors selling traditional foods, academics, food educators, and entrepreneurs, are identifying and redefining traditional foods, the role they have played in health and wellness, and are working to make them more accessible to all Native American community members. They are working on a number of different levels to restore traditional knowledge, practices, and beliefs and to revitalize these traditions in the everyday lives of their community members.

Traditional Native foodways include all of the cultural, spiritual, and ecological knowledge, and physical activities and cultural practices in locating, producing, consuming, and celebrating food for individual and group survival and regeneration. These activities include hunting, fishing, gathering, collecting, farming, processing,

cooking, and feasting, which also includes prayers, songs, dances, ceremonies, and stories that honor and describe how to use different foods for different purposes (Nelson 2010). As Native foodways become more clearly defined, chefs, cooks, and educators are educating community members on the ancestral traditional diet. This in turn enables individuals to make educated choices on what foods they eat. Many Native communities are at a crucial point in this issue and are working to reclaim, revitalize, and rejuvenate these traditional practices and their ancestral foodways.

The two historical periods following the traditional ancestral period are not by any means the only circumstances in which Native American cuisine was changed, but I have chosen not to focus on fast food or other food movements that are affecting what Native Americans eat today. Although they have also played a role in health disparities, and they do pose potential health hazards as well as health solutions for Native peoples, I deal specifically with the food continuum as I have defined it, and the new Native American cuisine emerging within the communities where I work.

The food continuum is used primarily to help define what contemporary Native American cuisine is, how the Native American diet and cuisine has evolved, and to raise concerns on issues of nutritional racism that Native communities face today. With this information, community members can make choices on the foods they eat and foods they want to eat in the future.

Finally, when all of these periods are fused, the hybridity and interaction are melded into a new Native American cuisine that draws from tradition and uses the innovation of Native American chefs and cooks to create something new, a cuisine in which tradition is dynamic and doesn't contradict the past. This is what I see today in the Native American food movement and the revitalization of traditional Native foods. Traditional knowledge and practices blend with the contemporary. The chefs in the current ethnography exemplify this. Their food embodies elements of what their ancestors ate, foods that are rich in local knowledge, and foods that are deeply performative. The chefs' senses link them to this performance, and the foods they prepare become representative of their identities. In essence they are improvising by combining contemporary and ancestral ingredients with new and innovative means. At this

intersection, European high cuisine interacts with Native American cuisine and Native American cuisine interacts with European high cuisine. This is the new Native American cuisine that is presently emerging.

Although most of the memories that the chefs and cooks recounted during our interviews were of commodity foods, these chefs are consciously and clearly making decisions to create new memories of food, not only for themselves but for the generations that follow. They speak of their senses “coming back to life” when they taste bison meat that was raised by a member tribe. Here the senses become a framework for the chefs and cooks practicing Native American cuisine to tell their stories. Melissa Nelson, an Anishinaabe/Turtle Mountain Chippewa tribal member and associate professor in American Indian Studies at San Francisco State University, speaks of reliving moments of her ancestral past with the reintroduction and revitalization of ancestral foods into her diet.

And some of the students at the Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA) in Santa Fe speak of being awakened by the very flavor of the foods their ancestors ate. They speak of relating to the proximal memories from the foods that sustained the generations before them. The foods that Native people are eating today are different than the foods of the past, and even when the food is similar or the same, the remembering of these foods is new. Community members are “jumping over” the commodity food period and creating new memories of ancestral foods that have a very clear local focus, are deeply immersed in traditional knowledge, and move them into to a place where they can be healthy and well. These new memories of foods ground the people who eat them in place-based sensory experiences that reinforce who they are and where they came from. New memories are being woven into families in the same way as the memories of commodity foods were for many of the chefs’ and cooks’ families. In continuity with the past, Native foods are being reintroduced, revitalized, and reinvigorated in the present. This may be what saves Native people from the health disparities that exist today from the foods that have been incorporated into the Native American diet.

Chapter 6

The Ethnography

This study investigates contemporary chefs in modern Southwest kitchens. I set out to analyze the emergent cuisine of Native American chefs and cooks and non-Native chefs in contemporary Southwest kitchens. My research aim is to investigate this new community of chefs and cooks and to explore how this new Native American cuisine is imagined and practiced. Through interviews and close attention to the work of chefs and cooks, I investigated aspects of specific ingredients being used by each of them, explored why and how they used particular techniques to prepare the foods, and observed and documented the range of individual presentation. Over a number of years (2004-2010) and through a variety of professional cooking events, fundraising dinners, and in the confines of restaurant kitchens I documented how chefs/cooks professionally perform Native American cuisine. I interviewed chefs to examine how the senses are a way of cultural knowing and a mechanism for triggering bodily memory, and I observed their cooking and discussed what they thought about and how they would define this emergent cuisine. These individual “portraits” of chefs/cooks from a multicultural segment of the Native American community make up the second portion of this ethnography.

Although the foods I investigated are tied to a specific geographic area, and include foods dating back thousands of years as well as more recently introduced foods, I discovered in the process of this investigation that something else was inspiring some of these chefs and cooks to cook Native American foods, something embedded in their individual makeup. The more I dug, the more I began to see each individual as a part of a greater whole. Some of the Native chefs and cooks were, first and foremost, members of a specific traditional cultural community, and secondary to that layer of identity is another one identifying them as chefs. The layers were so tightly woven that at first I didn’t detect a difference, but the more I investigated, the more I began to peel away these layers to reveal who these individuals are.

As I worked, and continue to work, alongside these chefs, I witnessed the discourses and practices associated with these foods and how they are intricately linked to the construction of identity in Native communities. Food is intimately associated with

local knowledge and cultural expression. What I ultimately found, and what I am compelled to include now, in this account of Native American cuisine, is that traditional Native American *foodways* are distinct from Native American *cuisine*.

In the next several chapters this is illustrated with the role of food in ceremony, in the construction of place, in ritual, and in the construction of individual identity. When Native foods are taken from the grounds of a ceremonial feast, a Sun Dance, an NAC Peyote ceremony, and a Pueblo Feast Day, and brought into the contemporary kitchen setting, the ceremonial construct of the meaning of the foods, and their importance, comes with them. In many instances, these ways of respecting, treating, handling, approaching, and preparing food are completely different than the way some of the chefs look at contemporary Native American cuisine. Most, although not all, of the chefs were professionally trained at culinary institutions, where they were taught a traditional European approach to cooking, and some of the chefs were educated by classically trained chefs under whom they worked for years, in restaurant settings. These chefs taught them a variety of techniques and approaches to food and cooking based on their own experiences in commercial kitchens.

The Native cooks I interviewed learned how to cook from their elders—in many cases, mothers, grandmothers, and aunts, although men played a role by raising the livestock, hunting, and preparing the fires. Their knowledge is passed down from one generation to the next. What these cooks learned is inextricably linked to who they are and where they came from. The information was centered on their particular community and tribe. The food these cooks made had specific recipes that have been handed down within their own family lineage, in most instances from a close family member. The methods they were taught followed traditional protocol and were usually performed for a special occasion, family gathering, ceremony, or feast.

Like many ethnographers, my original research questions and thoughts changed during the course of my research. Native cooks play an important role in the perpetuation of traditional Native American food culture and cultural traditions by cooking in ceremonial instances like the ones I present in the chapter 8. This information is different from what I thought I would find based on my original research design, but it is an

important part of understanding traditional Native American foods, foodways, and Native American cuisine, and thus I have included it here. What I discovered is that traditional Native foodways are passed down from one generation to the next, and Native American cuisine is a combination of European-introduced culinary techniques in conjunction with components from traditional Native foodways.

My fieldwork was conducted over a multiyear period with professional chefs, Native American cooks, extended family members of chefs and cooks in Native community ceremonial and feast settings, primarily on the Navajo and Tohono O'odham reservations, both in Arizona, and on some of the Pueblos in New Mexico.

My interviews with Native cooks were predominantly with women who participated in cooking for large gatherings, community feasts, and in ceremonial settings. These women primarily considered themselves Native cooks and not Native chefs. They described themselves as women who were working with traditional Native American foodways, not practicing Native American cuisine. Men's roles in these ceremonial festivities and obligations were primarily connected to the spiritual components of food, the making of places in which to serve them, and running the ceremonies in which the food was served. In contrast, the majority of professional chefs I interviewed were men who were cooking in professional kitchens.

Most chefs distinguish between Native American cuisine and traditional Native foodways. Native American cuisine is depicted as a professional expression of Native foods, combined with European culinary techniques. On the other hand, participants explained traditional Native American foodways as an expression of spiritual and cultural identity through food. Although the description of cuisine includes "the foods and methods of preparation traditional to a region or population" this explanation links Native Americans to their food in precisely the same way as it does Europeans (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuisine>). However, while Native American "cuisine" has cultural ties to the people and places of a particular region, it is in fact much different than I imagined. Native American place-based names for foods are not uncommon in many tribal languages, and as I expected, foods from Native Americans are indeed distinctive to particular regions in the Southwest, and vary from tribe to tribe and Pueblo

to Pueblo. These factors are evident in traditional Native American foodways as well as in regional Native American cuisine.

When the chefs, cooks, and community members with whom I worked described Native American cuisine and Native American foodways, they were portrayed as being distinctly different. Traditional Native American foodways are more attached to ceremony and ceremonial situations. Native American cuisine is a practice that is performed in a contemporary kitchen setting for a Native American audience, a non-Native audience, or both, using traditional food ingredients in a modern context. In some instances, both Native cooks and Native chefs expressed apprehension that some of their food traditions, while actively practiced within the communities I worked, were not necessarily meant to be shared with other communities or prepared in a contemporary kitchen setting. Some traditional Native foodways (how the foods are prepared) and some traditional Native American foods (specific recipes or dishes) are intended to be shared, with people outside their own community, but these instances are very specific.

A good example is the foods prepared on a Pueblo Feast Day. These foods, are meant to be shared with friends, family, and the general public, and a Pueblo household might feed several hundred people in one day. Invitations to come to their Pueblo's Feast Day are offered, including directions on how to get to a specific house.

For instance, Carla Sarracino, the Coordinator of Education Support and Undergraduate Advisor in the Anthropology Department at the University of New Mexico, sends an email every year to the Anthropology Graduate Student email list inviting students, staff, and faculty to the Feast Day at the Pueblo of Laguna, along with a map and directions. In 2010 she sent an attachment with the following invitation and a detailed map. Carla graciously invites everyone to her feast activities and to eat at her in-laws' home every year.

Pueblo of Laguna Feast Day Sept. 19th

You are all invited to our feast day. There will be a variety of food stands, arts/crafts from all the different Pueblos along with other tribes. Come and enjoy the various pueblo dances starting around 10-5, located east of the Church. You are welcome to come to Phillip and Marion Sarracino to eat. . . . There's parking at the baseball field for the feast activities. If lost contact Carla Sarracino cell number xxx-xxxx.

Brian Vallo, a member of Acoma Pueblo and a board member of the Alfonso Ortiz Center for Intercultural Studies at the University of New Mexico, sent this email to several hundred of his friends on August 26, 2010. Again, this is an example of Pueblo hospitality and the sharing of a Pueblo Feast and all of the foods associated with it.

Greetings Friends!

One week from today, the Pueblo of Acoma will observe the annual feast day of our Patron, San Estevan. I invite you join us at our family home (flanking the EAST side of the Plaza) where my mother, sisters and aunts will present you with many traditional, and some not so traditional but tasty, feast day favorites. Stay to enjoy the dances, visit with old and new friends, or just find one of those special places atop the mesa to enjoy the scenery and energy of "Haaku".

A High Mass is held inside the old mission at 8:00 a.m. followed by a solemn procession of the Saint through the village. Shortly thereafter, the dances begin (10:30-11:00-ish) and run throughout the day. And, don't forget about the artisans and farmers who will be selling their creations and recent harvests of chili, corn, native squash/pumpkins and melons!

Shuttle service will be provided, or you may choose to ascend the mesa via the paved road, or even more exciting, the foot-hole trail! Hope to see you on Sept 2nd!

Warm Regards,
Brian

Preparation takes many days, and relatives often come together to prepare the Native dishes each household will serve. Some families work for an entire week

preparing the food and then spend the entire day of the feast serving family and friends in their home, with little time to walk to the plaza to watch the dances themselves.

Another example of foods to be shared with others is the foods prepared for the feast at the end of a Sun Dance. These feast foods are prepared by a number of cooks, some of whom are family and community members and others, who are supporters of the dancers, may be visitors to the area where the Sun Dance is being held. This feast is shared with everyone and held on the final day after the Sun Dancers have left the arbor. Food is prohibited near the arbor where the dance takes place out of respect for the dancers because they must fast during the four days of the dance, with no food or water.

Foods, that are *not* meant to be shared outside of the ceremonial situation, include the sacred foods—water, corn, fruit and meat—which are brought into the tipi during an NAC Peyote Ceremony in the early morning hours as part of the actual ceremony. These foods, are meant to be eaten only by the participants and their families. Once the ceremony has concluded and the door to the tipi is opened, a feast is served which is open to all participants as well as family and friends who did not participate in the all-night ceremony.

A final example of a traditional food that is meant to be shared but not meant to be prepared in a commercial kitchen, is piki bread. Piki is a ceremonial food made only by community members but available to chefs, who then serve it in their restaurants. The word *piki* is of Hopi origin and refers to a tissue-paper-thin cornbread made on a traditional stone with a fire beneath it. It is also made in some of the Pueblos in New Mexico. I know piki makers in Tesuque, Jemez, and Kewa (Santo Domingo). Each Pueblo has its own name for it, but it is essentially the same bread. It is a cornmeal batter that is baked in large, tissue-paper-thin sheets and then rolled up like a newspaper. White, yellow, pink, and blue piki is made from the different colors of corn, although blue piki is the only color available outside Native communities. The other colors are primarily used for ceremony and are not sold or distributed outside the community.

Because the making of piki is an art and a ritual, and it takes years of practice to become a good piki maker, it is made only by women who have been taught the art by their mothers, grandmothers, or someone else in their family who has agreed to teach

them. It is traditionally made on a special stone that is large, flat, and smooth. The stone is elevated on four legs so pieces of wood, usually cedar, can be burned underneath to heat the stone. A small fire is kept burning the entire time the piki is being made. These stones take a long time to prepare and are heirlooms that have been passed down for generations, primarily from mother to daughter. The batter is prepared from just three ingredients: a very finely ground cornmeal, culinary ash, and water. The piki maker dips her hand in the batter and then rubs it onto the hot stone, continuing to add strokes of batter until it forms a large sheet almost the size of the stone. This thin dough is then cooked until it dries and then is pulled off in one large sheet. Another piki sheet is placed on top, until it softens. It is folded several times and then rolled, resulting in bread that is about the size of an ear of corn. Blue cornmeal piki can be served on a daily basis. Juanita Tiger Kavena, in *Hopi Cookery*, states

Piki is served as crackers, or wafers are served, often with onions and greens and a small dish of salt water on the side to dip the *Piki* in. . . . It is also . . . carried for lunch when members of the family are working away from home. . . . *Piki* comes in different flavors and colors. Chile *Piki* is particularly good with bean sprouts and stews. . . . *Piki* made from red or yellow corn is strung and given to children and friends at the summer Kachina dances. There is also a fresh corn *Piki* but it is seldom made or served.

Women who make the blue piki sometimes sell the rolls to chefs. John Sharpe, the executive chef/owner of the Turquoise Room in La Posada Hotel in Winslow, Arizona, serves piki made by local Hopi women on a regular basis. The dish on his menu is called “Piki Bread with Hopi Hummus” and features not only the bread, which he buys from a woman on the Hopi reservation about an hour north of Winslow, but also reservation-grown tepary beans which he purchases from the Tohono O’odham Community Action group in southern Arizona. An excerpt from his menu is below.

Piki Bread with Hopi Hummus

Two Piki breads made by Monique Talemtewa of Second Mesa, served with my version of Bad-dap-suki.

A hummus made with reservation-grown Tepary beans, pit-roasted corn, and corn and sunflower oils.

Garnished with sunflower seeds.

\$10



Photo 6.1 Piki bread with Hopi Hummus served by Chef John Sharpe in The Turquoise Room at La Posada Hotel in Winslow, Arizona. (Photo provided by John Sharpe)

The recipe for piki has been published in several cookbooks, including mine, but it does not translate into a contemporary kitchen. I've tried to adapt the recipe to the modern kitchen numerous times, and I couldn't get it to work at all. The recipe has to be made on a traditional stone in a piki house. I know of no one who makes it in a commercial setting. The Pueblo women who have mastered the art of making piki, which takes many years, usually make enough for their families, their ceremonial obligations, and sometimes some to sell. I buy several hundred rolls every year from my Hopi friends who come out to Santa Fe for Indian Market. As I was writing this manuscript, I bought 299 rolls from Elmer Satala Jr., whose mother, Gloria Honanie, made it at Songopavi Village, in Second Mesa, Arizona. I will use the piki in my Native American cooking classes, in catered dinners for both Native and non-Native audiences, and as a traditional Native food for IAIA students to sample. I teach a seminar to the incoming class of students each year as part of their orientation on Native foods.

I was taught to make piki by Genevieve Karusgowva, from Hotevilla, Arizona, but when I tried it, the batter globbed in one area of the stone and I burned my hand as it stuck to the hot stone. She makes it look effortless, but she has been making piki for many years. I do not know any male chefs who have been taught how to make piki or who have attempted to learn how to make it.



Photo 6.2 Genevieve Kaurgowva (Hopi) from Hotevilla, Arizona, making blue corn piki bread on a piki stone.



Photo 6.3 Cut piki bread made by Gloria Honanie of Second Mesa, Arizona, and served at Native American dinner in Santa Fe, New Mexico in September 2009.

Piki is unique because it is an ancient traditional food; some elders say is the oldest cornbread recipe in what is now the United States. It is considered to be one of the original Indian breads and only works when it is made traditionally as it has been done for many centuries. Yet it is served in some of the most contemporary restaurants, by chefs who feature Native American cuisine.

The chefs in this ethnography served contemporary versions of many traditional Native American foods, utilizing a variety of ingredients ranging from hand-gathered wild foods to locally raised Navajo churro lamb to piki, which they purchase from Native food producers or purveyors. Some chefs buy their raw ingredients from local farms, school gardens, and farmers' markets; others purchase ingredients from Sysco (an international distributor of food and related products and services to restaurants, hotels, motels, schools, colleges, etc.) and Shamrock Foods (a family-owned food distribution company in Arizona, New Mexico, and Colorado). This discussion will be presented more in detail in the chapters that follow.

Chapter 7

The Native Cooks

Native cooks are different from professionally trained chefs. Some of the women I interviewed have taken a cooking class, but none had been through a culinary degree program. Norma Naranjo, one of the Native cooks from Ohkay Owingeh, teaches her own cooking classes at her home, on the traditional foods from her Pueblo, but the knowledge she teaches and the recipes she makes all come from her own family lineage. All the Native cooks I interviewed have been taught how to cook from their mothers, aunts, and grandmothers. The knowledge they were taught has been passed down from generation to generation. Although recipes may be changed slightly with each generation of cooks, they are for the most part made the same way as they have been for generations. In some cases, specific protocols are required, involving how to grow traditional foods, how to prepare the food, how to harvest the food in the wild, and specific tools to use when preparing the food. These protocols are specified by each cook and may vary from tribe to tribe or Pueblo to Pueblo. How and why a specific food is made is different in each Native community. This is the way each cook was taught, this is the way it has always been done, and this is the way that each cook is going to pass this food, harvesting technique, or recipe on to future generations. The majority of cooks in traditional Native kitchens are women. Although men do play a role in growing food and raising livestock, their dominant role in the past has not been in the traditional Native kitchen.

Men are usually present, and some may even help with a specific feast or ceremonial event, but traditionally in Native communities men don't cook. Several of the professional chefs with whom I worked came from this background (Whitewater 2006; Garcia 2006; Craig 2006), yet they broke traditional protocol when they became chefs (Dornenburg and Page 2003; Ruhlman 1997). These men crossed gender lines into areas traditionally dominated by women, much in the same way that professional women chefs have had to cross gender lines into contemporary European-based commercial kitchens to become chefs, executive chefs, and chef owners. In doing so, these traditional Native men have created a pathway for Native boys and men to be able to cook in traditional settings. Men are now beginning to be accepted in the kitchen at ceremonial feasts and

traditional ceremonies. They can be seen cooking alongside women and preparing food for these events.

Most of the Native cooks I interviewed (and with whom I worked) were from Seba Dalkai, and Pinon, Arizona, on the Navajo Reservation. Norma Naranjo, from Ohkay Owingeh (San Juan Pueblo) and Margie Mermejo (married into Picuris Pueblo through her husband, Richard Mermejo) were the only Pueblo cooks with whom I worked during the span of this fieldwork. The Native cooks from Seba Dalkai included Marie Begay; her sister Caroline Willie; their mother, Alice Willie; Marie's niece, Calandra Willie; and Marie's daughter, Tedra Begay. Two of Marie Begay's other sisters, Loretta Ondelacy and Liz Willie also helped with the preparation of the food, but did not want to be formally interviewed. The preparation of food centered around two events. In one I helped the cooks prepare the food for an NAC Peyote Ceremony that was held for a member of the Willie family. I also interviewed two elderly relatives of Tedra's on her father's side, Calvin and Mary Nez, who farm traditional foods in a remote area of the Navajo Reservation called Tolani Lake, also in Arizona. Calandra Willie interpreted for the interviews with Calvin and Mary Nez, along with her uncle, Hank Willie. The Native cooks from Pinon included Linda Begay; her grandmother, Susie Whitewater Begay; and Susie's sister, Louise Begaye; both of these grandmothers are no longer with us. The preparation of food centered on a Sun Dance feast hosted by the Begaye family (grandmother Louise's sons), and for an NAC Peyote Ceremony feast. It also included food for several purification ceremonies, also known as "sweat lodges." In many instances other family members were present for the formal interviews, which were digitally recorded. On some of these occasions they were tape recorded as well, so family members who didn't have access to digital playback devices could have copies of the interviews. These were presented to the family after the interviews were completed and transcribed.

Various approaches were used in interpreting languages. Perspectives on language and its use both influence and affect ethnographic research and writing. The Navajo language possesses a dense collection of meanings—Earth Woman, human mothers, the sheep, cornfields, and the mountain soil bundle are all designated by the same word,

shimá. Food, sustenance, nourishing Mother, and corn are all designated by the word *naadaáá*. Sorting out the intertwined Navajo conceptions of motion, form, and number is difficult for an outsider and must be done without resorting to descriptions of exotic objects or curious practices.

Gary Witherspoon states “the first and best entry into another culture is through the language” (1977:8). I do not speak or understand Navajo (Diné), Tewa, or Tiwa. Perhaps this places me at a disadvantage. However, the greatest value of learning the language of another people does not come from being able to interview informants without interpreters or from providing native terms in ethnographic writings, although these are important factors. It comes from being able to understand what the Native speakers say and how they say it when they are conversing with you and with each other.

Some of the elders in these interviews do not speak English at all, but immediate family members have translated from English to Navajo and from Navajo to English. I have made every attempt to understand what the elders in this chapter are saying, how they are saying it, and what their meaning is as it relates to food, food preparation, and specific recipes. Some information and verbal nuances are undoubtedly lost in translation that a fluent Navajo (Diné), or Tewa or Tiwa speaker, would understand. As an interested and concerned participant, and not as a detached observer, my attempt is to include as much information and detail as possible so the reader can understand how the information was portrayed to me, what was happening at the time of each interview, and how each of the traditional speakers relayed the information to me. I include portions of the actual translation that was provided to me by immediate family members, which may or may not be grammatically correct in English. In the case of Native cooks who were fluent in their own native language as well as English, the interviews were conducted in English, as this was the preference of the Native cooks. Some words that could not be translated or were specific names of traditional Native dishes are left in the Native language.

The Native Cooks from Seba Dalkai, Arizona

Marie Begay

Marie Begay is Diné (Navajo) and grew up in Sand Springs, Arizona, on the Navajo Reservation. She lives with her husband, Johnny Begay, also Diné, in Gilbert, Arizona, a suburb of Phoenix that neighbors Mesa and Chandler. Marie has two grown children, a son, Briyan, and a daughter, Tedra. Marie is one of seven children; she has three brothers and three sisters. All but herself, and one of her brothers, live on the reservation. Her brother Raymond lives with his family in Albuquerque. Marie mostly learned how to cook from her “grandpa” on her mother’s side because, as she stated during our interview, “we used to stay with him by ourselves, sometimes when my mom and dad were traveling, so he taught me the basics, like how to make bread in an oven.” Marie has worked for the Indian Health Service (IHS) for more than 30 years. She and her husband lived in Albuquerque for a number of years before being relocated to the Phoenix area for her job.

When Marie and her family lived in Albuquerque, she worked with a lot of Pueblo people, and they had a great influence on the foods she ate and ultimately fed her family when her children were small. Marie grew up in proximity to her mother’s house on the reservation, where three of her sisters, two of her brothers, and her mother and father live. She goes home on a regular basis for family gatherings, ceremonies, and ceremonial obligations. She and her daughter Tedra always help cook when an NAC Peyote Ceremony or Hogan ceremony is held at her family home in Seba Dalkai.

One of her brothers, Hank Willie, is the vice president of the North Leupp Family Farm project, NLFF. The farm is owned and operated by the Diné community located near the Little Colorado River of Leupp in the southwestern portion of the Navajo Nation. The goal of the community garden project is to create a model to teach families how to farm traditional crops such as corn, squash, chiles, and melons and to create food-secure communities through the initiation and development of sustainable agriculture. This farm initiative supports a healthy lifestyle, encourages environmentally sound agricultural practices in a dryland farming environment, and advocates for the revitalization of Diné agricultural traditions.

Marie's family's land covers a fairly large area. Her family moved to the Seba Dalkai area because their original home in Sand Springs, where Marie grew up, was on land that was subsequently designated as part of the Hopi Reservation. The Navajo/Hopi Relocation Act of 1974 relocated her family, along with many other Navajo families living in Sand Springs at the time. Marie's family's six houses are all clustered together. Her mother, Alice, and her father, Isk, live in one; two of their sons, Larry and Hank, each have a neighboring house, as do three of their daughters, Loretta, Liz, and Caroline. All six houses are within a short walking distance, the equivalent of a city block. The family collectively owns a flock of sheep, and Hank has a garden between two of the houses where he uses drip irrigation to grow squash, melons, and corn. Hank uses techniques very similar to the ones he is using with the NLFF project. The family uses the food from the garden during the growing season and stores some of the harvest not far from Marie's mother's house.



Photo 7.1 Hank Willie started a drip irrigation garden project between the main house in the family compound, Isk and Alice Willie's house, and his house to raise food for the family.



Photo 7.2 A variety of squash growing in the Willie family garden with drip irrigation.



Photo 7.3 Young squash plant. (Photo by Hank Willie)



Photo 7.4 Traditional crops grown at the North Leupp Family Farm (NLFF) using irrigation. (Photo by Hank Willie)

Like many Diné (Navajo) women, Marie was taught how to make bread by her mother, probably the most influential woman in her life, who, as well as her grandpa, taught her how to make many traditional Native American and Navajo dishes. Marie is the only daughter in her family who doesn't live on the reservation; she lives in an urban area because of her career. She has always had a stable job and provided for her family. Marie often returns to the family homestead in Seba Dalkai to visit and fulfill her obligations at ceremonies and events, when she is needed to help cook for family members.

Marie stated, "We make a tortilla bread. It is a bread that we make with our hands, by patting our two hands together"; she paused and began to think back to some of the first foods she learned how to make. "We make it both ways. From corn flour and wheat flour. For the corn, we use the blue corn and add it to our flour, that's how we make the bread, and probably the other one would be when we put it on a corn husk, with the blue corn, we make a little bun, we call it bun bread." She looked over at her daughter, "Tedra what's the word for that in Navajo, do you know?" Tedra shook her

head. “Kneel down bread is the bigger one, the tiny ones, are the bun bread.” “I should know the word in Navajo for that bread,” she stated. “We will have to ask someone back at home.” Marie continued, “I also love the mush.” “The blue corn mush, it’s not the bun bread, it’s different. It’s just the mush itself, it is like porridge. I love that food, too.” “Whenever I go home, I try to have my sister, Caroline, make it, either the mush or the bun bread. It’s a very Native dish; I love to eat it at my mom’s house.”

“I guess, when I think about it, whenever we have a family meal, we always serve a stew, that is number one, plus some sort of bread. Those are always the main dishes we make for any family dinner or event at my mom’s house; then we add dishes to those two, depending on who and how many people we are cooking for.” “Whenever there is a family feast or large meal, all of the duties are divided up and everyone takes a dish to make, and then we assign one person as the organizer to make sure that everyone is making what they are supposed to. Then we know that we will have enough food and enough of a variety of dishes for that particular feast or family event.” When we cooked together for the NAC Peyote Ceremony feast, that was the case, and I was assigned a dish to make for the feast. Marie was in charge of the food for that feast.

Tedra Begay

Tedra Begay is Marie’s daughter. She grew up in Albuquerque until she was twelve years old, when her family moved to Gilbert, Arizona, where she lived until she was twenty-two. Tedra is a 2007 IAIA graduate who received a Bachelors in Fine Arts with an emphasis on photography.⁵¹ I met Tedra when she worked with me as part of an externship in photography in 2003. She has freelanced for me since then, assisting with both photographic and Native American culinary events for more than seven years.

Because Tedra grew up in an urban environment, she never learned to cook some of the traditional foods that her mother learned. She learned how to cook the dishes she does prepare from her mother, her aunts, and her grandmother. She took a cooking class in high school, which taught her some culinary basics. Her mother, Marie, has played the most significant role in her cooking, and she didn’t start cooking for herself until she was in college and forced to do so. Tedra still calls her mother often and asks how to cook something on a regular basis. They talk at least once a day.

Her first real cooking experience was in a high school class in which the students made something new each week. She had not really cooked until then because her mother made all the meals for the family everyday or they ate in restaurants. Tedra's mother worked every day, so if she didn't cook for the family they would eat out. Therefore, Tedra grew up liking the taste of fast food. Some of her favorite places to eat are Pizza Hut, McDonald's, Carl's Junior, and Taco Bell.

Tedra now lives in Albuquerque, close to several of her cousins. Tedra and Calandra Willie, the daughter of Tedra's Aunt Caroline Willie and Chef Walter Whitewater, grew up together and are very close. They call each other sisters, even on their Facebook pages. Because the Navajo clan system is different than Western kinship systems, for the purposes of this ethnography I refer to them as cousin-sisters. Tedra is also very close with her Uncle Larry's daughters Clorissa Willie, Lara Willie, and Kelley Willie. She travels to her grandmother's house with Calandra or her other cousins on a regular basis. Her Uncle Raymond lives in Albuquerque with his family, and Tedra sees him often as well. Because she lives alone, she tends not to cook much at home, but she does cook every time she goes back to her family home in Seba Dalkai, where her aunts and grandmother live. Tedra stated during our interview, "I currently cook at home on the rez, but rarely at home in Albuquerque."



Photo 7.5 Marie, Tedra, and Johnny Begay.



Photo 7.6 Tedra Begay and her grandmother, Alice Willie.

When Tedra helps to cook at her grandmother's home in Seba, usually about fifteen people in her immediate family in addition to other relatives, friends, or guests have come to participate in the ceremonies. One of the most important elements for her family is having bread with every meal. They make Navajo fry bread or they use the same dough and, instead of frying it, they cook a tortilla-style bread over an open flame. We've come up with the term "no-fry bread," which I use to refer to this style of bread. Someone in the family makes bread for everyone back home every day. The bread is made from scratch from store-bought flour, usually Blue Bird flour, a favorite on the Navajo reservation.

Other ingredients for dishes that Tedra helps to make come from her Uncle Hank's garden at the house or from the NLFF, which is not far from the family house. The fresh produce consist of mostly corn, several types of squash, watermelon, and sometimes other ingredients. Tedra has been out to the NLFF with her Uncle Hank on several occasions.



Photo 7.7 Traditional corn, beans, and squash growing at the North Leupp Family Farm.



Photo 7.8 View of NLFF showing traditional crops.



Photo 7.9 View of NLFF showing irrigated crops.

Caroline Willie

Caroline Willie is Marie's sister. She lives on their land in Seba Dalkai with her mother, father, and other family members. Caroline is the best cook in the family, and everyone I interviewed referred to her as the main cook. She learned to cook from her Mom, Alice Willie, much in the same way that Marie did. Caroline is Marie's younger sister. Caroline has one daughter, Calandra, with Chef Walter Whitewater. Her first cooking experience was frying potatoes when she was seven years old. She has always loved to cook and even considered opening a food stand, but for now she is the family cook and cooks for everyone, pretty much every meal, every day. The other family members—her two brothers, her two sisters, and her mother and father—all eat together in the morning and in the evening. Sometimes she'll feed whoever is home for lunch, but the main family meals are breakfast and dinner. On average she cooks for six people every meal, unless other family members are visiting. The most important ingredients she uses every day are Native corn, usually in the form of cornmeal, and olive oil. She used to cook with lard but uses olive oil now for health reasons.

Caroline is perhaps the most shy of all family members I interviewed, and she spoke the least. Although her sisters and her mother all chimed in throughout the

interview, I really tried to focus on Caroline and to have her speak about her cooking experiences as much as possible. The more I dug into what she felt was important, the more information I got, and I was better able to understand her perspective on food and foodways.

On the day of our interview, she had made a stew from mutton, squash, and blue corn. Her family grows both traditional white corn and blue corn using a dry-farming method. She uses this corn all the time in her cooking. Her brother Hank grew the squash that she used in the stew, and the family raised the sheep, which they butchered themselves. She also makes Navajo tea, which her family, mostly her mother, grows adjacent to their house. Alice Willie takes the seeds from the tea every year and spreads them all over the yard. The tea doesn't grow in rows, as it would if it were planted in a garden, and because it is a perennial it returns every year. Navajo tea, also known as Indian tea (*Thelesperma megapotamicum*)⁵² is a wild plant that prefers disturbed areas. I've tried to grow it around my house, but it always seems to want to grow between the sandstone rocks on my walkway and not in the open areas.

Alice had so much of it in 2007 that she had the whole family harvest it, dry it, and cut it into small pieces for making tea all throughout the winter months. The following year I bought a giant plastic ice cream container full of tea from them for twenty dollars. It is a very healthy beverage that was used extensively by the Pueblo, Diné (Navajo), and Hopi peoples before coffee was introduced. Her family has used it for many years. They always cut it, never pulling up the roots, so it returns year after year. The tea has many medicinal qualities and is commonly used in communities on the Navajo Nation and also in almost all of the pueblos.

Caroline's brother, Hank, grows most of the vegetables that she uses in her stews, soups, and other Native dishes. One of the most important is Navajo white corn. It is used fresh, dried, or on the cobs in stews, or the kernels can be combined with mutton and squash. Because the family raises all of their own sheep, this is the primary meat that Caroline uses to cook with.



Photo 7.10 One of the Willie Family's ewes with her lamb.



Photo 7.11 Calandra harvesting Indian tea.



Photo 7.12 Indian tea that has been harvested, dried, and cut, and made into homemade tea bags for brewing.



Photo 7.13 Caroline and Calandra Willie.

Caroline prefers to cook outside with a wire mesh grill over the open flames of a wood fire, but she also cooks on the woodstove in the cook house. They also have a modern stove at her mother's house. Her favorite dish to make is the little tied bun bread, but she, like her sister Marie, could not remember what it is called in Navajo. Her sisters, especially Marie, always ask Caroline to make the bun bread whenever Marie knows she is coming home. She also really likes to make traditional blue corn pancakes outdoors on

the grill. This dish is made with just blue corn, culinary ash, and water. Sometimes she adds milk powder or a little sugar—foods that were introduced to the family through the commodity foods program. Caroline sometimes uses olive oil instead of lard to cook the pancakes, to make them healthier. Traditional blue corn meal pancakes were one of the foods that I found many families make all over the Navajo Reservation.



Photo 7.14 Katie Coho Henio from Ramah, New Mexico, prepares traditional blue corn pancakes using an outdoor grill and open flame.



Photo 7.15 Traditional Blue corn pancakes made with finely ground blue corn meal, culinary ash, and water.

Although she considers herself a traditional Native cook, Caroline stated that an electric roaster has been the most influential non-Native cooking tool she uses. “I plug in the roaster oven and I’m able to cook meat or a stew really slowly and make it nice and tender”; “I couldn’t do that in the past.” Caroline has a crockpot that she uses as well, but she prefers the roaster. Caroline’s sister Loretta joined in the conversation: “We always have meat, mostly mutton. The main dish we are using is the stew or the sheep ribs, sometimes even corn and cornmeal, and then of course, fry bread or tortilla bread. Then, of course, we add all of the other goodies that come after the main dishes we prepare.”

We had been cooking all night when she said this, preparing multiple dishes for the feast. Everyone had eaten, several platefuls in some cases, and some of the guests even packed plates to take home. This practice is common at Diné (Navajo) ceremonies and other gatherings, but not at Pueblo feasts. No one takes food home on a Feast Day. But after an NAC Peyote Ceremony feast or a sweat lodge feast, people often take home plates full of food. Elders get their plates first, and then whatever is left over is available for everyone else. There is a distinct difference between the proper protocol at a Diné (Navajo) feast and a Pueblo Feast Day.

Caroline was tired; we were up until almost two in the morning. Her work was done now, and she just wanted to relax and talk about food, visit with the family, and listen to the other interviews. She commented on how much she enjoyed hearing other family members’ different answers to the same questions about food, traditional food, and traditional foodways. We were done, for now.

Calandra Willie

Calandra Willie is Caroline’s only daughter. She grew up in Seba Dalkai with her mother, aunts, and grandparents. She also grew up with her uncles and mostly hung out with the males in her family. She stated, “I’m more of a tomboy out of the girls in the family; I did everything with the guys. But I’ve always known how to cook, make bread, and more recently I’ve been learning how to make dumpling stew on my own.” She went to high school in Winslow, Arizona, and then to college at the University of Northern Arizona in Flagstaff. Presently, Calandra lives in Albuquerque near her cousin-sister, Tedra.



Photo 7.16 Calandra Willie outside her home in Seba Dalkai, Arizona.



Photo 7.17 Calandra Willie in her traditional Navajo woven dress and jewelry.

Calandra's father is Chef Walter Whitewater, one of the Diné (Navajo) Native chefs in this study and the chef with whom I have cooked the longest. Calandra has been cooking since she was about eight or nine years old. Her first cooking experience was

making potatoes with spam when she was home alone. She peeled the potatoes and put them in a pan with the spam and then surprised her grandpa when he got back from herding the sheep. She has no professional training but was taught to cook by her grandmother, mother, and aunts, with whom she grew up. The most influential people in her life are her grandmother and grandfather; they taught her a lot about her culture and how to speak the Navajo language. She goes home to Seba Dalkai every chance she gets to be with her extended family. Because Calandra lives alone in Albuquerque, she doesn't cook for large groups of people, but she likes to experiment with new recipes and gets compliments from her friends and family on the dishes she prepares.



Photo 7.18 Calandra Willie and her dad, Walter Whitewater.

We spent a day in Tolani Lake with Calvin and Mary Nez for a documentary by Iowa Public Television on traditional Native farming techniques and traditional foods of the Navajo Nation. Calandra and her Uncle Hank spent hours translating what the two elders had to say about traditional foods and farming. Calvin and Mary Nez live in a remote region of the reservation, near the small town of Leupp. Calandra was most interested in being able to show an audience outside the Navajo Reservation the dry-farming techniques used in this region and the abundance of food produced with this type of traditional farming. The Nez family had such an amazing crop the year we were there that it was hard to believe that they used no irrigation and were solely dependent on available rains during the summer monsoon season.



Photo 7.19 Nez family garden in Tolani Lake.



Photo 7.20 Calvin and Mary Nez's family garden uses water from (late summer) monsoon rains. They farm solely using this dry farming method.



Photo 7.21 View of the Nez family garden, looking south, showing traditional squash and Navajo corn.



Photo 7.22 View of garden looking northwest, featuring traditional crops.



Photo 7.23 Calvin and Mary Nez of Tolani Lake, Arizona. Calvin is Tedra's father's uncle, which in Navajo kinship system is Tedra's paternal grandfather or, in Navajo *náltí hastiin*.



Photo 7.24 Film crew with Calvin and Mary Nez (left), Hank Willie (seated in red t-shirt), Walter Whitewater (holding microphone), Navajo Nation Native American Foods segment producer Laurel Bower-Burgmaier (seated in white shirt), camera man from IOWA publication television, and Calandra Willie (standing in white shirt).

Calandra is very proud of her dad and the work he is doing with Native foods on and off the reservation. In addition to being a chef who cooks traditional and

contemporary Native American cuisine, Chef Whitewater recently taught an eight-week cooking class on Healthy Native American Cooking (the first of its kind on the Navajo Reservation) with the Navajo Nation Special Diabetes Project (NNSDP) in Window Rock, Arizona. The project is headed and sponsored by Neal Barnard, M.D. and Caroline Trapp, N.P., C.D.E. of the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (PCRM) in Washington, D.C. It focuses on combating diabetes by reintroducing an ancestral plant-based diet. Dr. Barnard advocates that diabetes can be controlled, and even reversed, with an easy-to-follow plant-based diet, which he outlines in detail in his book, *Dr. Neal Barnard's Program for Reversing Diabetes* (Barnard 2007).

“My grandma showed me how to make the dough for the tortillas and fry bread. One thing I have yet to learn how to make is blue corn mush,” she said. “That is something I need and want to learn how to make.” But she was really glad to be able to make fry bread and to be able to prepare it for her cousin-sister, Tedra, and cousins Lara, Kelly, and Clorissa. Because Calandra lives in Albuquerque, she mostly cooks for her cousin-sister and her other cousins, who want her to make fry bread. They usually ask her to come over and make it for them. For Calandra, this means that she is appreciated and needed by family members who live in an urban setting far from the reservation. She stated, “So for me that shows that they love my fry bread and want more.” Fry bread and no-fry bread, or tortilla bread, is very important in Calandra's family. All of the women in her family know how to make it, and some form of bread is served with every meal.

Calandra had a different way of looking at the traditional foodways and Native American cuisine than the rest of her family. While food for her is definitely a form of expression, she stated during her interview “Everyone has his or her own unique way of cooking food, whether it is traditional or contemporary.” Native American cuisine for her is a modern replica of traditional foods. “I think Native American cuisine kicks it up a notch from traditional foods, but I'm a fan of both, they both are delicious.” She went on to say, “It's modern-day cooking for Native Americans, I think it is very creative. Our own Navajo dishes aren't 100% known to outside communities; it could never be duplicated because every Navajo that knows how to cook has their own ways of making

traditional food the way they were taught. But for the modern stuff, I think it's great that non-Natives can see that we have people who are creative as chefs."

Perhaps because her father is one of the most famous and successful Native American chefs in the Southwest, and because she has been exposed to seeing food differently than most Native cooks, Calandra viewed the two as being different yet intertwined, a perspective that was unlike that of the other Native cooks. When we discussed what food ingredients made up Native American cuisine, she commented, "Something that's not traditional, that's for sure; new secret ingredients. It's the best, very unique and creative! I like how traditional foods are becoming modern, it's something new and something different for people to try."

Alice Willie

Alice Willie is the matriarch of the Willie family. She is a beautiful woman. She is a strong, medium-sized elderly woman, with her hair pulled back in a traditional Navajo bun. Her hair is mostly gray with some strands of darker hair remaining. Grandmother Alice always dresses traditionally, in the style that is most common among Navajo elders. She always wears a traditional Navajo broomstick skirt that she sewed herself, and a velvet shirt with a collar. She makes most of her outfits, both the skirts and the velvet shirts. She always wears traditional Navajo jewelry. All of the times I have been out to the house in Seba Dalkai, or whenever she has come here to Santa Fe, she is always wearing a traditional Navajo skirt, velvet shirt, and her jewelry. Alice prefers to be called Grandmother Alice or Grandma Alice. It's who she is. Her identity is being a grandmother, not only to her own family but also to everyone who is younger than she is. She preferred that I use English and say "Grandmother Alice" rather than the Diné words for grandmother, as other elders had me do.

She is warm, welcoming, and always wants to make sure that whoever comes to visit is fed. Providing food is one of the ways in which she shares who she is, her home, and visits with people when they are at her house. Of all the houses that share the family land, it is always her house that hosts the family and guest meals. She has a large table with (I think) at least eight chairs, and chairs can be moved from the adjoining living room when they are needed.



Photo 7.25 From left, Grandmother Alice, (behind her) grandson Briyan Begay, husband Isk Willie, daughter Marie Begay, granddaughter Tedra Begay, (behind Tedra) son Hank Willie, granddaughter Calandra Willie, daughter Liz Willie, daughter Loretta Ondelacy, daughter Caroline Willie, and son Raymond Willie.

Her house is inviting; it is nicely furnished with pictures of her children and their families on the hutch where the television sits. Her favorite photos are the ones in which her grandchildren are dressed traditionally. She has helped make many of the girls' dresses, and her hobby is to make dolls in traditional clothes. She gave me one, a beautiful doll with dark brown hair tied into a bun. She's wearing a cotton broomstick skirt made of a calico material with small purple and green flowers, a velvet shirt, a Concho belt, a squash blossom necklace with matching earrings, and two bracelets. On her legs are traditional brown leather moccasins with white deerskin leggings. After we finished working together that year she gave me the doll for Christmas, and it reminds me of Grandmother Alice because she is dressed the same way.

Her daughters and granddaughters are always around her. On the night of the NAC Peyote Ceremony all of the girls—Calandra, Lara, Kelley, and Clorissa—were getting ready in Alice's room. She helped them with their hair, jewelry, and outfits. It was nice to watch their interaction. The women who were not going into the all-night ceremony were the cooks. There were six of us: Marie, Loretta, Liz, Caroline, Grandmother Alice, and myself. Marie's son, Briyan, hung out with us for quite some time, talking and watching us cook. He helped set up the table for the feast on the day of

the event but didn't really help us cook the night before. He mostly talked to us while we cooked. He was one of the few men who helped set up for the feast but didn't go into the meeting.



Photo 7.26 Calandra Willie and Tedra Begay dressed in their traditional Navajo outfits. This is one of grandmother Alice's favorite photos of the two girls.

We cooked for hours, talking, prepping, sharing stories and going over the menu for the following day. The tipi was packed with people. We knew there would be a lot of people to feed after the meeting. The Willie family was organized. Marie was the one in charge. She kept everyone going and made sure we were on track and would be able to finish all the dishes for the following day. There were several stews. We prepped the meat by cutting it into chunks; we browned it and then added it to the vegetables. There were fruit salads, pasta salad, and a green garden salad. Some of the desserts were store-bought and some were made from scratch. There was a Jell-O dish that I think is similar to an ambrosia salad. Fry bread would be made on the day of the feast, and there were

traditional bun breads, corn mush, and more. I couldn't believe how much food was being prepared.

On the following day, after we served all of the food and the guests had gone, we sat down to do the interview. Grandmother Alice doesn't speak English so her two daughters, Liz and Loretta, took turns translating. "How long have you been cooking?" I asked. "Since I was eleven years old," she replied. "Am I allowed to ask how old she is now?" I asked. Grandmother Alice nodded, and said she was seventy-three years old. That was in 2007.

She remembers Sand Springs. Her family was relocated some time ago, and the Navajo Nation built her family new houses. She was happy with the houses and glad that her family could be close to her. Most of her children live in the cluster of houses that make up their homestead. They all share the responsibilities for the sheep, both physically and financially. In 2007 there was a severe drought, and they had to buy hay to feed the sheep. It was expensive for the family but they had no other choice. There just wasn't enough grass for the sheep to graze.

They had the NAC Peyote Ceremony in early spring, around the second week of April. It was still quite cold, but several of the ewes had already had their lambs. Caroline and her mother had separated the mothers and baby sheep from the flock so the lambs could nurse and stay warm in the hand-built, straw-lined stalls. The Willie family loves red and blue heelers, and they had five of them. The doghouses are lined up next to each other on the back of the house opposite the sheep corral. The dogs were all well fed. This dog breed is actually an Australian cattle dog, bred to herd cattle over long distances and across rough terrain, which makes them good sheep and cattle dogs on the reservation. The reservation has some rough terrain, and the sheep mostly open-graze on the land where the Willie family kept their herd. Grandmother Alice liked the dogs because they bark when someone is coming up the driveway, alerting the family.

We continued with the interview. "What do you consider to be the most important ingredients that you use in your cooking?" I asked. "Cooking ash for using with the cornmeal," she replied. "This is the most important ingredient because it is used with our

corn, in blue corn mush, and it is an ingredient used in the Navajo cake that's ground up really fine and used for coffee cream."

She considers herself a traditional Navajo woman. Alice learned to cook from her mother. The first things she learned to make were coffee, bread, stew, and fried potatoes. She smiled and told her daughters to tell me that she has very good memories of cooking when she was young. She always enjoyed preparing food for her family, feeding them, growing corn, and raising sheep.

"When I was a little girl," she said, "we had to cook outside and we didn't really have anything to cook our potatoes with so we would use sheep fat to fry the potatoes in and we would use the same sheep fat to make fry bread. Nowadays, we don't use sheep fat anymore; we have Crisco from the store. We didn't really have any sweet stuff back then, either," she stated, "we just had the basics. Every now and then we would go to the trading post by wagon or on horseback." Her comment illustrates that products from outside the reservation have replaced ingredients that were used in the past, as in the case of Crisco being used instead of sheep fat, which had probably been used since sheep were introduced. As with some of the other elders, she reminisced about the past and how life used to be. "Corn mush is our most traditional dish, from the old food ways," she stated. "For the corn mush we get the water and bring it to a boil, then we add the ash and put in the cornmeal and bring it to a boil. We then stir it until it is ready and eat it while it is still hot." She paused for a moment. "It is my most favorite traditional Navajo dish." "I use my stirring sticks and my brush to make it traditionally even today." She pointed up to her traditional stirring sticks and brush in her kitchen.

Alice started to talk about some of the traditional foods that are not harvested anymore. It was upsetting to her. "Native foods are foods such as corn mush, blue corn bread, Navajo cake, the leftovers from the Navajo cake that you grind and use for coffee or tea, steamed corn, and wild yucca bananas that's made for pudding." She paused. "You eat the wild yucca bananas with corn mush or you eat them like you would dried apricots, today." Dried fruit was issued to Navajo families through the food commodity program, and many families still receive dried fruits today.



Photo 7.27 Traditional Navajo cooking brush and stirring sticks used to preparing a variety of corn dishes.

Grandmother Alice took out a book she got sometime in the 1950s or 1960's, she thought. The Office of Navajo Economic Opportunity's Emergency Food – Navajo Homemaker Program, which was funded by the Office of Economic Opportunity in Washington, D.C, distributed it. They developed this book of recipes to show people how to use USDA commodity foods. Information had been broadcast over the radio, and demonstrations were held at chapter houses (local government buildings equivalent to a village or town hall) and in communities all over the reservation. With the collaboration of "Navajo Homemakers," as stated in the book's introduction, recipes for Navajo foods were also included. That's why Grandmother Alice likes it, because it had the traditional recipes accompanied by drawings showing how to make some of the traditional foods that were important to her. The cookbook is a collection of commodity recipes, Native recipes, and recipes from Navajo Homemakers, which were described in pictures as well as in English.

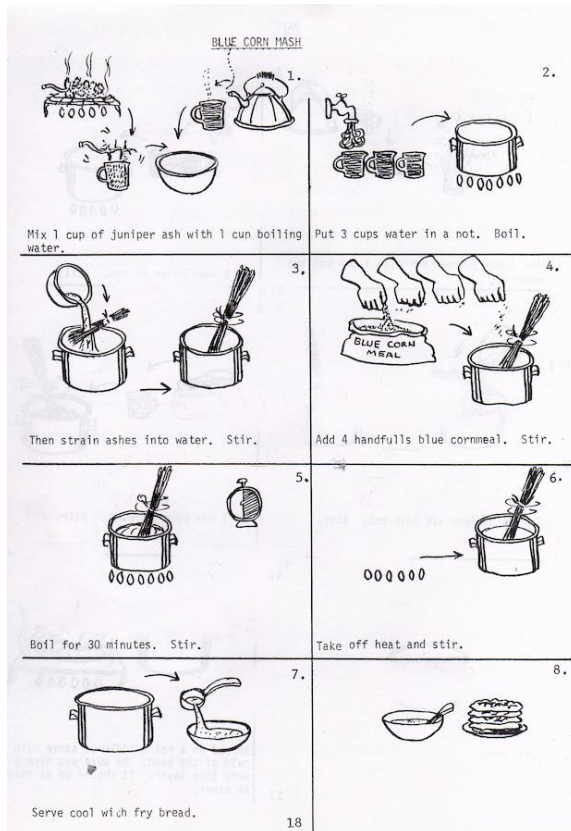


Figure 7.1 Blue Corn Mash recipe from p. 18 of the “Good Nutrition & Good Eating!” booklet distributed during the 1950s by the Office of Navajo Economic Opportunity and funded by the Office of Economic Opportunity in Washington D.C. Grandmother Alice Willie likes this book because the recipes include hand-drawn illustrations that she can share with her grandchildren to teach them how to make traditional Navajo dishes.

The cookbook was divided into four sections for each of the basic food groups—meat, dairy, breads and cereals, and fruits and vegetables, based on the USDA food pyramid. Today the food pyramid adds a fifth category—fats, sweets, and alcoholic beverages—to address the role of unhealthy foods in the average American diet. A new food pyramid has also been added to address Type 2 diabetes.

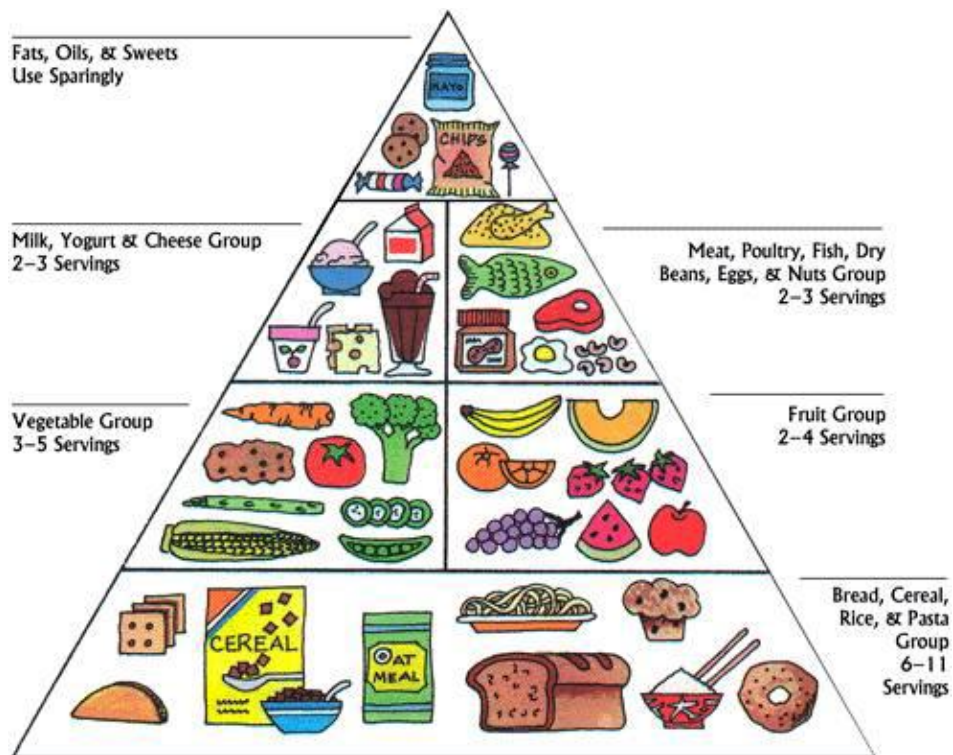


Figure 7.2 USDA food pyramid as it appeared in 2009.
http://my10online.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/food_pyramid.jpg.

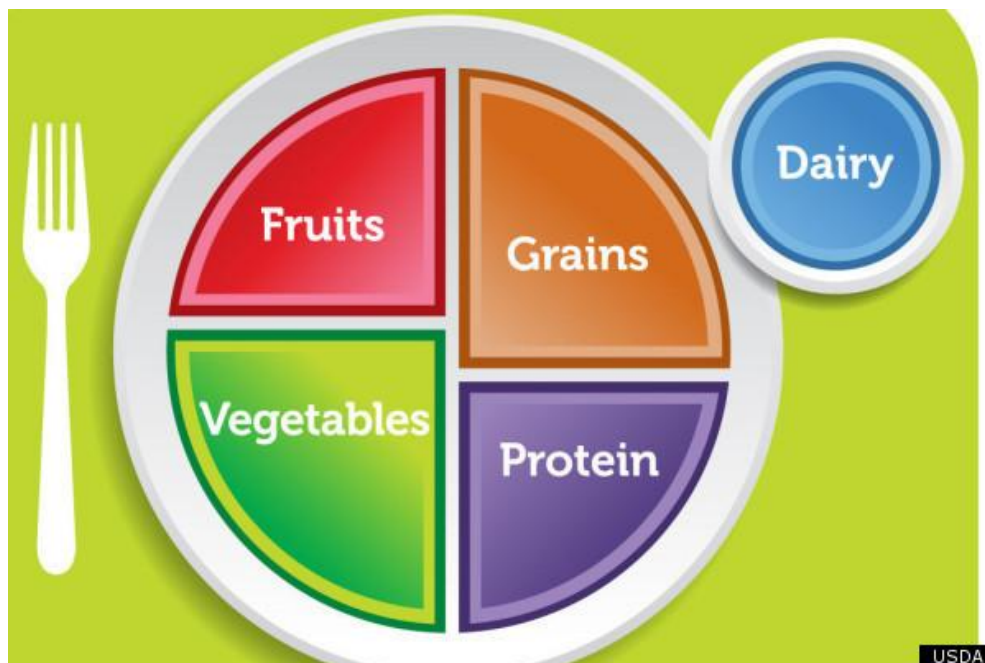


Figure 7.3 USDA food plate introduced to the public in May 2011.
<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/>.

Dr. Neal Barnard states that the USDA food pyramid doesn't address cultural variation and the nutritional needs of Native Americans. He has referred to the distribution of commodity foods by the government as a form of nutritional deprivation for Native peoples. Melissa Nelson from San Francisco State University's Native Studies program and I have termed this "nutritional genocide." This issue is also addressed in Gary Nabhan's book *Why Some Like It Hot: Food, Genes, and Cultural Diversity* (2004).

Grandmother Alice uses the book to help her grandchildren make the Native foods that she feels are important to pass on and are in danger of disappearing from Navajo culture. During our interview, she expressed concern that many of the foods harvested in the wild, including spinach, onions, yucca bananas, and the little roots that look like potatoes, which she called *potato yazhi*, are in danger of no longer being used because people don't know what to do with them and how to use them for food. Liz and Loretta translated the word for the root as "little potato" or "wild potato." "Many people don't know how to prepare these foods anymore," Grandmother Alice stated. When I asked why they weren't being prepared anymore, she commented that everyone is in school and the other folks are all at work now. Here we see an example of traditional ecological knowledge being lost because of both internal and external pressures.

"I'm trying to teach Calandra [her granddaughter] now how to prepare the blue corn meal and make the dough. She already knows how to make the dough, but Tedra [another granddaughter] doesn't really make dough, because Marie [her daughter] is always working and so it this one [her daughter Loretta] that has to teach them so that they learn how to do it. So she is teaching them how to do it. They have to learn it and let it go on. I even teach the grandkids on how to butcher. I teach them, this is how you clean the intestines and clean everything and this is how you do it, even the blood sausage to what you put in there and even the way you cut the meat and take the mutton apart, all that stuff, you have to learn it. That's how Calandra knows how to do it."

Grandmother Alice is not the only elder cook who expressed concern about the younger generation not knowing how to harvest, hunt, butcher, or prepare important Native foods. Not only the Native cooks but many of the Native Chefs expressed this concern as well. Grandmother Alice's approach to the problem was unique: she

advocates that everyone, including people outside Navajo culture, need to be educated on the traditional foods and their importance. “If we don’t pass on the information from old age there will be nothing because nobody is going to know how to do it and nobody is going to tell how to prepare it and stuff like butchering and all that stuff will probably die out. . . . I like to share knowledge, even though they are non-Navajo.”

Her philosophy was her way of ensuring that there would be a future for other Native cooks. Rather than keeping the information within her immediate community, she thought it was important to share it with as many people as possible to guarantee the perpetuation of the information for future generations. Her granddaughter Calandra also has a unique view of food. That’s why she likes the little cookbook from the Office of Navajo Economic Opportunity program, because it has the Native recipes in it and it has simple illustrations on how to make most of the traditional Navajo foods that were important to her.

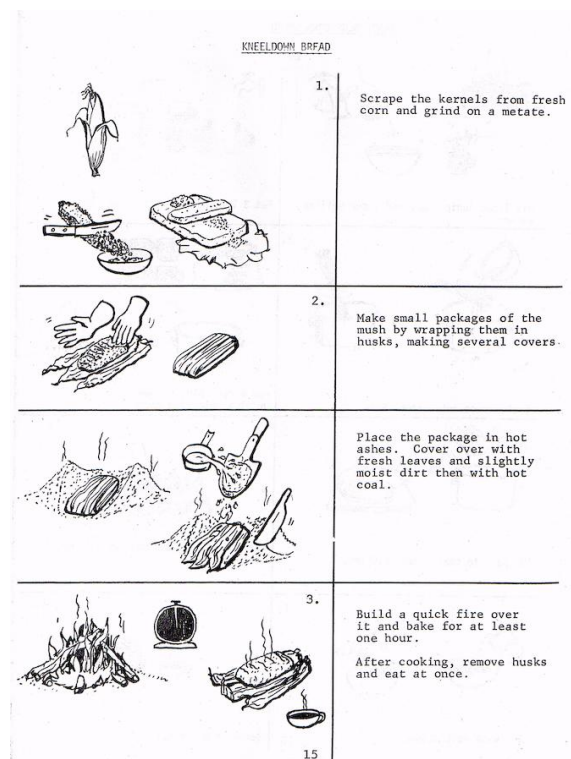


Figure 7.4 Kneel Down Bread from p. 15 in the “Good Nutrition & Good Eating!” booklet. This traditional recipe is prepared by many Navajo families and served on many occasions.

Grandmother Alice added one more component to her assessment of traditional Native Navajo foods. “When you are preparing food you are supposed to be happy,” she said. “It makes the food taste good and it comes out right and tastes good and then you share it with other people and it makes them feel good, happy, and then whatever they want to do it comes out right, if it’s the opposite it’s bad. The thing about it is if you’re not happy about it, people are not going to be happy.” This theme would occur throughout many of the interviews. I call this the intangible essence in foods and cooking, something that goes into the food via touch. I refer to it as folklore, because I cannot document it empirically, but most tribal communities have some sort of story that involves the “proper way” to handle foods, especially traditional foods, while cooking. All of the Native cooks and chefs with whom I worked identified this theme as they handled Native and traditional foods.

The Native Cooks from Pinon, Arizona

Susie Whitewater Begay

Grandmother Susie Whitewater Begay was eighty-eight at the time of our interview. She was born by her father’s place, the white water spring, which is now dry, not far from her house. Her father’s name and her maiden name is Tohlakai (White Water). Her grandson, Chef Walter, changed his last name to Whitewater to reflect that connection to his family’s place. Grandmother Susie sister’s son Paul also changed his last name, to Tohlakai, to reflect the same connection to place. They are the water clan and the rainbow people. She lived on this land all of her life and never traveled beyond Arizona and New Mexico. She doesn’t like to leave her livestock. Grandma Susie, as she likes to be called, speaks no English, although she does understand some words. For this interview, I asked the questions in English, they were translated into Navajo (Diné) by her granddaughter, Linda Begay, and then Grandma Susie would reply in Diné, which Linda would then translate into English. Since this interview was conducted, she has passed on and is no longer with us.



Photo 7.28 Susie Whitewater Begay of Pinon, Arizona. She is the grandmother of Chef Walter Whitewater.

Pinon, Arizona, is a small town on the Navajo Reservation. It is about an hour west of Chinle, the community near Canyon de Chelly. The road to Pinon is off Highway 191, a two-lane highway. Cows, horses, and sheep open-graze along the road so driving is difficult and slow. Once on a trip from Pinon to Santa Fe, Chef Whitewater hit a cow, killing it and totaling his truck.

The area borders the Hopi mesas, which lie just south and west of Pinon. It has one gas station, a Bashas' supermarket, a very small health clinic, a chapter house, and a post office. The old mercantile is still next to the gas station, but it has lost most of its' business to the supermarket. The mercantile still offers credit to local residents until payday, and that's what keeps them open. On the first of the month, it is packed with local residents spending their government checks. There is an elementary school and, now, a high school. None of these places existed when Grandmother Susie was a child. There was a small boarding school where her grandson, Chef Walter, went to elementary school. Even though the school was no more than four miles from the family house, they

could not drop him off and pick him up every day so he stayed at the school and only came home for holidays and in the summer.

Most Navajo homesteads have at least one hogan, typically a circular or hexagonal one-room structure with a single east-facing door. Next to the hogans are government-funded homes, typically rectangular with several rooms, including a kitchen and a bathroom. Grandmother Susie made a point of this because she was living in a tribally built house rather than the circular hogan that she grew up in. Traditional Navajo homes always have a door that faces east to welcome the new day. Houses that are close to the highway usually have electricity and running water, but this is not always the case. Many homes on the reservation still do not have electricity or running water, and families must haul their water.



Photo 7.29 Traditional Navajo Hogan with no running water or electricity.

There is no record of her birth, nor does she have a birth certificate because she was born at home. Her birth hogan, which is down the hill from where she lives now, is no longer occupied, but the hogan where her children were born is still used by the family and is very close to her present home. Grandmother Susie and her husband had fourteen children. Three children have passed away, as well as her husband, which has been hard for her. They raised sheep and grew corn. She learned to weave when she was young and

wove many rugs throughout her life. She sold many of her rugs at Hubbell's Trading Post,⁵³ the oldest continuously operating trading post on the Navajo Nation.



Photo 7.30 Grandmother Susie Whitewater Begay choosing yarn for weaving.

At the time of our interview, Grandmother Susie wasn't cooking as much as when I first met her; her daughters and granddaughter Linda did the majority of the cooking. When I first met Grandmother Susie the family house had no running water, so the toilet and shower in the tribally built house didn't work. Everyone washed himself or herself by hand and used the outhouse that was about 50 yards from the house. She loved to chew tobacco and always asked people to buy it for her, but her children didn't want her to chew for health reasons. She had an old, brown, upright refrigerator, with two doors that opened like a closet. After the refrigerator no longer worked, she used it as her dresser and closet. It was on the right side of the living room, next to her bed. Grandmother Susie kept all of her personal belongings in there—her jewelry, her recently woven rugs, and

her clothes. She too dressed traditionally in a broomstick-style skirt and a velvet shirt with Navajo jewelry, some of which her son Art made, as he is the jeweler in the family.



Photo 7.31 Grandmother Susie Whitewater Begay weaving a traditional Navajo Ganado-style rug.

One of her daughters, Lola, married outside the tribe after boarding school and now lives Whittier, in a suburb of Los Angeles. She is the family seamstress, and she makes all of the traditional clothing for her mother and her Aunt Louise. Lola also makes Sun Dance dresses, traditional shawls, and Pow Wow dresses for most of the girls in the family, and many of the men's Sun Dance skirts. Lola's son Josh is a drummer in a traditional drum group who follows the Pow Wow circuit and drums at the Sun Dance that is held on his family's ancestral land each year.

Many of Susie's children live in the vicinity of her house, similar to the way the Willie family's homestead is structured. Her children, Guy, Rita, Thomas-Mike, Lola, Joe Thom, Maggie, Robert, Bobby, Francine, Lucinda, and Art, all remained close to her

and were an active part of her life. Guy, the oldest son, was in his sixties at the time of the interview [now passed on], and the youngest son, Art, in his late thirties. They all have children, and some of their children have children. Guy lived within walking distance, and Rita, Maggie, and Francine all have homes next door to Grandmother Susie's house. Her son Thomas-Mike and his children Linda and Walter lived with her, as did Linda's two children, Courtney and Cassandra. Her son Joe Thom [also now passed on] lived with his family just down the wash, next to the cornfield. Her sister Louise lives within sight of Grandmother Susie's house, past the cornfields and the wash to the west. Louise's family houses are probably about a mile as the crow flies, but by car it is about six miles and takes twenty minutes on the dirt roads. Many family members just walk between the homesteads unless they have to haul something for a sweat lodge ceremony, Sun Dance, or feast.

Grandmother Susie was a traditional woman. She followed Navajo protocol and lived in what she called the "Beauty Way" which is also a part of the "Blessingway." Corn was the most important food to her. Although I had specific questions for her, no matter which question I asked, she talked about what was important to her and issues that she felt were of importance in the understanding of food and traditional Navajo foodways. So, while other participants did follow the format for the interview, Grandmother Susie was one of the elders who followed her own format.

Grandmother Susie never considered herself a chef. It wasn't even something she thought about. She was the family cook, she was a traditional cook, and she cooked over the years at every feast and ceremony, including for immediate family, extended family, and for groups as large as any chef would encounter in an active restaurant. She was the matriarch of her family and the oldest sister to her siblings, all of whom lived nearby and would participate in family gatherings, ceremonies, NAC Peyote Ceremonies, and sweat lodge feasts. Cooking for the whole family required days of prep work and a lot of food. Gatherings for ceremonies could include anywhere from fifty to one hundred people, and sometimes more.

She felt the need to pass on traditional knowledge and refused to learn to speak in English as a way of keeping her own language alive. She would make her grandchildren

who weren't fluent in Navajo, and me when I was there, practice words in Navajo so we would understand what she was saying. We used a little dictionary published by Garth A. Wilson; I still have it. Language was very important to her, as were the traditional Navajo ceremonies. One of the most important Navajo ceremonies in terms of the use of corn is the Kinaaldá, the "coming of age" ceremony in which a young girl learns how to use traditional Navajo corn by grinding it into a meal and making a ceremonial cake from the cornmeal.

Grandma Susie used two types of corn for her cooking, blue and white. As we talked about corn being one of the most important foods to her, she remembered a creation story and began to recite it.

From the time of the beginning, people were searching for food. There was a turkey (I can't remember his name), and he shook himself one day. From one of his feathers came a blue corn. It fell from him. When the corn fell, the people discussed how to make food out of it, so the people planted it, and now today, we have the corn plants and the corn. That's how we came to have blue corn.

She paused for a moment and then continued to talk about corn.

White corn meal, it is used for Kneel Down Bread and for Tsi' yelli' (little bun), which has its name because it looks like our Navajo hair buns. Blue corn is the one used for cornmeal; it is ground into a meal. White corn is used as an offering; we use it as an offering to the East in the morning. When the dawn comes, you offer your words, your prayers. The yellow corn is used as an offering to the West. It is ground too. We also use the white corn when we have Navajo ceremonies, Kinaaldá, Nightway, and Blessingway; the medicine people use the cornmeal to dry you off. They give you a bath with it. Sprinkle it on you. My favorite dish is Inish spizhi', corn dumplings. I also like grinding the corn, but they don't do those things anymore.

Corn for Grandmother Susie, was a ritual object, it was the embodiment of the Mother, but it was also food. It represented sustenance to her, and giving of life. It was her favorite food to cook with and the most important food source.

Each morning, as the sun comes up, Grandmother Susie and other traditional Navajo elders use cornmeal or corn pollen as their offering; they face the East and offer a prayer of thanks. "In beauty" is how most prayers are chanted. Corn is used as a ritual object and then as an ingredient for preparing breakfast. A favorite dish is blue corn mush.

She talked for hours about food, its importance to her, and why she used it in ceremonies. She said the Sun Dance was important because it anchored a place for ceremony, a place where she could prepare food and eat, a place to pray, a place to be with family. This ceremony for her was important because it was helping to revitalize foods that were not being prepared much anymore. When you have a place for ceremony, you have a reason, and it is with that reason that she could prepare food and then teach the younger generation how to prepare these same foods.

“Mostly, I have watched the white man influences, over the years,” she stated. It was apparent she felt passionate about this. Her voice got louder. “In the modern world it’s good. Sometimes we look up to that but we are forgetting our own traditional ways, which we need to remember. We need to know about our foods. We need to know where we came from.” As she continued to talk, her body changed. There was force in her voice; she felt very strongly about this issue, and you could see it in every muscle. Her face tightened; she paused. She was thinking about her foods from the past. They were important to her; she held onto the foods of her past through her memories. As more and more family members gathered around, she sat up, strength and resilience emitted from her voice. The sound of what she was saying resonated with the listening family members. She loved having all of her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren listen to what she had to say. “I am happy for this interview,” she stated.

The stage had been set for her to tell her stories. It was a form of performance for her. As more family members gathered around, she continued to talk. They sat and listened attentively. Her words became mesmerizing. Her voice, though soft and quiet, had strength to it. She knew it. She talked about traditional foodways, about their importance and how preparing food for a ceremony was not only an obligation for the family but a duty to revitalize and perpetuate their traditional foods. “These foods need to be practiced, to be learned. They need to be prepared in order for them to live on,” she said. My questions were no longer the focus of this gathering. She had a message to convey, and this was the moment in time she had chosen to convey it.

Her performance was a mode of communication, a way of speaking, the essence of which resides in the assumption of responsibility to an audience for a display of

communicative skill, highlighting the way in which communication is carried out, above and beyond its referential content (Bauman 1986:3). For the listening family members, the act of expression on the part of Grandma Susie was open for evaluation. The relative skill and effectiveness of her display was an enhancement of the experience, through the present appreciation of the intrinsic qualities of the act of expression itself (Bauman 1986:3). She knew that her performance in this instance was calling forth special attention to what she had to say, and that with that performance she had the power to create and evoke a heightened awareness of both her act of expression and her place as a performer. She talked a while longer; it started to get late. "We need to cook dinner now, would you like to help us?" she asked. She got up, and everyone knew she was done talking; it was time to prepare dinner, so we all got up to help her.

Louise Tohlakai Begaye

Grandma Louise Tohlakai Begaye, who prefers to be called Shima' sa'ni' (grandmother), was eighty-one years old when we conducted her interview. She is the sister of Grandmother Susie Whitewater Begay and the closest to her. She does not speak English, and Linda translated this interview much the same as she had done with Grandmother Susie. She lives in a modern tribal house, but does not have running water or electricity. Although her sister's house, which is closer to the road, now has both water and electricity, the Navajo tribe says that she lives too far from the road. She uses the traditional hogan adjacent to her house for ceremonies and for her children to stay in when they visit. The two families often have gatherings and participate in ceremonies together. Louise's children are close in age to the younger children of her sister Susie. Grandma Susie had fourteen children, and Grandma Louise, Shima' sa' ni', had twelve, of whom ten remain. Her sons Paul, Amos, and Gary were major influences in the making of the Sun Dance. She is the keeper of the medicine bundle for the Tohlakai (Whitewater) family and has been initiated to work with plants, possessing a great deal of knowledge surrounding them. She is protective of this information but knows she will have to pass it on and is working with several of her children on that now.

The land surrounding her house has a vastness to it; mesas follow one another as if never-ending, and there is a feeling of expansiveness. The red earth contrasts with the

blue sky and the white billowing clouds. Sheep, goats, horses, and cattle speckle the landscape and move along slowly as they nibble on the sparse grasses between the sagebrush and low-lying piñon trees. Sheep dogs keep the herd together, and sometimes you'll see Mike Leo, one of her sons and the family's sheepherder, on horseback, moving the sheep from one place to another. Sometimes instead the sheepherder is Grandma Louise, dressed in a skirt and caring for her flock of sheep. The elders on this part of the Navajo Reservation are still very much concerned with caring for their sheep. They weave rugs from the wool, selling many of them for a source of income. These elders know how to butcher the sheep, cut up the carcass, and use all of the parts of the animal for food and clothing.

I grew to be very close to Shimá sá ní. She likes to call me "daughter." I think I remind her of one of her daughters, and she is built exactly like my Jewish grandmother on my father's side of the family, so she reminds me of my own grandmother. We spend a lot of time together. She shows me things around the house, sits next to me in ceremonies, and helps serve the food with me at family gatherings and ceremonies. I've always been one of the first to volunteer to help out, and she likes that. "Hard work is good for you," she would always say.

We sat down together to talk for the interview. There were ambient sounds in the background. I really had to focus to hear her. Two of her daughters were frying chicken. There were clanking sounds in the background from one of the frying pans. You could hear the hot oil, it was making crackling sounds, but Shimá sá ní continued to talk. You could hear it as each piece of chicken was dropped into the oil; "Pshhhhh" was the sound it made. Shimá sá ní was completely aware of the sounds from the kitchen but continued to talk. Much of what she had to say about food and corn was very similar to what her sister said.

Corn is one of the primary ingredients For Grandma Louise, as are lamb and some of the wild plants, in all of the traditional foods. "We make blue corn mush, blue corn pancakes, and kneel-down bread too. We also make a dish with blue corn into it, like a little cake inside a corn husk, then we press it out and put it in the ash of a fire, then when it's cooked, we take it off." She paused for a long time to contemplate these foods.

Remembering had taken her back to another place. You could see it in her body. She looked at me and then said, “The white man uses corn for popcorn, and we never did that before.” She tells Linda to translate for me that she is upset because the younger generation doesn’t want to grind corn any more. She remembers making grinding stones out of hard rock and using them when she was younger; it is really hard work and takes a lot out of you. She still grinds corn, using corn that her family or her sister Susie’s family grows.

She begins to talk about the younger generation; she talks slowly and her response takes a long time. It’s difficult to hear her, but she continues to talk. Her daughter is still frying the chicken. One of the grandchildren walks into the house yelling something about the sheep dog that is outside; she “shhhhhhhhes” them and then laughs softly. Then she says, “In our teaching, it would be better to teach how to do things, so that the young ones can learn it the right way, from the elders.” Her comment elicits a command for them to listen, to respect what she is doing with me, and there is teaching and intention in her words that she has spoken in her own language. All the ambient sounds, her daughter frying the chicken, the door opening and closing, children walking in and out, is making her upset. “This is exactly what I am talking about,” she states. Everyone stops what he or she is doing. “I am trying to talk about the old ways, and all of you need to listen.” It became quiet. Some of the people in the room sat down. She continued to talk, about the foods, the Sun Dance, and the role this ceremony had in the family. It was important to her. Mike-Leo, who lives with her, came in. He had just returned from taking care of the sheep. She acknowledged Mike-Leo and asked him if he is hungry. The food is finished and everyone is gathering to eat. There is still more that she wants to say, but we are done. We will resume our interview after the family meal, when it is quieter and she can focus on my questions.

She finishes up by telling me that she hardly ever leaves her home these days. She did go up to South Dakota to meet with some of the traditional Lakota elders, when they were bringing the Sun Dance ceremony onto her land after she had her visions and her dreams. The journey was good for her to see the elders and to talk with them about the Sun Dance, its meaning and its importance.

She is a strong woman. Short, somewhat stout, but very strong, you can see it when she stands. She is only about five feet tall, if that. She works hard. Her hands are weathered; they look like a farmer's hands, but she is in good physical shape. She is always at all of the ceremonies, every NAC Peyote Ceremony, every sweat lodge, every feast. Her sister, Grandma Susie, is much more frail and does not attend all of the family events, and when she does, she needs assistance. Shimá sá ní tells me how much she loves her family and how deeply they are a part of her life. This was apparent throughout our talk. She participates in the Sun Dance ceremony by attending some of the sweat lodges and by preparing some of the food for the feast. She spends four days of the Sun Dance down at the arbor, supporting the dancers. I remember seeing her there all day, in a plastic folding chair, watching. As she sat there throughout the day, her children and grandchildren tended to her and made sure she was feeling O.K. and that she didn't need anything. She is an important elder at this ceremony and has a status in her community which is one of utmost respect, and she is revered by all of her children and their families. Her position in the family and community is apparent from where she sits in the arbor during the Sun Dance ceremony. She doesn't mind that the Sun Dance did not originate with her (Navajo) people. Shimá sá ní mentioned to me that as long as the ceremony did good for her people, she accepted that it was given to her people from another tribe, the Lakota. The Sun Dance has been given to other tribes as well and is now practiced in many locations throughout the United States, Canada, and Mexico.



Photo 7.32 Louise Tohlakai Begaye sitting by family ceremonial sweat lodge.

Sorting out the intertwined conceptions of words and their meanings does pose translation issues, yet bodily interpretations and bodily ways of knowing (Geurts 2002), a process profoundly involved with epistemology, the development of its cultural identity, and its forms of being in the world, provide insight into the meaning of the words beyond their literal translation. As both grandmothers talked, and as we spent time in the kitchen together, preparing food and conducting other daily activities, I understood much more than their words by the way their bodies spoke to me, and the ways in which they communicated to me beyond the use of language and their words.

Linda Begay

Linda Begay is Grandma Susie's granddaughter and Thomas-Mike's daughter. She is the oldest of Thomas-Mike's two children. Her younger brother is Walter Whitewater. She was 39 years old at the time of this interview. She was raised in Pinon, by her father and her Aunt June when she was a small child, and then moved off the reservation for most of her school years. She lived in the Mormon home of the Wolf family, in Mesa, Arizona, just outside Phoenix, with her brother Walter and one of her uncles, Bobby (her father's younger brother), so they could receive a better education and become fluent in English. After graduating high school, and working for a short time in Phoenix, she moved back to the reservation with her two children, Courtney June and Cassandra Lyn. She is fluent in both Navajo and English.

During our interview she responded in English, and then she would translate some of what she said into Navajo so the others in the room could understand her responses, especially her grandmother, Susie. Linda said she feels like she lives in two worlds. One is the traditional Navajo world, which includes all of her ceremonial obligations, and the other is the contemporary world, including the American pop culture in which her children are growing. For many years, Linda was unable to find a good job in Pinon and subsisted on government assistance, and making and selling traditional shawls, bags, and other crafts. Several years ago, after she had volunteered at the medical clinic in Pinon for quite some time, she was offered a job at the Chinle hospital. Now she has a good job in the neonatal unit. She works full-time stays in Chinle, traveling between Pinon and Chinle for her days off. She doesn't drive and doesn't own a car, so she depends on

relatives who travel between Chinle and Pinon. Linda doesn't cook much in Chinle; she mostly cooks when she comes home to her father's and grandmother's house in Pinon.

She spoke slowly and clearly thinking about each response and making sure her responses expressed exactly what she was feeling.

I remember when I was growing up, my favorite thing was eating corn and preparing kneel down bread at harvest time. In the winter, a corn mush was put outside overnight. The next morning we ate it like ice cream. It was the reward for all of us children, but now everything has gotten modernized and it is different. Even for me, I have forgotten some of these ways.

She talked about moving back to the reservation from the city. Since she returned, she said she has become more involved in making traditional Navajo crafts, very involved in the ceremonies, and always involved in the preparation of food for the ceremonies, including NAC Peyote Ceremonies, the Sun Dance, and the feast after a sweat lodge ceremony.

I don't usually participate in the ceremonies, so I always participate by making the food. Then I am a part of the ceremony. The people that eat the food I prepare, they connect with me when they eat it. I become a part of the ceremony through my food. . . . If I could pass something on to the next generation, my advice to all the generations to come would be to learn all that you can, because it's hard to go back, it's hard to learn these things later in life.

She stopped and thought about what she had just said. You could see her contemplating the response, thinking about her words. She talked about how hard she is trying to teach these ways to her children. About how important this way was to her. She talked about how the Sun Dance had given her an opportunity to cook for the final feast of the ceremony in which both of her daughters had danced. They were in the circle and she was on the outside, tending to the kitchen and making sure there would be traditional foods for them to eat when they finished. This was important to her and why she chose not to dance.



Photo 7.33 Linda Begay with her youngest daughter, Cassandra Lyn.



Photo 7.34 Linda with daughters Courtney June, Cassandra Lyn, and brother Walter Whitewater, holding ceremonial eagle and hawk fans.

The Native Pueblo Cooks

Norma Naranjo

Norma Naranjo is from Ohkay Owingeh, formerly known as San Juan Pueblo. She considers herself to be from two communities, the Ohkay Owingeh community, which is her tribal affiliation, and the Hispanic community, into which her family married. She grew up in the pueblo. Ohkay Owingeh is located in northern New Mexico, twenty-four miles north of Santa Fe, just past Espanola on Highway 84/285. It is a small community with a well-known center, the Oke Owinge Arts and Crafts Cooperative, where visitors can watch artisans working in a variety of art forms, which include jewelry and pottery but not cooking. Norma is unique in that she has opened a business in her home which she has called “The Feasting Place.” Their house is right off Highway 84 but still considered to be within the pueblo. She offers cooking classes, hosts lunches and dinners in the same way she would for a Pueblo Feast, and she also caters for special events in other locations.

Norma grew up at Ohkay Owingeh, where her family raised cattle and farmed. Both her mother Margaret and her grandmother Rosa Leah were great cooks and bakers. By the age of ten she was helping them with cooking and beginning to master the art of baking bread and pies in the family’s horno (adobe oven). Because both of her parents worked, she often prepared dinner for her five younger siblings, all girls, in addition to cooking for her mother and father.

She learned how to cook from her grandmother first, then her mother, and also from her former mother-in-law. The most important and influential person in her life has been her current husband, Eugene Naranjo, commonly known as “Hutch.” Hutch is from Santa Clara Pueblo (Kha’p’oo Owingeh, meaning Valley of the Wild Roses), which is southwest of Ohkay Owingeh. The prehistoric cliff dwellings of Puye are located at Santa Clara, as well as a large land base with a wide variety of geographic features that enables many tribal members to grow food and raise livestock. Hutch is Norma’s partner in the cooking classes. Hutch does all of the farming, on his land in Santa Clara Pueblo, and grows all of the products and produce that they use in their cooking classes. He has built both of the ovens Norma cooks in, does all of the maintenance on them (this involves

replastering with adobe mud once or twice a year), and he teaches the horno demonstration cooking classes with her at their house.



Photo 7.35 Traditional Native white corn grown for cooking classes by Norma Naranjo.



Photo 7.36 Traditional Native blue corn grown for cooking classes by the Naranjos.



Photo 7.37 Norma and Hutch Naranjo baking bread for a cooking class at their house in the adobe oven built by Hutch.



Photo 7.38 Norma teaching about traditional Pueblo corn meal.



Photo 7.39 Norma conducting a cooking class with students on traditional Pueblo foods.



Photo 7.40 Pueblo yeast bread ready to be baked in the outdoor oven.



Photo 7.41 Norma pulling Pueblo oven bread from the horno.



Photo 7.42 Finished Pueblo oven bread sealed in plastic bags and more loaves ready to be baked in the outdoor oven.

Norma is a beautiful woman. She has long black hair, a big smile that is welcoming and warming to everyone who enters her home, and she loves to laugh. She takes great pride in welcoming into her home visitors from all over the world to learn about her traditional Pueblo foods, participate in cooking classes, and eat a meal prepared

by herself and her students. Norma is proud to say that she has had visitors from Thailand, Canada, Italy, and even the famed author Isabel Allende, as well as New Mexico State Representative (now U.S. Senator) Tom Udall. They have been to her house for traditional Native Pueblo foods and cooking classes.

Norma started her business in 1999 after retiring from the U.S. Public Health Service as a social worker. Before she retired she was receiving so many requests to prepare traditional dishes for various events that people suggested she start a catering business and conduct cooking classes. Using traditional Native foods as she was taught by her family in a traditional Pueblo style of cooking, Norma adds another special ingredient to her meals by using foods that she and her husband have grown and raised.

Almost all of the ingredients used in her meals are homegrown. Crops such as traditional chile, chicos (chico corn), and various types of squash, tomatoes, and cucumbers are canned, dried, or frozen for use throughout the year in her cooking classes and catering services. Norma does not consider herself a chef, but she does consider herself a good cook and is quite confident about how good her food tastes and how many people like it. People from all over the globe have tasted her food, and she's even catered the commencement ceremony at the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe.

During our interview, Norma giggled softly as she talked about her cooking experiences, what foods were important to her, and what foods she liked the most. She said that she has been cooking for about forty-seven years and couldn't be happier. Cooking food was for her, a "self-made trained person," as she proposed and then giggled again, something she was born to do—it was who she was meant to be.

In one of our conversations about the connection between the way food nurtures you and the way the food tastes, Norma commented. "For example, I have gone to buy corn at Wal-Mart, and when we grow our own corn and we buy it from, like, Wal-Mart or other stores, you really can tell the difference. There is a . . . I can't even explain." Norma was distinguishing between the food she grows, serves, and eats and the food that she was able to purchase in her local area. There aren't many places to shop for food where she lives, north of Espanola, and her choices are to drive down to Santa Fe or Albuquerque to go to a grocery store or, as she explained it, just to grow all of her own

ingredients. The only food store in Espanola that carries fresh produce is a Super Wal-Mart; it does have organic flour for baking and other staples she needs to cook for large groups of people on a regular basis. So she does shop there when she needs to. This is a good example of the taste of place or *terroir* (Trubek 2008; Jacobsen 2010).

Norma stated,

I think that food is what brings families together. Food is what brings people and communities, everyone together, and I think that's a form of love. It's . . . any form of expression that you wanted, you know—people may have an expression of laughter, people may have an expression of good—and people have a way of doing this—I don't know how you can say that in English, but there are all kinds of forms. . . .

Norma's mission is to teach that “Food is much more than just eating,” which she states on her website and expressed during our interview. “Food is a necessity that brings families together. Back when most people raised their own food and had time to cook, we were healthier people, physically, mentally, and spiritually.”



Photo 7.43 Norma preparing dough for traditional Pueblo pies.



Photo 7.44 Norma rolling out the dough for pies.



Photo 7.45 Pueblo prune pie and home canned vegetables and fruits, prepared and grown by the Naranjos.



Photo 7.46 Individual serving size Pueblo prune pies.



Photo 7.47 Cooking class meal featuring Pueblo foods grown and prepared by Norma and Hutch at the Feasting Place.

I know of no other Pueblo women who have opened their homes and their lives to teaching about Native Pueblo foods. Norma is one of the first to teach the history of her Pueblo foods and how to make them, and to share the information with people from around the globe. She is a role model for other Pueblo women and Native youth, both

female and male, and she participates in her own Pueblo's Feast Day as well as her husband's, in addition to all of the cooking she does at her home. Norma loves what she does and wouldn't change a thing.

Margie Mermejo

I met Margie Mermejo in 1987. Her husband at the time, Richard Mermejo, was the governor of Picuris Pueblo. Margie is a nurse, and she and Richard met when he was at the Riverside Indian Hospital in California for treatment many years ago. He had two children from a previous marriage and she had three. They combined their families from two different cultures, with five kids in one household. They lived first in Vadito, a small town just outside Picuris Pueblo, then later moving onto Picuris Pueblo. Richard and Margie separated in 2007. Richard's two children lived primarily with their mother but spent a lot of time with their father and Margie while they were growing up.

Picuris Pueblo is located on the banks of the Rio Pueblo, in a serene spot known locally as "the hidden valley" because the Spanish initially missed the pueblo on their first expeditions north. The two-hundred-year-old adobe church, San Lorenzo de Picuris, holds its annual Feast Day on August 10. Picuris, or Pikuria (meaning "Those Who Paint"), so named by the first Spanish governor of New Mexico, Juan de Oñate, was one of the largest pueblos during the period of first contact. Their own name for their pueblo is Pinguiltha, meaning "Mountain Warrior Place" or "Mountain Pass Place" in their dialect of the Northern Tiwa language, part of the Kiowa-Tanoan language family. The subsequent decline in population has made it one of the smaller pueblos, with a population of around three hundred (according to the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center website, accessed 2011). Most of the adults who have jobs work off the reservation, and all of the children go to school in nearby Peñasco. All of Margie's children went to school and graduated from there. Margie continued to work as a nurse after she moved from California to New Mexico with her children. She has worked at the hospital in Española for many years now. Although it is only about twenty-five miles from the pueblo to the hospital, the small country road becomes snow-covered during the winter and makes the commute difficult.

Margie hosted her feast for the Feast of San Lorenzo in 1989, which was the first time I attended. Because Richard was always very active both politically and ceremonially, on many Feast Days he could not eat until late in the evening. Richard was governor of the Pueblo in 1987, then again in 2003, 2006, and 2009, as well as being lieutenant governor in 2010.



Photo 7.48 Richard and Margie Mermejo outside their home in Picuris.



Photo 7.49 Richard Mermejo illustrating how to use a braided horsehair slip knot for fishing using a traditional method in the river on Picuris Pueblo. The horsehair can be attached to a stick or pole or used by holding it steady in the slow-moving pools of the river.

I've been helping the Mermejo family host its Feast Day since I met them in the late 1980s. For many years I would help prepare the food, serve it, and clean up afterwards. I often spent the night in the Mermejos' guest room either the day before the Feast or the night of the Feast, depending on when my help was most needed and who was able to take off from work to assist.

Feast Days are a huge endeavor. Because Margie "married in" and is not a member of Picuris Pueblo, it took her several years to learn how to host a Feast and prepare the food. Once she learned, she was able to integrate her Feast Day obligations with her work schedule; manage her family, including all of the children; and prepare the food for hundreds of guests from all over the world, including visiting family members, extended family members, dignitaries from other pueblos, and business associates from the Hotel Santa Fe.⁵⁴ Even with all of these duties, she still manages to be a gracious host in her home for the Feast, and to meet all of her obligations.

Margie always had family members who would assist in the preparation of the Feast Day foods, but it ultimately was her responsibility to host five hundred or more guests in her home on the Feast Day every year. Planning began months in advance. Margie had to plan which foods to serve, how to shop for and get all of the ingredients, how to prepare the food and how to keep it from spoiling. There are no stores in Picuris. The nearest supermarkets are in Taos, a small but expensive town north of Picuris, or Española, where a Super Wal-Mart has just recently opened. Margie preferred to drive to Santa Fe so she could get fresh ingredients and bulk foods, with prices that were affordable. After the Hotel Santa Fe opened, she was able to spend the night in Santa Fe before heading back up to Picuris, making it possible to shop for larger quantities.

If Richard was successful during the hunting season, and Margie would store the deer or elk meat in a large freezer they kept in a back room of the house until she needed it for the Feast. Meat was probably the most expensive ingredient for her to secure to feed so many people.

Many family members assisted her, especially in the early years of her married life in the pueblo (many of Richard's sisters and brothers still live close by). But two of the most important helpers were her daughter Christine, who married her high school

sweetheart and lives in Peñasco, and Richard's daughter Janelle, the oldest of the five children, who now lives on the Pueblo with her children. Because Richard always had ceremonial obligations on Feast Day, he wasn't at the house during the day but did help by moving furniture and setting up the large dining room table with extra chairs in the days before the Feast.

The majority of the dishes that Margie served every year were all fairly similar to what was being served in many Pueblo households for their Feast Days. What are now considered "traditional" foods for a Pueblo Feast Day weren't always considered traditional. New foods have been incorporated into the Feast Day menu. But they always had a green chile stew; some years she made it with pork and some years with beef or one of the game meats Richard hunted. There was always a red chile stew with potatoes and meat (this was always one of the hottest stews on the menu), a chicos corn stew, a garbanzo bean stew with cabbage and meat, a big pot of beans (usually locally grown pinto beans), a green salad, potato and pasta salads, some sort of roast, and then a huge list of desserts. Desserts might include pistachio Jell-O, mandarin oranges in red Jell-O, a traditional sopa or bread pudding, cakes, cookies, and a variety of pastries. Some were made from scratch and others were store-bought. The drinks always included tea; some years it was the hand-gathered wild Indian tea and other years it was Lipton iced tea or an iced tea mix. Soft drinks or punch and water were also provided. The water in Picuris is delicious, and many of the residents take pride in the taste of their water and how clean it is, so Picuris water was also always served.

When Richard and Margie ended their twenty-two-year marriage in 2007, Margie moved out of the pueblo, away from the family home, into a house in Peñasco, close to her daughter Christine. She stopped serving Feast Day meals, and Richard is now remarried and lives in the home with his present wife at the Pueblo.

Summary

All of the Native cooks introduced in this chapter are women, except for Norma Naranjo's husband, who cooks with her on a regular basis for the classes they offer in their home. Cooking for ceremonial Feast Days, Sun Dance Feasts, and NAC Peyote Ceremony Feasts has always been the job of women. Although things have changed

through time, and are continuing to change, and more men are helping in the kitchen at these ceremonial obligations, it is still primarily the job of women. Family members come together to assist with the massive amount of work needed to prepare meals for large groups, such as the women I present here.

These women cooks love what they do. They did not want to be referred to as chefs, and they made a clear distinction between the two terms, preferring to be called Native cooks. All of the women enjoy what they do as Native cooks, considering it to be a part of who they were, not only as women but also as members of their families, their communities, and their tribes. Food was representational of who they were and the place in which they lived.

In the case of the women who do not speak English, I have highlighted the words in their own Native languages that held great significance to them. The words that each of these participants spoke helped me to understand their perspective on who each cook was, what they felt was important, and what holds meaning to them in terms of their food and traditional foodways. While I didn't understand each and every word, the way in which these words were told to me became much more important.

A story is a complex ceremony in miniature. If the story is being told in a language that the mythographer has only recently begun to learn, or does not understand, the ear will mostly hear the *music* of the voice, the pitch rising and falling, and the amplitude, tone, and timber, as well as the interaction of sounds and silences (Tedlock 1983:3).

For me, this statement holds true. The sharing of these women through their interviews and the ways in which they prepared the food was told to me as a story. It was shared in the form of a relationship. This relationship, between the grandmothers and myself, was a means of understanding. Although I can interpret some of the spoken words, I will never have the same relationship with them that is shared within and among community members who speak the language, as is the case for several members of the families with whom I worked. I can, however, bring consciousness to some of their thoughts, why they do what they do, and help them to crystallize what is important to them so their stories and reasons for doing certain things continue to be told and done.

Preparing food was a common bond for all of us; we enjoyed the preparation of the food as much as we enjoyed serving and eating the foods of each of the feasting situations.

Chapter 8

Ceremonial Feasts:

A Peyote Ceremony Feast, A Sun Dance Ceremony Feast, and the Feast Day of San Lorenzo at Picuris Pueblo

The sociological and semiotic aspects of foods are especially significant in festive contexts. The feasts I focus on in this chapter are events at which the intention is not to satisfy hunger and the need for nutrition but rather to celebrate (Humphrey and Humphrey 1988:2). The participants understand that traditional foods, events, and contexts encode more meaning than individual foods at these events do. Thus the foods in this particular environment are not mere collections of nutrients upon a table. These specific communities of individuals select, transform, and “perform” foodstuffs in ways that are complex and interconnected. These practices govern a particular festive context and define and perform significant aspects of each individual community, its values, and its sense of self (Humphrey and Humphrey 1988:2). Here the idea of food as a symbolic marker of identity is extended beyond the boundaries of ethnicity and regionalism. Food becomes the element that binds together community and extended community members through the act of eating, which are a component of each of the feasts but not necessarily the main component. Each feast is a ritual (ceremony or festive context) in which an event is performed for a specific purpose. Each ceremony is unique and distinctive to the tribal community performing it.

Edward Casey (1993) reminds us of how the intimate relationship between embodiment and emplacement brings the problem of place into close resonance with the anthropological problem of knowing, “Local Knowledge.” His examination of how to be in place is to know, and is to become aware of one’s very consciousness and sensuous presence in the world (Feld and Basso 1996). Casey states that place is the most fundamental form of embodied experience and the site of a powerful fusion of self, space, and time. This concept directly relates to my work in an NAC Peyote Ceremony Feast, a Sun Dance Feast, at the Feast Day of San Lorenzo at Picuris Pueblo (all described in this chapter), and in a commercial kitchen (described in chapter 12).

Keith Basso's ethnographic investigation into the "wisdom" that sits in places and his notion of *interanimation* (Basso 1996b) are relevant here as well. This notion influences the participants of the Sun Dance, the cooks preparing the foods for the feast(s), and the chefs in contemporary kitchens. As Basso suggests, "the self-conscious experience of place is inevitably a product and expression of the self whose experience it is, and therefore, unavoidably...places possess a marked capacity of triggering acts of self-reflection, inspiring thoughts about who one presently is, or memories of who one used to be, or musings on who one might become" (Basso 1996b: 55).

Feasting is a common practice among Native American tribes. In the Southwest, ceremonial feasting is practiced in a multitude of ways and through a multitude of different types of feasts. An NAC Peyote Ceremony Feast in a Navajo community at the end of a Native American Church ceremony conducted in the Diné language by a Roadman is much different than a Pueblo Feast conducted on a saint's feast day, such as the San Lorenzo at Picuris Pueblo. Yet the sharing of food and the concept of feasting in these different Native communities share several common threads. This chapter focuses on three different feasts in three different communities and the foods prepared for them.

The Peyote Ceremony Feast

On the night of the NAC Peyote Ceremony the evening star stood alone in the sky. Against the backdrop of the setting sun, the tipi poles reached upward into the hues and tones of purples and deep blues. A single eagle feather blew softly in the wind, and the air was crisp on this April night. Many months of preparation led up to this day, and soon the Roadman, the leader of the ceremony, would ask everyone to enter the tipi where the ceremonial proceedings would begin.

From the time of European contact to the formation of the Native American Church in 1918, more than twenty-five groups indigenous to Mexico and Texas have been identified as using peyote. It is used in ceremony and ritual as a sacramental food. Its importance compares with that of bread in the Christian ritual of the Eucharist (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sacramental_bread) and the symbolic foods of Passover or Pesach in Jewish tradition (<http://www.angelfire.com/pa2/passover/faq/seder-plate.html>). Catholic priests who were part of the Spanish invasion "found in peyote another evil to

be rooted out of the New World.” The first record of contact with Indians who used peyote dates to 1560. By 1620, the Spanish Inquisition denounced it as diabolical and subjected Indian peyotists to torture and death (Fikes 1996:169). The Roman Catholic Church inadvertently carried knowledge of peyote as it spread, since converted Indians from peyote areas were brought along to start new missions. By the end of the eighteenth century, peyote had spread west to the high Sierras and east to the Gulf coast, as well as to the north and south (Stewart 1987:20-30). Comanche leader Quanah Parker (1845-1911) was one of the most important early Roadmen in Oklahoma (Young 2002:306). Nearly all of the nations who arrived in Oklahoma after 1874 (e.g., Cheyenne, Arapaho, Osage, Quapaw, Ponca, Pawnee, Sac and Fox, Kiowa) had already incorporated peyote use, and many of the newly arriving nations also adopted it (Stewart 1987:97-127; La Barre 1989:114-120).

Traditional Navajo belief or ceremonial practice did not mention the use of peyote, until it was introduced by the neighboring Ute tribe, around the same time as it entered Oklahoma. Today, however, the Navajo Nation has the most members of the Native American Church, with estimates that twenty percent or more of the Navajo population are practitioners and Peyote Ceremonies are regularly practiced in many parts of the reservation.⁵⁵

The stigma attached to the use of the food sacrament peyote has led some Native and non-Native members of various tribes to call the ceremony a Tipi Meeting. The Native American Church members with whom I spoke, however, prefer to call the all-night ritual a Peyote Ceremony. Peyote is a cactus containing psychoactive alkaloids, particularly mescaline, that is used as a medicine for its curative properties. It is a sacred medicine that protects, allows one to see the future, and instructs users in how to live (Reuben Snake (Winnebago) in Smith and Snake 1996:231).

Because of the struggle of American Indians related to their use of peyote for religious purposes, the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA) was passed in 1978 to protect peyote users. However, it did not end unwarranted harassment. Today NAC members must carry a card, which confirms their membership in an NAC congregation, and they should know the law (Stewart 1987:333). Most NAC Peyote

Ceremonies conducted on the reservation begin after the sun has gone down and last until the following morning. After the ceremony, a feast is served to all of the participants as well as family and friends. The feast can take place inside the tipi or outside on tables. Some of the people I worked with from Pinon (Whitewater 2006) can remember the food being spread out on blankets and sheets for guests, with all participants eating the meal sitting on the ground, depending on the weather. In inclement weather the feast might take place inside a participant's home.

At the first signs of dawn, the Roadman sings the Morning (Dawn) Song. At this time the "peyote woman" (often the wife of the Roadman) brings in water. She represents the woman who first found peyote. As she sets the water down on the ground and kneels, she looks around the tipi and greets everyone, talking to the people and blessing the water, and everyone will drink some of it after she finishes.

Following her, three women bring in three matching bowls of breakfast foods. The water is always first. It is usually brought in a bucket. Water represents all life, for without it there would be no life, thus making it the most important and most revered of the sacramental foods. Next, three bowls of breakfast foods follow. First is the corn, which may be corn kernels in sweetened water or a cooked blue corn mush. The corn represents human beings (Whitewater 2006). Native American Church members believe that we start out as a seed and then grow into a plant, like the cornstalks that later produce their own seeds to carry on life and feed the people. So corn has primary importance right after the water. Following the corn is the fruit, which is usually fresh fruit that has been cut up into small pieces. The fruit represents the spirit, for it is sweet and pure and comes from a tree or vine. Finally the meat is served, which may be dried or cooked and then shredded into very small pieces. Game meat is preferred, but store-bought meat is also used. The meat represents the "flesh" from which we humans are made, and it signifies the belief of NAC members that all we really have to offer of ourselves is our flesh (Whitewater 2006). The people in the Sun Dance Ceremony share this same belief, although some of the symbolism is different. This latter ceremony is practiced now on the Navajo Reservation as well, and the same foods are used in the same order when the sacred tree of life is planted in the ground for the Sun Dancers to dance around.

After the foods are brought into the tipi they are placed in front of the Roadman, who blesses them. He then passes each of the four foods to his left, and they are passed around the tipi until everyone has taken some of the water and the three breakfast foods. Once they have made their way completely around the tipi, they are placed on the west side of the altar in front of the Roadman. The tipi portion of the NAC Peyote Ceremony is then completed with closing songs, and the tipi door is opened to let in the first rays of morning light. Everyone visits for a short period at the conclusion of this part of the ceremony, and then food is either brought into the tipi or the feast takes place outside. The ceremony actually isn't complete until the tipi is taken down and the grounds where the ceremony was conducted are cleaned. All of the participants are mindful that the ceremony is not yet complete and are respectful of the sacredness of the event. No photos are permitted during the NAC Peyote Ceremony.

Sponsoring a meeting is a huge endeavor. It takes a lot of social and economic expenditures as well as a lot of people to come together for the actual NAC Peyote Ceremony. In addition to the ceremonial participants, a large group of people is needed to cook the food for the feast. Sponsoring a ceremony includes not only the expense of the food; the use of tipi, which must be borrowed or bought; the wood needed to burn all night; and the fees for the initiated persons to assist with the ritual, including the Roadman, the Roadman's wife, the person who carries the drum, and the fire keeper who keeps the fire burning all night and spreads the ashes in a half moon design as the wood burns (Whitewater 2006). When I helped at the Willie house, we cooked all day and most of the night, and then rested for several hours. We worked well into the early morning hours, and I was tired. Loretta walked me up to her house and showed me to the guest room, where I could lie down. All of the cooking was done at Grandmother Alice's house, which was about one hundred yards to the south.

After resting for several hours, the cooks got up again to make coffee, serve breakfast pastries, and put together the feast. When I got up at dawn and walked down from Loretta's house, Caroline was already making fry bread. When I first walked back into her house, Grandmother Alice offered me coffee and instructed me to sit at the dining room table adjacent to the kitchen. The sun was already up, and they had just

opened the door to the tipi. Marie was heating up some of the food we had made the night before and making the last few items on the menu.

Marie had typed up a menu in advance and distributed it to the family members so they knew what they were responsible for preparing or purchasing for the feast. Caroline had deviated from the menu and made a stew with some of the winter squash and corn (I think it was hominy, although it could have been a traditional Navajo white corn that her brother had grown and they had stored since the last harvest) with some sheep meat. She was the most traditional cook in the family, and this dish was representational of a traditional Navajo stew.

For the actual feast, Marie's son Briyan helped us set up several long tables. Each of the cooks stood at a specific station and served each guest as they came by. Because the weather was nice, everyone was served outside, on the east side of the tipi where the ceremony had been conducted the night before. They sat at various tables and on chairs the family had placed under a tarp and near several large trees.

Marie approached the Peyote Ceremony feast menu in much the same way that one of the Native chefs would have. She came up with a menu, printed it, and then assigned each dish or item to a specific individual. For instance, Clorissa, Lara, Kelley, Larry, Hank, and Isk were assigned items that they could purchase in advance because they were all going to be inside the tipi all night, participating in the ceremony. Marie, Liz, Loretta, Grandmother Alice, and Caroline were all assigned dishes to prepare the night of the ceremony and in the morning before the feast. Marie wrote on the menu "already furnished" for the two items for which that I was responsible.

The only dish I was unfamiliar with on the menu was the Watergate salad. When I looked this up online, I found out that it is a pistachio pudding served with marshmallow, pineapple, nuts, and fluffy whipped topping. The first time I made this dish was the night before the feast, when we were all cooking it together. The Native cooks knew exactly how to make each dish, what needed to be done in advance, and who was going to be doing what. All of the dishes were made from scratch, and the meat was roasted overnight in a slow-cooker with a variety of condiments and seasonings so it would be

tender the next day. The sheet cake was the kind one would get from a supermarket, although I'm not sure where they purchased it.

MENU FOR PEYOTE CEREMONY April 13, 2007	
MENU:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Roast Beef with Mashed Potato & Gravy▪ Green Beans▪ Pasta Salad▪ Watergate Salad▪ Bread▪ Cake▪ Coffee/Soda	
ASSIGNED DISH or ITEM:	
ITEM	ASSIGNED TO
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Roast Beef▪ Mashed Potato▪ Pasta Salad▪ Watergate Salad▪ Green Beans▪ Bread▪ Cake▪ Soda (Coke, 7-Up, Pepsi, Ice-Tea)▪ Coffee	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Raymond & Marie▪ Liz▪ Loretta▪ Loretta▪ Already Furnished▪ Alice▪ Clorissa, Lara, Kelley▪ Larry, Caroline, Hank, Iske▪ Already Furnished
Note: Will be feeding about 30 people.	

Figure 8.1 The Feast Menu for the Peyote Ceremony at the Willie House in Seba Dalkai on April 13, 2007.

In NAC Peyote Ceremony feasts the foods are typically a combination of what is seasonally available, perhaps grown or harvested by the sponsoring family, a sheep or cow butchered by the family, and other foods the host family can afford to buy. Sponsoring and feeding everyone at an NAC Peyote Ceremony is expensive and may require contributions from several members of a family.



Photo 8.1 Tipi poles viewed against the morning sky at sunrise.



Photo 8.2 View of tipi with door open to the east after everyone has exited to eat the feast.



Photo 8.3 View toward the west after exiting the tipi.



Photo 8.4 Foods ready to be served at the Peyote Ceremony Feast.



Photo 8.5 Birthday cake that was served as part of the Feast.

How were these specific menu items and foods chosen? In all of the NAC Peyote Ceremony Feasts I have attended, the menu varies, and what is served depends on what foods are available, the budget, and how many cooks are available to help prepare the foods.

Donna R. Gabaccia (1998) states that we must explore the symbolic power of food to understand changing American identities because the food reflects cultural or social affinities in moments of transformation. Foods that are now fundamentally American are a combination of dishes that originated from a multitude of different locations and ethnic backgrounds. Today, as in the days of the Columbian exchanges, Americans eat what students of linguistics call a “creole” or what cooks might describe as a gumbo or stew made of a number of ingredients that originated from multiple locations but that now are part of the local landscape. Today, many Americans quite willingly “eat the other,” or at least some parts of the others, some of the time. Eating habits like these suggest tolerance and curiosity and a willingness to digest, and to make part of one’s individual identity, the multi-ethnic dishes available today (Gabaccia 1998:9). The foods at a Peyote Ceremony Feast very much reflect this analysis. These foods as well as

traditional Diné (Navajo) foods have become an integral part of a Native American Church Peyote Ceremonial Feast.

Many elements play a part in the making and execution of a Peyote Ceremony. The peyote cactus, a medicinal plant used as a food sacrament, is also a facilitator of prayers inside a very structured all-night NAC ceremony. The use of this “wild” plant carries with it a host of cultural implications (Etkin 2006). Within the confines of this “church,” food is symbolic of both faith and belief. The water is brought into the meeting at midnight, by a woman who represents Peyote Woman, and is given to all of the participants to nourish them. Following the distribution of water, considered to be the giver of all life, the breakfast foods—corn, fruit, and meat—are passed around to the participants and shared from the same bowl and spoon. This sharing symbolically binds them.

Sounds, smells, and tastes play an integral part in the experiential knowledge and thoughts that a participant shares inside the tipi. Members might all hear, smell, and taste the same ingredients, but their experience and how it is perceived are different. What an individual sees, or believes to have seen, will depend upon the individual and his or her own cultural biases. Participants have elicited a number of visions, which are interpreted to have a multitude of meanings.

I observed the procession of guests lined up to be served by the Native cooks. Each guest showed evidence of anticipating receiving the food and being able to eat while visiting with family and friends. The aesthetics of the meal were much different than they would be for a situation in which chefs were serving a buffet of Native American cuisine dishes. There were many dishes on the buffet, and all the guests commented on how delicious the foods we prepared were. What was important was not how the food looked, or even exactly what foods were being served—in fact, the guests didn’t care at all how things were presented. What was important here was the sense of community and the fact that the foods had been blessed by the Roadman. Their belief was that by participating in the feast, all of the blessings from the Peyote Ceremony the night before would be bestowed upon them. The food was playing an integral part in the meaning of the Peyote Ceremony. In fact, it was the final part of the ceremony before

things would be cleaned up, the tipi taken down, the fireplace swept clean, and the ceremony concluded.

The NAC Peyote Ceremony Feast represents abundance. It symbolically nourishes the participants, including those who participated inside the tipi and additional family members, friends, and cooks who came to participate in the feast. It is sustenance that feeds the body, but the Native American participants and church members believe that it feeds the mind and the soul of all who eat it as well. The foods in this particular festive environment are not simply collections of nutrients on a table (Humphrey and Humphrey 1988:2). Food in this situation binds not only the family members but also friends, relatives, and in some cases strangers, guests who have been brought by other member participants, as one cohesive unit. Plates from the feast are often packaged to be taken home to other family members who were unable to attend but, through receiving and eating the foods from the feast, will receive the blessing from the ceremony. This practice is common at NAC Peyote Ceremony feasts.

The Sun Dance Feast

The Sun Dance originated with the Plains tribes, but it has been adopted by the Diné (Navajo) after the Lakota chiefs, who now perform this ceremony annually in various locations on the Navajo Reservation, gave it to them. As with all rituals, the Sun Dance has its own symbols: the camp circle represents the universe; the altar, the essence of life; and the buffalo skull, the people's close relationship with this holy animal. The small figures of a man and a bison, formerly endowed with exaggerated male parts, are made of buffalo hide and hung from the pole; they stand for fertility and the increase of both humans and animals. The crotch of the cottonwood tree is the symbolic nest of the Thunderbirds, and the pole itself is the Tree of Life. Reaching into the clouds, the pole connects earth with sky, and the people with the Grandfather Spirit (Amiotte 1987; Erdoes 1990; McGaa 1990; Steinmetz 1980; Thunder 1995).

Most Sun Dances are held in late July or early August. Purification (with sweat lodge rituals twice a day, in the early morning before the sun comes up and in the evening after the sun goes down) begins on a Sunday and continues until the fourth day, which is called the Tree Day. On Wednesday of the Sun Dance week, the Sun Dancers go out to a

specific cottonwood tree. A woman, representative of Buffalo Calf Woman, takes the first cut on the tree with the axe. She speaks to the tree and tells it that her people are sorry to take the tree's life but the ceremony is necessary; it will be the *Wiwanyag Wachipi* (in Lakota), or *Ho-jo-ne* (in Diné), a ceremony in which the people dance, gazing at the sun. It is a ceremony, she explains, "highly important, for by doing it, the people will live" (McGaa 1990).

The cottonwood tree is then taken to the place where the Sun Dance will be conducted and is planted in the center of the Sun Dance ground. Prayer offerings of tobacco bundles and colored cloth are tied to the tree. Before the tree is raised, offerings of the Sacred Foods (the same foods used in the NAC Peyote Ceremony: water, corn, fruit, and meat) are made in the hole dug for the tree by the Grandmothers from where the ceremony is being performed. In the case of the Sun Dance Feast I observed, Grandmother Susie and Shimá sá ní were the two Grandmothers who placed the food in the hole with the cottonwood tree that would become the Sun Dance tree. The ceremony was being conducted on their ancestral family land.

Very similar to the way in which these same foods were offered inside the tipi during the NAC Peyote Ceremony, they were offered to the Sun Dance tree. Water, which represents life, is poured into the hole where the tree will be placed. Corn, which represents human beings, is offered next and placed in the hole, followed by fruit, which represents the spiritual realm we live in, and finally shredded meat (usually bison), which represents the flesh we are made of and which will be sacrificed by the dancers during the Sun Dance. The sacred water and foods are all placed in the hole, prayers are recited, and then the tree is placed on top and packed in with dirt. The hole is deep. The tree is buried deep enough so it will stand during the entire ceremony without being pulled down or knocked over by the force of the dancers who are tied to it. The dancing always starts on a Thursday morning so the fourth day will be on a Sunday, when the ceremony will end with the feast (Erdoes 1990; McGaa 1990; Steinmetz 1980).

On the fourth day of the Sun Dance, after all of the dancers have pierced and all the pipes have been smoked, the Sun Dance Chief leads the dancers out of the arbor through the opening on the east, and as they walk around the south side of the arbor the

supporters and observers are permitted to shake each dancer's hand. Shaking the Sun Dancers' hands allows them to be blessed by the sacredness of the pure prayer state that the dancers have attained during the four days of fasting and dancing. By touching the dancers, all of the prayers they have made throughout the four days of dancing will be transferred to the person who touches them. Then, once the dancers have performed one last sweat lodge ritual, and changed out of their Sun Dance regalia, the giant feast is held. The people who have danced as well as those who supported them are welcomed to eat and participate. The feast is served on the south side of the arbor. No photos are permitted of either the ceremony or the feast.

On the day I attended, there was a long, long line. It was the end of the day. The sun was setting. It was warm. It had been a long four days, and the dance was over. The Sun Dancers were the first in line, as they had not eaten for four days. The Sun Dance Chief lined them up, with the elders and children behind them. Everyone else followed. Hundreds of people wanted to eat. At least ten tables were lined up in a row that seemed to be almost a hundred feet long. There was a huge amount of food. Styrofoam plates and bowls were at the beginning of the line. Plastic forks, knives, and spoons followed, with paper napkins next. At least a dozen women were standing beside many of the prepared dishes, helping to serve the guests and control the portion sizes so there would be enough food for those at the end of the line.

When dishes ran out, they were replaced with similar dishes stored underneath the tables or on the prep tables in the back. At the back tables, Native cooks who that had prepared the foods, and relatives and in-laws of the dancers who had come to help serve the food, were putting the final touches on the dishes. Some of the women were slicing large roasts of meat and carving turkeys into portion-size pieces; others were heating stews on portable propane gas burners or open-flame fires near the prep area. Still others were cutting the desserts into serving-size pieces and carving watermelons into triangles for the women at the tables to serve. Unlike at the NAC Peyote Ceremony, there was no formal menu for the Sun Dance feast.

The foods were organized into areas with similar types of dishes, such as traditional dishes made from corn, meat dishes, and stews and soups; salads such as

potato salad, green salad, and pasta salad followed. Next were freshly cut fruit, fruit salads, desserts, and finally beverages, which included traditional Indian tea, punch, lemonade, water, and cans of soda. This feast was a combination of dishes orchestrated by the Native cooks at the Sun Dance and dishes families brought as their contribution. It was massive.

I helped serve the Sun Dancers; there were probably at least a hundred. They mostly took the traditional foods, a little meat and some fruit. Their stomachs were small, and most of them knew they couldn't eat much food to break their fast. Some loaded up their plates, knowing that as they finished their feast meal the following day the blessings from the feast would be bestowed upon them. Then we served the elders and children. I wanted to see all of the variety of food that was being served before it was gone. The ladies I had helped prepare the feast knew this, and they told me to go ahead and get in line.

The first station after the plates and plastic eating utensils were the traditional corn dishes. There was blue corn mush, a traditional dish made with cornmeal, water, and culinary ash. A woman served it from a cooking pot. "Would you like some blue corn mush?" she asked. She placed it on my plate. I could smell the corn; the dish smelled mild and delicate. It was robin's egg blue, and still warm. I could see the steam rising from the pot. This was one of the dishes Grandmother Susie made. Tied cornhusk bundles, traditional Navajo blue corn bun breads, were sitting on a tray, kneel-down bread. I took one. Shimá sá ní had made some of these. I wanted to take more than one but there were still so many people in line I knew there wouldn't be enough for everyone. The traditional foods were always the first to go.

Next came a platter of meat; I inquired what kind of meat it was. "We have buffalo and elk," the woman serving the food answered. "We were given meat by one of the supporters, and someone else that hunts," she said. It looked like a big roast that had been cooked slowly, for hours. The meat was dark brown and it sliced easily. You could see that the women were serving specific portion sizes so there would be enough to go around. There were slices of turkey as well, but I opted to take only a piece of the roast game.

There were several stews; one was just mutton with broth. This was the stew the elders liked the most. It was simple, with just the sheep meat cooked in broth until it was falling off the bones. Both Grandmothers had donated sheep, which had been butchered for this stew. Another was a corn stew, with white hominy (posole) and meat cut into small pieces. Then there was a vegetable stew with meat; it looked like a beef vegetable stew but I couldn't be sure. Finally there was a stew with potatoes, some chopped green chiles, and ground meat. "What kind of meat is in this stew?" I asked. "Ground lamb," said the woman serving the stew. "Would you like some?" she asked. "Yes, please." I was served some of the stew in a small Styrofoam bowl. This stew, too, had meat from the sheep Grandmother Susie and Shimá sá ní had donated, and I wanted to taste some.

Next was a green salad made with iceberg lettuce. It was mostly lettuce but had some cucumbers and a few tomatoes. It had already been dressed with a ranch-type salad dressing. More food followed. There was fry bread that had been cut in half, and some Pueblo-style oven bread that had been sliced. The oven bread had been brought to the feast by relatives and in-laws who were from Pueblo communities, including the nearby villages in Hopi. There was pasta salad, a potato salad which Linda had made, and a blue cake-like dish baked in a rectangular pan. "What is this?" I asked. "It's a sheep blood cake," replied the woman serving it. "We butchered yesterday and made this blood cake from the sheep we butchered." It looked delicious, similar to a blue cornmeal cake. I was surprised by the color. I took a little. I had never had blood cake before. It wasn't something my mother made when I was growing up. It, too, came from the sheep Grandmother Susie and Shimá sá ní had butchered.

Then came the desserts and fresh fruit. There were several different kinds and colors of Jell-O desserts, always popular at Native American feasts. There was also a marshmallow dessert with fresh fruit and cool whip mixed in. Next was the fresh watermelon. Lots of pastries were piled on the next two tables. Most were store-bought. I could see cinnamon rolls with melted sugar on top, chocolate donuts, blueberry muffins, and sugar-coated jelly donuts. Finally, there were several homemade cakes. I took a piece of a yellow cake. It looked like a pound cake and didn't have any frosting or much adornment to it. I'm not a big sugar eater, so it looked perfect to me.

The last table had a variety of sodas, a big orange cooler with traditional Navajo tea, also called Cota or Indian tea, and a pink Kool-Aid-type beverage. I served myself a cup of Navajo tea and walked over to join a group of people I knew, and sat down to eat. I continued to watch the line. I could see people serving themselves from the last table. Almost all of the elders took the traditional beverage, the Indian tea. Most of the kids and some young adults took sodas. Pepsi was preferred over Coke; some folks said it tastes better, but I don't drink that kind of soda so I had no point of reference. The line was moving but it was getting shorter. It looked as though there would be enough food, but very few leftovers. Some of the women who had been serving were making up plates for themselves and placing them on the prep tables, to ensure that they would have the foods they wanted.

This feast was much different than the NAC Peyote Ceremony feast. First, the number of people was much larger. The Peyote Ceremony had between 30 and 40 people; the Sun Dance feast had several hundred attendees, including the dancers, family members, and guests. There was much more food involved, and many more cooks. It was organized, though, and there was enough food for everyone.

The more experienced Native cooks, who had obviously prepared similar feasts before, took the lead and orchestrated the serving line. They knew where people should be, and when. Several of the more seasoned Native cooks worked on the prep tables in the back, cutting servings and replenishing food on the service line. The newer Native cooks and the helpers, like me, were assigned stations where we would serve designated dishes. As the crowd thinned, women on the service line got into line to get food for themselves.

Many of the dishes had taken days to prepare. Women from neighboring homes and nearby communities, including Grandmother Susie and Shimá sá ní, had butchered sheep, and others donated meat that they hunted or purchased from the supermarket for the stews. Some brought dishes already prepared; others donated the ingredients which the Native cooks used for dishes prepared on-site in the Sun Dance kitchen. The daily meals for the supporters were prepared in the outdoor kitchen as well; it was set back from the arbor probably one hundred yards or so, on the south side, near where some of

the Sun Dance supporters were camping and vehicles had close access to for loading and unloading food. Made of plywood, it had a roof (in case it rained), four walls that extended from the ground to about your waist, and then an entryway. Several propane tanks were attached to industrial-size burners resting on small, handmade tables, with large pots on top of each burner. There was a prep area with cutting boards, several knives (that were quite dull), and a fiberglass sink where boiled water was used for washing and sterilizing dishes. Water had to be hauled in each day by truck and was used sparingly in the outdoor kitchen.

Grandmother Susie, Shimá sá ní, and Linda had all prepared dishes for the feast. Grandmother Susie made blue corn mush, one of her favorite dishes. Shimá sá ní had prepared some of the kneel-down bread with two of her daughters. Linda had prepared a huge potato salad. It's one of her favorite dishes to make, and family and friends love her version of it, so she makes it for lots of ceremonies and always for the Sun Dance feast. Other family members had brought sodas, baked goods, stews already prepared, and watermelons. I bought raw ingredients for stews and fresh vegetable salads, as well as several watermelons, a case of fresh strawberries, and I made a simple organic spiral pasta salad for the feast.

As in the case of the Peyote Ceremony feast, the presentation of the food was less important than the food itself. The symbolism of abundance was an integral part of the Sun Dance feast, much as it was for the Peyote Ceremony. The foods had all been blessed, and guests believed that blessings would be bestowed on each individual who ate the foods. Again, the culmination of all of the prayers from the ceremony was manifested in the food for distribution among the dancers and their supporters, family, and friends. The exchange of food is a potent marker of community values because food is so fundamental to our sense of nurturing (Humphrey and Humphrey 1988:2)

A sense of community emanated from the Sun Dance Feast and the place where it was held. All who were there had participated in one-way or another. Some were the Native cooks who helped prepare food for the supporters each day of the dance and then for the final feast. Some had husbands, wives, or children that were dancing. Some came because a relative was dancing and they wanted to show their support. Some people came

only on Saturday and Sunday because they had to work during the week. Others had come and stayed the entire eight days from the beginning purification to the feast. People had come from all over to participate in the Sun Dance. Some drove great distances (e.g., from South Dakota, Washington, Canada, Mexico, and several states on the East Coast) and stayed for the duration. There were guests from Italy, and several chiefs had come from the Masai Tribe in Africa to witness a Native American Ceremony. (I do not know who sponsored their trip to the United States and brought them to the Sun Dance.) Elders from the Hopi Tribe came to show support for their neighbors, the Diné dancers. This was especially symbolic given the conflict surrounding the Navajo-Hopi land dispute,⁵⁶ and the Willie and Begay family of Native cooks from Seba Dalkai, who were related to the Pinon cooks through Chef Walter Whitewater (his daughter is Calandra Willie), were all relocated as a result of this situation.

Yi-Fu Tuan states that deeply loved places are not necessarily visible, either to oneself or to others. Places can be made visible by a number of means, such as visual prominence or the evocative power of art, architecture, ceremony, and ritual. Human places become vividly real through dramatization. Identity of place is achieved by dramatizing the aspirations, needs, and functional rhythms of individual and group life (Tuan 1977:178). Gathering is an event, and an exploration of place-as-event enables us to see how places, far from being inert and static, are themselves continually changing in accordance with their own cultural dynamism (Casey 1996b:44). In the Peyote Ceremony, a place (the tipi) was erected to house a ceremony and then a feast. It was taken down after the event then erected at the same place for the next ceremony. The Sun Dance location has permanent structures, which are used year after year. Both ceremonies have a permanent place where the event occurs.

Here we see a performance of a particular vision of the community, its values, assumptions, worldviews, and prescriptive behaviors, for it is within festive contexts that the transformation from staple to symbol becomes most apparent. The complex of behaviors associated with selecting, preparing, serving, and consuming foods creates a symbolic vocabulary of the basic assumptions of the community, with meaning and significance. Such meaning may be possible because festivity seems to be inextricably

linked with ritual at the point of community—that is, at the point where the individual participates in traditional structured ways in the social network (Humphrey and Humphrey 1988:3).

Sounds, smells, tastes, textures, and sensations all play a major role in both of these ceremonies. The Western notion of text, and of textual interpretations, is secondary to the sensuous body, and these senses are central to the metaphoric organization of the ceremonial experience of each ceremony (Stoller 1997). Nabhan speaks of the desert smelling like rain. His work with the O’odham (Papago) focuses on the fact that rain is more than just water, that water comes to living things in different ways, and brings with it different things that affect how plants grow. In addition to the nutrients released in a rainstorm, and the physical force of the water, other mechanisms are associated with water (Nabhan 1982:7-9). Water is a fundamental ingredient in both of these ceremonies, for its use as a food, which is ingested by the ceremonial participants, and also as an element of purification. It is symbolic of life and as a life-giving element. In both ceremonies, herbs are burned, and the distinct smells play a major role in each one.

Sounds are also important in the two ceremonies. The drum signifies the beginning of each ceremony and also the heartbeat of Mother Earth. In the Peyote Ceremony it represents the heartbeat of the mother that each person hears while in the womb. In the Sun Dance Ceremony it resonates as the force that keeps the dancers’ feet moving for four days. Lived experience, then, involves constant shifts in sensory figures and grounds, constant potentials for multi- or cross-sensory interactions or correspondences. This sonic presence and awareness are potent forces shaping how the ceremonial participants make sense of their experience. Here sound is central to making sense, to knowing, and to experiential truth (Feld 1996:93). As with participants in the Peyote Ceremony, every Sun Dancer hears the same sounds at the same time, and all of them dance to the same beats. Yet acoustic time is always spatialized; sounds are sensed as connecting points up and down, in and out, echo and reverb, point source and diffuse. And acoustic space is likewise temporalized; sounds are heard moving, locating, and placing points in time. Thus, experiencing and knowing place—the idea of place as

sensed, place as sensation—can proceed through a complex interplay of the auditory and the visual, as well as through other inter-sensory perceptual processes (Feld 1996:98).

The sensory experience of both the Peyote Ceremony and the Sundance Ceremony feasts is enhanced through the sense of smell; each guest smells the foods being cooked and then again as he or she eats each dish. The tactile sensation at each feast is like many great culinary experiences. Each guest experiences all of the different types of foods uniquely. Each participant ingests the symbolic meaning of abundance, in addition to sustenance, through the act of eating.

The Feast of San Lorenzo at Picuris Pueblo

As described in chapter 7, Picuris Pueblo holds its annual Feast Day each year on August 10. The Feast of San Lorenzo begins with a mass at the church, an adobe mission that is several hundred years old. The mass is followed by ceremonial foot races, ceremonial dances (which change every year and last most of the day), and an afternoon ceremonial pole climb. Vendors also sell arts, crafts, and food.



Photo 8.6 Dancers from Picuris Pueblo at San Lorenzo Feast Day in 1988 (taken with a photo permit from the Pueblo before photos were no longer permitted).



Photo 8.7 San Lorenzo Feast Day dancers at Picuris Pueblo.

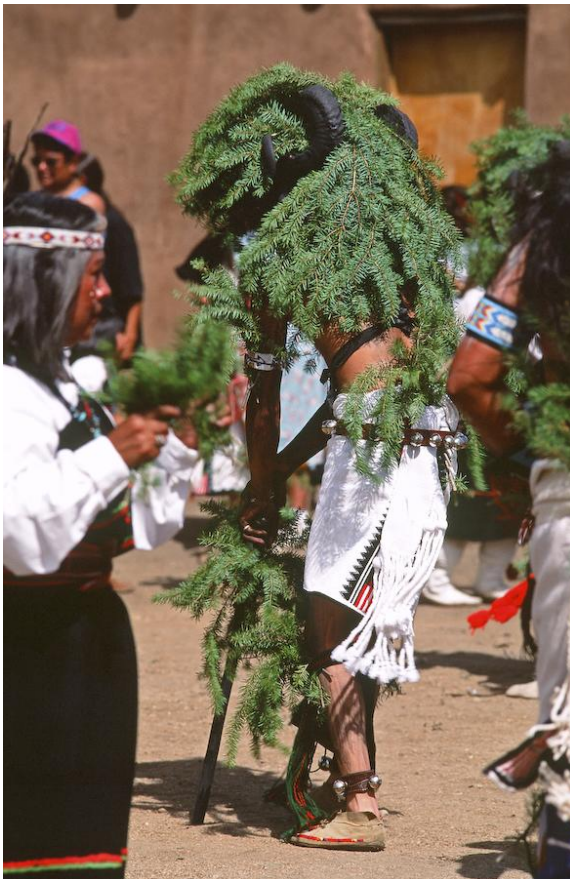


Photo 8.8 San Lorenzo Feast Day dancers at Picuris Pueblo.



Photo 8.9 Young girl dancer at Picuris Pueblo.



Photo 8.10 Drummers and singers at Picuris Pueblo Feast Day.

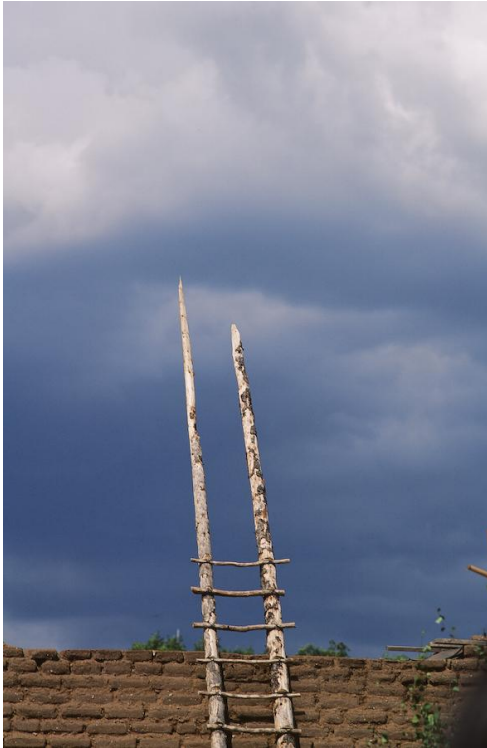


Photo 8.11 Kiva ladder at Picuris Pueblo on San Lorenzo Feast Day.

Richard Mermejo, was the governor of Picuris Pueblo in 2006 when he asked two Native chefs and one Native cook to prepare and serve the Feast Day meal at his home. He had previously been the governor of Picuris Pueblo for multiple years, and lieutenant governor in 2008 and 2010. In 2011, he was elected war chief. Elections are held every year, on January 1. Picuris was the New Mexico Pueblo where I first began to document Native foods in the winter of 1987. When he was governor, Richard and his family invited me to visit them to learn about his people and some of the foods that were important to them.

Over the years I spent a lot of time with Richard and his then-wife Margie. He brought me up into the mountains behind the pueblo where he showed me how to identify and harvest wild onions (*Allium cernuum*), wild celery (*Cymopterus fendleri*), and wild carrots (*Daucus carota*). He showed me some of the medicinal plants, and how to prepare them.

He and Margie invited me each year to assist her with the preparation of the foods for the feast she hosted in their home. I also often helped with the serving, doing the

dishes, and the cleanup. Each year they would begin shopping for ingredients at least a week before their Feast Day. Food preparation began days in advance. The menu varied from year to year. The Mermejo family first planned a menu, then making lists of all the food and other items they needed. Next Margie assigned family members and friends dishes that they would make and bring to the house. Richard's two sisters, who also live on the Pueblo, bake bread in their outdoor oven, and they would provide loaves to serve to guests on Feast Day. This process was very similar to how the family approached the making of the foods for the Peyote Ceremony feast.

The day before the feast, Margie would prepare the meat for the stews. Often the meat came from game that Richard had hunted, which was frozen after the hunting season and then used for several of the stews on Feast Day. Having enough food to feed hundreds of people was always one of the biggest concerns. Margie loved having help with the food, doing the dishes, and serving the food. For her, the Feast Day was a time to be with family, see old friends, and meet new friends who would come to her home on Feast Day as guests of guests. Some years when I was there to help serve, we fed well over five hundred people.

After Richard and Margie ended their marriage, Margie moved to the neighboring town of Peñasco. In 2006, as governor, Richard knew that he needed help to host the feast at his home. His daughter, Janelle, would help, but with two small children of her own, preparing all the foods for her dad was going to be difficult for her. Richard called and asked if I would put together a small team consisting of two Native chefs and one Native cook to prepare the food for the Feast Day that year; bring the food to his home and organize the food that had been prepared by his daughter; serve the food to guests; and clean up. I would also ensure that there would be enough food. It was the first time a Pueblo governor had asked me to work with outside chefs to prepare the foods for a Feast Day. Because I had helped for so many years at the Mermejo home, Richard knew that with the help of outside Native chefs and in collaboration with his daughter the work would be executed to his satisfaction. He then could fulfill his ceremonial obligations on the day of the feast. It was an opportunity for me to help prepare the foods and observe

the interactions between the Native chef, Native cook, and guests at Richard's home on the Feast Day.

Richard and I met months in advance. He told me how much wild meat he had in his freezer. He had a list of the types of cuts he had put aside from the Pueblo's most recent bison butchering. We discussed how many people he thought would be eating at his house on the day of the Feast, so we would know how much food to prepare, and we discussed what dishes he wanted us to serve. Then we came up with a schedule for delivering the frozen meat and the money to shop for the ingredients to make the host of other dishes for the feast.

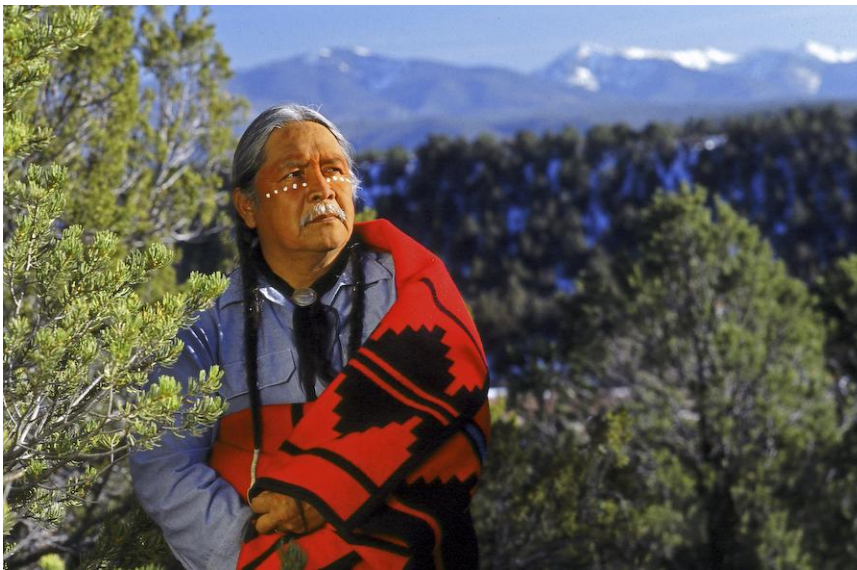


Photo 8.12 Richard Mermejo outside his home with the Truchas Peaks in the background.

On July 26, more than a week before the Feast Day, Richard and I met at the Hotel Santa Fe and he gave me the meat. Chef Walter Whitewater, a Diné chef, and Estrella (Stella) Apolonia, an indigenous cook living in Las Vegas, New Mexico, agreed to prepare the foods with me. Stella is a Sun Dancer who had pledged to dance for four years at Picuris. She danced at the first Sun Dance held on Pueblo land with a Lakota elder,⁵⁷ Jon Fast Wolf, so helping with the Feast Day foods had special meaning for her.

After Richard and I met at the Hotel Santa Fe, Chef Whitewater and I did the remaining food shopping for the feast. Some of the ingredients were purchased at the Santa Fe farmers' market from local merchants, and others from the local supermarket.

On Tuesday, August 8, Chef Whitewater, Stella, and I all began to prepare the foods for the feast. The menu included local baby salad greens served with a homemade dressing; a pasta salad made from fusilli that featured local red bell peppers, red onions, tomatoes, and herbs from the farmer's market; and a potato salad made from potatoes also purchased from the farmers' market, with local onions and chard as the other featured ingredients.

There was a garbanzo bean stew made in the traditional Pueblo style with just beans, meat, and a pinch of salt. Bison meat from Picuris was used in this stew. A green chile stew was prepared with ground bison meat, and as per Richard's request, it was made from both mild and hot New Mexico green chiles so the stew was quite picante. A red chile stew with venison meat that Richard had hunted, local potatoes, local onions, and New Mexico red chile powder (which we purchased from Casado farms on San Juan Pueblo) was another featured dish. Elk meat that Richard had hunted was roasted slowly to ensure that the meat remained tender, and it was served with gravy that we made from the meat and vegetable drippings in the roasting pan, and the fat (although there was very little fat on the elk).

Side dishes and condiments included clay-pot-cooked local pinto beans; oven-roasted local potatoes with olive oil, salt, and rosemary; red chile sauce made from local chile pods; oven bread made by Richard's sisters; calabacitas, a traditional northern New Mexican sauté made from yellow summer squash, zucchini, onions, sweet corn, and green chile; chicos, a dish made from roasted sweet corn that is dried in the outdoor adobe ovens; oven-roasted root vegetables; iced Indian tea (which we hand-harvested near the town where Chef Walter grew up, in Pinon, Arizona); and for dessert, a baked mixed berry crisp made from local raspberries, blackberries, strawberries, and cherries, some of which had been frozen from the year before and some of which were the current season's first crop. Richard's daughter took care of the other baked goods, including

home-made cookies, cakes, and pies, as well as an array of store-bought items. She also made the fruit punch, iced (black) tea, and provided sodas.

It was an intercultural feast that featured ingredients from the precontact period, the early contact period, as well as the period of government-issue foods. Some of the dishes had been made in Picuris for generations; other, newer dishes had freshly grown ingredients that would have been introduced by farmers who settled in the communities adjacent to the pueblo. And there were dishes that had evolved from the Hispano-Indian exchange and neighboring Spanish descendent communities in the valley, from Peñasco all the way north to Taos.

Tuesday we did all of the prep work, including cutting the vegetables for the various dishes as well as trimming and cutting the meat for the stews. We also slow-cooked the beans, chicos, and garbanzo beans in crock pots overnight. Wednesday, the day before the feast, was actually the busiest and longest day, as we had to combine the ingredients into the prepared dishes for the event. We worked ten to twelve hours that day, prepping all of the food for the feast.

Early Thursday morning we gathered at the kitchen, loaded all of the prepared food, and drove up to Picuris. It's a little more than an hour's drive from Santa Fe, and we had planned to be there by 8:30am to get ready for the first guests, who would arrive later that morning. Janelle was already at the house. We unloaded all of the crock pots, the containers of salads, baking dishes with the berry dessert, several large thermos containers with the iced tea, many bags of ice, all of the condiments, and the roast elk meat. It took about an hour to unload the vehicle and organize the kitchen. We began the process of heating up the food for service and organized the stacks of plates and bowls we would need, as well as serving bowls and platters, which would be placed on the table for guests to serve himself or herself.

The food has to be reheated in small batches. The pots are refilled, as more stew is needed throughout the day. This method keeps the food from spoiling, especially dishes that contain meat. The stews are kept in the refrigerator refills are needed. Because there were not enough burners in the kitchen at Richard's home, we used multiple crock-pots, electric burners, and electric roasting pans.

Guests came in the front door. Traditionally they would say hello and then either wait in the living room for a space at the dining room table or, if seats were available, sit down at the table to eat. As soon as a spot opens up, someone from the living room is asked to sit down, and then when they are finished eating they get up from the table so another person can eat. It is customary to take a portion from multiple dishes. Someone serves the guests drinks and makes sure the bowls and platters of food are replenished and hot, so guests can serve themselves and eat until they are full. After their meal, many guests vacate their spot at the table and then chat and or visit with other guests and family members in the living room; then they walk or drive down to the plaza to participate in the ceremonial activities of the day by watching the traditional Pueblo dances and ceremonial pole climb.

Our first guest arrived at about 10am. We served until after 6pm. Janelle welcomed everyone into her father's home and then showed him or her into the dining room. Richard's house has an entryway, which leads to the living room. The living room, with a wood-burning stove in the corner and a couch and several chairs, opens onto the dining room. The dining room table seats about eight people. On the right side of the room is the doorway to the kitchen, which is enclosed. Another hallway has one door leading outside and several other doors leading to three bedrooms and the restroom. It is a Pueblo-style house, built by the tribe, often called tribal housing by the local residents. When Margie moved out she took many of the home furnishings, so the house was a little more sparsely decorated than when we were there for previous Feast Days.

We served food all through the lunch hour. Things ran quite smoothly. Chef Whitewater was in charge of heating all of the food, and Stella and I were in charge of serving the guests a beverage, refilling the bowls and platters with hot food, clearing the place settings after each guest ate, and then resetting the place for the next guest. I knew many of the guests because I had helped at the Mermejo house for many years, and it was enjoyable to see everyone again. Many of the guests commented on how good the food was and how much they enjoyed the variety and taste of the dishes Richard had asked us to serve.

During the afternoon lull, while most Feast Day visitors were watching the dances, each of us walked down to the plaza to see some of the dances, and then returned so the next person could see the festivities. It was a well-needed break from heating, serving, and cleaning up.

Richard wasn't there at all that day. He returned from the kiva sometime around 6pm, after his ceremonial obligations were finished, and ate his feast meal. We had served hundreds of guests throughout the day; I didn't count, there wasn't time, but all of us estimated that we had easily served five hundred people. Much of the food was gone, but we had saved a little of each dish early in the day so Richard could taste all of the foods we had prepared. Richard talked about his day, asked us who had come to visit, told us how the dances went in the plaza, and talked about who had climbed the pole this year. He was tired from his ceremonial obligations and glad that, even though Margie wasn't there, he was able to fulfill his obligations as governor and feed a traditional Pueblo meal to all of the Picuris Pueblo Feast Day visitors. We cleaned up, loaded the car, and headed back to Santa Fe.

Symbolism and Meaning in the Feast Meals

The Pueblo feast is different from the other two feasts at which I had assisted. One major difference is that it is presented to guests inside a private home on the pueblo, hosted by a single family. Multiple homes in each pueblo serve Feast Day guests and Pueblo visitors on the day of a feast. A visitor might eat a meal in several homes during the day, depending on how many people they know from that pueblo. In the case of the Peyote Ceremony Feast and the Sundance Ceremony Feast, the meals were served to larger groups, all at once. Only eight guests can eat at Richard's table at a time. The Pueblo Feast Day meal lasts for hours and resembles a restaurant-style event at which guests eat the meal, visit a little, and then leave. Throughout the day, new guests are constantly arriving.

All of the meals had a performance aspect. Bauman asserts "performance is a mode of communication, a way of speaking, the essence of which resides in the assumption of responsibility to an audience for a display of communicative skill, highlighting the way in which the communication is carried out, above and beyond its

referential content.” This holds true for all of the meals described here, each one varying slightly from the others. From the point of view of the audience, the act of expression on the part of the performers, who in this case are the Native cooks, is open to evaluation for the way it is done. Each person who experiences the feast meals will have a different evaluation.

Each individual experience will differ, and each interpretation of each of the meals can be examined through the eyes of the participants in a multitude of ways. The Peyote Ceremony and the Sun Dance feasts are an extension of the ceremonies themselves. Although the Pueblo Feast Day meal is part of the day’s ceremonial activities, it is physically removed from the ceremonial aspect because of its location in the home of a community member, even though in this case, it is the home of the governor of Picuris Pueblo. This makes it a different experience for the participants. Guests at a Feast Day ceremony don’t necessarily experience the dancing unless they want to (which is usually the case), whereas participants in the other two ceremonial feasts eat with the invited guests and family members. As the ceremonial dances and pole climb are performed on the plaza, the Feast Day meal is preformed in a private home in a location that may not be within walking distance of the ceremonial activities. All of the feasts are offered as a ritual ceremonial performance for the enhancement of experience, and through appreciation of the intrinsic qualities of the act of the expression itself, participants experience the ceremony (Bauman 1986:3). Performance of each of these different feasts calls forth special attention to and heightened awareness of the act of the expression, the actual eating of the meal, and also the presentation of the Native cooks and chefs who prepare and serve the food. Here the symbolic forms that are a part of each ceremonial feast have their primary existence in the actions of the people who are presenting the meal, and the roots of each ceremonial feast lie in the social and cultural life of each Native community.

Anthropologist and food scholar Ravindra Khare pointedly argues that “the materialist view of food remains incomplete without appropriate attention to the symbolic, moral, and communicational dimensions” of specific foodways (1987). These dimensions are what most reward the scholarly investigation of festive events of groups

and of the foods, which are focal points of the events, the rituals associated with them, and their location in the overall context of the festivity. The complex behavior associated with selecting, preparing, serving, and consuming foods creates a symbolic vocabulary of the basic assumptions of the community, with meaning and significance (Humphrey and Humphrey 1988:3).

In the three examples I present in this chapter, feasting is an act that represents abundance. The interpretation of what abundance represents and how it is executed vary with each feast. In the case of the Peyote Ceremony, the foods included a combination of a menu created by the Willie family, which was representational of mainstream “American” foods, served alongside fry bread, a dish very special to Navajo people, and a traditional stew with ingredients raised and grown by the family itself. Its symbolism is rooted in the foods that were given to them on their Long Walk from their ancestral homelands to the Bosque Redondo or Hwéeldi.

In the case of the Sun Dance Feast, the foods served are a combination of very traditional dishes that hold special and sacred meaning to the elders of the community, especially those with whom I worked, alongside dishes prepared from what is available and within the financial means of the participants.

Finally, in the case of the Picuris Pueblo Feast Day, the dishes were representational of foods that Richard’s ex-wife Margie would have served, and of traditional Pueblo dishes made from ingredients that were from the Pueblo, were local to New Mexico, or were purchased at a grocery store. The difference with this feast is that Native Americans from outside the Pueblo prepared it, although this is not the norm.

Climate and terrain have placed harsh restraints on local diets for millennia, reinforcing regional identities. The United States is a nation of many regional environments, and its culinary and ethnic histories have been shaped by regionalism, reinforced by territorial expansion from the Atlantic to the Pacific (Gabaccia 1998:7). People have ties to the regional foods. Even today, we do not expect Diné people to fish for salmon, or even to eat much of it. In these instances the taste of place comes into play, as well as the concept of *terroir* (Trubek 2008; Jacobsen 2010). Locating food makes it ours, and it can also train us to appreciate it in new ways. Food is being localized for

reasons of economics, politics, and aesthetics (Trubek 2008:12). At the same time, tastes are always changing, and the way in which these changes occur can ultimately reveal much about the larger structures that shape our daily lives (Trubek 2008:13). The taste of place then, like the foods and drinks that were served in each of these feasts, may be a phenomenon with very localized stories—practices framed by particular cultural memories, meaning, and myths (Trubek 2008:17).

Because gathering is an event, place plays an important part in all of these ceremonies. Place is evoked through each of the ceremonies and through the act of eating the meal with other participants. In each case, place is grounded through eating the foods. Meaning, then, is intertwined in the ceremony and the feast. These places, while visible in the sense that they are in a specific place (the tipi, the arbor, and the Pueblo plaza), are also grounded in the place where the food is served, which in each instance is a different place than the actual ceremonial ground. These deeply loved places are not necessarily visible, either to oneself or to others. The identity of place, thus, is achieved by dramatizing the aspirations, needs, and functional rhythms of group life (Tuan 1977:178). As place is evoked in these instances, so are the senses.

The sensuous body—smells, tastes, textures, and sensations—all play an important role in how each feast is interpreted and experienced (Stoller 1997). The place in which the feast is experienced comes into presence through the experience of bodily sensation, as well as through the expression of heightened emotional and aesthetic dimensions of sensual inspiration (Feld 1996:134). Thus, as these places make sense because of how they are made sensual and how they are sensually experienced, “Perceiving bodies are knowing bodies, and are inseparable from what the participants of the Feast know is culture as it imbues and shapes particular places. It is by bodies that places become cultural entities” (Casey 1993). How each individual interprets the act of the ceremony and the act of eating and experiencing the feast is unique. The lived experience then involves constant shifts in sensory figures and grounds, constant potentials for multi- or cross-sensory interactions (Feld 1996:93).

As food solidifies the social ties in each of these ceremonial acts, the maintaining of human relationships formed through the ceremonial act of feasting, ties are created that

bind these individuals. In each of these feasts, food becomes an offering through ritual that binds the participants with each other through experiencing together the foods of the feast. Food is symbolic of both faith and belief. To accept the food, eat it, be nourished by it, both physically and spiritually, signifies the acceptance of each ceremonial act and the reciprocity of the feelings expressed not only in the ceremony itself but also in the foods.

Foster and Anderson (1978:268) note that “People feel most secure when eating with friends and loved ones and in most societies, public meals symbolically express these feelings. Normally we do not share a meal with our enemies; on the rare occasion when we do, the mere act of eating together signifies that at least for the moment antagonisms are laid aside” (Bryant 1985). In each of these feasts, foods hold meanings that are complex, intertwining symbolic meaning from ritual, place, and the bodily interpretation for each individual who experiences these acts of eating. In each feasting situation this recognition occurs because all of the participants understand that traditional foods, newly introduced foods, events, and contexts hold more meaning than just the foods being served or the event itself. Meaning is interwoven into all aspects of the event, making each thread an integral part of the ceremonial event.

Chapter 9

Native American Chefs in Contemporary Kitchens

Becoming a chef involves developing skills in a kitchen. But understanding what it means to be a chef comes from more than just culinary skills. It comes from a passion to cook, to understand culinary history, to appreciate different ethnic cuisines and ingredients, and to put forth food as an expression of one's own self and ethnic identity. Some chefs receive training from culinary schools and institutions and learn in a classroom setting; others learn through apprenticeships and by working their way up through the various positions in the kitchen. The business of cooking, and ultimately of operating and running a restaurant, and becoming a chef-owner, requires even more skills that must be mastered in addition to the skill of cooking.

Most chefs start out as working cooks and experience a "rite of passage," much as one might encounter in boot camp (Dornenburg and Page 2003). The hours are long, the work is physically demanding, the pay is usually low, and the working conditions in the kitchen, being near stoves and ovens, can be very hot. However, being a chef is much more than standing at a cutting board or next to a hot stove all day. Chefs who are just starting out in their careers must be prepared to work their way up from the lowest-level positions of prepping food or working as a line cook all the way up to a sous chef, chef de cuisine, and eventually to an executive chef or a chef and owner. Chefs wear a jacket with double layers of fabric over the chest, on the lower arms, and a high collar to protect them from splattered grease and other hot liquids. The traditional white chef's jacket is usually the preferred choice, although now jackets are found in many different colors and in an array of styles. Pants, which began with the traditional black-and-white hound's-tooth check, range today from solid black to a brightly colored print of red chile peppers. Headgear ranges from a traditional toque (the classic tall, white hat) to a baseball cap. Footwear ranges from tennis shoes to clogs, which are particularly popular with cooks who have worked in French kitchens. Ultimately, what a chef wears today varies greatly by culinary establishment; however, in most American kitchens the standard remains the white chef's coat, black or black checked pants, and no hat.

Kitchen work during lunch and dinner is always intense, but the atmosphere of a kitchen may range from a tense calm to loud and frenzied screaming and yelling. Different kitchens have a variety of approaches to what kind of organizational system works best. In this research, styles ranged from a high-volume, fast-paced, open exhibition kitchen to a large hotel banquet-style kitchen that was busy but quiet as the chefs, prep chefs, and pastry chefs worked.

Those who stick with culinary work find that the growth of the foodservice industry is opening up opportunities for them as cooks and chefs. These opportunities, however, carry with them an important responsibility, as the choices made by the next generation of chefs will transform the foods of tomorrow. Andrew Dornenburg and Karen Page, authors of *Becoming a Chef* (2003), believe that chefs should recognize this influence and use it responsibly, striving to master their profession, beginning with an understanding of its history (Dornenburg and Page 2003:2).

Jimmy Schmidt, a well-known Southwestern chef and executive chef at the Rattlesnake Club in Denver, Colorado; the Rattlesnake Club in Detroit, Michigan; three other restaurants in the Detroit area; and a Rattlesnake Grill in the Denver area states, “understanding the history of the dish you are preparing will allow you to put a little more of your heart and soul into what you’re cooking. I think that’s what it’s all about.” Chef Schmidt is a part of the growing number of chefs (including Jacques Pepin, Wolfgang Puck, and Mark Miller) who promote the belief in “personal health, the vitality of cultures, and the integrity of the global environment.” Chef Mark Miller has always been much more regionally focused in the Southwest, although he has recently been including more Asian influences. All of these chefs work with organizations, such as the Chefs Collaborative,⁵⁸ to produce educational videos on sustainable food choices. They prefer to buy local foods, and their restaurants are situated to serve seasonal and local cuisine.

Some chefs believe that our food has remained the same over the past two to three hundred years, and that everything that is prepared by chefs today has been done before. All the chefs do is recreate new and innovative versions of the dishes that have already been done. This common theme was apparent among both the Native and non-Native

chefs with whom I worked. Many stated that they were just the “medium” that was channeling the foods of their ancestors, and adding a modern twist to them, or plating them in a specific way. This made the dish their own, even though the foods really belonged to, and came from, the elders (Whitewater 2006; Craig 2006).

Chef Walter Whitewater stated, “I am the vessel through which these foods are served, but they belong to the elders through which they were created.” Many chefs hold that the foods they are serving must be harvested, used, processed, and plated with respect to the specific belief system from which those foods originate. This is not to say that these chefs do not emphasize innovation and creativity; they do. What many chefs do is bring together elements from their ancestral past with elements from the present, “fusing” these components in the dishes that they create.

The wide variety of ethnic and regional cuisines that are eaten today, along with the modern demands for convenience and sophistication placed on today’s cooks and chefs, affect what they create for their patrons. The concerns about healthful food become factors as well in what chefs serve in their restaurants. They are constantly taking recipes from the past and bringing them into modern kitchens—serving them in new ways based on old traditions. This holds true with the regional Native American cuisine of the Southwest.

Chefs today have a rich and impressive lineage dating back thousands of years; understanding one’s place as a link in a chain to the past—as well as to the future—can help a cook see the profession in a more balanced perspective (Dornenburg and Page 2003:3). No matter how strong a chef’s inspirations, they are not enough to give rise to greatness unless the chef is willing to work hard to reach his or her goals. Skills must be carefully honed and refined through directed effort. The palate, which allowed a chef to first learn what he or she found most enjoyable, must be trained to discern subtleties in flavors and flavor combinations, and to critique as well as taste. Similarly, basic cooking techniques must be mastered, with speed and efficiency developed over repeated efforts, in order to be able to create desired effects. This is what leads chefs into professional kitchens and increasingly into professional cooking schools (Dornenburg and Page 2003:63). Many of the country’s leading chefs reached the top of the profession without

the benefit of a cooking school degree, but many today recommend a cooking school as the most expeditious start for an aspiring chef. Some of chefs I interviewed went to cooking schools; others learned by apprenticing in a variety of restaurant situations and with a variety of different types of cuisines.

Both the chefs that worked their way up within a restaurant and the chefs that went to culinary school started in a variety of restaurant positions. Some chefs began as prep cooks (a position some chefs believe is the backbone of a restaurant), performing the labor-intensive task of chopping vegetables for mirepoix (a traditional French combination of onions, carrots, and celery aromatics), peeling garlic, cleaning salad greens, butchering meats, cleaning racks of lamb, and straining stocks. Others worked on the hot line as cooks who prepare the entrees, typically at two or more stations, such as sauté and grill, requiring experience with the delicate cooking temperatures of meat and fish. The sauté cook traditionally sautés entrées on top of the stove; the grill cook grills meat, fish, or vegetables while preparing side dishes on the stove. Once a cook has developed basic kitchen skills and good work habits, further development takes place over a period of years. By working at higher and higher levels in a kitchen, ideally under the watchful eye of a skilled chef, an aspiring chef can move up in the professional kitchen environment. The cook builds speed in the kitchen, and then he or she develops a larger repertoire of skills and refines his or her techniques (Dornenburg and Page 2003:163).

Some of the chefs I interviewed have been sous chefs, who assist in the running of the kitchen; others have been pastry chef assistants, working their way up to pastry chef and then chef, and eventually executive chef and in some cases chefs and owners. Once a cook has mastered being a sous chef and has developed both a strong voice for his or her own food and a thorough knowledge of how a kitchen is run, he or she may be ready to become a chef. Most chefs have made that transition either by falling into a specified opportunity or by seeking one out (Dornenburg and Page 2003:164).

As part of my fieldwork, I worked with chefs at four Native American fundraising events in Arizona for the Tohono O’odham Community Action (TOCA) organization. I met several of the TOCA organizers at the Heard Museum in Phoenix, Arizona, and

suggested that they bring Native chefs together to raise money for their programs, as part of their yearly Celebration of Basketry and Native Foods Festival. The mission of the festival was to bring together basketry artists from indigenous nations all over North America to celebrate their diverse food and basketry traditions. For the Tohono O'odham, the connection between Native foods and baskets is the link between cuisine and culture, and between artistry and survival

(http://www.tocaonline.org/www.tocaonline.org/Oodham_Foods/Oodham_Foods.html).

The event was originally held at the Heard Museum in Phoenix. Later it was moved to the Tohono O'odham Cultural Center and Museum in Sells, Arizona. The event includes a basketry and traditional foods market, with more than two hundred and fifty basket weavers and traditional foods producers, the largest market of its kind. Cooking demonstrations by Native American and other chefs from all over the Southwest are also a part of the festival. The event included a multitude of traditional foods from a variety of Native American regions; it focused on the histories of these tribes, the cultural importance of foods in an array of communities, and the health benefits of these foods, as well as Native music from the Tohono O'odham community, O'odham traditional dance performances, storytelling, and an assortment of food tastings. It brought together multicultural components from tribes all over the Americas, forming one of the most well-known pan-Indian native foods and basketry events in the United States.

The fundraising dinners began in 2004 at Lon's at the Hermosa in Scottsdale, Arizona, with six chefs each preparing a course for the dinner, followed by two years at Kai Restaurant in the Sheraton Wild Horse Pass Resort and Spa, owned by the Gila River Indian community. In 2007 and 2008 chefs did not participate, but in 2009, several chefs from the previous years collaborated with a group of new chefs at the Ventana Room in the Loews Ventana Canyon Resort in Tucson, Arizona. The chef event moved from Phoenix to Tucson after the Celebration of Basketry and Native Foods Festival moved from the Heard Museum to the Tohono O'odham reservation, which is close to Tucson. These events featured several Native American chefs, as well as non-Native chefs working with Native American cuisine, and provided me with an opportunity to work collaboratively with them, with each of us preparing and producing a dish for the dinner.

This gave me the unique opportunity to document, observe, and analyze these chefs. Each chef prepared one dish for the dinner, with the help of the kitchen staff of each resort. The host restaurant assisted with procuring the ingredients and execution of the dish. All proceeds from these dinners went to TOCA.

These events gave me insights into each individual chef's process for creating his or her food for a specific audience. I was able to observe how each chef performs his or her culinary artistry. Other events in which Native chefs cooked collaboratively featuring Native American cuisine and traditional Native foodways will be referenced throughout the chapters that follow.

Each of the chefs has unique stories to tell. These stories document what Native American cuisine is and how it is being prepared in commercial kitchens today. This chapter focuses on Native American chefs who have a significant amount of experience in the kitchen; the next chapter focuses on the newly graduated and younger Native chefs who are just beginning their culinary careers. Following that chapter I present the stories of two prominent non-Native chefs in commercial kitchens. All of these chefs are cooking, preparing, and working with Native American cuisine and the ingredients that make up this cuisine. They range in age from nineteen years old to well over fifty. Some of the chefs have well-established careers. Several are women, but most are men. Some of the chefs grew up in Native American communities on Indian reservations; others were raised in cities and urban areas not close to Indian reservations. The chefs' stories that I present here derive from ethnographic interviews and from my experiences working with these chefs in food preparation events or commercial kitchen settings.

The Native American Chefs

Walter Whitewater

Walter Whitewater is a Diné (Navajo) chef from Pinon, Arizona. I introduced him in chapter 4. Presently he commutes between Santa Fe, New Mexico, and Pinon, Arizona, returning for ceremonial obligations and to raise Navajo churro sheep with his dad.⁵⁹ He works as a chef with Red Mesa Cuisine, a Native American catering company in Santa Fe.

Walter considers himself to be a traditional member of the Diné community. He is fluent in his language, is immersed in culture and ceremonial activities, and practices traditional agriculture each year by planting and growing corn, squash, sunflowers, and culinary herbs near his home in Pinon. He also knows Navajo silversmith techniques and works with leather and hides to make traditional Navajo crafts. He was one of the first Native men to cross the culinary gender line and prove that he could have a career cooking, teaching cooking, and yet still hold onto his traditional ways.



Photo 9.1 Walter Whitewater holding a red-tailed hawk fan and gourd rattle at sunset outside his home in Pinon.

Chef Whitewater learned to cook by apprenticing in a variety of restaurants in Santa Fe. Beginning in 1992, Chef Whitewater worked under Chef David Tanis at Café Escalera for five years. Chef Tanis himself was taught to cook by the legendary Alice Waters of Chez Panisse, in Berkeley, California. Chef Whitewater learned all of the kitchen stations at Café Escalera, including prep, sauté, grill, and line cook. He went on

to cook at Mu Du Noodles under Chef Mu Jing Lau, learning about Asian foods, including the many ways to prepare noodles and serve them with Asian sauces. In 1998, Chef Whitewater began cooking at Bishop's Lodge under Executive Chef Zachery, learning contemporary Southwest foods. After Chef Zachery left the lodge, he worked for a number of years under Executive Chef Alfonso Ramirez, a renowned Mexican chef who has cooked traditional Mexican cuisine for dignitaries from all over the world. Chef Whitewater learned the traditional techniques for making sauces and food presentation in what Chef Ramirez calls "Latin fusion cuisine."



Photo 9.2 Chef Walter Whitewater prepares a Native American menu at Isleta Pueblo in 2003. (Photo by Katherine Kimball)

Presently, Chef Whitewater is the chef de cuisine at Red Mesa Cuisine, a Native American catering company in Santa Fe, specializing in Native American dishes from ancestral foods with a modern twist. Along with Chef Sam Etheridge, he was the culinary advisor for the James Beard Award-winning cookbook *Foods of the Southwest Indian*

Nations (2002) and has taught Native American cooking classes at the Santa Fe School of Cooking since 2001. In 2008, Chef Whitewater was awarded the James Lewis Award, which recognizes self-taught chefs through the Black Culinary Alliance (BCA), an organization dedicated to create awareness and exposure of, and educational opportunities for, people of color within the culinary profession. Chef Whitewater was the first Native American chef recognized for this award.

Chef Whitewater has appeared on numerous Food Network television cooking shows featuring foods of the Southwest and (at 51 years old) is one of the oldest and most established Native American chefs in the United States today. He is a role model for many Native American youth, especially young men, and very active with organizations that perpetuate and support cultural and traditional food practices on the reservation.

Of all the chefs in this ethnography, I have known Walter Whitewater the longest. We have worked together for many years. I have spent a great deal of time with both his immediate family and his extended family. We have participated in a number of ceremonies on the Navajo Reservation together. Several of his family members have already been discussed here; they are the Native cooks from Pinon, Arizona, and Seba Dalkai, Arizona, presented in earlier chapters.

Chef Whitewater learned to cook with and from his grandma, Susie. Unless speaking from Chef Whitewater's perspective or in his voice, I refer to her in this ethnography as Grandmother Susie, out of respect, as she is no longer with us.

In an early experience, he was at a ceremony where two elder men were cooking fry bread. "We have a different life at Navajo, men don't cook, so I watched these men, in a ceremony, making bread, fry bread, you know, generally, I saw something different here. When I was a kid, this happened, and then years went by and I saw another elder, a man, preparing breakfast for his aunt and his kids. This was something that I didn't see on my reservation and I felt I wanted to be a part of it."

When Chef Whitewater first wanted to cook, his family was horrified. They offered him a flock of sheep, some cattle, and asked him to work with the livestock. They asked him to do anything else but cook. "Men don't cook," they told him. "Only women cook." Typically in this community, men raise the livestock, they hunt, and they plant the

corn. They might dig an earthen pit for the corn they've grown and then cook it overnight, but men cooking isn't common, and it was even less common in his youth for a man to be in the kitchen.

It wasn't until Chef Whitewater won the James Beard Foundation award for his culinary contributions to the cookbook *Foods of the Southwest Indian Nations* (Frank 2002) and appeared on numerous television shows that his family accepted his professional career. At that point he crossed what I call the "imaginary culinary gender line" that exists in traditional Native American households. Only after he had won several awards, appeared on numerous television shows, and was featured in magazine and newspaper articles was Chef Whitewater accepted at home as a man who had a career in a commercial kitchen as a professional chef. Now Chef Whitewater is an example of a very traditional Native man whose chosen profession is as a chef. He was one of the first Native men to prove that he could have a career cooking, teaching, and yet still hold onto his traditional ways.



Photo 9.3 Thomas Mike and his sister Maggie Begay preparing corn they grew in their field to be cooked overnight in an earthen pit.



Photo 9.4 Thomas Mike and his nephew Christopher Begay place corn into the earthen pit on top of rocks that have been heated with a wood-fueled fire.



Photo 9.5 Thomas Mike fills the earthen pit with fresh corn.



Photo 9.6 Thomas Mike and Christopher cover the corn with tarps before sealing the earthen pit with dirt.



Photo 9.7 Dirt is placed on top of tarps so the corn will slowly roast in the earthen pit overnight.



Photo 9.8 The corn is removed from the earthen pit at sunrise after cooking all night.



Photo 9.9 Some corn will be eaten fresh and some will be dried for use throughout the winter.

Two events changed his life. He began cooking at an early age, he thinks around age twelve, and his first cooking experience was with commodity foods. These were the foods he grew up with and the ones he saw the most. He remembers looking through books and cooking magazines for photographs of food. Food presentation was always

important to him, even though he didn't grow up with a mother who prepared meals for him, and his family in general didn't care how the food looked when it was served.

In the early 1990s Chef Whitewater spent some time in my professional photography studio in Los Angeles. He assisted with a photo shoot for the renowned chef John Rivera Sedlar, a Santa Fe, New Mexico, native who developed his career in Los Angeles. Chef Sedlar “wrote the book” on *Modern Southwest Cuisine* (Sedlar 1986) and is one of the most acclaimed Southwest chefs in the world. He is best known for his visual plating, which is sometimes controversial and often political. Having seen Chef Sedlar's food while photographing at Sedlar's restaurant Abiquiu, in Santa Monica, California, Chef Whitewater said that he had an epiphany and realized that he too could use symbols and designs that represented who he was as an expressive form of his identity as a Native chef. Since that time, he has used Navajo rug weaving designs, including Yei Bi Chei faces, as part of his culinary expressions that can be seen on his plates.



Photo 9.10 Yei Bi Chei of caviars made by Chef Walter Whitewater from black American caviar, tobiko orange caviar (flying fish roe), chopped white onion, chopped parsley, and chopped hard-boiled egg, with purple and yellow endive are used for the feather headdress.



Photo 9.11 The author helping plate prepared endive with caviar for Chef Whitewater's Yei Bi Chei of caviars for a Native food event in 2010.

Over the years, Chef Whitewater has cooked for groups of people ranging from two to almost two thousand. When asked if he cooks for his family in addition to commercial cooking, he replied,

When you are cooking for people that are your clients, you have to be professional, you have to be on top; when I am cooking for family, it is more relaxing, you know, it is not really the same thing. When you are cooking in a restaurant, you have to be aware of everything; every little detail is important. I take what I do as a chef very seriously. For me the food is the most important thing. I want to make sure I start with the best, freshest local ingredients that I can get. I want the food to look good, to have flavor, and to have a delicious smell. I want everything about the food on the plate make you want to eat, and to savor every bite.

Chef Whitewater kept making the point throughout our interview about how he respected every food with which he worked. He said he respects the animals he works with (he has butchered his own sheep); he respects the fish he filets and cuts into

portions; he respects the plants, the vegetables, and the wild-harvested foods. Food for him “is something that you feel when you handle it, how you cut it, what you do with the leftover parts.” He always uses all of the parts and never likes to throw anything away. He feeds the fat from the meat he butchers to the sheep dogs back home. He uses the fish and vegetables parts to make cooking stocks. He composts other vegetable parts, and the wild food parts he puts back into the Earth with thanks to the plants for letting him use them. In the everyday life of Navajo people, wild plants are gathered for food, for medicine, and for religion (Mayes and Lacy 1989:2). For Chef Whitewater, wild plants are sacred. Prayer accompanies all traditional plant use on the Navajo Reservation. Prayers are said when Rocky Mountain bee plant (*Cleome serrulata*) is gathered for a stew (Mayes and Lacy 1989:2). Plants are not picked randomly or wastefully. Rather, they are picked as needed, and then, no more than are necessary.

I think it is just how you respect your animals, how you respect fish, and I always want to respect the plants. You don’t just cut it down and throw it away, in the trash. For me it’s the way you handle it; it has given its life to you, it is the food that has been used to feed the people with. I always make an offering to thank everything that I cook with.

Chef Whitewater commented that when he worked at Café Escalera, he observed others who butchered meat sometimes making cuts that were ragged, as if made by a hatchet. He said that one must speak to the animal, to cut and butcher it in a sacred way. This is why, he said, when he cuts meat or filets fish, the portions always come out smooth, with no cut marks. To him, this was the result of the way he handled the animal. To this day, other chefs comment on how beautifully Chef Whitewater prepares his meat and fish.

When there is going to be a butchering, we just don’t go and grab a sheep; people choose the right one, and before it is put down, for a certain part of the sheep that you use and then you let go and release a little piece of the animal’s hair. It is pulled out and released. When you release it, you know it is going to be used in the right way; that’s how much respect we have for our food, you know, and it’s not only with the four-legged, it is with everything.

He compared how food was sacrificed on the reservation and in commercial kitchens: “In the restaurants a lot of times, you can feel that the animal wasn’t handled in

the right way, so when I touch it, I talk to it and release it, so that the meat will taste good and it knows it will be respected and used in a good way.”



Photo 9.12 Chef Whitewater’s family sheep in lower-elevation corral in winter.

Chef Whitewater spoke about how making the food look good was a part of what he did as a chef, but that there is a deeper meaning to his presentation. “Your dish is not only yours,” he stated, “but the people that you are representing, your people and your nation. When you make food look nice, when you use it in a good way, for healing, or to make somebody achieve something, you uplift them; that’s why I feel I am presenting food to a guest.”

Chef Whitewater spoke a lot about place. He talked about how place was important to him, and how the place where he was born was in the food he cooked and in his presentation of the food. His food has the symbolic elements of the places where he herded sheep. It has the colors he saw in the canyons when he herded his father’s and grandmother’s sheep, and the colors he sees now when he herds his own sheep. It has the four dots that represent the four directions he prayed to while growing up. It has symbolism from the ceremonies he participated in. It has the symbols of the tipi poles that reach to the evening sky that he saw when he entered into a NAC Peyote Ceremony. His food has all of the places that are important to him woven into the presentation. Place is enmeshed in the symbols and colors of how he designed his plates. His food has the

colors of the weavings his grandmother used to weave when he was growing up. His food has all the places he knew; it has symbols that represent those places to him and who he is. That is what he feeds to people—all the places that are a part of who he is.



Photo 9.13 Piñon crusted lamb chop. This dish illustrates Chef Whitewater’s use of symbols of the four directions made with two different sauces, a roasted orange bell pepper purée, and a red chile sauce. It also shows the tied cornhusk, representing the tipi poles seen in a NAC Peyote Ceremony. Chef Whitewater’s plates are full of symbolism.

He talked about his favorite foods. He talked about the ingredients he most likes to use and how the foods he prepares make him feel. “Cooking to me is my life. It’s what I do, and it’s who I am now. Everywhere I go and everything I do, I do as a chef.”

To Chef Whitewater, Native American cuisine is not only the visuals of the food, it is “the beauty way.” In Navajo culture, living according to nature is called *Ho Jo ni’* (Whitewater 2006), and that is how Chef Whitewater approaches his plating, his flavors, what he would and would not put on the plate to serve to a guest. He distinguishes between the foods his people ate in the past and the foods that the Spaniards brought to

them. The Spanish brought sheep, horses, cows, wheat flour, peaches, and apricots, to name a few, to the Navajo people, and Chef Whitewater uses these ingredients in his cooking. Chef Whitewater talked about how these animals changed the life of the Navajo people. Then he talked about the Long Walk (see chapter 4), and how the U.S. government issued Navajo people flour and lard—that was when fry bread originated. For him, Native American cuisine is composed of all these foods. To him, Native American foodways are distinct from Native American cuisine. The former are the foods that are distinctly Navajo: “The wild animals and the connection to them, the connection to the land, our way of life, the traditional ways, the songs. This is what makes the food native,” he said. “These are our traditional foodways. They are different from Native American cuisine but they are intertwined in the sense that some of the traditional foodways are incorporated into Native American cuisine.”

Whether he was preparing contemporary Native American cuisine dishes or traditional Navajo foods, “all foods and how they are handled are sacred,” Chef Whitewater said. Here Chef Whitewater is self-identifying as Diné, but he also has incorporated other things he has learned into his way of being a chef. Unlike some of the other chefs, he is not focused on all the native foods of the Americas in his cuisine; rather he is much more locally and regionally focused.

Loretta Barrett Oden

Loretta Oden was born and raised in Shawnee, Oklahoma, and is a citizen of the Potawatomi Nation and a registered member of the Potawatomi tribe. She grew up in Shawnee and lived in Oklahoma until she was forty-eight years old. Loretta says she literally grew up in the kitchen. Her mother came from a very large Potawatomi family. By the time Loretta was born, nine of her grandmother’s original twelve children were still alive. All of the children were born at home, and Loretta was, in her words, “blessed with grandparents and great-grandparents, and when we had a family gathering there was a lot of cooking to be done. Ya’ know, my fondest memories and my life was . . . in the kitchen. Everyone gathered there, we cooked, we sang, we laughed.” Chef Oden remembers that her mother and her aunts would sing in beautiful harmony, like the Andrews Sisters, and play piano. They were all good weavers, sewers, and cooks, always

making a lot out of what they had at home. When she was small her mother would take her to Oklahoma City, about 40 miles away, to eat at the Golden Seven Chinese Restaurant as well as to one of her mother's favorite Mexican restaurants. Loretta thought it was like going to New York City. She and her mother would try to replicate the dishes they had tasted in those restaurants. As is evident today in Chef Oden's food, these multiple influences played an important role. Her food is not just influenced by her family or her tribe; multiple influences from all over the Americas can be seen in the food she prepares.

Loretta's mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother all had gardens, which produced beautiful fresh produce—all that a cook could want. Planting and tending the gardens were a long-held tradition in Loretta's family. Her grandmother, Onnetta, gardened until she was well into her eighties. Chef Oden remembers her up at the garden with her walking stick, or leaning on a hoe or shovel; she recalls that was a great joy for her grandmother. Gardening was a way to get her hands and feet back to the earth. When Loretta was in the fifth or sixth grade, her mother, Annetta, moved the family approximately one hundred fifty miles south to Gainesville, Texas. She had someone help her plow a little piece of the land so she could have a garden. They plowed it with a mule and hand plow. Chef Oden's father's side of the family is Irish and English, and he grew up raising cattle and chickens. His family was originally from Winfield, Kansas, but later moved to Oklahoma, where he met Chef Oden's mother. With a multicultural background and growing up in close proximity to a number of other tribes, Chef Oden has many influences on her cuisine. I would classify her as knowing and using a pan-Indian approach to Native American cuisine.

Loretta married at a very young age and raised a family. Her husband's family was also from Shawnee, Oklahoma, and they had a restaurant where she was exposed to the food industry and food business, but she never took her in-laws' business seriously until after she raised her children.

Loretta today considers herself a chef and a food historian. She is a self-taught chef. In 1993, when she was fifty, she opened her first restaurant, the Corn Dance Café,

in Santa Fe, New Mexico, with her son Clay. Loretta Oden had cooked all her life with and for her family, but this was the first time she had embarked on a commercial venture.

During our interview, Chef Oden remembered the opening of the Corn Dance Café. “We literally learned as we went,” she stated. “We did the renovation of this funky little place on Water Street ourselves, and one time we were refinishing the floors, ya’ know, staining them pale blue and that sort of thing, and we looked at each other, my son Clay and I, and said, do you know how much food to order? How do we know what kind of equipment we need? So we literally started from the floor up, the ground up; we learned the business as we went.” Chef Oden and her son opened in the off-season, the winter, hoping to get their feet on the ground before the busy summer season. At first they were only open for dinner. Pancho Epstein from *Pasa Tiempo*, a weekly arts supplement to the *Santa Fe New Mexican* newspaper, came in unannounced and tried some of their food. He wrote a glowing review of the Corn Dance Café, and then they decided to open for lunch.

We literally had a herd of people at the door; we had no idea what happened, and there were only four of us in the house. . . . We had no staff, . . . it was . . . very early in our career, and the kitchen crashed. . . . I went around handwriting little gift certificates, telling our customers to come back for lunch on us, and from that moment on we literally were hiring every day, we were learning, we were teaching, we were sourcing our food items, ingredients, and all of that, and we learned on the run.”

Even though Chef Oden had leased rather than purchased the building for her restaurant, she still had to do major renovations. The little restaurant only seated fifty-eight people, but the first summer they opened a side court and back patio area to serve one hundred more people. During the busy season, and especially during Indian Market, they would serve two hundred to three hundred covers a day. But after the busy season, business was spotty. Some of her patrons included Val Kilmer, Marsha Mason, Buffy Saint-Marie, and other celebrities who signed her guest book. The food they served was, according to Chef Oden, “a new take or a creative take on taking the indigenous ingredients of the area and using traditional cooking methods, then kind of spinning it for today’s palate.”

Chef Oden didn't originally plan her menu based on how healthy the foods were, but *Prevention Magazine* approached her to do an article on the Corn Dance Café. They hired me to take photographs, and this led to a nine-page spread (Nagel 1995). The article was great press for the restaurant, for the food Chef Oden was preparing, and for Chef Oden herself.

Her menu featured indigenous foods from all over the Americas, including the Southwest, Mesoamerica, and South America. The Corn Dance Café served a menu focused on plant-based foods, along with game meats such as bison, venison, and salmon. They featured the Native American turkey in several dishes. No beef was served. They bought line-caught salmon from the Northwest Coast, Copper River salmon when they were running, and they tapped into regional traditional Native cuisines, which were very healthy and contained very little fat. This prompted Chef Oden to get more involved in health concerns of the Indian community. Once she discovered that diabetes, heart disease, and obesity were at epidemic levels in many Native communities, she decided that she wanted to use her knowledge for the betterment of their health. She drew a connection between what people put into their bodies and their state of health and well being, and she became an advocate for revitalizing a more traditional Native American diet.

Many of the restaurant's ingredients were local. They featured corn, beans, and squash as the primary plant-based ingredients, supplemented with tomatoes, chiles, and potatoes, among others. They made everything from cornbread to corn ice cream. The Southwest and Pueblo influence constituted major parts of the restaurant's menu. Chef Oden stated that,

Over time food traditions changed, and . . . what happened in a lot of Indian country was the government commodities program, so we kind of lost our connection with our original food sources. But there was a really wonderful farmers' market in Santa Fe, and I was able, during the summer months, to get a lot of stuff from Native producers there. We of course had . . . Elizabeth Berry there with all kinds of wonderful, wonderful produce that she was able to hand-deliver fresh in a basket,⁶⁰ and . . . that was such an exciting aspect of it in those early days in Santa Fe.

Bison appeared in many different forms on the Corn Dance Café menu. Of all the foods connected with Native Americans, Oden says, “There is none more closely aligned than the buffalo.” Bison appeared in her menu in many different forms: in a roast, steaks, and also the house burger. “Bison meat is very low in fat, even lower than skinless chicken and . . . salmon,” Oden noted. Chef Oden was quoted in a “Chef’s Seminar” article on her in *Santé Magazine*: “It’s a bit more expensive than beef, but there’s more yield because there’s little shrinkage. And without the fat, the protein is more dense, so you don’t need to eat as much” (Platus 2007). Chef Oden prefers to use the traditional native cooking methods, which include smoking, drying, and salting meats.

“I pre-smoke meat a lot—such as in my dish of achiote-marinated quail smoked over sassafras wood and then finished on the grill,”⁶¹ Chef Oden stated. “And to preserve the foods and intensify flavors,” Oden added, “I do a lot of dehydrating, usually between two window screens out in the hot sun. We put the drying frames on the flat roof of the restaurant. . . .”



Photo 9.14 Venison medallions with chokecherry sauce and roasted garlic potatoes, from Chef Loretta Barrett Oden at Corn Dance Café.

The Corn Dance Café remained open from 1993 to 2003. They were at the address on Water Street for four years and then moved to the Hotel Santa Fe. Since it is the only American Indian-owned hotel in the city, the fit was a good one for Chef Oden, and the restaurant did well in its new location. The Corn Dance Café remained a part of the Hotel Santa Fe for more than six years.



Photo 9.15 Medallions of free-range turkey with cranberry-piñon sauce and cornbread dressing. Pumpkin soup topped (in the back) with roasted pumpkin seeds.



Photo 9.16 Chef Loretta Barrett Oden at the Corn Dance Café in 1995.

When Chef Oden's contract was up, the hotel changed the restaurant's name to Amaya and then changed its menu. Today, Amaya serves Native cuisine; according to their website, the restaurant "Innovatively blends food from the cold rivers of Alaska to the Great Plains where their chefs select superb traditional Native American foods and weave them together in a style that is both ancient and contemporary." After almost ten years in the restaurant business, Chef Oden decided to embark on a new journey with PBS to create and host a five-part series entitled "Seasoned with Spirit—A Native Cook's Journey" (<http://www.foodreference.com/html/ap-seasoned-w-spirit.html>). During the filming of the series, Chef Oden traveled for three years across the United States. Her cultural focus was to connect Native American cultural dots, and to learn from Native American oral traditions since written recipes were not available (Platus 2007).

Beyond food, fun, and history, the series also has a greater purpose. Over the past thirty years, Native American peoples have seen an alarming rises in obesity and Type 2 diabetes. Among some tribes, such as the Tohono O'odham in Arizona, about seventy percent of the population develop the disease. Tribal people, like many of the nation's citizens, have incorporated inexpensive processed foods into their diet with disastrous health consequences. "Seasoned with Spirit" attempts to confront the problem by encouraging Native Americans, and the rest of the country, to reconnect with the natural foods of our heritage . . . foods from the land. As this series advocates, buying and preparing food from local growers is always a healthier option, and more and more Native American tribes are recognizing the benefits of using traditional foods (<http://www.foodreference.com/html/ap-seasoned-w-spirit.html> retrieved January 24, 2011).

Episodes of Chef Oden's series include "Gulf Coast Originals," "Cuisine of the Desert Southwest," "Return of the Buffalo," "Bounty of the River's Edge," and "Food upon the Water." In 2006, shortly after its release, the video series won an Emmy Award in the documentary category.

Chef Oden was the chef, consultant, and Native American foods historian with Tohono O'odham Community Action (TOCA), helping them open their Desert Rain Café in April 2009. The café is adjacent to the gallery, which features beautiful basketry, art,

and jewelry from artisans throughout the country, with a focus on People of the Desert. The café features locally grown traditional foods, such as the tepary bean (*Phaseolus acutifolius*, called *bawĩ* in the O’odham language), a desert floodplain bean; as well as O’odham corn (*Zea mays*, or *huñ*), squash (*Cucurbita argyrosperm*, or *ha:l*), and melons (*Cucumis melo*), an Old World food brought to the Southwest by Europeans. Wild-harvested foods include desert delicacies such as cholla buds (*Opuntia echinocarpa*, called *ciolim*), prickly pear (*Opuntia engelmannii*, or *i’ibai*), mesquite beans (*Prosopis velutin*, or *kui wihog*), and saguaro fruit (*Carnegiea gigantean*), called *bahidaj* and considered to be a sacred fruit signaling the beginning of the rainmaking ceremony. After Chef Oden helped to develop a locally healthy menu, train Tohono O’odham kitchen staff, and set up the kitchen and equipment, she opened the café to a local crowd in Sells, Arizona, on the Tohono O’odham reservation. Chef Oden and TOCA opened the restaurant in hopes that the café will become a local eatery for Tohono O’odham community members and a destination for visitors to the Tohono O’odham Cultural Center and Museum, which is in the neighboring town of Topawa. Following the opening of the Desert Rain Café, Chef Oden moved back to Oklahoma to pursue additional food interests.

Chef Oden was one of the first chefs to participate in the fundraiser dinners for TOCA in 2004, and then again in 2005, 2006, and 2009. Of the Celebration of Basketry and Native Foods Festival, Chef Oden stated,

It’s the food, the food, the food. And so much of the song, so much of the dance, so much tradition revolves around the acquisition of, the preparation of, the giving thanks for food. Even like here at TOCA, at this wonderful celebration of basketry, the baskets are an integral part of the gathering and the preparation, the storing of food (<http://www.nativeand.org/raft/oden.html> retrieved on January 24, 2011).

One of the best-known Native American chefs in the United States, Chef Oden once referred to herself as the Native American version of Julia Child. Presently she is living in Oklahoma and working on several food-related projects.



TRADITIONAL....

Each dish contains at least one traditional product such as cholla buds, tepary beans or saguaro fruit syrup. Sometimes we prepare them as our people have for countless generations and sometimes in new ways. Either way, it is done with the utmost respect for the foods that *T'itot* provided to sustain the People of the Desert.

HEALTHY....

Traditional foods are healthy foods. They help regulate blood sugar levels and control diabetes. We use syrup from the agave as our sweetener, mesquite flour in our baked goods and olive oil for cooking.

DELICIOUS....

The flavors of the desert are rich and wonderful. We feature them in ways that will satisfy and excite your palette. If you are not happy with your meal, please let us know so we can make it right!

MONSOON ENTRÉES ... 11:00AM- CLOSING

TEPARY BEAN & SHORT RIB STEW ... \$5.95
This traditional hearty stew of white tepary beans & beef short rib meat is served with corn bread.

WHITE & GREEN CHILE STEW ... \$5.95
White tepary beans, chicken & roasted green chiles flavor this rich stew. Served with corn bread.

PRICKLY PEAR CHICKEN SANDWICH ... \$6.95
Grilled chicken glazed with our special prickly pear & chile sauce served on a house-baked roll with chipotle dressing. Served with Cholla Pico de Gallo & Chips.

DESERT RAIN QUESADILLA ... \$4.95
Monterey Jack cheese and brown tepary beans grilled on a whole wheat tortilla. Served with salsa and a side salad. Add chicken for \$2.00.

CHOLLA BUD, JICAMA & CITRUS SALAD ... \$5.95
Cholla buds, jicama, pineapple and a citrus dressing served on a bed of baby spinach. Served with cornbread. Add Prickly Pear Chicken for \$2.00.

TEPARY BEAN, WILD RICE & QUINOA SALAD ... \$5.95
Brown tepary beans, Ojibwe wild rice and quinoa served on a bed of mixed greens. Served with cornbread. Add Prickly Pear Chicken for \$2.00.

COMBO PLATE ... \$6.95
Your choice of a half portion on any two of entrees listed above.

MORNING DEW BREAKFAST ... 6:30-10:30AM

DESERT RAIN SCRAMBLER/ BURRO ... \$4.95
Green chile, jack cheese & Cholla Pico de Gallo. Served with or wrapped inside a whole wheat tortilla. Add chorizo for \$1.00

DESERT GRANOLA ... \$3.95
Our homemade granola features mesquite, agave nectar and saguaro seeds. Served with yogurt.

HOT CEREAL ... \$2.95
Our daily special is lightly sweetened with agave nectar and served with dried fruit and pecans.

CHIA FRUIT SALAD ... \$2.95
Seasonal fresh fruit, chia seeds and prickly pear nectar.

BREAKFAST MUFFIN ... \$1.95
See our specials board for today's choices.

WHEAT PANCAKES ... \$3.95
Whole wheat & banana pancakes served with prickly pear agave syrup.

FLASH FLOODS BEVERAGES

ICED TEA (REGULAR OR AGAVE SWEETENED) ... \$1.50

AGAVE LEMONADE ... \$2.00

BOTTLED WATER ... \$1.00

DESERT RAIN COFFEE ... \$1.50

REGULAR OR DECAF

SELECTED TEAS ... \$1.50

ORANGE JUICE ... \$2.00

MOUNTAIN SNOW SMOOTHIES

PRICKLY PEAR SMOOTHIE ... \$2.50

MESQUITE SMOOTHIE ... \$2.50

CHIA BERRY SMOOTHIE ... \$2.50



CLOUD BURST DAILY SPECIALS

**MONDAY
TRADITIONAL MEAL ... \$6.95**
A combination of traditional favorites: *gaiwusa* (roasted corn soup), brown tepary beans, sautéed cholla buds and a whole wheat tortilla.

**TUESDAY
TAMALE PLATE ... \$6.95**
Your choice of two green corn, red chile, tepary bean or chicken tamales. Served with a side of brown tepary beans and our house salad.

**WEDNESDAY
CHEF'S SPECIAL**
Consult our special board for a seasonal selection.

**THURSDAY
PRICKLY PEAR GLAZED PORK RIBS ... \$7.95**
Prickly pear glazed pork ribs served with a side salad, cornbread and brown tepary beans.

**FRIDAY
RED CHILE PLATE ... \$6.95**
Beef in a rich sauce of red chiles. Served with a side salad, brown tepary beans and a whole wheat tortilla.

DRIZZLE SIDE DISHES/APPETIZERS

DESERT HUMMUS ... \$2.95
A savory dip made with white tepary beans. Served with corn chips.

CHOLLA PICO DE GALLO ... \$2.95
A chunky salsa made with *ciotim* (cholla cactus buds), tomatoes and chiles. Served with corn chips.

TEPARY BEAN DIP ... \$2.95
A rich, earthy dip made with brown tepary beans. Served with corn chips.

DESERT RAIN SAMPLER ... \$7.95
Sample our Desert Hummus, Cholla Pico de Gallo and Tepary Bean Dip.

ROASTED CORN ... \$2.50
Fire roasted ear of corn. Served with butter & hot sauce.

HOUSE SALAD ... \$2.95
Mixed greens, apple and pumpkin seeds, served with a prickly pear vinaigrette dressing.

DESERT GRANOLA PARFAIT... \$4.95
Our homemade granola features mesquite, agave nectar and saguaro seeds served with vanilla yogurt and seasonal fruit.

CHIA FRUIT SALAD ... \$2.95
Seasonal fresh fruit, chia seeds & prickly pear nectar.

RAINDROPS DESSERTS

MESQUITE OATMEAL COOKIE... \$1.00

CHIA BERRY POPSICLE ... \$1.50

DESSERT TAMALE ... \$2.50

Figure 9.1 The menu from the Desert Rain Café, which opened in March 2009 and features food prepared by members of the Tohono O'odham Nation. Chef Oden was the consulting chef when the restaurant first opened. The current chef kitchen manager, Ivalee Pablo (Tohono O'odham/Pima) worked for many years at the Arizona Inn in Tucson. The Desert Rain Café Menu downloaded on June 22, 2011 (http://www.desertraincafe.com/www.desertraincafe.com/Sample_Menu.html).

Sandy Garcia

Sandy Garcia is a registered tribal member from San Juan Pueblo (Ohkay Owingeh), but he grew up at Santa Clara Pueblo. Chef Garcia comes from a family of nine, and he is the youngest. His mother is from Santa Clara and his father is from San Juan. Chef Garcia stated that *owingeh* is Tewa for the word “village,” and that growing up in Santa Clara, his backyard was the Rio Grande, which he always considered a part of the village. Chef Garcia, for all of his accomplishments, is a relatively young chef, in his late thirties. He is professionally trained and holds a degree from the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York. He has short black hair and round, John Lennon-style glasses. I first met Chef Garcia in 2004 at one of the TOCA fundraising dinners in Phoenix and have worked with him at many events since then.

Everyone in Chef Garcia’s family cooks or hunts. His extended family—his cousins, his aunt, and his uncle—all hunt. They bring home their kill, which usually consists of deer, duck, geese, or rabbit, and the family then cooks the wild game. He remembers as a very small child watching his uncle skin and dress a deer, which had a huge impact on him. The Garcias always had a garden, usually planted between several family and extended-family homes. They also raised pigs. It was Chef Garcia’s father, who did all the cooking in the family, which influenced his cooking the most. Chef Garcia stated that his dad always made cooking entertaining and interesting; he suggested that this was because his dad was in the military for twenty years. His dad being in charge of cooking was very nontraditional for a Pueblo family. Much in the way that Chef Whitewater was told that men didn’t cook in his tribal community, Pueblo men don’t traditionally cook in their tradition either. Chef Garcia’s dad was probably one of very few men in a traditional Pueblo community who cooked for the family on a day-to-day basis. His dad cooked all of the daily meals, both breakfast and dinner.

When it came time for the annual Feast Day, however, everything was different. All of Chef Garcia’s aunts and sisters would get involved. His dad still remained involved in the feast, butchering all of the meats (Chef Garcia called this the “grunt work”), as opposed to the actual food preparation or serving of the Feast Day foods.

One of Chef Garcia's favorite memories from childhood is smelling the bread being baked by his aunts and sisters. He said this was a time when he lived without a care in the world, and that this was always a very happy time for him. All of the kids in his family would line up, one of his aunts would pull a loaf of bread out of the horno, and they would "break bread." This family ritual involved one of his aunts or sisters, who would break the bread into pieces, spread Parkay butter spread (Nestle 2006:106) all over it, and then share it with the other family members. It's one of his fondest family memories. Cooking and preparing food was always something he really enjoyed. Chef Garcia grew up in a family of Pueblo potters, and he said that while he tried his hand at pottery, and also at painting, he just didn't have the patience for these art forms. He really preferred the excitement of cooking and preparing food.

Chef Garcia always enjoyed cooking. Whether it was a Sunday night or after a hard day at school, cooking food was always enjoyable for him. The kitchen was a safe place, filled with smells that would just draw him in. It was a relaxing place where he didn't have to worry about anything. He could just focus on the food, the different smells, and help his dad prepare a roast or braise meat, assist with the barbecue, or help chop garlic. In his recounting of what made him decide to become a chef, smell played a huge role (Classen, Howes, and Synnott 1994; Stoller 1989; Ackerman 1990). It was part of his sensory perception (Korsmeyer 1991:1).

Sandy Garcia's first job was delivering produce to restaurants. He was able to see the chefs during some of these deliveries, and sometimes the chefs would call the warehouse after he had left to let them know the produce wasn't perfect. He was impressed by the chefs' standards for quality, he stated. This standard is what he brings into every commercial kitchen in which he has cooked.

Chef Garcia began cooking professionally at Dave's Not Here, a small café in Santa Fe. According to Chef Garcia, the neighborhood café was a place for friends to drop in, have something to eat, chat for a while, and then leave. It was the type of kitchen, according to him, where one could have conversations with the patrons. He befriended a couple that came in often to dine. The woman had been married to a chef, and her present husband was an artist. They were both artists now. She had also been a

chef in her “previous life” with her first husband. She suggested to Sandy that he go to the CIA cooking school. Sandy wanted to know more; he asked the couple over to his house for dinner one night. His new chef friend told him that she had worked her way up through the ranks of the kitchen at the school of “hard knocks,” and how hard that was for her. “If I were to do it all over again,” she stated, “I would go to the CIA.”

Sandy did a little research and decided to apply to the school, and was accepted. The next thing he had to do was find funding to attend the school. Through Santa Clara and the Eight Northern Pueblos, Sandy applied for funding and subsequently received half of the twenty-six-thousand-dollar tuition. With a number of additional grants and student loans, he was able to raise the balance. So Sandy, along with his wife and one-year-old son, moved to Hyde Park on Long Island, where he attended the CIA and received his degree in 1992. The CIA was considered one of the best culinary schools in the country at the time (Garcia 2006), and Sandy was determined to make it through the program and get his degree.

After his schooling, Chef Garcia became the chef de cuisine at Kai Restaurant, where he worked for many years, earning some of the biggest accolades in his career. Kai Restaurant, located at the Sheraton Wild Horse Pass Resort and Spa outside Phoenix on the Gila River Indian Reservation, is best known for showcasing the heritage, culture, art, and legends of the Pima and Maricopa tribes. According to the website, “Kai, meaning ‘seed’ in the Pima language, features a menu rich in creativity, history, and Native American culture. Executive Chef Michael O’Dowd incorporates the essence of the Pima and Maricopa tribes using locally farmed ingredients from the Gila River Indian Community to create unforgettable masterpieces”

(<http://www.wildhorsepassresort.com/dining-wild-horse-pass.html>). Kai is one of only six U.S. restaurants to achieve the AAA’s “Five Diamond” status, and the nation’s only Native American restaurant to have earned this distinction, along with a Mobil “Five Star” rating. Kai has been described as redefining Native American cuisine. Kai’s philosophy is to take “classical European culinary techniques, artful plating, and pairing with the finest wines” to bring an ancient cuisine into the modern spotlight (Betancourt 2009:vii).

Historically, the first farmers of the desert Southwest were the Hohokam, predecessors of today's tribes who utilized a large and complex canal system. Now intermittent because of modern dam construction, these streams, especially the Salt and Gila rivers, were the lifelines of Hohokam culture; they provided the water for hundreds of miles of irrigation canals (Gumerman and Haury 1979:75). In 2005, Chef Garcia hosted the TOCA fundraiser dinner at Kai as part of the Celebration of Basketry and Native Foods Festival, which was held at the Heard Museum in Phoenix.

For this event, Native American guest chefs were invited from all over the Southwest: Chef Fernando Divina, preparing the hors d'oeuvres featuring little tastes of foods from the Tohono O'odham; Chef Loretta Barrett Oden, preparing the fish entrée "Sonoran Meets the Bayou," a Houma Alligator Sauce Picante Quinoa, Peruvian Potato Salad, with alligator she procured from the Seminoles in Florida; Chef Walter Whitewater, preparing the poultry entrée, a marinated grilled quail with a New Mexico red chile ristra glaze; Chef Sandy Garcia, as the host chef, preparing the main entrée of buffalo tenderloin from the Cheyenne River Sioux tribe with barbecue chorizo (Spanish influenced), scarlett runner beans, smoked corn coulis, locally harvested Tohono O'odham cholla buds and saguaro syrup; and myself, preparing the dessert course, a New Mexico piñon and chocolate flourless torte (European style; the piñon nuts had been hand-harvested and winnowed). This was served with syrup made from hand-gathered prickly pear, locally harvested saguaro, and a farmer's market peach (Spanish-introduced) honey sauce.

In June 2006, when I interviewed Chef Garcia, he had just moved from Kai to northern California to work in a new restaurant in Davenport, approximately thirty miles north of Santa Cruz. This was the first time Chef Garcia had cooked outside the Southwest region, and he was excited at his new career possibilities. He was forming relationships with local farmers, learning more about what foods were grown, and was starting to put together a menu based on available locally foods and those he would order from Native American purveyors. His plan was to continue to order bison from the Inter-Tribal Bison Cooperative,⁶² as well as salmon from the Quinault Nation, a federation of seven tribes (Quinault, Hoh, Chehalis, Chinook, Cowlitz, Queets, and Quileute peoples)

in western Washington, and other Native American suppliers at the Inter-Tribal Agriculture Council (IAC, like ITBC, is working to provide a unified effort to promote change in Indian agriculture for the benefit of Indian people). Chef Garcia had developed relationships with other Native food suppliers he planned to use for this new venture in Davenport, California, called the Davenport Roadhouse.



Photo 9.17 Chef Sandy Garcia cooking outside on the beach in California near the Davenport Roadhouse with locally harvested sea kelp and sea greens.



Photo 9.18 Chef Garcia removes the skin from the wild caught salmon.



Photo 9.19 Chef Garcia prepares the hand harvested quinoa and amaranth greens.



Photo 9.20 Chef Garcia poaches the salmon.



Photo 9.21 Chef Garcia poaches the salmon with the wild mushrooms, sea kelp, sea greens, and mussels.



Photo 9.22 Chef Sandy Garcia prepares to plate his dish.



Photo 9.23 Chef Garcia places the poached salmon on the plate.



Photo 9.24 Hand-harvested quinoa and amaranth greens served with pouched wild salmon, steamed mussels, chanterelles, morels, and locally harvested sea kelp and sea greens. Chef Sandy Garcia prepared this dish in 2006 after moving to California.

“We just put in a garden, here in Davenport, outside the restaurant site. As a matter of fact, Jesse C. is working on it right now, as we speak; we are planting beans, planting herbs, varieties of herbs, lettuce and baby greens, carrots, and beets, so this is going to be a garden that . . . we’re looking at sustaining the restaurant.” Chef Garcia’s

plans included foods from the garden as well as from local farms and his Native American sources. He planned to use a wood-burning oven to make a variety of dishes from his own heritage of dishes as well as from other cultures. This new restaurant venture for Chef Garcia was more focused on global cuisine than just the new Native American cuisine for which he had become famous in his previous position at Kai.

Shortly after we conducted our interview, the Davenport Inn lost its primary funding and the deal fell through, but Chef Garcia began a new position at Bon Appétit Management Company,⁶³ an organic-sustainable on-site catering company specializing in serving high-tech Silicon Valley companies, like Google. Chef Garcia moved from Santa Cruz to San Jose, where he now lives. The mission at Bon Appétit is to use local sustainable foods. This mission is very much in line with Chef Garcia's values and goals. At Bon Appétit, professional chefs cook on-site at a variety of locations, from scratch, providing café and catering services for corporations, companies, colleges and universities, other educational institutions, and specialty venues to make healthy, nutritious menu choices for their patrons. This organization has become a model for sustainable food service.

Chef Garcia has been working at Bon Appétit since he left the Davenport Inn. He has researched the traditional cuisine from his Pueblo. He stated that

Because the tradition became altered with the arrival of the Spaniards, . . . we adopted so many means for preparation from the Spaniards, that if you look at what was traditional Native American Pueblo styles these days you'd easily look up Spain and find some of the same traditions there. For instance the peasant-style stews, family-style gathering and the use of ingredients from garbanzo to saffron to certain types of beans. . . . In order to explain true traditional methods of Native American cooking, I would have to go back in another direction.

Chef Garcia explained that when he was at Kai, his staff was nervous about cooking Native American Southwestern cuisine because they had had no experience with it in their professional culinary training. Chef Garcia had to encourage them to study and immerse themselves in both the Native American and Hispanic cultures to understand the foods and how they evolved. Here, place-based foods played a large part in what Chef

Garcia used to teach to young chefs working at Kai. Many of the foods served at Kai are local to the Sonoran desert and include items in the Tohono O'odham, Pima, and Maricopa traditional cuisines.



Photo 9.25 Chef Garcia preparing a bison tenderloin appetizer with bison from the Inter-Tribal Bison Cooperative (ITBC) (<http://www.itbcbison.com/about.php>).



Photo 9.26 Chef Garcia preparing Quinault salmon appetizers with salmon from the Northwest Coast (<http://www.wcssp.org/index.html>).



Photo 9.27 Chef Garcia puts the finish touch on a Native American cuisine appetizer plate.

Today these tribal groups are working to secure water rights that will enable them to grow their traditional crops and foods. Chef Garcia explained that many of the cooks who worked at Kai had never been exposed to Native American foods, and that he had to teach them about the Native American ingredients and foods, including the mesquite bean (*Prosopis velutina*), saguaro fruit and seeds (*Carnegiea gigantea*), cholla buds (*Opuntia acanthocarpa*), nopales, prickly pear (*Opuntia engelmannii*), chia seeds (*Salvia hispanica*), tepary beans (*Phaseolus acutifolius*), O’odham watermelon (*Citrullus lanatus*, introduced by Europeans), O’odham squash (*Cucurbita argyrosperma*), varieties of native corn (*Zea mays*) (Betancourt 2009). Many of these foods and seeds are being grown, harvested, packaged, and sold to chefs by TOCA as part of their economic outreach and community action group. Additional foods are being grown, harvested, marketed, and sold through Native Seeds/SEARCH, a non-profit organization dedicated

to conserving the rich legacy of agro-biodiversity of plants in the desert Southwest. Serving and sourcing local foods has always been important to Chef Garcia and a part of his mission as a chef. Chef Garcia no longer works in the Southwest, but he has remained active in promoting healthy foods and works on special Native American events at diverse venues.

Jack Strong

Jack Strong is a member of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians of Oregon. This band from the California/Oregon border was forced to relocate north. They are mostly Tolowa, Chetco, and Tututni peoples, but according to Chef Strong there are several additional bands in the confederation.⁶⁴ Chef Strong grew up in Siletz, Oregon, about twenty minutes from the Oregon coast. He is thirty-one years old and has been cooking professionally for fifteen years now, almost half of his life.

His mother was taken away from him when he was four, a very typical story on his reservation, according to Strong, and his grandparents raised him. Growing up, he took care of his elderly grandfather and learned to cook from him using a microwave oven. He remembers cooking things that a little kid could cook, such as hot dogs. But now that he is a professional chef, he says that his grandmother was most influential in what he cooks today. He used to watch her prepare chicken for his grandfather. Chef Strong remembers watching her cut every ingredient, noting that she cooked very traditionally and that she did not waste anything, not even the fish heads. Chef Strong said that elders in his community love fish heads and fish cheeks. Chef Strong remembers eating fish heads himself, but says that he really prefers the cheeks. (Among the Chinese,⁶⁵ fish cheeks are also considered a delicacy.) What stands out the most for Chef Strong is something his grandmother would say to him, that presentation was something that was “just simple.” “The food is going to be mixed up in your stomach, so why not mix it up on the plate?” he recounted. Chef Strong never wanted to do that; he always wanted to keep the items on his plate separate, even though, as his grandmother would say, “it would be mixed up in your stomach, anyway.”

Presentation for Chef Strong is a large part of how he serves his food today, but he always remembers what his grandmother would say, and how the two of them would

joke and laugh about him when he was young. “Even then,” he stated, “I wanted things to look a certain way on the plate.” Aesthetics plays a major role in his food preparation and presentation (Nelson 2008; Salvador 1997). He noted that his sense of aesthetics was completely different from that of his grandmother, even though they were both working with the same food. Chef Strong points out this distinction as an important factor in his identity not only as a chef but also as a person, and a characteristic that emerged in his childhood. During our interview there were layers of meaning in what he noted and pointed out about himself, who he was, how that influenced his life choices and who he has become today.

Although Strong’s mother wasn’t physically present in his life, he stressed emphatically that she was important to him, and he recounted all the things she accomplished in her life. “She was on the first tribal council in the 1970s, helping to get sovereign rights back for our tribe; she was a nurse; she was going to school; she was a single mother; and she was really, really smart. She had a knack for creativity, and that’s where I think I got my creativity from,” he stated. “So even though she wasn’t physically here, through her genetically, I think that I embody who she was.”

Chef Strong’s sense of identity, not only as a person but also as a chef, is directly tied to his family, his Siletz roots, and his sense of place (Feld and Basso 1996). The foods he grew up with were different from those of the other Southwestern chefs in this ethnography, reinforcing distinctions between regional Native American cuisine and place (Gabaccia 1998). For instance, while Chef Strong was growing up, fish was a dominant ingredient, whereas sheep was a dominant ingredient for Chef Whitewater. Foods vary regionally, which directly influences the primary ingredients in the diet (Cattle and Schwerin 1985:1). This is also an important component in the Native American foods movement, which will be discussed in the following chapters. Writing about the re-indigenizing of bodies and minds through Native foods, Nelson states, “Our very survival, individually and collectively, may depend on us taking back control over the quality and production of the food we put into our bodies” (2008:180). She draws the distinction between what we eat and where we eat as being a part of who we are.

Chef Strong considers himself a young chef de cuisine at thirty-one, and professionally, in the culinary world, he is indeed young for his accomplishments (Dornenburg and Page 2003). His present position at Kai is his opportunity to retain the high ratings the restaurant presently holds. He replaced Chef Garcia (introduced above) as chef de cuisine. In December 2006, when Chef Strong and I sat down to record his interview, he had been at Kai for only eight months.

Chef Strong's culinary training began at Lane Community College (LCC) in Oregon. He is one of LCC's success stories, and the college has used him in their advertising campaigns. Before coming to Kai Restaurant, he worked at the Phoenician in Scottsdale, Arizona. He had "good press," according to Chef Strong, remaining in the public spotlight throughout his time there, which he believes has helped him rise as a professional chef.

Chef Strong's first job after culinary school was with Adam Bernstein, a New Yorker, who was opening a restaurant called Adam's Place in downtown Eugene, Oregon. Bernstein was a graduate of CIA and had worked at large country clubs as well as catering and consulting. According to Chef Strong, he was a world traveler. Bernstein just celebrated his tenth anniversary at his restaurant. Chef Strong helped open the restaurant and started out at all the kitchen stations. He was the lunch cook, worked the pantry (including baking),⁶⁶ and was even the dishwasher until the business was well underway. "There just wasn't a budget or cash flow to fill these other positions until we started getting business," he said. Even after working there for eight years, Chef Strong said laughingly that he still occasionally did dishes. While doing so many of the stations was more work, it gave him skills in the kitchen that he wouldn't have learned otherwise. Chef Strong went onto say,

While I was at this restaurant, I worked my way up in the kitchen. I began to take over as the lunch chef and was the co-sous chef at night with Paul Martin, who was a chef from Philadelphia. . . . He taught me not only about cooking but to read, read, read. His strength was reading, and that helped me to be more of a creative guy. He read a lot about what was going on in the culinary world. I've always been like a sponge, especially when I was younger. I would take everyone's strengths and make them my own and kind of filter out their weaknesses. After working with Adam for some time, he took me to Spain. It was

the first time I had ever been out of Oregon. I was the first person in my family to leave Oregon . . . so it was kind of a big deal.

Chef Strong grew up in a very small reservation town and no one really left, he said. Adam Bernstein took him to Spain because he had just opened a tapas restaurant and jazz club next door, and he wanted Chef Strong to learn the foods of Spain. They spent two weeks there, and then Bernstein took him to New Orleans and up the Northwest coast to Seattle, where they sampled all of the restaurants they could find that were doing fresh, local, seasonal dishes. Chef Strong learned a great deal about food and cuisine during this time and helped open the new tapas restaurant and jazz club. The restaurant, now called Adam's Sustainable Table, is an Oregon Tilth-certified organic restaurant (<http://tilth.org/certification>). Chef Strong developed an understanding of fine dining and Spanish cuisine, laying the foundation for his career under the mentorship of an executive chef with a strong French and Asian food influence.

After developing a high level of skill in the kitchen, and becoming the co-executive chef at Adam's Place Restaurant, Strong took a position at the Phoenician resort in Scottsdale, Arizona, where he served as the sous chef for Windows on the Green restaurant. He was responsible for all aspects of the culinary program and day-to-day kitchen operations. The Phoenician is a huge property with almost fourteen hundred employees. According to Chef Strong, this was very intimidating. He said that he put his head down, cooked his best, and looked toward the future. It was here that he developed a strong foundation for Southwestern cuisine.

Taking over as chef de cuisine at Kai Restaurant after working at the Phoenician was a wonderful opportunity for him. The restaurant serves sixty to seventy dinners a night, and on a busy night up to eighty dinners, a great deal of work because this is a highly rated restaurant. Every detail, every ingredient, and every placement of food on the plate played a role in the execution of the Native cuisine served at Kai. For Strong, this was an important and strategic statement as an up and coming Native American chef.



Photo 9.28 Chef Jack Strong of Kai Restaurant in 2006.



Photo 9.29 Chef Strong with his kitchen staff at Kai.

Chef Strong is an advocate of locally raised food, of working with local purveyors, including the farmers, and whenever possible of visiting the farms that supply food to the restaurant. His passion for food definitely expands beyond the commercial kitchen. As the chef de cuisine at Kai, he took his staff out to visit some of the local farms. He started this practice in Oregon, where there were many small farms. He took a group of kitchen staff to a goat farm in the mountains between Eugene and the coast, about a two-hour drive by car, where they milked the goats and learned the entire process of making cheese. This, Chef Strong stated, connects the staff with the food and the food with the staff. “Being passionate about what we do and where our food at the restaurant comes from has always been a driving force for me.” He spoke about more of the ingredients that were important to him. Like the other Native chefs, he stated, “the fresh ingredients and the highest quality ingredients are obviously the most important, but things that are treated properly, being kind and respect[ing] . . . the animals, plants, and land are also very, very important.” Chef Whitewater and some of the other Native chefs made this same point. It is an ideology, a way of looking at plants, animals, and food that is rooted in who these chefs are, a part of each individual chef’s identity, and a part of a larger identity that is affiliated with and attached to community, tribe, and place.

Chef Strong emphasized that because Kai is a Native American-owned-and-operated resort that specializes in Native American cuisine, he has found more options for where his ingredients come from and how they can be acquired than at the large resort where he had worked in the past. He gets produce such as eggplants, fresh herbs, peppers, chilies, lemongrass, and pomegranates, from the Gila River elementary and middle school gardens and from their agricultural programs. Working with the children in the local Native community is important to Chef Strong. He said it gives him a good feeling, a sense of community and his role in the community.

Chef Strong works with the person in charge of planting, a man named Tim, who is actively incorporating foodstuffs indigenous to the area. “They have just planted the i’toi onions (*Allium ameloprasum*),⁶⁷ which is originally a European shallot that is now indigenous to this area, and taste wise it is a cross between a shallot and garlic,” Chef Strong stated. This Spanish-introduced food has been saved from extinction by devoted

home gardeners, who offered it first to Gary Paul Nabhan when he founded Native Seeds/SEARCH. It is one of several examples of plants that are being revitalized in Indian communities and on Indian lands as part of the Native foods movement and the re-indigenizing of Native people through Native foods (Nelson 2008; Nabhan 2009). “We are working with Tim on food items that we can incorporate into our menus.” Chef Strong also noted,

We use some stuff from that farm for our dinner salads, and the i’itoi onion greens are in our dinner salads as well. Seeing pieces here and there in the salads and the food we put out every night is great. We try to use them as much as possible and more [than] in the past, and also other organizations like TOCA and [the] Native Seeds/SEARCH[es] of the world, the tribes from Alaska and the Northwest Coast, so we are using all of these guys and all of these purveyors as much as we possibly can. Sometimes it can be a hit or miss, whether it is shipping problems or something of that nature, but definitely we are working on our end as much as we can to use as much product from either Native American entrepreneurs or farmers or anything possible.

As with a growing number of chefs, Chef Strong wants to use locally grown and harvested foods. He prefers Native American-grown and -harvested foods. Being in touch with where the food comes from, by visiting the farms, knowing the farmers, and working with the school children on their gardens, makes him take more ownership of the food he serves in the restaurant at Kai, and it makes things more personal for him. This was common in the discourse of the Native American chefs with whom I worked, but other chefs outside of this unique community also stated this connection.

Chef Strong’s approach to food is combining Native American ideology, Native American food ingredients from the Southwest, and Northwest Coast foods, with the French techniques he learned in culinary school. For him, this was the foundation of Native American cuisine. “Only two chefs,” he observed, “had done this in the eighties and nineties in the Phoenix and Tucson area, and they were Vincent Guerithault from Vincent on Camelback and Yanos Wilder from Yanos Restaurant. Even though they were both non-Native chefs, they were serving an early version of a Southwest cuisine which would today become what I would call Native American cuisine.” The distinction that Chef Strong made during our interview is important.

Today there are classically (French) trained Native American chefs who can also cook their own traditional foods. Chef Strong emphasized that this gives Native American cuisine “a voice.” The foods, styles, and aesthetics of what Native American cuisine has become didn’t exist before. This is one of the fundamental ideas expressed by the Native chefs today. As Chef Strong put it, “Native American cuisine is being cooked today by Native American chefs.” He elevated his voice and continued, “This is something that is a new phenomenon in the culinary world. It is a crucial moment, for us, in the defining of Native American cuisine. We can now define what our own cuisine is, and not have someone else do that for us.”

Chef Michael O’Dowd, the executive chef at the Sheraton Wild Horse Pass resort overseeing the entire resort, is non-Native; Chef Strong, a Native American chef, is the chef de cuisine of the Kai Restaurant and the one who purchase, executes, and serves the food at the Kai on a daily basis. While Chef Strong has the more “hands-on” position, both chefs work collaboratively to bring and promote Native American cuisine to the guests at the resort.

The two also worked together with author Marian Betancourt on *The New Native American Cuisine: Five-Star Recipes from the Chefs at Arizona’s Kai Restaurant* (Betancourt 2009). Chapters in the beginning of the book focus on the bounty of the Sonoran Desert (with some historical information), on reclaiming agricultural heritage, on the restaurant as the showcase for the story, and on how the chefs put a new spin on an ancient cuisine to create their version of “the New Native American Cuisine.”

During Chef Strong’s tenure at Kai, he has furthered the advancement of Native American cuisine and given back to the local native community through the resort’s programs with Gila Crossing School. For him, this has been an amazing experience.

In April 2009, after Kai was named Arizona’s highest-rated restaurant, receiving top marks in local and national media, Chef Strong accepted a position at the Salish Lodge and Spa as the chef de cuisine of The Dining Room. The Salish Lodge and Spa is ranked among the best small resorts in the world; it is a AAA “Four Diamond” lodge overlooking the two-hundred-sixty-eight-foot Snoqualmie Falls in Snoqualmie, Washington. The resort is located thirty minutes east of downtown Seattle. It is managed

and operated by the Seattle-based Columbia Hospitality, Inc. With nearly twenty years of experience in the culinary industry, “Chef Strong will be an exemplary addition to our world-class culinary team,” said Lenny Zilz, general manger of Salish Lodge and Spa. “His Pacific Northwest roots and Native American heritage are a natural fit here at the lodge and we look forward to sharing his talents with our guests,” (<http://www.salishlodge.com/diningroom.php>). The restaurant offers Chef Strong’s indigenous Northwest cuisine featuring farm-fresh, native ingredients of the Pacific Northwest.

Within a year of taking the job at the Salish Lodge and Spa, Chef Strong was offered the executive chef position of his tribe’s casino and golf resort, the Chinook Winds Casino Resort (http://www.chinookwindscasino.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=81&Itemid=104). Overlooking the Pacific Ocean from the Lincoln City shore, the resort features the Rogue River Steakhouse, Rogue River Lounge, Siletz Bay Buffet, Euchre Creek Deli, Aces Bar and Grill, and Chinook’s Seafood Grill. Chef Strong emailed me to tell me he was approaching his one-year celebration at the resort and to let me know what he was working on (Strong 2011).

This is a year of change, as yesterday we completely emptied out our Seafood restaurant at our hotel for a remodel in both the front of the house and the back of the house. It’s looking like in June we will remodel our buffet with a new menu. . . . I have already completely changed all banquet menus (with great feedback from guests and the General Manager), created a new menu from our twenty-four-seven deli that is served anywhere on the gaming floor and with my extra time I will change our Steak House restaurant menu—by July—so a lot is going on here . . . (Strong 2011).

Chef Strong said he was happy to be “home,” near where he grew up. He gets to see his family much more often than when he was in the Southwest. He stated that although he did miss Arizona, and the Southwest in general, he had come full circle since starting his career and was looking forward to settling into his new professional role and work at the Chinook Winds Casino and Resort.

Arlie Doxtator

Arlie Doxtator, a Native American chef from Wisconsin, was invited to cook at several events with many of the other Native chefs from the Southwest through a relationship with Chef Nephi Craig's Native American Culinary Association (NACA). Chef Doxtator was one of the Native chefs who took part in the 2006 TOCA fundraising dinner at Kai Restaurant at the Gila River Casino Resort and Spa during the time of Chef Strong's tenure. Chef Doxtator prepared a pumpkin crème brûlée with cinnamon whipped cream. Chef Doxtator was also one of the participating chefs at an event sponsored by the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center IPCC in Albuquerque in October 2007 called "Connecting Communities: Native Foods and Wellness." This event connected him to a Native culinary network and to chefs practicing Native American cuisine. I had the opportunity to cook with him at both events and decided to include his voice in this ethnography. What Chef Doxtator is doing in terms of Native American cuisine, with and for his own community, is a good example of community collaboration in this accounting of chefs' discourses and practices.

Chef Doxtator is a member of the Sovereign Oneida Nation of Wisconsin,⁶⁸ the People of the Standing Stone. The Oneida Nation is one of five founding nations of the Iroquois Confederacy. They call themselves Haudenosaunee or People of the Longhouses. They originally inhabited central New York, particularly around what is now called Oneida Lake, and they are part of a large tribal group of bands that live in Wisconsin, New York, and Ontario, Canada. The name "Oneida" is the English version for the Onyota'a:ka, as they are called in their own language.

Chef Doxtator grew up on the Oneida Reservation, just north of a small town called Freedom, south and west of Green Bay, Wisconsin. He learned how to cook by watching his mother. When he was old enough he started watching the PBS series by Justin Wilson, a Cajun cook (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0295117/>), and Julia Child's cooking shows (<http://www.pbs.org/juliachild/>) in the late seventies and early eighties. Both of his grandmothers passed away when he was very young, but Chef Doxtator has one memory of his paternal grandmother making a bean soup from wax beans, green beans, and bacon for him and his cousins, which they thought was unbelievably good.

“While other kids were eating unhealthy foods, we were lucky enough to enjoy our grandmother’s bean soup, which to me as a kid was the best thing in the world.”

When Chef Doxtator was small his mother would bake many dishes from scratch, but mostly she used convenience foods. She did not do much “scratch cooking” other than baking, Chef Doxtator commented. “However, when I was younger, I found some pork chops in the fridge one day, while my parents were away doing errands. I found an Italian pork chop dish in one of my mother’s old cookbooks and, just on a whim, made the recipe, and it was a total success.” This started Doxtator down the road to becoming a professional chef.

Chef Doxtator has been cooking for most of his life—professionally for twenty years and cooking in general for more than thirty years. His professional catering company is called Four Winds Foods. He has been a private chef, a travel vendor, and a food service consultant, including kitchen and restaurant design. He went to culinary school for two and a half years but never completed his degree. Chef Doxtator laughed and commented, “I’m on the 30-year plan” to receive a degree. Doxtator has cooked for small dinner groups of twelve up to a huge catered event of eleven hundred and fifty people at the Oneida Casino.

For Chef Doxtator, a food’s source is a very important component in his cooking. Tsyunhehkwa, meaning “life sustenance” in the Oneida language, is an agricultural community and cultural program of the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin. Founded on the idea of self-sustainability and service for the Oneida Nation and the community, this group supplies Chef Doxtator’s food.

The organization has three main components: agriculture, a cannery, and a retail outlet. Chef Doxtator works mostly with the agricultural component, which supplies heirloom white corn and field crops in the summer. On the 83-acre certified organic site, the tribe grows corn, beans, squash, fruits, and vegetables. They also have a solar greenhouse, where they grow herbs and berries. Their growing year starts in February, when they plant the vegetable and herb seedlings in the greenhouse. Some are later transplanted outside.

Tsyunhehkwa also raises beef, and they raise and process free-range poultry and farm-fresh eggs. One of their primary responsibilities, according to Jeff Metoxen, the manager, is caring for their Three Sisters—corn, beans, and squash. Metoxen accompanied Chef Doxtator to the “Connecting Communities” event at the IPCC in Albuquerque. There he set up a booth with Oneida traditional foods for sale to the public; he also presented a talk on the Tsyunhehkwa project to the attending tribal members and general public.

According to the Tsyunhehkwa website, the Oneida believe that it is an obligation to tend to and take care of their sacred crops. This is evidenced through their connection to the white corn, which is explained in their creation stories. The website states, “Caring for the White Corn goes hand in hand with caring for and respecting their natural environment and all that it provides in return. It is our job to respect all that the Creator has offered, and to view food as the natural medicines and health provided to them by the Creator” (<http://www.oneidanation.org/tsyunhehkwa/page.aspx?id=3896>).

For Chef Doxtator, the primary sacred ingredients for his people are the Three Sisters. Each year the Oneida Nation plants three to six acres of the Iroquois White Corn. Much of the planting is done with modern equipment (i.e., tractor and seeder), but it is done in accordance with the cycle of traditional ceremonies and the lunar cycle.

Jeff Metoxen told me a story at the IPCC “Connecting Communities” event in 2007: “Recently, a non-tribal land owner and neighbor decided not to have her field planted with commercial corn, in order to reduce the risk of cross-pollinating the Oneida white corn. Some of the modern corn hybrids were being planted outside of Oneida land and could potentially cross with the ancestral heirloom Oneida white corn. By doing this, she was protecting the seeds and keeping the Oneida heirloom seed pure. Many of the natural and organic growers in the area work together in this way to protect each other’s crops and seeds.” This story is important, Metoxen told me, because it shows the relationship they have with their neighbors (Metoxen 2007).

The Green Corn stage of the sacred white corn is celebrated in August, with the Green Corn Ceremony. The Oneida look for traits in their corn that will provide the strongest seed for the coming years, such as stalk strength, average height, one ear per

stalk, and eight kernel rows; these cobs will be saved for future use. After husking, during the harvest, the community makes more than two hundred braids, each with sixty-five ears in them, which are hung to dry in the traditional manner. The rest of the corn is stored in racks in their greenhouse for use in winter. The fibers that connect traditional and contemporary education for Native people are intertwined. The dynamic, physical life that the great-grandparents lived, of fishing, hunting, growing, and gathering their own food, is no longer an option (Ross 2008:201). Tsynhehkwa is a way to keep agricultural and food traditions alive and still be able to exist in the modern world.

The Three Sisters are the most prevalent ingredients in Chef Doxtator's community and an important part of his culture. He noted, "We even have a housing site, named the Three Sisters, as well." The white corn alone yields many food products including the raw corn, dehydrated corn, corn soup, corn bread, and corn flour. These products are processed at the cannery and are available at their retail store. The cannery is also a training facility, which teaches about the preservation of a multitude of local foods and crops. The cannery processes their traditional white corn into soups, including pork and smoked turkey soup, cornbread, cornmeal, corn flour, and dehydrated corn. The Oneida's agricultural component provides produce such as cucumbers, vine-ripened tomatoes, onions, garlic, cilantro, fresh dill, and a variety of hot peppers and chiles, which are used to produce salsa and pickles, while the berries they grow are made into jams and jellies. Oneida Nation Farms also processes apples into applesauce, without sugar, as part of their series of healthy foods to combat diabetes. They make their own apple pie filling and dehydrated apple chips as well as homemade cookies. They fulfill orders for their fresh-hulled corn soup and traditional cornbread for commercial kitchens and chefs.

Chef Doxtator makes white corn bread the traditional Oneida way, he said. His daughter's grandmother taught him, from his wife's side of the family (his mother-in-law). He referred to her as his "daughter's grandmother," which he said followed their kinship system. He said he also makes corn soup the traditional Oneida way, described as a three-day process. During our interview he stated that approximately ninety-five percent of his ingredients come from what he considers to be his native heritage. This

was the highest percentage cited for use of heritage ingredients of any Native American chefs interviewed.

Place and place-based names, including Tsyunhehkwa and the land used for the Oneida community farm, all hold primary importance in the foods Chef Doxtator cooks and how he approaches designing the menus for his clients. The sensory memories that accompanied the lessons Chef Doxtator learned, in conjunction with the local foods that he cooked, anchor them to particular places. These places for Chef Doxtator are centered around his knowledge and way of being in the world. The connection with a specific ecosystem and the knowledge that he could provide for himself and his family are important to him. “Native food traditions honor food with prayer and story, with song and dance,” Doxtator stated. “Eating is an intimate act; all of our tastes, our smell, and our senses are involved in this essential act of eating food” (Nelson 2008:181). To Chef Doxtator, these are important ingredients in his cooking and in being a chef.

Although his training is European, Chef Doxtator learned to utilize his native ingredients in contemporary ways without losing connection to his identity through land, place, and heritage. This was very important to him. Native American cuisine, he stated, is his way of sharing who he is as a Native chef with his clients in his catering business. Chef Doxtator called this his fusion side of cooking. He said, “If I am doing Native American food, I will always use the best Native American ingredients, and then maybe use an Asian-type cooking method for them, or maybe a French or Italian method, and then just the way I display them on the plate becomes my own way of expressing who I am as a chef.”

Chef Doxtator, as did other Native American chefs interviewed, described himself as cooking contemporary foods with classical European techniques, and ancient foods of native heritage. In the case of the Kai Restaurant chefs, the native heritage and ingredients were from other Native American communities but were used in conjunction with local ones. Much of how the chefs cooked depended on their sources of food ingredients. Chef Doxtator was able to procure many of his ingredients locally, from his own tribe. This made a huge difference in the foods he served and the way he prepared them. While presentation was an important factor to Chef Doxtator, he pointed out,

You could have the best-looking food, but if it does not taste good, you've wasted everybody's time. The texture is hugely important, how it feels in the mouth, and the contrasting textures are things I like to focus on. Balance is huge in what I do; you know, every part of the tongue, every taste bud on the tongue, sweet, savory, sour, or salty, should be in that dish, no matter what it is. You should be able to, at some point, detect everything. Everything should be balanced.



Photo 9.30 Chef Arlie Doxtator with his dessert Pumpkin Crème Brulee with cinnamon whipped cream, his dessert for the 2006 TOCA fundraiser dinner at Kai Restaurant.



Photo 9.31 Chef Doxtator cooking vegetables in an open pit with wood, rocks, and sand. The vegetable are roasted and then used for a variety of dishes. (Photo by Franco W. Lee)

Taste is the fundamental component in Chef Doxtator's cooking. Making sense of taste is, for Chef Doxtator, not only literal taste, the kind that takes place in the mouth, but also a part of sense perception (Korsmeyer 1999:1). Here I refer to how the mouth perceives the foods put into it. Chef Doxtator was interested in how and why the body interprets taste (although not from an anthropological perspective); he was interested in why people like the taste of certain foods. He wanted to know how food makes the individual feel, and the role it plays in ceremony. Foods qualify as symbolic and meaningful in a host of ways, for they are representational and expressive. These functions are exploited in some of the most important social rituals, such as the religious ceremonies I describe in chapters 7 and 8 on Native cooks and ceremonial foods, in commemorative occasions, and can also be seen in the common and familiar acts of everyday eating (Korsmeyer 1999:7), as well as the foods one eat in restaurants. Chef

Doxtator was interested in the familiar acts of everyday eating and in creating an experience for his patrons that was “sensory packed.”

Chef Doxtator stressed that, in addition to taste, people could identify his dishes by the way they looked. “Where I’m from, in the Green Bay area, people know when—and they are serious, no modesty—people know when our chef Arlie is cooking. They can tell by looking at the plates, which one is mine.” As do the other chefs he has a distinctive way of presenting his food.

In summary, Chef Doxtator, as does each chef in this ethnography has a distinct aesthetic style. Each chef had a set of primary ingredients, usually based on tribal affiliation and on the place where they worked, cooked, or prepared the foods. Each chef stated that taste was an important factor in his or her food, both taste in the literal sense and taste in the sensory sense of perception. How the food they prepare is interpreted depends on the people who eat it. Each chef cooks differently to fit the audience; different audiences desire different tastes. Each chef thinks of food as a form of expression and that they are the vehicles, as chefs, through which it is expressed.

Finally, these characteristics were much more highly developed in chefs who had been practicing their profession or craft for long periods of time than in the younger chefs who had recently begun their cooking careers.

Chapter 10
The New Generation of Native American Chefs
Recent Culinary School Graduates

When I first began this project, my intended focus was on Native American chefs. As the research progressed, I realized that there is also a community of emerging Native American chefs. This new generation is not only younger, all of them have attended a culinary school. To my surprise, and after years of working with Native American communities and chefs, I found there to be more young Native men than women who were aspiring to be professional chefs working in commercial kitchens. Two of the chefs in this chapter went to professional culinary schools (one to the Scottsdale Culinary Institute, the other to a hotel/restaurant management program at Central Arizona College), and two others were completing programs at Santa Fe Community College (SFCC). The SFCC culinary arts program offers a two-year associates degree designed to prepare students for entry-level positions. The SFCC's culinary arts program, under Chef Michelle "Mica" Roetzer, has opened doors for many students, providing integral skills needed to get a job.

Georges Auguste Escoffier, the legendary figure in the development of modern French cuisine, stated, "Everything is relative but there is a standard which must not be deviated from, especially with reference to the basic culinary preparations." In the early twentieth century he elevated cooking to the status of a respected profession. To this day he has remained influential throughout the world. In *Becoming a Chef* (2003), Escoffier is quoted as saying, "Society had little regard for the culinary profession. This should not have been so, since cuisine is a science and an art and [he] who devotes his talent to its service deserves full respect and consideration" (Dornenburg and Page 2003:9). French techniques remain the standard in the industry.

The young chefs in this chapter all have these standard culinary skills. They know how to make a basic stock, how to make a sauce, how to use knives, and an array of other culinary fundamentals. Practical experience, however, comes from working in kitchens under a range of chefs in a variety of establishments. And this only happens with time. The desire to become a chef comes from early influences, whether home cooking, a

coming from family of cooks, living close to the land, growing up in a restaurant, or eating out in restaurants while growing up.

Alice Waters is quoted as saying, “most of it’s in the genes. The really good cooks seem to just have a natural ability. They don’t exactly learn it—it’s just in them” (Dornenburg and Page 2003:33). Most successful chefs believe that you are born with a good palate, just as a musician is born with good ears. And Escoffier advocated that a good cook who is born with an interest in gastronomy will naturally become, under favorable circumstances, a more accomplished artist than one for whom cooking is an unpleasant task. The chefs presented here are all young (in terms of professional chefs), and some are earlier in their careers than others. What I present is only the beginning for them. Their career paths will unfold over time and can only be understood by following them for their entire careers.

Nephi Craig

Nephi Craig is White Mountain Apache on his mother’s side and Navajo (Diné) on his father’s side. He was born on the White Mountain Apache Reservation in 1980 and lived there until he was about ten or eleven years old; in 1991 his family moved to Window Rock. Nephi graduated from Window Rock High School. His father, Vincent Craig (deceased in May 2010), was the famed Navajo artist, singer, songwriter, musician, humorist, poet, and creator of the boarding-school survivor and comic strip hero “Mutton Man.”

Chef Craig commented during our interview that while growing up he bounced back and forth between Arizona and New Mexico as well as “Rez to Rez,” (the Navajo Reservation and the White Mountain Apache Reservation; Craig 2006). He made the analogy that his ancestors were nomadic, and that he thought he was still the same way, both as a person and as a chef. Chef Craig is a classically trained chef who draws specifically on his own cultural roots for culinary inspiration. His earliest culinary memories are gardening and cooking with his mother, and selling their baked goods to neighbors. During part of the time that Nephi Craig was growing up his dad was attending the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque while the family lived in Whiteriver, Arizona. His father would travel back and forth, but this was financially hard

on the family. During this time, his mother grew a garden so that the family could have “fresh stuff,” as Chef Craig called it, to cook with. He prepared with his mother an assortment of simple confections that were portioned into sandwich bags, loaded into an igloo cooler, and then put on a wagon and sold throughout their community. This provided Chef Craig’s first sense that cooking was something that he enjoyed, something he could get better at, and something he could do to make money.

Many family members actually influenced Chef Craig as a young man. His mother, his father, and his grandmother on his father’s side were the most influential. His grandmother worked for a school in Gallup, New Mexico. His dad’s sister, Chef Craig’s Aunt Vivian, was also an “awesome cook,” according to Chef Craig, and very influential while he was growing up.

His first culinary experience was making cheese sandwiches. “We would reach into the refrigerator and pull out that big, famous block of commodity cheese and just take some bread and make cheese sandwiches with the commodities he had received, cheese, mayonnaise, and bread. I remember that being my favorite meal as a little kid, and I didn’t know that that big block of cheese was part of the foods given to us by the government.” Chef Craig commented that he has come a long way since those childhood memories of cooking with commodity foods.

Chef Craig’s first cooking job was at the White Mountain reservation casino. He cooked there for a while and then, as a young adult, he attended culinary school at Scottsdale Community College. He left school after a year and apprenticed at The Country Club at DC Ranch, under Chef Chris Olson, and at Mary Elaine’s at the Phoenician Resort, two of Arizona’s finest restaurants. He has since worked every station at DC Ranch, honing his craft. When he was younger, he had created a timeline for his career. By the age of twenty-three he had reached his first goal as a chef, having worked at two fine-dining restaurants in Phoenix, which prompted him to set new goals.

Since beginning his professional culinary career, he has cooked in São Paulo, Brazil; Cologne, Germany; London, UK; and Osaka, Japan. He has also conducted workshops in Native communities, teaching about food at the grass-roots level. Over the past eleven years he has cooked at the James Beard House in New York, at the National

Museum of the American Indian in Washington D.C., in Native American health departments, at Navajo Reservation high school culinary programs, as well as for the White Mountain Apache Tribe and the Navajo Nation.

Chef Craig reached a career turning point in 2003 when he realized the importance of organically grown local foods. While he was working there, Mary Elaine's had bought a locally ground, artisan, hand-ground cornmeal, a food that Chef Craig had known all his life. Chef Craig stated,

It's from our ancient meals and this food was being planted, it's good, it's sweet, it's nice, and they were all there, these four- and five-star chefs ogling over this simple food that we enjoyed as Native peoples all of our lives. . . . It really planted the seed inside me and gave me the confidence to say, hey, these are just all the foods around me, tomatoes, different herbs, different spices, beans, corn, that have been put on the menu, and they all came from the indigenous cultures of the Americas.

While in culinary school, Chef Craig was taught the "huge picture" of food, including world gastronomy and world history. He recalled that he felt like he was being "force-fed" an intense curriculum featuring all the other cuisines of the world, with little or no mention of the contributions of his own tribe and the tribes around him (Craig 2006). The only mention of anything Native was that corn, beans, and squash originated from Mexico, with no mention at all of the Native American nations (Craig 2006). This made Chef Craig feel that his Native foods, and his people, were not being taken seriously enough to be mentioned, in any of the books he was required to read (Craig 2006).

Wanting to ensure authentic representation of Native Americans in the culinary industry and professional world of cookery, Chef Craig founded, in 2001, The Native American Culinary Association (NACA, www.nativeculinary.com/forum), a grass-roots network of chefs and cooks from across the Americas, from Alaska to Argentina. NACA's mission is to develop and preserve Native American culinary traditions for future generations with a forward-looking approach to modern Native American cookery and cuisine. "It is by working with people from Native communities and the public that NACA aims to achieve these goals. Some of the most well-known and renowned Native American chefs are now a part of the NACA organization" (Craig 2006).

Shortly after starting NACA, Chef Craig went to Washington (state) to work with another Native American cuisine chef, Fernando Divina, at a restaurant called Tendrils at Sage Cliffe Resort. Located on the Columbia River, this resort includes the Cave B Inn and Spa, Tendrils Vineyard Restaurant, Chiwana Village, and the Cave B Estate Winery. Chef Fernando Divina is a well-known chef who worked for many years in Phoenix, at Lon's at the Hermosa, the first restaurant location to sponsor the Native American chefs for the fundraiser dinner for TOCA in 2004. Chef Divina is known for his locally sourced ingredients, on-site restaurant gardens, and work with a variety of foods from the Americas, as well as for his James Beard Award-winning book, *Foods of the Americas* (Divina and Divina 2004), co-authored with his wife, Marlene, a member of the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa in Montana. Chef Craig worked with Chef Divina for seven months before returning to Arizona. He needed to be near the family, he asserted, and his ancestral homelands.



Photo 10.1 Cave B Inn casitas at Sage Cliffe Resort where Chef Craig worked with Chef Divina.

Place (Basso and Feld 1996) is important to the majority of the Native chefs that I interviewed. Remaining or working close to his ancestral homelands is extremely important to Chef Craig. He uses and features ingredients that come from both of his reservations. The most important ingredient, he stated, is water, “because it’s the

foundation of flavor and water gives life.” Water is also the most important ingredient for the Native cooks described in chapter 7, and the recurring theme of its importance was apparent in all of the ceremonies, chapter 8. The two Native chefs who made this distinction were Chef Whitewater and Chef Craig.



Photo 10.2 Chef Divina’s garden at Tendril’s Vineyard Restaurant.

“Water is followed in importance by salt,” Chef Craig stated. “Apache salt is a natural-occurring salt from the reservations, deep in the canyons of the Salt River. This is a very sacred site to the Apache people,” he said. Then he continued, “You have to go way down in the canyons. You take a long hike down there to get the salt, and when you get there you have to pray; then you take only what you need. First you take a bite of the salt, and that is how it is harvested.” Chef Craig began to recite a story.

The salt banks used to have an actual cave, it was the salt caves. In the 1800s, when the copper mining town of Globe was blooming and the town [was] being built, people were exploring the canyons for copper and they stumbled across the Apache salt banks. This is where the Apache people had seen spirituality, sustenance, and this beautiful, beautiful white salt that they used in a variety of ways. The miners didn’t exactly see eye to eye with the Native people, and they saw only profit, so they began to blast it. So we [Apaches] lost that—that one outer wall of the salt caves and that probably took thousands of years to form. A couple of days later they found these miners—these two miners down by the river and by the salt banks—and they had been evidently struck by lightning, and they were dead. This outraged everyone in the local towns, and they blamed the Apaches; they said the Apaches murdered them. It looked like they had desecrated this site. So it caused an uproar in our Apache communities, and it caused a lot of the headmen, from not only White Mountain but also from San

Carlos, to get this site protected under their own laws. My great-grandfather on my mother's side was one of the guys that helped get it protected—his name was Carter Johnson. I named my son after him.

Chef Craig was passionate about this story, reciting it to me in a real performance (Bauman 1984). It was close to his heart, and it represents who he is. Then he stated,

I was really apprehensive about using this salt because I had seen it used in ceremony, in prayer; when people were sad and hurting, they would use this to help cleanse and, you know, kind of recuperate. So I didn't know if putting it out there would cause some type of cultural conflict for me, as a Native chef. So I had to really take a lot of time to think about—its usages and how will I use it and where am I going to use it, and so basically I had to sit down with some family members and say, "Look I want to use this, and do you think it's something I should do?" and they had to talk with other people and then finally they just said "Yeah, if you are going to use it, use it in a good way, use it sparingly, and never sell it.

To this day, Chef Craig uses this sacred salt when he cooks. He uses it sparingly, and he uses it to teach other Apache chefs about their traditional foods, as well as for some of his demonstrations to non-Native people both here in the United States and abroad. This illustrates, again, how some ingredients in Native cooking are considered sacred, and how chefs are bound to their own cultural references and taboos, rules placed on specific ingredients within their own cultures. This was more apparent with wild-harvested foods and ingredients than it was with cultivated crops, although the element of prayer, spirituality, and food as medicine and sustenance enter into what some Native chefs can and cannot do with food, plants, and animals.

Some chefs have cultural obligations that they have to incorporate into how and what they prepare. In *The Soul of the Chef* (2000), author Michael Ruhlman tells the story of famous chef Thomas Keller of the French Laundry in Yountville, California. Chef Keller has live rabbits delivered to his restaurant and decides to butcher them himself.

If he were going to cook rabbits, then he should know how to skin, gut, and butcher them as well. The purveyor showed up . . . knocked one out, slit its throat, pinned it to a board, skinned it, and gutted it, then left. That was it. And Keller was alone in the grass behind the restaurant with eleven cute little bunnies. Bunnies *are* cute. Soft fur, long ears, little pink noses, warm, yearning eyes. Keller didn't *want* to kill them. But he had no choice at this point and eventually cranked up his resolve and made for one of the rabbits. Rabbits scream, and the first rabbit he tried to kill screamed really loud. It was an awful experience, he

said. He tried to kill it, but the rabbit was screaming so loud and struggling to get away that the work was difficult. Then the rabbit's leg snapped as it struggled to get away. So while it was still terrified, and now likely in great pain, it could no longer run away. Keller managed to kill it. Ten more to go (Ruhlman 2000:289).

The chef did stun, kill, skin, gut, and butcher all of the rabbits for service that week, and he did learn how to break down the rabbits (filet the carcasses). But what he had also taught himself was respect for food and a lesson that was deeper than that, the lesson of waste. It was difficult for the chef to kill those rabbits; their lives weren't meaningless. Rather, by taking their lives the chef realized that he could not overcook or waste any part of those rabbits. He was going to do everything possible to make them perfect. This understanding stayed with this chef for the rest of his career. Not only did he always respect the food he prepared—after all, he had seen firsthand how difficult it was, for them, to give up their lives—he was going to do everything in his power to make sure that every part of every rabbit was used, and that nothing was wasted. This is the first account I've read about a non-Native chef taking this approach to cooking, an approach deeply parallel to issues revealed in my ethnographic interviews with Native chefs.

Chef Craig uses rabbit often in his cooking. He grew up eating wild rabbit that he had hunted. His respect for animals is very much like Chef Keller's story. Nothing is ever wasted. Chef Craig uses all of the parts, makes stock from the bones, and does everything in his power to honor the life of the rabbit by cooking it to perfection. Chef Craig called this way of being with the food part of his "nativeness." It is his way of being in the world. For him, there is no other way to be. These attitudes were inseparable from who he is. An ideology of respecting the food he cooks and not wasting anything is intricately woven into the fabric of his being. His food choices reflect his identity as a chef but also as an eater.

Humans cling tenaciously to familiar foods because they become associated with nearly every dimension of human social and cultural life (Gabaccia 1998). Regardless of whether he hunted the animal himself or purchased it, it was Chef Craig's obligation to talk to that spirit and make peace with it in order to serve it. Chef Whitewater had a similar ideology to how he approached, handled, and prepared his food. These two chefs believed that this was why their food tastes so good and is so perfectly butchered.



Photo 10.3 Chef Craig removes the meat, fat, and membranes that connect the individual rib bones on racks of rabbit, a technique called “Frenching,” for the TOCA fundraising dinner at Kai in 2006.



Photo 10.4 Chef Craig prepares racks of rabbit for Rabbit Three Ways for the 2006 TOCA dinner at Kai Restaurant.



Photo 10.5 Racks of rabbit marinating in olive oil and herbs.



Photo 10.6 Chef Craig preparing a sauce for his rabbit dish at Kai Restaurant.

Most commercial chefs are not taught this approach in culinary school. Young chefs were taught that if they cooked a piece of meat incorrectly for a patron, for instance, “well done” instead of “medium rare,” they had to discard that piece. This is still true in some culinary institutions. Some of the Native chefs I interviewed said that they would put that piece of meat to the side and use it for another dish or as part of the staff meal rather than throwing it away. Some of this understanding comes from having to butcher the whole animal. It comes from knowing what it takes to cut up the entire carcass as well as skin and gut the animal. The majority of culinary students today have never had to kill and butcher an animal. This removes them from what it means to take that animal’s life. This is what is unique about the story of Chef Keller.

After working with Chef Divina, Chef Craig took the job of culinary director at the Classic Cooking Academy in Scottsdale, Arizona, a new culinary academy that was started by French chef Pascal Dionot. With more than thirty years’ experience, Chef Dionot is a European-trained chef with a degree in hotel and restaurant management from Hotelfachschule Speiser, Germany, and he has more than eighteen years’ experience in professional culinary education at L’Academie de Cuisine in Maryland. Chef Dionot acknowledged the need for Native American culinary professionals and, with Chef Craig, started the first Classic and Native American Culinary Program. Their mission was to train and encourage Native American youth and adults to become professional agents of the culinary arts.

This program, now run by Native American chef Harrison Watchman, Diné (Navajo), focuses on an approach to food from a Native American perspective to develop well-rounded culinary professionals in both the theory and technique of cuisine. The Native American program focuses on traditional and contemporary Native American culinary customs and technologies, including concepts of sustainable agriculture, health, and nutrition.



Photo 10.7 Chef Dionot shows Native American youth at Classic Cooking Academy in Scottsdale, Arizona, how to prepare pasta dough for a meal using classic and Native American cuisine techniques for a seven-course tasting menu.



Photo 10.8 Chef Dionot works with a Native American student as part of the Native American Youth Culinary workshop in 2008.

Chef Craig has been one of the featured Native American chefs at the TOCA fundraiser dinners in both Phoenix and Tucson. The 2004 and 2006 dinners featured signature dishes, with an appetizer of roasted breast of squab with handcrafted tortellini and squash essence. With assistant chef Franco Lee, the 2006 dinner featured the entrée meat course he called “Rabbit Three Ways”: a “stew” of rabbit leg meat, butternut squash, pine nuts, root vegetables, and smoked Apache salt; a “dumpling” of Navajo white corn rabbit tortellini, braised greens, confit tomato, and white Apache salt; and a “roast” rack of rabbit, bacon-wrapped loins, young root vegetables, sauce nana (which Chef Lee said was a sauce that Chef Craig invented, made from a vegetable puree using parsley), and yellow Apache salt.



Photo 10.9 Chef Nephi Craig plates Rabbit Three Ways with Chef Franco Wayne Lee (on his right) and two other chefs at Kai Restaurant in 2006.



Photo 10.10 Chef Craig puts the final touch on the rabbit “stew” dish featuring rabbit leg meat, butternut squash, pine nuts, root vegetables, and smoked Apache salt.



Photo 10.11 Chef Craig spoons on sautéed young root vegetables on the “roast” rack of rabbit dish.



Photo 10.12 Chef Craig completes the “roast” rack of rabbit, bacon wrapped loins, sauce Nana, and yellow Apache salt.



Photo 10.13 Chef Whitewater assists Chef Craig with the plating of his Rabbit Three Ways.



Photo 10.14 Rabbit Three Ways, featuring a “stew” of leg meat, butternut squash, pine nuts, root vegetables, smoked Apache salt; a “dumpling” of Navajo white corn rabbit tortellini, braised greens, confit tomato, white Apache salt; and the “roast” rack of rabbit, with bacon wrapped loins, young root vegetables, sauce Nana, and yellow Apache salt.

Chef Craig is currently working for his tribe as the executive chef for the Sunrise Hotel at the ski resort on the White Mountain Apache Reservation. This hundred-room hotel has a restaurant for its guests and for outside patrons. He has created an educational environment in which his staff can learn professional culinary techniques (since many have had little or no professional culinary training) and a publicity campaign to make this restaurant a destination featuring his menu of Native American cuisine. Chef Craig lives at the hotel full-time during the winter, at least for now, because the drive from the town of Whiteriver to the resort is almost an hour each way. In addition, Chef Craig has started a blog [<http://apachesinthekitchen.blogspot.com/> retrieved on February 3, 2011] that features photos and stories of his work at the resort, with descriptions of his all-Native staff at the restaurant.

Chef Craig reports that this is the only kitchen in which he has worked that has only Native American cooks as well as a head chef (himself) who is Native American, all

of whom are from the White Mountain Apache tribe. The focus in the kitchen is on training and culinary fundamentals. Communication and professional terminology is used and reinforced on a daily basis. As the head chef, Craig tells the crew of the possibilities at hand and the great opportunity to grow as a team as well as individually. He has taught the kitchen staff how to make chicken stock from scratch, using blanched chicken bones, washed and cut for stock, with mirepoix, instead of relying on chicken and beef bases that have a high sodium content and, according to Chef Craig, don't taste as good. By devoting the time to making good-quality stock, Chef Craig states, "This is the foundation to making everything from soup to sauces," while setting his kitchen apart from the many other kitchens in the region.

In one section of his blog he states,

I am talking about a starting point for professional Native chefs and cooks. The powerful realization that we stand on the brink of a very important time in the culinary history of Native American people today. We have the potential to work diligently to develop our own interpretation of modern Native American cuisine as we see it. This of course must be very respectful of the great culinary traditions of the world and the culinary traditions of Native peoples of the Americas, because without understanding the history and evolution of those respective cuisines, our efforts risk becoming "confused" and lacking a solid foundation. So, culinary theory, approach, and philosophy are very important. It is just as much an intellectual and spiritual journey as it is a physical one.

This statement encompasses an important message from Chef Craig. It reveals what Native chefs are doing today in the culinary industry and why they are doing it. It brings up issues of identity, place, and aesthetics. In addition, it indicates how Native chefs are working to define Native American cuisine. This movement is both academic in its scope as well as grassroots in its community base. Native chefs are taking a lead role in how they wish to be defined, and how they want to execute their own conceptions of aesthetics, identity, and place (Cadman 2006; Craig 2006; Lee 2006; Oden 2006; Strong 2006; Whitewater 2006).

Bertina Cadman

Bertina Cadman grew up on the Navajo Reservation in Rock Point, Arizona. She is a member of the Navajo Nation. She learned how to cook from her mom and her older sisters, but her father also played a role in a professional sense with her decision to go to

culinary school and “take on the culinary arts profession,” as Cadman puts it. Part of his support came from his own experience in the U.S. Army, traveling overseas and working in the food service department. After leaving the army, Chef Cadman’s father got a job with a local school on the reservation as a food service manager. When Bertina was a young girl, she would look through magazines he would bring home, such as *Gourmet* and *Bon Appetite*. Bertina thought everything looked so tasty and fancy, she decided that was what she wanted to do when she grew up. Chef Cadman is a 2007 graduate of the Scottsdale Culinary Institute.

Her mother taught her how to make dough when she was quite young. Chef Cadman’s mother told her she would have to make bread as a Navajo woman, and this was an important dish for her to learn how to make as a young girl. Most Navajo women consider making dough for fry bread to be an important skill. All of the Navajo cooks in this ethnography know how to make dough. Chef Cadman, as a young girl, knew she would be able to learn how to make dough, but as she remembered back during our interview to her first cooking experience, she commented that she thought it was going to be easy, because it looked easy watching other people make it. However, it was more technical than she had thought and the exact technique of making the dough was difficult to learn: the proper consistency, and the correct amount of water, baking powder, and salt that needed to be added to the flour.

In high school, Chef Cadman took a home economics class in which the students had to take home a few recipes and test them on their families. Each student had to buy all of the ingredients and then prepare the food. Chef Cadman went into town with her dad to buy the ingredients for her recipe, and then she made the dishes with him, for their family. This was a good experience for her, she said, and it actually brought the family closer together, especially her and her dad. All of Chef Cadman’s early food memories were social events that she thought bound her family together as a cohesive social unit. This was an important point for her, and a big part of her love for food and for preparing food. Happy childhood memories of cooking with her family and eating together were a large part of her attraction to food and the culinary profession.

Chef Cadman's undergraduate degree is a dual degree in history and Native American Studies from Dartmouth College in New Hampshire, which she received in 2005. Though Chef Cadman learned plenty about government policies and politics while she was at Dartmouth, she noticed that there was hardly any mention of Native American foods, ingredients, or agricultural practices in her history and culture courses. There was little mention of the Native American contribution to the culinary arts and of the Native American contribution to American cuisine as a whole. This bothered the young college student. The history being taught at Dartmouth didn't include what Chef Cadman thought to be an accurate history of the Native American contributions to what is now the United States.

After finishing college, Chef Cadman decided that she wanted to cook and to be a chef. She remembered the Navajo culture class she had taken during her youth, with a traditional foods segment as part of the curriculum. This class would set the foundation for her career as a chef and become an example of the foods that were important to her. Being in that class was interesting for her because she learned about her traditional Navajo foods. Chef Cadman hadn't been exposed to some of the foods as a young girl, but eventually, once she learned how to make them, she came to love them.

In this Navajo culture class, Chef Cadman learned about traditional Navajo foods such as blue corn pancakes and other traditional ingredients used by the Navajo people. These foods included wild onions (*Allium cernuum*), Southwestern celery (*Cymopterus fendleri*), and wild banana yucca (*Yucca baccata*). For Chef Cadman, this class was pivotal. After this class, Chef Cadman was more familiar with her traditional foods and she could better relate to her grandparents. It helped her to understand traditional Navajo food practices. It also prompted her to ask questions of the elders she knew and to learn more about the foods native to her region, and how to use them.

After graduating from Dartmouth and returning home to Rock Point, Chef Cadman decided to change directions. That's when she enrolled in the culinary arts program at Scottsdale Culinary Institute. She graduated with an Associates of Applied Science degree in the culinary arts. It took her two years to complete this degree. At the time of our interview in 2009, she had only been out of culinary school for two years.

The culinary arts degree taught her about professionalism. It taught her how to present herself as a culinary artist. She learned how to be organized in the kitchen, how to be clean and handle foods properly. She learned different cooking techniques based on European tradition, and she learned how to be precise. “For example,” Bertina stated, “Exact knife cuts with precision were one of the skills I mastered at school. I was always trying to get the perfect cut, make the perfect sauce, create the perfect soup, and we were taught to make everything the best that you can. The very tiniest demands are all important components that you learn from working in the kitchen, which is good,” she said. “I was taught to always try my very best and give it all that you have and I think that this is a good discipline to have.”

Right after graduating from culinary school, Chef Cadman’s first job was as the assistant Native American program director at the Classic Cooking Academy, in Scottsdale, Arizona. She originally worked under Chef Nephi Craig at the academy, where the two chefs became quite close. When he left, about a year after she started, the Classic Cooking Academy offered her the job, but she declined. “I wanted to try some other things,” she stated. So they hired Chef Freddie Bitsoie, a Diné (Navajo). “Freddie and I switched roles. I told him I wanted to try something else, and he really wanted to run the Native American program here at the Scottsdale Culinary Academy, so we traded positions until I left.” Chef Cadman worked under Chef Bitsoie during her last semester at the school.

While at the Classic Cooking Academy, Chef Cadman cooked for patrons at the café as well as taught approximately thirty students a day in the school’s cooking classes. Executive Chef Pascal Dionot set up a small café in front of the school so patrons could taste what was being made at the school, and the students could have practical experience cooking for patrons. This, Chef Dionot said, gave the general public an opportunity to taste the cooking school’s food.



Photo 10.15 Chef Bertina Cadman preparing a corn mush with sumac berries at Classic Cooking Academy in 2008.



Photo 10.16 Corn mush being stirred using traditional Navajo stirring sticks. Chef Cadman uses a variety of traditional cooking utensils when she cooks in a commercial kitchen.



Photo 10.17 Chef Cadman plating blue corn mush onto a corn husk.



Photo 10.18 Chefs Cadman and Freddie Bitsoie plating Corn Mush Three Ways at Classic Cooking Academy.

During her time at the Classic Cooking Academy, Chef Cadman learned practical things that she hadn't learned in culinary school. She was taught how to order food, and she did some of the ordering for the school. This gave her the opportunity to learn about what the different purveyors supplied. "Pascal gets a lot of ingredients from Shamrock and Sysco, the big food purveyors," Chef Cadman stated. "Some ingredients we get from the local grocery store. There is a Bashas' right around the corner from the school, so we go there sometimes. And if we can't find some of the specialty items we need, we go to AJ's, a gourmet store near the school," Chef Cadman noted.

However, when it comes to ingredients that we need for our Native American classes, we order them locally, through providers such as TOCA and Native Seeds/SEARCH. If a tribe is marketing some of their food items, on a national level, we will place an order with them. Just recently, we got some wild rice from Red Lake Nation Foods in Minnesota, and we also bought some dried cranberries from the Coquille Indian Tribe in North Bend, Oregon.

Buying native products for their Native American cooking program was something that both Executive Chef Pascal and Chef Cadman thought were important. They tried to purchase the majority of their ingredients for the Native American culinary program from Native American-owned and -operated enterprises. Another good example was the Native American heirloom corn they use at the school. Sometimes she got the traditional corn they used from her mother, who gave it (for free) to her daughter. Other times, Chef Cadman purchased the corn from local vendors at flea markets on the Navajo Nation in Gallup or Shiprock. Chef Cadman would purchase products for the school every time she went home to visit her family. Her goal was to form a relationship with the same person at the flea market and build ties with them so they could supply the school with products year-round. Then the corn vendor could ship it to the school rather than her having to buy it at the flea market.

Another important component Chef Cadman incorporated into the curriculum at the Classic Cooking Academy was the use of culinary ash. She used it in the school when she prepared blue corn meal dishes. This ancient culinary ingredient has been used by Navajo people (as well as other tribes in the Southwest) for hundreds of years, she said. She knew of the nutritional benefits from using the culinary ash and wanted to incorporate its use in the school. Chef Cadman made blue corn mush the traditional way

and even brought in her own stirring sticks, which she let the culinary students use, to teach them how to make the dishes the traditional way. In the Navajo language the stirring sticks are called *ídístsiin*. They are traditionally made with three or more sticks tied together and used for stirring traditional corn dishes.

In the Navajo legend of Changing Woman, the stirring sticks are part of the first ceremony she experiences. Kinaaldá, a Navajo puberty ceremony, originated in the ancient story of Changing Woman, and each young girl who has a Kinaaldá makes stirring sticks as part of the ceremony (Begay 1983). Chef Cadman also brought grinding stones into the school. “We hand-grind the traditional corn here with the students,” she stated. In addition, Chef Cadman said that she would bring corn that her mother had ground to the school to use when teaching students how to prepare traditional Navajo corn dishes.



Photo 10.19 Plates of Traditional Corn Mush Three Ways lined up for service to patrons for a seven-course tasting menu.

Chef Cadman emphasized that the majority of the culinary techniques taught at the Classic Cooking Academy cooking school were French-based. “Even when we are using Native American ingredients, the techniques we use are still French. Because that’s what the school wants to promote, so rarely do we prepare things the way we want to.” She said that when in the Native American program she had more say in how the foods

were prepared and what foods they would cook, but that all of the other curricula at the school were heavily European-based in approach and technique, noting that this was the standard in the professional culinary industry.



Photo 10.20 Corn Mush Three Ways, featuring blue corn mush (left), yellow corn mush (center), and corn mush with sumac berries (right).



Photo 10.21 Chef Cadman using stirring sticks to cook her corn mush dish.

Chef Cadman worked at the Classic Cooking Academy for a year and a half, and then she decided she wanted to work toward opening her own café near where she grew up. One of Chef Cadman's biggest goals was to design Native American food and cater it to a Native American clientele. She wanted to cook for her own community, on her own land. Chef Cadman wanted to cook for people on the reservation using the skills she had learned in culinary school. This was quite different from some of the other Native chefs I interviewed. Several of those chefs cooked in high-end resorts or fine-dining establishments for a non-Native audience or a mixed Native and non-Native audience. At the time of our interview (2009), she was working her last semester at the Classic Cooking Academy.

For the 2009 Celebration of Basketry and Native Foods TOCA fundraising dinner, the menu featured a "Taste of Native Cuisine" with six courses. Chef Cadman and Chef Bitsoie collaborated on a dish and presented it together to represent the Classic Cooking Academy. Executive Chef Marc Ehrler of the Ventana Room, who was hosting the event, prepared two courses, the beginning muse and main entrée course. Chef Walter Whitewater from Red Mesa Cuisine in Santa Fe, New Mexico, followed Chef Ehrler with a seafood course. Chef Jack Strong, from Kai Restaurant, prepared the soup course, and Chef Loretta Barrett Oden, who was working with TOCA as consulting chef at their new café, prepared the poultry course. After Chef Ehrler's meat course, Chefs Bertina Cadman and Freddie Bitsoie prepared "A Tasting of Indian Corn: Consommé of Indian Market Steamed Corn with Tamaya Blue Corn and Piñon Puree and Mixed Kernel Confetti." For the dessert course, I presented a trio of desserts.

Chef Cadman takes what she does and how she presents her food very seriously. When she began to plan her dish for the TOCA fundraiser, she took several steps into consideration. As she described her process in creating her dish for that event, she emphasized,

One of the things that they teach you in culinary school is that all of these (taste, smell, texture, and color) elements are important, and that it's the visual presentation, which is the first impression of the plated dish, that people will critique you on at the beginning. So first you need to make something that is visually appealing and something that is very vibrant and colorful and balanced

on the plate, something catching to the eye. And then of course it has to taste very good and has to complement all of your taste sensations.

Chef Cadman meant this not only in the literal sense (Korsmeyer 1999) but also in the cultural sense (Frank 2011). She continued,

First of all I think about who I am serving the food to. If it's a dinner, like the one we are doing tonight . . . at the Ventana Room at Loews Ventana Canyon Resort, then I plan my dish around serving a dish at a high-end, classy, expensive resort and so I wanted to create something that would fit that atmosphere and the people who are paying for the food. Depending on the audience and the abundance of the place, I do my research and come up with a dish accordingly.

For this event, the research Chef Cadman included for her dish focused not only on the place where the dinner was going to be held, but also the type of plating and the style of food she wanted to present to the audience. Chef Cadman wanted to give a simple but elegant taste of corn, step it up with her plating, and let the audience taste how the delicious Native American corn could be. Chef Cadman commented, "If I were doing something like this at home, I would still want it to be nice, but I wouldn't go all out on the way it was presented like I had done for the TOCA dinner."



Photo 10.22 Chef Cadman in 2009 at the Loew's Ventana Canyon Resort in Tucson, Arizona, for the TOCA fundraising dinner in the Ventana Room.



Photo 10.23 Chef Cadman plating on the line with chefs from Loew's Ventana Canyon Resort.



Photo 10.24 Chef Cadman pouring the corn consommé into soup cups.



Photo 10.25 A tasting of Indian Corn: Consommé of Indian Market Steamed Corn with Tamaya Blue Corn and Piñon Purée and Mixed Kernel Confetti.

In this example from Chef Cadman, we not only see the importance of taste, both literally and culturally (aesthetically tasteful to this chef), we also see the chef's thought process in terms of plating, artistic design, as well as the important role the audience plays in Chef Cadman's decision-making process. Chef Cadman made a dish that fulfilled her objective. She set out to share traditional Native American corn three ways, which she did. The ways she prepared the Native American corn were simple and pure in the ingredient's essence, she commented. What varied in the case of Chef Cadman, and where Chef Cadman took her own culturally creative license, was how she presented her dish to her patrons, the audience that was attending the event.

For Chef Cadman, Native American cuisine is made up of the foods of her people. She commented,

. . . I would define [Native American cuisine] as the foods that are prepared by your family, your relatives, your clan, and the teaching and philosophy and the ingredients that they hold valuable, and most of the time it's food that has been passed down through the generations. A lot of [it] is natural-type foods, and a lot of [it] is taken from the earth, and for the Navajo they have the four sacred foods, corn, beans, squash, and tobacco. So for Native American cuisine, it depends on what tribe you come from and the foods that your tribe holds valuable.

For Chef Cadman, Native American cuisine has a traditional side and a contemporary side. She continued,

Actually I would say a lot of [them] (the traditional foods) are some you would find at the flea markets, and then there's the contemporary side to Native American cuisine. I guess it is the business side or the marketable side. . . . I see it at Classic Cooking Academy, at Kai, and I see it with your business Red Mesa Cuisine, and I see it at this new place being built here on the Tohono O'odham reservation in Sells, at the Rain Dance Café. I see it in Canada at the Indigenous Foods Café.

She stopped for a moment, and then continued,

I am a part of both of these communities, the traditional and the contemporary. When I go home, we will prepare a lot of our Navajo foods for ceremonies, and I'm also a part of the economic side, my employment at Classic Cooking Academy. . . . I think I bring some of the contemporary to the traditional too, at home; when we do prepare these foods I will introduce different ways that [they] can be elevated and or just bring a little bit of creativity to the taste to a lot of these foods at home.

Chef Cadman didn't make a distinction between Native American foodways and Native American cuisine. For her, they were all Native American cuisine. What differed between her and some of the other chefs was that she defined Native American cuisine as having both a traditional and a contemporary side. Chef Cadman acknowledged that she is a part of both of these approaches and could creatively use them interchangeably within the community of Native chefs, as well as in her role as a Native chef cooking for a ceremony at home. This perspective was unique to her. This approach focuses on several components. First, it included her role as a Native American chef. Second, it included her role as a Native American woman chef. And third, it included her role as a chef who was also a traditional Navajo cook, preparing foods for ceremonies within her own Navajo community. Chef Cadman went on to say that Native American food was distinctive because of the people preparing it.

What [they] hold and what [they] represent, [their] thoughts, dreams, they are things that [they] hold valuable and I think that's the ideas that [they] put into the food. And it's similar to every culture that has thoughts and ideas that [they] put into [their] own foods, [they] are different, just like people are different culturally, but [we] are still human beings; it depends on what people were taught growing up; it's all different.

Chef Cadman closed her eyes, then she slowly opened them. “I want to go home and start a business for myself. I want my son to understand his own food and to be close to my family, my siblings, my grandpa, and to be able to get together and have family gatherings, go to ceremonies, and I want him to be a part of all of it”.

She stopped, then started talking again. “My goal,” she stated, “my dream, is to have a catering business to start off with and then eventually have a place of my own. I would like to be a consultant for the hospitals up in Rock Point, maybe work with the Indian Health Service (HIS) or at some of the schools.” “I would like to be that person to go back to my community and try to establish my own business with a kind of tribal sovereignty, a kind of self-sufficiency,” she said.

Chef Cadman was unique in that she wanted to use the culinary talents she had learned and bring them back to her community. She did not want to work in a high-end resort. She did not want to cook for a non-Native audience.

Franco Wayne Lee

Franco Wayne Lee is a member of the White Mountain Apache tribe and grew up in Whiteriver, Arizona. He was twenty-six years old at the time of this interview. He is married and has two children, a thirteen-year-old and a three-year-old (in 2006). Chef Lee went to Alchesay High School (named after a famous chief of the White Mountain Apache). Chef Lee grew up in the same town as Chef Nephi Craig. During our interview, he remembered that Chef Nephi Craig’s dad, Vincent Craig, built his son a half-pipe skateboard ramp in the backyard of their house. He continued,

All the other kids just had a piece of plywood over a barrel, but the half-pipe was something really big back then. All the kids wanted to go over to the Craig house and skateboard there. I used to go over to Nephi’s house and skateboard there when we were much younger, in 1985 and 1986.

Chef Lee smiled as he reminisced about when he was a young boy. For him, knowing Chef Craig as a small boy was a very special memory.

Chef Lee started cooking with his grandpa and grandmother. They taught him how to make simple gravy. His grandparents showed him how to cook slowly, how to take his time when he cooked, and how to really put himself into all that he does and cooks. Chef Lee said, “So, when I cook, I cook with a lot of passion and a lot of love into

my food, and [they] tell me that that's how it tastes good." Chef Lee has always loved food, and it has always been a form of expression for him; "very much like a weaver or a jeweler or any other traditional cultural arts," he stated. "I've always cooked a lot with the Three Sisters, corn, beans, and squash. I would say those are our main ingredients that we grew up with."

After graduating from high school, Chef Lee got a job at the Sunrise Park Resort, in the Tempest Restaurant, located in the White Mountains (coincidentally, Chef Craig is currently the executive chef there). During his interview, he told the chef at the resort that he wanted to be a "chef someday," and that that was why the chef should hire him. That was enough. Chef Lee was hired and worked there for a number of years. The young Chef Lee said he first started as a dining room busser, then became a server, a host, a cashier, a bar back, a dishwasher, a prep cook, and then, finally, a line cook. He worked at the Tempest from 1995 to 2000. Working all of these positions in the restaurant prepared him for being a professional chef, Chef Lee stated.

In 2000 Chef Lee enrolled at Central Arizona College in Coolidge, with an intended major in the hotel and restaurant management program. In June 2001, before finishing the program, he took a job as a shift manager at a McDonald's in Window Rock, Arizona. At the McDonald's, he learned good management skills, Chef Lee told me. He left in February 2002 and went to Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas, Nevada, to get a job that he had seen advertised in the McDonald's kitchen. When he left, he had neither the job nor a place to live. Chef Lee said that he just knew this was what he wanted to do and that he needed to take a risk to get it. He interviewed for the job and was asked by the assistant executive chef why he wanted the job and why they should hire him. Chef Lee said, "I want to be your boss one day." The chef laughed and then thanked him for coming in for the interview. Apparently the executive chef overheard Chef Lee's response and told the assistant executive chef to find him before he left the building. They called security. Security found him just before he left the building and told him to return to the chef's office immediately. The executive chef hired him on the spot, giving him thirty minutes to get his uniform and start his first shift. Chef Lee worked at Mandalay Bay until January 4, 2005.

After working at Mandalay Bay, Chef Lee moved to Portland, Oregon, where he was the manager at an oyster bar for about a year. Being outside the Southwest region, was very difficult for Chef Lee, and he said that he needed to be closer to where he grew up, closer to other Native people, and that he wanted to find a job on the reservation. As in the case of other Native chefs, place plays a significant role in his life, not only in the physical sense but also in his sense of place (Feld and Basso 1996). Chef Lee needed to move back to the Southwest, where he felt he was a part of a familiar community. Having a place-based job for Chef Lee was very important. Thus, familiar places are experienced as inherently meaningful (Basso 1996b:55).

While Chef Lee was in Portland, he looked up his old friend (and now fellow chef) Chef Nephi Craig on the Internet. Chef Lee emailed him, and he emailed back. Emails led to phone calls, and the phone calls led to more phone calls. The reconnection led to the two chefs collaborating for the 2006 TOCA fundraiser with the dish they called “Rabbit Three Ways,” described above.

Cooking together at this event was the first time the chefs had been reunited since growing up together in Whiteriver in the 1980s. The TOCA dinner was the first time Chef Lee had met other Native American chefs. Chef Lee explained that it was one of the most important experiences of his life. To cook with top-caliber Native chefs who were cooking high-end Native dishes was very important to him and his career. For Chef Lee, this experience was life-changing. It totally changed his perspective on Native American cuisine and the chefs who were preparing this food. He now felt that he had officially become a part of this community of Native American chefs. “Chef Craig had done the accelerated chef program, which made him more established as a young Native chef cooking Native American cuisine,” Chef Lee stated. “Chef Craig had excelled as a young Native chef and had earned himself quite a name.” Chef Lee made a point of this, as he told me that the two chefs are actually only about a year apart in age.



Photo 10.26 Chefs Nephi Craig and Franco Wayne Lee in 2006 at the Heard Museum for the Native Foods Festival.

After leaving Portland, Chef Lee returned to the Gallup area to work at the café for the Coyote Canyon Rehabilitation Center in Brimhall, where he cooked for Navajo adults participating in the center’s rehab program. He ran the café, incorporating menu items that included local and regionally appropriate foods. Chef Lee served an array of stews, soups, salads, and light lunches. The café was only open from six in the morning to three in the afternoon. Chef Lee said that he gave the café a “Native influence,” and he felt he had some freedom as to what foods he could serve. He was working at the Coyote Canyon café at the time of our interview.

Chef Lee told me that he prepares a blue corn mush dish every day, which he makes from scratch. “First I use whole blue corn that is toasted,” he said. “Then I hand-grind it to a flour. I add kosher salt, with cold water first, then I add hot water while it is cooking. I whisk the corn mush until it is thick and serve it in a variety of ways.” Chef Lee uses a hand food mill to grind his own flour from the traditional blue corn that he gets from local growers on the Navajo Reservation. This was a practice that many of the

Native cooks did as well. “While my audience is primarily Native American and very local,” he said, “there are non-Natives who drive up from Gallup to eat at the café.” Chef Lee cooks, on average, for about one hundred and twenty people a day.

Another favorite dish that Chef Lee makes at the café is called an “Apache Tamale Cho.” This is a traditional dish he learned to make while growing up in Whiteriver. This dish “features a handmade corn tortilla dough that is formed into a dough ball similar to pasta,” he said. “Then it is boiled and served with some kind of meat.” Traditionally it was served with a wild game meat jerky or dried beef, which he reconstituted in the pot with the dumplings.

Chef Lee also uses traditional culinary ash because “it adds nutritional trace minerals and calcium,” he told me. For some of his dishes, he also uses traditional cooking methods that he prefers not to change, preparing the foods in the way that they were always done before, “like my ancestors used to do,” he stated. Because the kitchen doors are open in the café, customers can watch him cook. He liked this, he said. It gave him a feeling of “truly performing for the guests,” and he felt that it made him work harder to create ways to entice the people watching him. “People eat with their eyes,” he stated.

Chef Lee left the Coyote Canyon café to work with a Cantonese chef from Window Rock at a restaurant called China West. He learned how to cook Cantonese and enjoyed learning about a new cuisine, but he realized he wanted something more. In 2008, Chef Lee was hired as the sous chef at the Fire Rock Navajo Casino, in Church Rock, New Mexico. The casino, located just east of Gallup, had just opened. Chef Lee worked in the Cheii Grill and Pub as well as the food court, assisting with the execution of what he called “steakhouse foods,” featuring ribeye steaks, grilled salmon, mahi mahi, and barbecue ribs. The menu at the Cheii Grill and Pub also includes Native specialties such as fry bread, a Navajo taco, a Navajo burger (a hamburger served with a Navajo white flour tortilla), and mutton stew. Currently Chef Lee is the food and beverage manager and executive chef at the Casino, working under Anton Breneauer, an Austrian chef who is the corporate executive chef and food and beverage director. Anton

Breneauer works for the parent company that runs the casino—Navajo Nation Gaming Enterprises.

Chef Lee reminisced about some of his fondest food memories from when he was growing up. “We would cook robins, put them on the coals and roast them. We would cook them on an open fire with banana yucca.” He told me that these were the foods of his ancestors and that they were special to him. He recounted,

I was very young, five or six years old. We were very poor. We lived in this little purple shack up behind my grandparent’s house. . . . We could not afford butane but we had a little small iron potbelly stove and that is where we cooked. We used to make pancakes. When I would wake up in the morning and it was still dark outside, we had . . . one little kerosene lamp that illuminated the whole room. I walked over to see what my mom was making, one morning, and she was making pancakes. She had taken the commodity foods that we got; she took some of the pineapple in a can, and put [them] inside the pancakes from the mix she made. And that memory always reminds me of our struggle, what we had to go through, and how it feels to be poor. It is a good memory to keep. . . . We had to boil water to take a bath, to wash our clothes in a big old tub. . . . Those pancakes that my mom was making that morning are a memory I will never forget. They brought me to a place inside, a place where I keep all to myself.

For Chef Lee, this place was the purple shack that his family lived in but it was also the place in his mind, in his memories of his family cooking together. It was representative of his family being able to make do with what they had. His family used commodity foods often, he said. These foods, even today, remind him of the struggle they went through; it was a part of their life. He said, “It was how we lived.” His family had no running water and had to haul water every day. That was a difficult time for them, he remembered.

Chef Lee was not the only Native chef who grew up this way. This too was how Chef Whitewater grew up, and these experiences influenced how both chefs felt about foods; it was how they learned to respect all food. It taught them not to waste any food. It was something that they keep with them in their commercial kitchens today.

“Native American cuisine,” Chef Lee said, “was just like my Grandma’s cooking that included mainly corn, squash, mutton, berries, and wild herbs. It is what our elders had. These foods are very distinctive; a lot of foods have traveled all over the continent.

In America, the foods that now make up today's cuisine come from our traditional ingredients; they are Native," he said.

For Chef Lee, food is a part of his culture. "We identify ourselves by our foods," he stated. "It's who we are." Native American cuisine and Native foodways are the same thing, he say to me. They were all of the foods that existed before any contact with Europeans. He considers Native American cuisine and Native American foodways to be the "precontact" foods that I discussed in earlier chapters. Commodities were not a part of Native American cuisine, and he did not consider them to be a part of his traditional foods. Food, here, is a distinct ingredient that is a part of his identity, as an Apache, as a chef, and as a Native American.

Perpetuating Native American cuisine is important to Chef Lee. He wants to use what he has learned to teach young people that "food is the culture." He said, "I want to leave my mark in the culinary arts by teaching about the meanings behind our food; this is what we have that represents us. This is who we are." For Chef Lee, participating in the TOCA fundraising event changed his life and opened his eyes as a Native chef. It made him see where he was at the time of the event and where he wanted to be in the future.



Photo 10.27 Chef Lee and his assistant prepping the rabbits.



Photo 10.28 Seasoned tomatoes drying on a rack after being roasted in the oven for the Rabbit Three Ways.



Photo 10.29 Chef Lee rolling out pasta dough for Navajo White Corn Rabbit Tortellini.



Photo 10.30 Chef Lee presses the dough through the pasta machine.



Photo 10.31 Chef Lee takes pressed pasta dough, which will be stuffed with the rabbit mixture and made into tortellini.



Photo 10.32 Chefs Nephi Craig and Franco Wayne Lee's Rabbit Three Ways. (Photo by Franco W. Lee)

Franklin George

Franklin George was a student at the Santa Fe Community College (SFCC) culinary arts program in Santa Fe, New Mexico, working toward his associates degree in applied science in August 2008, when we conducted this interview. He is from the Diné (Navajo) Nation and grew up mainly on the Navajo Reservation in the small towns of Shiprock, New Mexico, and Page, Arizona, but he also lived in Texas and New York. Chef George is a tall, thin young man who is somewhat shy, and in his early twenties.

His cooking experiences were limited at the time we worked together, but he spoke candidly, openly, and eloquently about Native American cuisine, native foods, and his career. Chef George said that he always knew he wanted to be a Native chef. He was just about to embark on this journey, and he was very excited about the future. As we talked, you could see the fire in his eyes. He was filled with dreams, goals, and aspirations. Chef George had a list of all the things that he wanted to do and all that he wanted to accomplish. Becoming a chef was his life's goal.

Franklin George learned how to cook from one of his instructors, Michelle “Mica” Roetzer, at Santa Fe Community College. Chef Mica, as she likes to be called, taught him contemporary classic European cooking techniques, the history of food, and how “to really cook,” as Chef George put it. Chef Mica, according to Chef George, “really pushed me a lot, and I have learned a lot through her. She is probably the most influential person in my cooking today.” “But,” he stated, “it was my grandparents who taught me how to cook my traditional Navajo foods and how to grow our traditional foods, like corn and squash. My first cooking experience was with my grandparents, where we butchered a sheep and I made some blood sausage.”

Chef George had been professionally cooking for three years when we met, including his cooking experiences in school. While still in culinary school at SFCC, he started working at Adobo Catering in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Chef George was on call throughout the summer season, and when they did call him, he worked as a prep cook. He had also worked at the Community College for professional events in and around the community, under Chef Roetzer. At the time, he had a job as a line cook at the Route 66 Casino west of Albuquerque, where he was employed throughout the summer (http://www.rt66casino.com/thunder_road).

Franklin George was motivated to make the move from a home cook to a professional chef because, as he stated, “You get to play with the ingredients, you get experience . . . various cuisines. And I can assist . . . [with] the cooking and . . . turn a simple home-cooked meal into something totally different, . . . a high-class cuisine.” Cooking was something he enjoyed; he was looking forward to getting some professional cooking experience.

I first met Franklin George when he assisted Chef Mica and other SFCC students at a “Native Foods Celebration” event on Sunday, May 20, 2007, at IAIA. The celebration consisted of the seven organizations (see chapter 3, note 22) working on a project entitled Renewing America’s Food Traditions (RAFT). Managed by Slow Food USA, RAFT is an alliance of food, farming, environmental, and culinary advocates who have joined together to identify, restore, and celebrate American’s biologically and culturally diverse food traditions. Their mission is to do this through conservation,

education, promotion, and regional networking. Chef Mica and her SFCC students were on-site at IAIA for the day's event to assist the Native American and non-Native guest chefs and help serve the food to the public. Guest speakers for the event included Winona LaDuke (Anishinaabe Ojibwe Nation) from the White Earth Land Recovery Project; Dr. Gary Nabhan from the Center for Sustainable Environments; Dr. Melissa Nelson (Turtle Mountain Chippewa) from the Cultural Conservancy, along with guest chefs Loretta Barrett Oden (Potawatomi), Walter Whitewater (Diné) from Red Mesa Cuisine, Richard Hetzler from the Mitsitam Café at the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) in Washington D.C., Emigdio Ballon (Quechua), the Agricultural Director at Tesuque Pueblo, Jonette Sam (Picuris Pueblo), representing the Intertribal Bison Cooperative (ITBC), John Sharpe from the Turquoise Room at La Posada Hotel in Winslow, Arizona, and myself. Each chef gave a short talk about the Native American dish they had prepared, followed by a sample of each featured dish. Chef George was one of the student chefs from the SFCC culinary program who assisted with the food that day. He helped prepare the food in the outdoor kitchen, plate each dish, and serve hundreds of food samples to the attendees.



Photo 10.33 From left, back row, Santa Fe Community College culinary student Franklin George, one of Michelle Roetzer's SFCC culinary students, event participant Tiro Gonzales, (middle row) SFCC culinary student Orson Patterson, Chef Walter Whitewater, Chef Richard Hetzler, (front row) the author.

This was an important part of Chef George's learning experience. He had never been exposed to Native foods in this way. Chef George commented, "I've never cooked over an open fire or done pit cooking professionally alongside other professional chefs." He had only done open-pit cooking at home with his family on the reservation. The majority of the information and training Chef George received during his culinary schooling was modeled after a knowledge system that was centered on the cuisines of Europe (Escoffier 1907). Chef George was familiar with French and German foods and cooking techniques. Only about thirty percent of his training focused on regional foods of the Southwest, and none up to that point had focused on Native cuisine.

This "Native Foods Celebration" event changed Franklin George's culinary direction and gave him an opportunity to interact with established Native American chefs. Chef George was able to learn new food dishes and see how they were prepared. He had been exposed to Native American foods at home, but this was the first time he had been exposed to those same foods, prepared slightly differently and served to a general audience in a professional context. By the end of the day he was making arrangements to visit Chef Hetzler in Washington, D.C. and discussing the possibility of an internship at the Mitsitam Café.

In addition to the Native chefs at the event, food companies had booths with product information and products available for sale, including wild rice from the White Earth Land Recovery Project and Native Harvest, (http://nativeharvest.com/catalog/1/wild_rice), Oneida dried white corn from Tsyunhehkwa (<http://www.oneidanation.org/tsyunhehkwa/page.aspx?id=3900>), cactus products, a variety of seeds and food products from Native Seeds/SEARCH (<http://www.nativeseeds.org/catalog/index.php?cPath=1andocsid=4pa79c8q7jh3ts2kcct9fc19n5>), fresh bison meat from the Picuris Bison Program (<http://www.ediblecommunities.com/santafe/pages/articles/fall08/edibleSWnation.pdf>), and other Native food products.

One of the activities of the "Native Foods Celebration," which took place the following day, focused on exchanging community strategies for strengthening Native foods within regional food systems, and building momentum for a cooperative movement

to revitalize these systems. This included native food producers, chefs, community activists, and RAFT partner organizations. The three major foci of this event were sustainable food production, culinary and cooking partnerships, and national and intertribal alliances. The RAFT organizers hoped to explore practices for marketing and sourcing native foods within native communities and explore the challenges and benefits of working with a variety of retailers, chefs, activists, and eaters.

Native Foods Celebration - Schedule of Events Sunday, May 20 th , 2007 at IAIA	
Breakfast at Sage Inn starting at 6:30am – carpool to IAIA (leave by 8:45am at the latest)	
10:00am-10:15am	Paul Ninham, Oneida Nation, Traditional Blessing of Thanksgiving & Opening Prayer
10:15am-10:30am	Welcome (IAIA representative)
10:30am-10:45am	Winona LaDuke, Anishinaabe Ojibwe Nation, White Earth Land Recovery Project Introduction
10:45am-11:15am	Gary Nabhan introducing Jonette Sam (Picuris Pueblo) who will prepare Picuris Bison Stew
11:30am-Noon	Tomas Enos introducing Emigdio Ballon (Quechua - Bolivia) who will prepare quinoa, corn and more
12:15pm-12:45pm	Don Bixby introducing John Sharpe (Turquoise Room at La Posada Hotel) who will prepare Navajo-Churro lamb tacos
1:00pm-1:30pm	Lois Ellen Frank introducing Walter Whitewater (Diné) of Red Mesa Cuisine who will prepare marinated, grilled quail
1:45pm-2:15pm	Leigh Belanger introducing Richard Hetzler (NMAI Executive Chef) who will prepare wild caught Northwest Coast Salmon
2:30pm-3:00pm	Gay Chanler introducing Loretta Barrett Oden (Potawatomi) who will prepare tepary bean/wild rice dish
3:15pm-3:45pm	Gary Nabhan introducing Lois Ellen Frank (Kiowa) of Red Mesa Cuisine preparing chocolate piñon flourless torte
The Santa Fe public premiere of Loretta Barrett Oden's PBS series, <i>Seasoned with Spirit</i> , will screen throughout the day.	
The Cultural Conservancy staff will be recording oral histories throughout the day.	
Display of local Navajo-Churro ewe and lambs	
Native foods boxed lunch will be provided for all retreat participants	
7:00pm Group dinner at Sage Inn	

Figure 10.1 Schedule of events for IAIA Native Foods Celebration.

When Chef George lived in Shiprock, New Mexico, his family sold steamed corn at the flea market. They cooked the corn in an outdoor pit in the same manner that Chef Whitewater's family prepares their pit-baked corn, overnight in an earthen pit. Chef George's family also made blue corn mush, which they served and sold at the flea market as well. Chef George wanted to incorporate some of these traditional food practices into his work in a commercial kitchen; he had just never seen anyone else do the things he wanted to do, and didn't yet have the confidence to execute these aspirations. This was partly a factor of his age, but also because he was just beginning his culinary career and these experiences take time to develop. Chef Whitewater, during his presentation at the event, acknowledged to the general audience that the animal he was cooking, the quail, gave its life for his dish. As he has always done, Chef Whitewater made an offering to the animal and thanked it for giving its life to feed people. This was something new for Chef George to witness. It made him happy, to see another chef conducting himself in this way, in a professional setting. He stated,

. . . I used to pray to the animal that gave its life to provide food for myself or the people that I serve. I think it helps [them] with [their] health and nurses [them] so basically praying for the produce or animal, which gave its life. Before I felt kind of weird at first, but after a while, I . . . didn't really care about what people thought, as long as I knew I was fine with what I was doing; then it really doesn't matter after a while.

Cooking is a sacred act for Chef George. It is difficult for him to see other students and chef instructors waste food when it isn't prepared correctly for the customer. Wasting food goes against who he was as a Native person. He knows what it takes to kill an animal. He had killed a sheep as a small boy and prepared the meat and blood from it. That was his first cooking experience. Chef George used all of the animal's body parts for cooking, and then used the hide for making moccasins. Watching Chef Whitewater acknowledge the animal and then make an offering to it validated a part of him that wasn't yet secure in a commercial culinary setting. This experience gave Chef George confidence and professional approval to practice this tradition in commercial kitchens in the future.

This illustrates the importance of role models in the kitchen for young and upcoming Native chefs. There are now both female and male Native American chefs

available as mentors, such as Chef Whitewater, Chef Oden, Chef Strong, and Chef Garcia.

Chef George listed corn, beans, and squash as the major ingredients in Native American cuisine in terms of the cultivars, and that buffalo (bison) was probably one of the most traditional native meat sources. He also stated that sheep, especially the Navajo churro sheep, is now native to the Diné people, but he acknowledged that it wasn't always one of their traditional foods. I then asked him about chiles and he replied, "They are native, but I think they are more distinctively Pueblo than Diné (Navajo)."

Chef George said that, in addition to fry bread, sheep blood sausage was also a distinctly Diné dish and that in his family they used as much of the animal as they could, including the blood. His family did not believe in wasting anything, if at all possible. Chef George was reinforcing a point he had made when we were talking about the Native Foods Celebration at IAIA. Chef George's aunt still raises cattle, he told me, but no one in the family raised sheep anymore. His grandpa still planted fields of corn, squash, and watermelons, though. Chef George said he originally thought that Native American cuisine and Native American foodways were the same, but that during our interview, and after reflecting on some of the topics we had discussed, he now thought there was a difference between the two.

Chef George described Native American foodways as being more natural, without any adulteration, and Native American cuisine was when chefs brought Native American foods into a modern or commercial kitchen setting. The difference was that certain methods and ways of preparing the traditional foods had to be changed in the commercial kitchen environment. Chef George gave the example of roasting corn in an earthen pit: "When the corn is prepared that way as it had been for hundreds and hundreds of years, it is Native American foodways, and when that same corn is prepared with the husks on and roasted in a commercial kitchen oven and not in an earthen pit, it is Native American cuisine."

When I asked the young chef what he wanted to do in the future, he said that he wanted to be on TV. He would like to be a role model for younger Native American students who were thinking of becoming chefs. Chef George also stated that he would

like to cook for the president of the United States one day, and prepare a Native American dinner at the White House.



Photo 10.34 Santa Fe Community College Culinary student Franklin George in 2007.

Orson Patterson

Orson Patterson is a member of the Diné Nation who grew up in the eastern part of the reservation, in Crownpoint, New Mexico. Crownpoint is best known for the rug auctions that are held there once a month. Chef Patterson was very proud of this and said that Crownpoint was called T'iists'óóz Ndeeshgizh in his language. Chef Patterson was a student in the SFCC Culinary Arts program in August 2007, studying under Chef Mica when we conducted this interview. Chef Patterson and Chef George were friends, and the two of them had taken several culinary classes together. Chef Patterson had been cooking professionally for about two years. Like Chef George, Chef Patterson had worked a couple of jobs while he was obtaining his culinary arts degree. He, too, worked at Adobo Catering in Santa Fe, as a line cook rather than a prep cook. He was also a lab assistant at

SFCC. A lab assistant, Chef Patterson explained, assists the chef instructors in the teaching of the culinary arts classes and cleans the kitchen before and after each class. He liked being a lab assistant and was learning a lot from assisting the chef instructors. He explained, “We will have classes here at the college, where I assist newer students on how to do things. I teach them to have appreciation for what—the meal—they have cooked. So pretty much, when I am here at the college, you know, I like to assist the chefs more than to cook for people”.

Chef Patterson said that he enjoyed teaching new students what to do and how to cook. It gave him purpose while he was at school. He liked that. For him, cooking was more of a passion than a job, so it was a lot easier for him to do all of the necessary work for school, he told me. Making money doing what he loved was just the “icing on the cake,” he stated. Chef Patterson said he had a sense of accomplishment from cooking. “You take raw ingredients and you make them into something, you create a dish that people eat, not only does it nourish them but it is beautiful too. It is art,” he said.

Chef Patterson was also one of the chef assistants at the Native Foods Celebration at IAIA in May 2007. As had Chef George, he had made many contacts and learned a lot from the Native chefs at the event. Chef Patterson had received a job offer from Chef Richard Hetzler at NMAI to work in the Mitsitam Café. Chef Patterson was planning on working there after he finished his chef certification at SFCC. “I am only lacking one class to get my professional chef certification,” Chef Patterson stated. “Right now, I am currently working on hospitality and supervision for this semester, and I just need the purchasing certificate, which will allow me to be able to ‘walk’ in May, and graduate with my professional chef certification.” He was very excited by this as he explained it to me.

Chef Patterson was full of energy. He is short and somewhat stocky, had shaved his head, which was starting to grow out, and wore a diamond earring. He was really into cooking, looking forward to becoming a chef, and his life was centered around finishing school and getting a good job in a commercial kitchen.

Originally, Chef Patterson learned to cook from his family. He said he learned a lot from his uncle, whom he calls his dad. “My uncle is more like a stepdad,” Chef

Patterson stated, “but I consider him more of a father because he was there for me growing up.” His mother, sister, and grandma also taught him to cook, and he had developed some skills he learned from them. As he grew up, however, he got into trouble. He told me that he was incarcerated at a very young age. One of the instructors from Santa Fe Community College, Chef Mica, taught a cooking class at the facility while he was there. He took the class, and that was how he began to learn how to cook professionally. Those initial cooking classes developed his desire to become a chef.

Chef Patterson stated that the person who has been most influential in his culinary career is Chef Michelle Roetzer, or Chef Mica, the head of the culinary arts program. She taught him basic knowledge of the culinary field and “has always been there to support me,” he said.



Photo 10.35 Santa Fe Community College Culinary student Orson Patterson.

Chef Mica has been influencing and working with culinary students at SFCC for years. She has opened doors for many students, providing integral skills needed for a very

competitive profession. Chef Mica's personal inspiration and behind-the-scenes tips have helped her students learn an array of professional methods that they can apply to meet their career goals. She continues to inspire her students well into their culinary careers and is always available to them. Chef Mica is one of the featured chefs in the following chapter. She has mentored multiple young Native American students as the lead chef instructor and department head at the SFCC culinary arts program.



Photo 10.36 Culinary students Franklin George and Orson Patterson in the Santa Fe Community College Kitchen.

For Chef Patterson, the dominant ingredients that he uses when preparing Native American cuisine dishes are corn, beans, squash, and Blue Bird flour (he giggled as he told me this). The Blue Bird brand was created in the 1930s; it is milled in Cortez, Colorado. Red winter wheat purchased from local dry-land farmers is very finely ground into (white) flour. Blue Bird flour is the most popular flour on the Navajo Nation for making fry bread, and it is sold at trading posts as well as in grocery stores on and near the reservation. Native cooks will drive long distances to purchase the flour because they say it tastes better (due to the taste and texture) than any other flour. Chef Patterson said it was the best flour you can get, and after his trips home to Crownpoint he regularly brought twenty-five-pound bags back to Santa Fe to cook with at school.

Chef Patterson also likes to use lamb; it is the primary meat he uses. Because Chef Patterson grew up with sheep, he is comfortable cooking it more than any other kind of meat. He continued,

I choose locally grown products more than non-locally grown products, . . . [for] a couple of reasons. The first one is that you know it's fresh and you are also supporting the little farmers out there who are making a living off this land, and you want to keep pushing them to continue farming. With the way the world is running right now, so many people are depending on pesticides and all that, and second, plus the food tastes better when it is organic and unadulterated.

Chef Patterson, though still quite young, has formed definite opinions about the food he prepares, why he prepares, and why he prefers it. His favorite way to cook is in an outside kitchen. He stated that he likes cooking over an open flame, earthen pit cooking, as well as outdoor oven cooking, but acknowledged that these methods are impractical in a commercial cooking context. When I inquired about what he thought his own culinary techniques were, he commented,

My own culinary technique is confidence: when you walk through the kitchen, . . . you might not know what you are doing, but at least you know where you are going to be heading. I always have at least one goal in mind. . . . You are going to have confidence in yourself to be preparing food and other culinary techniques such as presentation in the food we prepare. . . . And by learning the different cuisines from different places I am bringing new things to the table.

Visuals were important components in Chef Patterson's food. He said that presentation is a keyword for him. His goal is to balance the colors on the plate, make the food look good, and "give it the hype it needs." But, while all those components play a key role in the presentation, for Chef Patterson, taste is the most important component. He went on to say, "For me, my thing is taste; as long as the taste—if it tastes good, if the smell is good, and it also looks good, then what you have is unique." He emphasized over and over again that taste was the primary importance in his food. We explored the idea of what taste was to him. He thought that taste was up to each individual chef. Taste was affected by what each chef liked. Taste was a factor in how you were trained in culinary school, he said. A professionally trained palate is more European than Native, he told me. However, as a Native chef, he thought he had the advantage of using his Native palate in conjunction with his European-trained palate. In essence, he stated, he had two palates.

Chef Patterson commented, “Although the same instructor with the same techniques trained both me and Franklin [Chef George], our food is different.” Chef Patterson said this was because an ingredient he put into his food. This ingredient, he said, was something that was inside each chef. I call this ingredient the intangible essence of cooking, and Chef Patterson was not the first chef to touch on this topic. For him,

First you start off with presentation, then you go with smell, and then the finishing product; you want to have it be tasteful because people eat with their eyes first. What makes my food unique is how I use these components with the ingredients I use; Franklin is going to make his food different than I do, even with the same ingredients. We’re different chefs, even though we have been trained the same.”

By this time in the interview he was speaking with a great amount of passion and excitement. He began talking about some of the food competitions in which he had participated. “There was an ‘Art Is Heart’ competition at the SFCC where people came in and watched us students making soups,” he stated. Chef Patterson loved when people came in to watch him and the other students cook; it gave him a good feeling. Then he said, “I would put those good feelings into my soup, and then everyone would eat those feelings.” This, he told me, was one of his secret ingredients. It was an ingredient he used to make his soup taste so good. “Let me give you an example of this,” he said.

You know, one thing that I have figured out was when I was growing up and making fry bread, when you are pissed off, you know, you can’t make bread—if you fry your bread that way, they won’t come out good; your cooking don’t come out good—for instance, when you try to make fry bread it tends to get hard if you are pissed off. So you have to be in a good mood to cook.

Chef Patterson wanted to return to the reservation some day. He emphasized that he wanted to move to Crownpoint and open a restaurant that utilized all of his newly developed talents. Chef Patterson wanted Crownpoint to become known not only for its rugs, but for its Native American cuisine. “All of the tourists that come to this town to buy rugs,” he stated, “could also discover the cuisine of this region, and I could be the chef in the future who prepares it for them.”

He said that some people do yoga to calm down; he cooks. “Cooking for me” he said, “it relaxes me, you know, it relaxes my mind and helps me cope with the problems that I have. . . . I get away from this instead of going out . . . or doing other things that I

know I would do if I wasn't cooking, . . . so when I am upset or feeling down, cooking brings a sense of calmness to me.”

Cooking was becoming his way of life. It was something he liked to do all the time. For him, cooking was social. It joined everyone in the kitchen together, like a family. “When I cook here, I am part of the family of chefs here at the SFCC. And when I go home and cook, I am a part of my family there. And wherever I end up cooking in my career, I will be a part of that family as well.”

Chef Patterson spoke about his experience at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center’s “Connecting Communities: Native Foods and Wellness” event. On October 20, 2007, he prepared “Miniature Navajo Tacos” for a large crowd at the cultural center. It was his first time preparing food for an audience (every seat was occupied during his 1:30pm time slot), and for that many people. Several of the other Native chefs helped him prepare and plate his food for the crowd. Below is the schedule of Native chefs who participated in the event at IPCC.

<u>Connecting Communities: Native Foods and Wellness</u>	
<u>Chef Food Demonstrations</u>	
<u>Saturday, October 20th 2007</u>	
12:00 noon	Chef Walter Whitewater from the Diné (Navajo) Nation, and Red Mesa Cuisine LLC, will prepare locally raised organic Navajo Churro ground lamb stuffed in a roasted New Mexico green chile with organic garden tomato sauce.
12:30 pm	Chef Arlie Doxtator from the Oneida Nation, and Executive Chef at Waubee Lodge Resort in Lakewood, Wisconsin, will prepare a traditional corn dish from his region.
1:00 pm	Chef Lawrence Riley from Acoma Pueblo will prepare a traditional Acoma Rabbit Stew with ground homegrown white traditional Acoma corn.
1:30 pm	Culinary Student Orson Patterson, Diné (Navajo) Nation, will prepare Miniature Navajo Tacos.
3:00 pm	Norma Naranjo from Ohkay Owingeh, formerly San Juan Pueblo, will prepare a White Corn Chicos Stew and Vegetarian Green Chile Stew with Squash, Corn, and Green Chile from traditionally and organically grown foods by her company, The Feasting Place.

Figure 10.2 “Connecting Communities: Native Food and Wellness” Chef Food Demonstration Schedule for Saturday, October 20, 2007.

Chef Patterson demonstrated a dish that he felt represented his own Diné (Navajo) identity. He specifically called his miniature taco a “Navajo” taco and not an “Indian” taco or a “Tewa” taco. (It is listed as a Tewa taco on the menu in the Pueblo Harvest Café at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center.) Chef Patterson stated, “I want it to be a Navajo taco because—well, I am a Navajo Native American preparing something. . . . Even if I make Acoma bread, I will call it Navajo bread, because it made by me and I’m Navajo.” In this instance, the food is representative of both his community identity, that of a Navajo Native American, and his individual identity as a Navajo Chef. He was aware of this identity connection and made a point of bringing it to my attention during our interview.



Photo 10.37 Culinary student Orson Patterson preparing a miniature Navajo taco at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center in October 2007 with Chef Richard Hetzler.



Photo 10.38 Topping the miniature Navajo taco with grated cheddar cheese.



Photo 10.39 Finishing the taco with diced tomatoes.



Photo 10.40 Culinary student Orson Patterson presenting his miniature Navajo taco.

When it came down to defining Native American cuisine and Native American foodways, Chef Patterson made another distinction. “Native American foodways are traditional. If you go back to the old ways, when they did not have a convection oven, they did not have electric stoves, they did not have stovetops, they were pretty much cooking using the open flame method outside, using wood to heat their food; nowadays it’s all down to convection ovens and stovetops.” For Patterson, the difference between the two is the professional appliances that changed Native American foodways into a cuisine—not the ingredients themselves, as had been the case with other chefs. Chef Patterson was one of the only chefs who made this distinction.

As he reflected on the future, his role models, and where he wanted to be, he said, “Twenty-five years from now, I want to be an executive chef, with, hopefully, a Native American restaurant on the reservation which will give jobs to the Native Americans who are out there without jobs, and I also want to give them the help they need; I want to be

there to accompany them, and teach them how to do things. . . . Hopefully a school [that teaches about Native foods] will be open by then—that I can also be an instructor at. Those are my dreams.”

Chapter 11

Non-Native Chefs in Commercial Kitchens, Cooking Native American Cuisine and Procuring Native American Ingredients

Cuisines have primarily been practiced in their region of origin and dictated by local ingredients. Ecological and environmental factors in a specific region provided the ingredients available to cooks and, later, to chefs. Understandably, each cuisine was developed around those abundant ingredients. Thus, cuisines were prepared by chefs living in close proximity to the regions of those cuisines. Regional cuisines were usually performed by “natives” from those regions, and the chef’s ethnicity was typically the same as the regional cuisine that he or she practiced. This regionality could be broken down to subregions within regions. For instance, coastal areas in Sicily had a different regional cuisine than the mountainous areas of Torino. While these two regional cuisines would both be Italian, they would differ based on ingredients local to those specific regions.

For North America, the RAFT map of place-based food traditions is a good example of the iconic foods and distinctive regional food cuisines that developed there. The map illustrates the regions with distinct dominant foods. The various “Food Nations” are delineated by the foods that developed around those areas.

These totem foods are more than just important commodities. Community feasts, household rituals, songs, stories, and the nutritional well-being of residents in those areas have revolved around these foods for millennia. For instance, the Northwest Coast Indian Nations’ primary food ingredient is salmon, along with a wide variety of wild foods from that region. The regional cuisine developed around those ingredients. Salmon was the perfect food for that region: it was abundant, cooks had access to it on a regular or seasonal basis, and it was an ancient native food with a tradition local to that region. Salmon has been a crucial food source for the Northwest Coast Indian Nations for millennia.

Likewise, in the Southwest, abundant ingredients such as corn, beans, squash, and chiles have dominated the cuisine and are an integral part of the food and cultures of the Indian Nations that occupy this region.

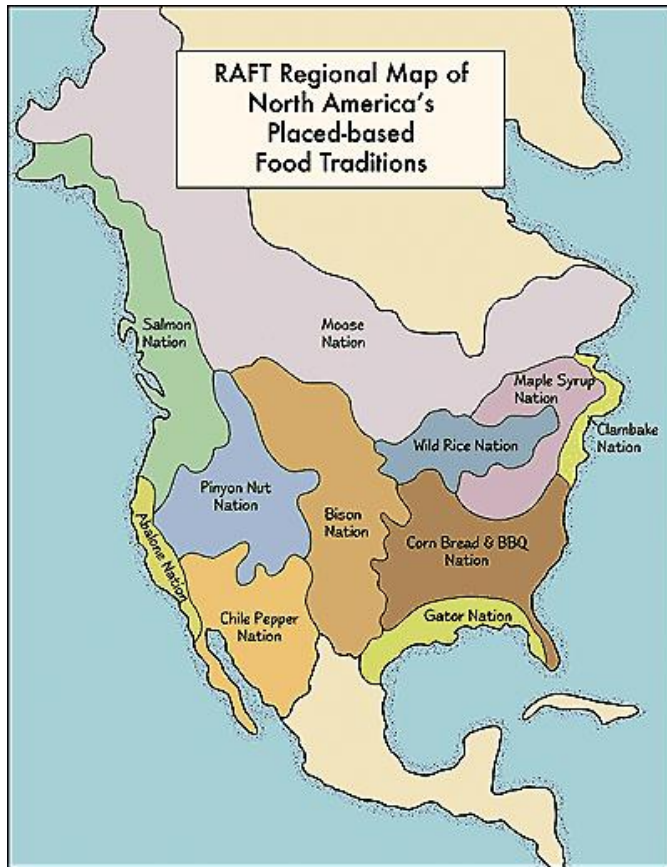


Figure 11.1 RAFT Regional map of North American's place-based food traditions. Retrieved on March 3, 2011 from <http://www.environment.nau.edu/raft/map.htm>.

After the Spanish settled in the Southwest and immigrant populations moved into regions that became their homelands, food traditions from immigrant populations fused with foods of Native cultures that were already dominant in a specific region. Contemporary fusion cuisine, then, is a melding of components from one culture's cuisine with components from another's. In some cases, fusion cuisine is a combination of multiple ethnic cuisines. A good example is Jemez Pueblo enchiladas. These enchiladas, for which Jemez Pueblo is famous, are made of tightly rolled corn tortillas filled with chopped onions and cheddar cheese and then smothered in red chile sauce. The corn tortillas and the red chile sauce are ingredients local to the region; the cheese is an introduced food. Yet the dish is considered a traditional dish from Jemez Pueblo.

Contemporary American cuisine, according to Donna Gabbacia, has two distinctive characteristics: the mass-produced, processed dishes and the diverse variety of

multi-ethnic specialties. The former gives a familiar and predictable homogeneity to supermarket shelves and roadside fast-food landscapes across the country, which is what first-time visitors, along with recently arrived immigrants, initially perceive as American food. Yet alongside the factory-baked spongy white bread, processed snack chips, and endless rows of tin cans with seemingly identical contents in the supermarket, sometimes hidden in the roadside mom and pop cafés, diners, and restaurants, there is an extraordinary diversity (Gabaccia 1998:226). Regardless of cultural origin, foods that are mass-produced for a national market generally lose their ethnic identities in the United States. Hot dogs, fried chicken, and Fritos all emerged from specific cultural communities. Few people today think of hot dogs as German, Fritos as Mexican-American, or Kentucky Fried Chicken as “soul food.”

The Indian taco is believed by many Americans to be Native American in origin. There can be no Indian fry bread and no Indian taco (or Navajo taco, or Tewa taco) without the introduction by the Spanish of wheat and by the U.S. government of blocks of yellow cheddar cheese through the commodity foods program. Yet, this dish is integrally tied to the contemporary ethnic identity of Native American tribes all over the United States. It is now iconic with the Native American community. You see it at every Pow-Wow, at arts and crafts festivals (including Indian Market in Santa Fe), at celebratory feasts, at ceremonies, at Native rodeos, and at almost every contemporary public Native American festival (Humphrey and Humphrey 1991:227). While the Indian taco does not seem to be a particularly important part of any tribe’s cuisine in other contexts, it is as a general rule considered an American Indian dish. Southwest plant-based foods (such as cholla buds and saguaro syrup in the southern deserts; corn ground into a fine meal as well as red and green chile in many of the Pueblos; banana yucca among the Diné) are less acculturative foods and are among the actual community-based contributions to the regional cuisine of the Southwest. More traditionality is embodied in the foods and they are more closely tied to individual communities rather than to American Indians as a transnational group.

With the fusing of foods in the Southwest, chefs from varying backgrounds have now become specialists in foods not necessarily representative of their ethnicity. For

instance, famed celebrity chef Bobby Flay, as mentioned in an earlier chapter, is a fourth-generation Irish American, yet he is best known for his Southwest cuisine. No longer does a chef have to be of the same ethnicity as the cuisine he or she prepares to be well-known or a celebrity in that cuisine. With standardized methods of cooking in commercial kitchens, set in place by Auguste Escoffier, the ethnicity of the chef no longer follows a linear trajectory to the food he or she cooks. In many cases it is more cyclical and more than one ethnicity is represented in the cuisine for which the chef is known. Chef Michelle Roetzer illustrates this point well. She is part Mexican on her mother's side and part German on her father's side, yet she is most well known for how she makes some of her Mexican dishes, including her grandmother's mole. But I believe that characteristics from the German side can also be found in her Mexican cuisine. I am part Kiowa on my mother's side and part Sephardic Jewish on my father's side. While my niche is Native American cuisine, I can't get my other grandmother, from the Sephardic side, out of the food I prepare. So when I cook Native American cuisine, I do so with the influence of my entire ethnic heritage, not just one. Thus, the chefs in this chapter, while not Native American, are cooking and procuring ingredients integrally tied to Native American cuisine.

As evidenced in some of the individual Native chefs' biographies presented in the previous chapters, practicing Native American cuisine comes from the dominant ingredients local to regional tribal communities. In some cases these are the native foods with which they grew up and the totem foods that have been cared for and eaten by their Native nations for millennia. In other cases the Native foods they prepare are from outside the Southwest that have been harvested by and purchased from native purveyors and neighboring Native American nations. For example, Kai Restaurant at the Wild Horse Pass Resort and Spa uses Northwest Coast salmon, which is purchased from a tribal enterprise, in addition to local ingredients. The hand-harvested wild rice from the Ojibwe Nation in Minnesota is another example. The salmon and wild rice are purchased from Native American enterprises outside the locale of the restaurant but are nonetheless traditional Native ingredients. This is the case for many of the chefs I present in this chapter. They are using Native-sourced local and non-local ingredients. These foods are

purchased from Native purveyors, tribal enterprises, and individuals all over the United States, Canada, and throughout the Americas.

Some chefs buy ingredients from small, local, Native farmers, as is the case with Kai Restaurant when they purchase their ingredients from the neighboring Gila River and Tohono O'odham communities. Some chefs buy foods from elders who make specialty traditional foods, as in the case of Chef John Sharpe at The Turquoise Room at La Posada in Winslow, Arizona, and the Hopi-made piki bread he serves there. He also serves locally raised Navajo churro lamb, which he buys from local sheepherders. These two Native communities are in close proximity to his restaurant. The chefs described in this chapter are practicing Native American cuisine much the same way that their Native counterparts are. I present here the commonalities, as well as their differences.

I also explore with the chefs presented in this chapter what this means in terms of identity. I ask, can the Tohono O'odham relate to wild rice, a water crop, as part of their desert identity? Many of the urban-based innovative chefs serving these foods for their cosmopolitan clientele can and do relate to multiple Native American foods from a variety of regions. However, in some of the more remote areas of the Southwest, where community members are typically not aware of foods outside their region and may not have access to them, these inhabitants prefer their own local, place-based foods over foods from outside their immediate or neighboring regions.

The Non-Native Chefs

Mark Charles Miller

Mark Miller has been called a culinary revolutionary and the founder of modern Southwestern cuisine. Originally a student of anthropology at University of California at Berkeley, Chef Miller worked under the legendary Alice Waters at Chez Panisse in Berkeley. He became the chef there after Jeremiah Tower, who along with Alice Waters and Wolfgang Puck is credited with inventing California cuisine. Beyond its broad influence on California and American cuisine, Chez Panisse has contributed to the success of many prominent chefs in the United States and the founding of a number of notable food-related businesses. Chef Miller worked at Chez Panisse for almost two years before leaving in 1979 to open the Fourth Street Grill in Berkeley. It was at this point that

Southwestern cuisine was first offered at a fine-dining establishment outside the Southwest. In the thirty-plus years since then, Chef Miller's name and career have been synonymous with contemporary Southwestern cuisine. Chef Miller has conducted and documented many intensive inquiries into the history and techniques of Southwestern cuisine. His unrelenting dedication to the cuisine has led to its increasing popularity. Mark Miller and his Coyote Café restaurants are as close as one can get to the branding of a cuisine.

An academic at heart, Chef Miller is a world traveler, has conducted detailed research on his cuisines, and has presented many of his discoveries of Southwestern, Latin and South American, and more recently Asian foods through a string of successful restaurants in the United States, Japan, and Australia. He has been in on the ground floor of a number of culinary tremors that metamorphosed into hot culinary trends and then passed these trends into general popular acceptance. Examples include mesquite grilling, which he was one of the first chefs to introduce. He used wood smoke to flavor food when he opened his first restaurant, the Fourth Street Grill, and later on his Southwestern cuisine. Many of the dishes at his 1981 Santa Fe Bar and Grill in Berkeley were "exclusively non-European," venturing to Latin America and the Caribbean for his research and inspiration. By the time he moved to Santa Fe in 1987 and opened the Coyote Café, he was acknowledged as one of the founders of American regional cuisine focusing on the Southwest. He also later focused on Western or Cowboy cuisine and opened Red Sage in Washington, D.C. in 2001 where he pays homage to a region that embodies an American ideal and offers a cuisine that is not "European, Asian, or Spanish." Chef Miller and his restaurants have met with critical acclaim and have received, among others, The Ivy Award, Food Arts' Silver Spoon Award, Esquire's Best New Restaurant Award (Red Sage), and the James Beard Award for Best American Chef – Southwest.

I met Mark Miller shortly after he opened the Coyote Café in Santa Fe, New Mexico. I have known him since 1987 and collaborated with him on many of his cookbooks and culinary posters. We first worked together on "The Great Chile Posters" (first published by Celestial Arts), for which we researched (and I photographed on

location) both fresh and dried chiles in markets throughout Mexico and South America. This project was released in two editions, *fresco* (fresh) and *seco* (dried) and led to the release of additional posters, including “Indian Corn of the Americas,” “Squash,” and “How Hot Is Your Chile?” (also first published by Celestial Arts). It also led to the release of *The Great Chile Book* (Miller 1991), *The Great Salsa Book* (Miller 1994), and *The Indian Market Cookbook* (Miller 1995).

In the 1990s the number one condiment in the American household was ketchup. Today the number one condiment in the average American household is salsa. There are many types on the market today. In most supermarkets the American consumer has an extensive choice of salsas in both the refrigerated and the bottled/canned section. Salsas that are available today include freshly made pico de gallo, roasted tomato salsa, tomatillo salsa, and restaurant-style salsas, in mild, medium, and hot. Sometimes salsas are located near the Mexican food section or, in New Mexico, the local foods section. Chef Miller was one of the first chefs to package a variety of salsas under his own Coyote Café label. These salsas reflected his research on chiles and on the cuisines of Mexico and the Southwest. We have collaborated on a number of other food-related projects and are presently working together on a poster featuring chiles of the world.

Mark Miller grew up in central Massachusetts. His mother, who was the most influential person on his cooking, is French Canadian. She used food that reflected the family identity, he recalls. His mother served baked beans, stews, braised meats, and a Sunday pot roast. They were Catholic, so they always had seafood on Fridays. Chef Miller stated, “All religion defines many cuisines and defines that part of the ritual, which re-enforces the identity within the family, and also the foods.” He grew up in the 1950s in neighborhoods with Lithuanian, Polish, Italian, and Jewish neighbors. Most of the families were second-generation, and the parents and grandparents were immigrants who still spoke their natal languages. They also still cooked the foods of their family lineages, which identified them in terms of culture and religion. There was a difference between what the Catholics, Protestants, and Jewish people ate on Friday, he remembered. Holidays (Passover versus Easter, Hanukkah versus Christmas, Lent) also affected what these families ate.

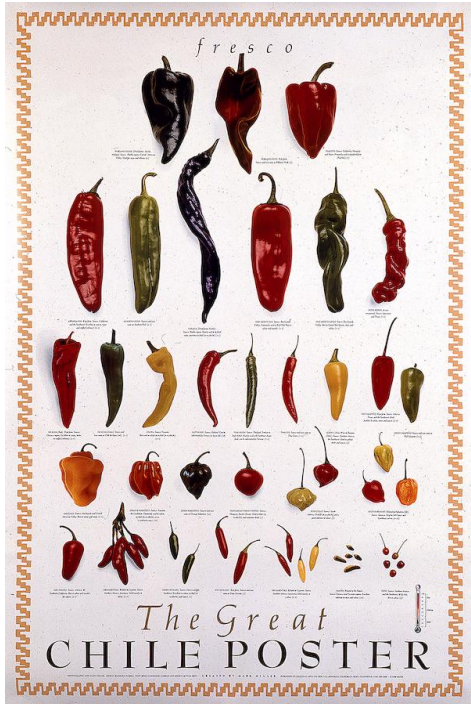


Photo 11.1 The Great Chile Poster, Fresco, by Mark Miller and the author, illustrating a variety of fresh chiles from across the Americas.

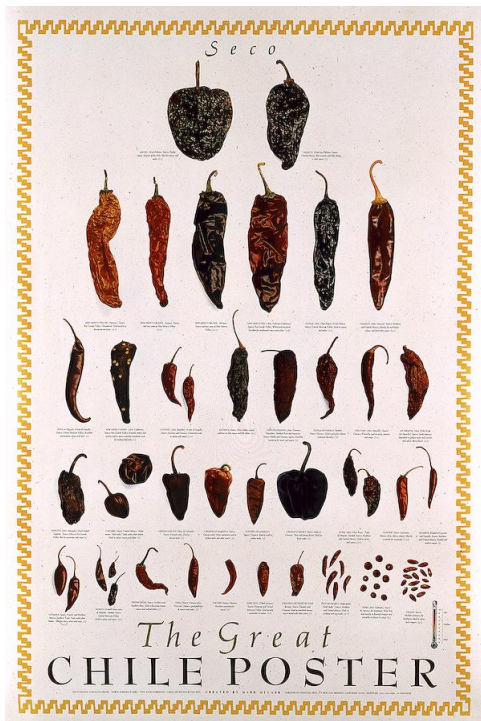


Photo 11.2 The Great Chile Poster, Seco, by Mark Miller and the author, illustrating a variety of dried chiles from across the Americas.

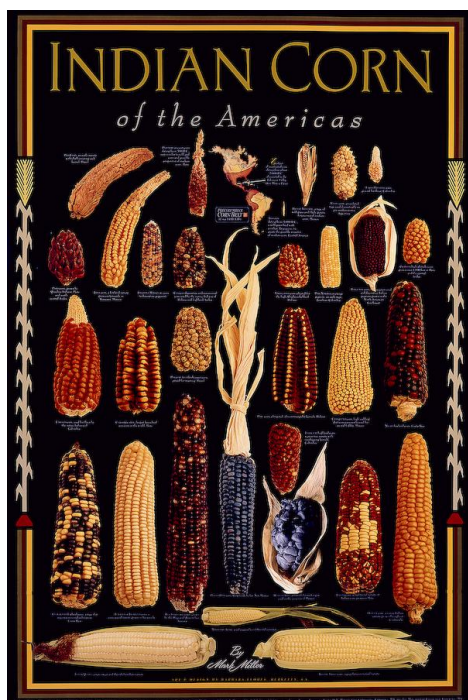


Photo 11.3 Indian Corn of the Americas, by Mark Miller and the author, illustrating varieties of corn from across the Americas.

His mother was a professional woman so when she wasn't home, someone else watched him. He grew up with what he called classic "American" foods. However, his mother did prepare meals that had origins other than their own. In the summer, Chef Miller spent time with his grandparents in Maine, where there was a lot of interaction between the environment of New England and the food they ate. He was introduced to freshly caught lobster and local fish such as black sea bass, Vermont homemade cheese, apples, and all of the fall ciders. The cuisine of New England, Miller stated, was influenced the most by the English who settled there. He classified his French Canadian ancestry, which came from both parents, as Western European. These were the major flavor profiles with which he grew up. Foods were a part of the places where he grew up and of the history of that region as well as the history of his family.

The Catholic boarding school he attended had additional food influences. For instance,

We had no choice on Fridays; all the boarding school students ate fish on Fridays. And on Sundays, we all had to fast until after church. A lot of Catholic countries still do that; you don't eat before church and you go out after church, so it is still

existent. You see it in France, you see it in Italy, you see it in Spain, you see it in Mexico, and you still see it to a degree here in Santa Fe. It becomes an important Feast that is connected to family and to church, and you see how religion affects food and the choices of food. All of these have meaning and become part of the food ritual.

Chef Miller talked for quite some time about family, ritual, religion, and food. He talked about ethnicity and how that influenced what people ate. They were all components that made up community, he said.

People are nutritionally concerned, which is sort of the individual at the expense of culture, you know; they are always talking about what is good for you. Nobody ever talks about what's good for the family, what's good for identity, what's good for giving people [a] sense of who they are. Apart from place, nobody talks about what's good for history, what's good for tradition; they always talk about nutrition, and I think that they are all overemphasized to the point of the individual at the expense of community.

One of Chef Miller's biggest concerns is the relationship between food and culture. He has done a lot of research on the topic and it is important to him. He talked about class and the role class plays in food and who has access to food in terms of health and wellness. "People with money have better access to better foods and can shop at stores like Whole Foods, which provides them with the best-quality ingredients." But that doesn't make them good cooks, he said, that just provides them with access. He continued,

You can create from within a recipe. Some codified ways of cooking recipes are another individual's interpretations of a culinary idea. I think recipes are helpful, yes, but people don't need to see a recipe as a form in itself; they can express something individually within . . . cooking. It's a part of reflection of personality of the individual, and it's also something we do in real time, in real space. I find it relaxing in a different way; it's more of a modus of operation than what I found in academics when I was at Berkeley. Cooking always took me to another time, another place, where cooking actually is a subject of people's opinion. I have good instincts in cooking because I trust my sense of taste and I have a good taste memory. I know when things will taste good and when they don't. I don't blame the recipe. I understand the cooking as a process; in order to get the desired result, I had to find out what I wanted to eat and what other people wanted to eat . . . That is how I became a good chef.

Mark Miller said he had been cooking since he was eighteen, which was for fifty-seven years at the time of our interview in 2006. He wasn't on the line as a chef anymore.

He had taught himself everything he knew and wasn't professionally trained in a culinary school. "I pretty much do a lot of consulting for major companies; I'm pretty much at the end of my public career," he said. "This is the last year I will come out publicly, the last year I will be involved in restaurants. My passion for food is still there, but I don't want to be involved in operation and management anymore." Chef Miller's focus was on traveling and learning about the food world for himself, rather than dealing with the public or the media. His new area of interest for research and learning about food is Asia.

Chef Miller stated that food was a way of expanding his own sensibility and his own sense of identity. He said that he didn't really feel that he belonged to one group of people, but that he was comfortable in a lot of cultures. He had never tried to pass himself off as being a part of the culture he was working with or visiting, but he did have an identification with sensibilities, moralities, and ideals which always made it easy for him to fit in and be accepted wherever he traveled. This always made it easier for him to learn about food, he said. "By the time I was twelve, I wanted to become an anthropologist (which was his major at UC Berkeley), and I was always interested in different worlds. It is one of the ways that I could transcend and become part of a larger identity." He went on to say that you didn't need a lot of money to "see" a city. Chef Miller was content walking around the streets of Tokyo, or anywhere in China, and visiting markets in Thailand. Seeing how people lived and ate was what was of most interest to him. That's how he learned all that he did and developed his palette, he said.

He isn't afraid to taste anything, anywhere. He believes that this is how he became an expert on the foods that made him famous. When I collaborated with him on the Chile projects we traveled all over Mexico. Chef Miller would stop at a street vendor, buy something, eat it, analyze the taste and the components in the dish, and then continue on to the next task of the day. He did this all day, every day. He visited people's homes (anywhere he was invited), he ate with local cooks, he ate in restaurants, he ate foods from street vendors, he visited the farmers' markets, he visited produce markets, and he ate in the local food stalls in those markets. He was always gathering information and entering it into his mental database. This was how he learned. He took notes. He documented what he saw and what he ate with photographs. All of these factors played a

role in his research as a chef. And when he returned to his restaurant kitchen in Santa Fe, he made dishes and creations from what he had learned. He looked at influences from other cultures and then incorporated components from what he had seen, prepared, and tasted, and made them into the dishes that were his own.



Coyote Cafe

INDIAN MARKET 1997

NATIVE AMERICAN TRADITIONS

Saturday, August 23rd

FIRST

Zuni Squash Blossom Souffle
with a Crawfish Sauce

SECOND

Hopi Painted Bean Soup
Elizabeth's "Wedding" Beans with Pulled Jerky

MAIN

Pueblo Corn Crusted Trout
Filled with Fresh, Sweet Maine Crab Slaw
Spiced Potatoes and Mustard Greens

or

Sioux Style Buffalo Rib Steak
Sunchoke, Bulb Onion and Field-Mushroom Saute

DESSERT

Penobscot Caramelized Corn Pudding
Roasted Pinon Spice Cakes and Wild Berries

or

Nez Perce Black Walnut Dried Fruit Tart
Maple Ice Cream & Sundried Cherry Sauce

Mark Miller, Owner
Mark Kiffin, Chef
Andrew MacLauchlan, Pastry Chef
Jeff Drew, Sous Chef



Figure 11.2 Coyote Café 1997 Indian Market Menu.



Coyote Cafe

INDIAN MARKET 1998
AMERICAN INDIAN FLAVORS
Friday, August 21st

FIRST

Gallina Canyon Squash Blossoms
Stuffed with Crawfish on an Azafran-Calabacita Sauce

* 1996 Carmenet, Sauvignon Blanc-Semillon Reserve, Edna Valley 4.00/6.50

SECOND

Mandan Sweet Corn Crusted Quail
Wild Cherry Compote and Cream Corn Essence

* 1996, Handley, Pinot Noir, Anderson Valley 4.50/7.00

MAIN

Mimbres Cinnamon Roasted Rabbit
Wild Boar Bacon, Chanterelle Ragout
and Costeno Chile Jus

OR

Spit-Roasted Buffalo Ribeye
Hopi Jerky Reduction, Sunchoke Mash
and Mincemeat Turnovers

* 1993, Terrabianca, Campaccio
Tuscany 6.00/11.00

* 1994 Robert Sinsky, Merlot Reserve
Carneros 5.50/10.00

DESSERT

Choose one of three

**Baked White Peaches
with Pinon Stuffing**
Dark Honey Juniper Ice Cream

* 1996 Bonny Doon, Muscat
Vin de Glaciere 4.50

Frosted Wild Plum Pudding
Mesilla Pecan Shortbread
Summer Spearmint Meringue

* 1997 Quady, Black Muscat
Elysium 4.00

Trio of Cheeses

Estancia Madura, Delphina, Old Croton
Wild Green Apples and Wheat Crackers

* 1991 Robert Mondavi, Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve, Napa 8.00/12.00

Mark Miller, Chef/Owner
Jeff Drew, Executive Chef
Andrew MacLauchlan, Pastry Chef
Gary Kucy, Sous Chef

Figure 11.3 Coyote Café 1998 Indian Market Menu.

Chef Miller used an example to illustrate how he looked at things. “It’s like looking at a polar bear; it’s not like looking at a polar bear like an Eskimo looks at it, like maybe like dinner.” He laughed and then said,

But when an Eskimo looks at a polar bear it’s recognized that it’s part of the same environment that they live in. They recognize something about the polar bear that is completely different. Yes, it’s dinner, but there’s also that it lives in the environment the same as the Eskimos do, and that both are a part of the same environment. That’s part of the Native American practices. I think the food, the ritual of food, into taking a life where you recognize that part of your own existence is part of the environment. And when you no longer think you are part of that environment, when you can just buy whatever you want from whatever it is, you no longer feel that sense of place and time, you are no longer related.

I asked him to explain this further. Chef Miller continued,

We don’t really support that primarily important component to our culture anymore, our neighborhood, our religion, our ethnic group anymore, and the food is no longer part of the community. For instance, when you live in an Italian community, there are Italian restaurants, the pizza place and the Italian-style restaurants; in the past they bought the bread in the neighborhood, they made the sauces from scratch, they made the mozzarella which then made the pizza, all in that one neighborhood. That’s why it was so delicious. Now, today, it is all delivered by Sysco.

Chef Miller said that in the United States culture is no longer connected to food in the same way it had been in the past. He said, that “is a tragic loss.” The intensification of the flavor profile was the intensification of the experience. He stated that food is an entry point for looking at different food cultures, for trying to understand people’s mentality. “I would rather eat non-organic Mexican chicken than cleaned-up organic chicken, because the chicken still reflects the important part of Mexican culture.” He continued, “The winners of the world get to rewrite history and forget their past. You know, a country that has no past has no future.” He gave another example of how things in the United States have become altered from their natural way of being.

When we go into Wal-Mart you see candles and soaps. I went to Wal-Mart the other day and I was looking at twenty-five soaps, and I said to the sales person, “Do you have any that are non-scented?” And she said no. Why does soap have to be scented? We cannot live here without the notion that soap is naturally used in making candles and fats. I don’t want to be in Santa Fe, washing my hands, and have a Hawaiian breeze. All I want to do is wash my hands. And the point here is that being in a place and accepting its sensibility is being altered from its natural

state. There is no longer the smell and taste of the local. It isn't just where you are anymore.

Chef Miller spoke for hours about his experiences as the chef and owner of the Coyote Café in Santa Fe. He talked about buying local beans from Elizabeth Berry, one of the first growers with whom he contracted to grow specialty foods for him in the early 1990s. He talked about supply and demand. He talked about how chefs played and continue to play an important role in what farmers grow, what foods are still being grown, and how the marketplace was changing based on this supply and demand. He talked about the importance of keeping alive and rescuing America's food traditions. He talked about the work Gary Nabhan is doing with RAFT. Chef Miller stated that he thought we are in a time of critical importance.

He said that both the local Native American and Hispano cultures are at a point whereby if they didn't make an effort to revitalize and reintroduce historically and culturally important foods to this region, they would be lost forever. It is crucial and critical to act now, he stressed. He talked about going to Chimayo and seeing a mixture of Native American and Hispano food that came from the fusing of the two cultures since the time the Spanish arrived. "Communities are no longer making their own green chile," he said; "They're buying Bueno frozen, they are moving off of the Pueblos and out of the local communities into the cities."

He sat for a moment and then said, "People are more interested in going to Geronimo [another Santa Fe restaurant] and seeing imported greens with a piece of lobster, and having a bottle of French wine. The most popular restaurant in town is the least Native . . . it has the least amount of dining to do with the area. People come to Santa Fe, and they are not having the Santa Fe experience." He stated how important it is to document as extensively as possible the varieties of foods that have been grown historically in this area, and then to collaborate with the local farmers to continue to grow these foods. It was urgent, he said, and he was worried about the future of the foods for this region. "The canyons in northern New Mexico probably produced hundreds of types of cultivated plants and . . . several hundred wild plants," he said. "These were cultural treasures. We need to do here what Gary Nabhan has done in the Sonoran Desert. We

need to know what the ancient cultivars were, and that these heritage seeds are being saved. They need to be protected, to enable us to continue the food and culture lineage of the region.”

This led back to the topic of religion. He said when the Spanish first came here they wanted to grow wheat instead of the local corn that the Natives had been using for millennia. The Spanish decimated the Native practices: “They didn’t know the seasonality and use of the local foods to this region.” He talked about the extensive trade routes that were set up between the Pueblos and the Plains, between the other tribes to the north and to the south. He imagined there were dozens of ways of cooking corn. “That this was probably a way of distinguishing themselves from other clans for many Native communities. Food has always been a way of distinguishing us, and a part of our cultural identity patterns.”

People always say Native Americans don’t eat foods that are good for them. I think it’s the displacement of still wanting foods that emotionally satisfy them. They lost their native foods, which had so much emotional meaning, [and] then they took on foods like fats and sugar which are bad for them. Everybody looks at the nutritional reasons [for] . . . high levels of diabetes, and I think it was the psychological displacement of loss of sense of meaning, and that they replace this with food that, unfortunately, [are] the ones which are more satisfying physiologically and give the most immediate gratification. But they are still starving in a sense, so you eat more of them.

Chef Miller was referring to fry bread here, and the foods introduced during the commodity food era. Reclaiming ancestral foods was a way for Native people to reclaim their identity. We discussed this topic in depth. Gregory Cajete, in *A People’s Ecology*, says that the state of health among Native Americans and other indigenous populations with a history of oppression and current struggles with environmental, health, and sustainable living issues are all related symptoms of “ethno stress” caused by the disruption of culture and loss of land. Theology of place is not only referring to a physical place but also to a place of being and understanding. Sense of place is constantly evolving and transforming through the lives and relationships of all participants. Chef Miller could see a trend moving toward achieving long-term sustainability, not only for Native communities but for everyone, everywhere. With education and the reintroduction of traditional foods to Native communities, especially via Native chefs, he said there is

hope, but that it is going to take some time to accomplish that goal. He implied the conflict between worldviews, non-Western or indigenous and that of the Western industrial mindset, which places humans at the center of it all. Native views are more centered on the interconnectedness of humans with the land and natural forces in general (Cajete 1999:viii).

Chef Miller talked about color, taste, smell, and texture in his foods—what he liked and what he didn't like. Throughout his career, he has tried to create modern Southwestern foods in restaurants where he kept the reference to place. Place is key, he stated, to regionally based foods, and the foundation for cultural identity when it came to food. He said that he didn't consider chefs as artists in the sense of expressing historical culture and religious themes. "Food is emotional and I think it's expressive, and that it expresses something about the individual, but to be true art it has to transcend something about the individual. . . . Food then creates a culture reality and it creates personal identification with nature through the body." The body is how each chef interprets what he or she does, and how, why, and when he or she does it. It is a sensual expression of self. Chef Miller has a heightened sense of his body and is very interested in how the body interprets information and then expresses it. This is an important part of being a chef. This is the factor that differentiates one chef from another. This is what makes one chef stand out from another or all the others, he said. Using these sensual bodily interpretations about food made him who he was, why he was so successful as a chef, and why he had so much passion about his food and his cooking, he observed. It is a part of who he is.



Photo 11.4 Mark Miller at the Coyote Café in 2006.

John Sharpe

John Sharpe, along with his wife Patricia, is the chef and owner of The Turquoise Room in La Posada in Winslow, Arizona, a Fred Harvey hotel built in the 1920s along the Santa Fe Railway.⁶⁹ The Turquoise Room is named for the private dining car on the Super Chief that was designed by Mary Jane Colter (also the hotel's designer) in 1935. The Super Chief ran from Chicago to Los Angeles. The original Turquoise Room was a favorite of the studio chiefs and movie stars of the day. La Posada, where the restaurant is located, is still a railroad stop (now Amtrak), making it convenient for travelers.

Chef Sharpe opened The Turquoise Room in 2000 and has worked hard overseeing every detail. He calls the menu Regional Contemporary Southwestern food, with an occasional tribute to the great days of the Fred Harvey Company. He pointed out that The Turquoise Room is one of the original restaurants incorporating authentic Arizona foods from the neighboring Native American tribes. Everything he makes at the restaurant is baked and cooked from scratch, using only the finest and freshest local ingredients.

Creating relationships with farmers has taken time. When Chef Sharpe and his wife first started the restaurant, it was very difficult to find purveyors and sources for local foods. Today he buys local honey, goat cheese, beans, roasted corn grown on the nearby reservations, Navajo Churro lamb, piki bread made by Hopi women from the villages to the north, as well as a variety of herbs and vegetables from growers in the Verde Valley, Chino Valley, and now in the Winslow area. The restaurant is open seven days a week from 7am to 9pm and serves breakfast, lunch, afternoon lunch, and dinner. This is a lot for one chef to manage. Chef Sharpe has dedicated many years since he opened The Turquoise Room to making the restaurant a “destination.” Travelers to the Southwest can sample foods that are representative of the local area and the region.

Chef Sharpe’s story begins in England. He was born in 1946 in Hartlepool, England. He knew from a very young age that he wanted to be a chef.

The actual story of how family members played a significant role in my cooking is a very interesting story. . . . ’Cause we were poor in the north of England, my dad and I, we grew everything in the garden that we ate, just about post-World War II; food was still rationed in England up until 1953. So what happened was that we made our bread at home, we baked our own cakes, we beat the batter ourselves, my mom could not do that because she had no muscles left from having cancer. In those days they did radicals [mastectomies], they cut all the muscles out. I did all these things as a kid and they [his parents] would give me positive reinforcement. They said, “When John made the cakes they would be better than when Molly made them.” Molly was my mother’s name.

My mother trained as a nurse, what you would actually call an RN today. She trained in a hospital with four other women, one of whom, my aunty Doreen, became a member of the Queen Alexandra’s Royal Army Nursing Corps, the ladies with the red capes and white hats in the British Army. Her parents died when she was quite young, so Aunty Doreen called our home, her home. . . . She had postings all over the world, and in particular Malaysia, Penang, Singapore, West Africa, South Africa, and she was my point of reference growing up. We didn’t have television nor a radio, but we had books, and my mother and father were both ferocious readers. Aunty Doreen would bring me back menus and things like that from all over the world, in all the places that she ate and everywhere she would go, so this was a great influence in what I would do later in life. . . .

Meanwhile back at home, because my mom didn’t have muscles left and couldn’t beat the batter, I made all the scones, cakes, etc. Family members found out and soon, probably by the time I was ten, eleven, twelve, and a teenager, I was

making Christmas cakes for the whole family, every year and at every Christmas. So that's how it all started and when I think about it, it was really quite a natural progression.

Chef Sharpe started out as an apprentice in London at age fifteen. In the early 1960s in England it was common to serve an apprenticeship and go to college at the same time. When he was training in Europe, everyone had to do an apprenticeship. In this way, he explained, your training came from working in a big kitchen. As part of the apprenticeship you had to work at all the stations. "You had to be chef de parties, which meant that you had to work a certain amount of time in the bakery, in the pastry, in the soup kitchen, on the roast station, on the saucier station, you had to learn all of the stations. You worked at the garde manger, you worked in the butcher shop, you worked with the fishmonger, you did all of the stations to learn all of those skills," he said. "When we got carcasses of beef in, we cut them up; we got the whole fish in, we cut them up; the deer came in with a bullet hole in it and the skin and head on, so we cut it up; that's what we did." The apprenticeship involved extensive training. He said that a normal day would begin at 8:30am, working straight through until 2:30pm. He would take a break and then return at 5:00pm and work until at least 9:30pm, and he did this for six days a week. On the seventh day he took classes. He said by the time he started school, he could use a knife, he could sauté, he knew how to blanch things. After working for six days in the hotel kitchen, his one day in the classroom was like a vacation.

He graduated from Westminster Hotel School in London, the second-highest-rated chef in his class. The next day he moved to Switzerland. His first professional experience was under a Swiss-German chef in Berne at the Schweizerhof. He observed that in Berne, much as he had experienced as a child, everything was fresh and local. "They had Parisian mushrooms which we brought in; they brought in poulet de Bresse, the special breast chickens from France; they had special fish coming from Masse on the train, and everything was local and from a farm probably within fifty miles of Berne." He paused and then stated, "It was very locally driven food." This was an important experience for him, he acknowledged. It was the foundation of who he is today as a chef. All of his practices now in The Turquoise Room are things he learned there.

He continued to work in Europe, primarily in Switzerland, and after working in a variety of culinary venues he moved to the United States in the early 1970s. At the Beverly Wilshire Hotel, in Beverly Hills, California, he realized that the way things are done in the United States is much different from how things were being done in Europe. He saw that the food is “just ordered.” He said, “It seemed to come off of a truck.” After his experience at the Beverly Wilshire he owned and managed several different restaurants and worked as an executive chef in the greater Los Angeles area. He moved to Orange County in 1981 and opened up a rib restaurant called the Rib Joint Road House in Dana Point, California. He was close to the Capistrano Valley and started to buy all of his food locally there. He found this “Japanese guy,” he said, “that grew strawberries, and then up the road from him was another farmer growing white corn.” Chef Sharpe would drive out and pick up the food from them. From then on, when he opened up other restaurants in Orange County, he realized that sourcing food was critical to what he could cook and how it would taste. The produce that was available from the “big purveyors” was inconsistent, and the quality wasn’t the same as from the farmers. One of his customers at the time was a “big gregarious American Greek guy” who had a huge produce stall at the Orange County Swap Meet Market at the Orange County Fairgrounds. Chef Sharpe noted,

He made thousands of dollars a week and all he did was drive his truck up to the produce market and buy produce with cash and come down and sell it at the County Fair Market, the Swap Meet, every Saturday. So one day we were talking and he said to me, “Why don’t you come up to the market with me and I will show you the market?” I said, “You mean the Alley Produce Market?” And I said I tried to get in there once and I couldn’t do business, so he said “You have to come with me and then I will show you. Please bring \$1000 in cash in your pocket and bring your truck and I will show you how I do it.” So I met him at the market at two o’clock in the morning, and after that I went every week at two in the morning to the produce market. First with my pockets full of cash and then afterwards with checks, and I used to go buy my produce right from the market, and my employees would come at five in the morning and they would load everything up and take it back to the restaurants, and that is how I used to get my produce.

Chef Sharpe said this was the beginning of the farmers’ markets movement that we see today. Chefs and consumers can buy quality produce directly from the farmers

without the middleman. Produce purveyor companies sometimes warehouse the food for up to a week before the chef might get it in his restaurant, he said. Today at The Turquoise Room he gets as much as possible from the local farmers. “When I first opened in 2000, there wasn’t a single produce company, not even from Flagstaff, that wanted to deliver out here in Winslow. There was nothing available in this area.” Chef Sharpe does use Shamrock foods, a family-owned regional company, for his dry goods and pantry foods, he said, but he buys as much as possible from local farmers. Chef Sharpe went on to say,

At one point, a guy walks in here, his name is Gary Nabhan, and we talk and he says that he may be able to help me here, and that is how it all started. That was in 2001. Since then I have diligently tried to form alliances with different people to get them to grow products that I know I will buy, and it has been a grassroots effort since then. I’ve even put ads in the local throwaway paper saying, “Do you know anyone that wants to sell produce from their garden?” telling them to come to my back door of the kitchen of La Posada and I will buy it from you on the spot. . . . This was the beginning of my “open door” policy, here at the restaurant. If someone has something they want to sell and it is good quality and fresh, my door is always open.

He was passionate about this topic. It was evident that he had worked very hard at this for many years, and that finding quality food purveyors in the Winslow area was a difficult process. He continued,

I had one lady, the first time she came over she brought a whole basket of fruit and vegetables and said, “This is what I have got.” I said O.K. and it just took off from there. We started a farmers’ market in Flagstaff in 2003, and so from June through September I had the farmers’ market in Flagstaff, and now I make an attempt during the winter to go down to Phoenix and buy from the McLendon Farms, and then we also have a CSA [Community Supported Agriculture] Program at Northern Arizona University [in Flagstaff] through the Center for Sustainable Environments, which Gary Nabhan started, and that brings a lot of produce up every Thursday from the Phoenix area during the winter. Those deliveries cease during the farmers’ market period in the summer and then resume again during the winter.

I found out that, while occasionally I may have paid more than what I should have, most of what I purchase is at a fair price. I feel that those people—if they feel that is what it’s worth to them to grow it, then that is what they should get, and if we as the end-user, the chef, want to have that stuff, then who are we to put a price on what it is for them to till the soil, plant the seed, water it, weed it, harvest it, and go through all the heartbreaks that are involved? I mean, I grow my

own foods. I grow my own squash blossoms, my own peppers, and my own tomatoes. I know what it is like. So if I look at myself objectively and I go, “Well what price do you want to put on that?”—You know, you are crazy to do it; it’s not worth it, so why would you ask anybody else about the price?

Right now here, I have been to all of the farms, I know pretty much everybody that I buy from. In the summer time, I would say we are looking at about seventy percent of the produce I use being local, and in the winter, it goes down and is only about forty percent.

Of all the chefs I interviewed, Chef Sharpe was the most candid about his ingredient policy. This is something he knows a great deal about. For years he had worked within his local and neighboring communities (both Native and non-Native) to set up systems that are now in place. “And more importantly” he said, “systems that worked.”

He continued to talk about how he got to Winslow, to open The Turquoise Room.

In the late 1980s when Mark Miller first started the whole Coyote Café Southwest food trend, many of us chefs were influenced by that. It was the “hot” food trend of the time, and many of us all kind of played with it and experimented with Southwest cuisine to a certain extent. What happened with me, however, was a little different. It was with the Bowers Museum in Santa Ana. I had a restaurant called the Topaz Café, which was inside of the museum. . . . The museum had a very, very large Native American collection of art from the latter part of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Dr. Paul Apodaca, who was the curator at the time and the first Native American professor (he was Navajo), to come out of UCLA. . . . Anyway, we collaborated together and decided to focus on foods of the Americas with special dinners reflective of that cuisine, Native American cuisine. . . .

We started doing dinners that we called a Native American Feast, with everyone sitting at large tables in a communal dining experience. No one would get a presented plate or creative plate or whatever you want to call it. Instead, everything would come on communal platters, in bowls, baskets, and everything would be shared. . . . The dinners would start off with Paul giving a talk. If we did Plains Indians, we did a specific Buffalo Feast to reflect that area; we also did the Coastal Indians of the Northwest, we did a Navajo Feast, and we did a feast of the foods from the Southwest. He would explain all of the ingredients I was using . . . and he would explain how these foods would be used in a tribal context, what their ceremonies would be, and how they would use these foods in their ceremonies, and what the significance of the particular food was from that particular tribe or regional tribal area. I would get up and talk about the food at the end and give my perspective as a European chef. I talked about how our life in

Europe would be different if we did not have corn, beans, squash, and peppers, etc.

We started these dinners in 1993 with about forty people, and by 1999, the last year we did these dinner feasts, we had three hundred people at each feast we did, and they were always sold out. It had evolved, but the lesson from this was that we were looking at what was local and indigenous to this country rather than looking elsewhere. I moved from Santa Ana and the Topaz Café to The Turquoise Room in Winslow, Arizona. I was right in the middle of the Native American culture, next to the Navajo, Apache, and Hopi tribes. How ironic is that, so where should my food come from, where I would be influenced by. Of course it would be those regional areas. I think it was just a natural progression that I would be influenced by the local foods in this area, and that is how it all started and how I came up with the foods I serve at The Turquoise Room today.

Chef Sharpe uses anything local that he can find. He gives talks at various Center for Sustainable Environment (CSE) events. He explains that wherever locals can grow food, whatever they can harvest and want to sell to him can be brought to him at the restaurant. That list includes everything from cactus buds to pit-roasted corn, various herbs, wild plants, and grasses. Chef Sharpe will buy them, use them in his food creations at The Turquoise Room, and put these dishes on his menu. He purchases tepary beans and roasted and dried cholla buds through TOCA on a regular basis.

Chef Sharpe commented on another component. “By using these unique foods, which I placed on my menu and in my cooking, I am working with local families and Native communities and the CSE [at Northern Arizona University] to help to revitalize everything, not only the foods themselves but everything culturally attached to them.” For instance,

I use the locally raised lamb from Irene Bennalley of Newcomb. This not only provides a way for her to make a living, it also revitalizes many of the Navajo traditions that are associated with raising the sheep. From the traditional shearing, spinning of the wool of the churro sheep, to the beautiful weavings they make from the handspun wool; all of these techniques are revitalized through the raising of the sheep.



The Blue Cheese Salad

Heart of Romaine lettuce, creamy blue cheese topped with Maytag Blue and honey roasted spiced pecans
\$8

The Southwestern Caesar

Romaine tossed in our house made Caesar dressing with roasted pumpkin seeds and Parmesan cheese.
Garnished with roasted red peppers and a Parmesan crusted cracker bread.
\$8

Today's Specials

House Smoked Wild King "Springers"

Columbia River Spring Run King Salmon, caught by the Nez Perce tribe. Considered one of the greatest Wild Salmon.
Smoked and Baked. Served on a bed of creamy corn polenta and topped with a Fresh mango, kumquat, heirloom
cherry tomato and chile pepper salsa. Garnished with fresh sugar snap peas.
\$29

*Bex Riesling – Germany 2006 \$8 Glass \$33 Bottle

This is a delicious wine with just enough sweetness to give it a refreshing edge.
Loaded with peachy fruit and notes of honey, pear and minerals.

Native Cassoulet with Utah Lamb, Duck Leg and Elk Sausage

Tohono O'odham grown brown Tepary beans cooked with Churro lamb, chilies, duck and spices.
This version is deconstructed. I serve a duck leg confit, grilled free range Churro lamb skewer
and spicy Elk sausage alongside the beans.
\$27

*St. Francis "Wild Oak" Merlot – Sonoma 2004 \$10 Glass \$45 Bottle

Wild Oak Merlot is a lush, rich, full bodied wine characterizing classic Bordeaux structure.

Locally Raised Churro Lamb Sampler Platter

Lean and tender shoulder pieces simmered in tomatillo and Green Chili served over sweet corn tamale.
Lamb shanks and ribs in a red chile posole. Lamb Chop grilled and served on a bed
of arugula topped with pico de gallo salsa.
\$29

*St. Francis "Wild Oak" Zinfandel – Sonoma 2006 \$10 Glass \$45 Bottle

A beautiful concentration of flavors and colors with a wild berry flavor and a slight note of Eucalyptus. Nice long lasting

Phone 928-289-2888 Fax 928-289-1288 Email dine@theturquoiseroom.net

Figure 11.4 Page 2 of the dinner menu at The Turquoise Room, featuring, "Columbia River Spring Run King Salmon, caught by the Nez Perce tribe," and two dishes with Churro lamb raised locally by Irene Bennalley of Newcomb, New Mexico, on the Navajo Reservation.



tannins with a nice balance of earthiness and a black cherry finish

Colorado Elk Medallions with Blackcurrant Sauce

Farm raised Elk loin medallions with a blackcurrant brandy sauce, wild mushroom corn custard flan and baby green beans.

\$32

*St. Francis Cabernet – Sonoma County 2005 \$10 Glass \$40 Bottle

This full bodied cabernet has a rich mouth feel, moderate tannins and deep ruby color. The taste of black cherries, dark chocolate and spicy oak. Special Buy!

Our Native Churro Lamb is free range reared by Irene Bernalley of Newcomb, New Mexico on the Navajo Reservation.

Irene raises her sheep at her "Bar Q RZ Ranch" in New Mexico

It is hormone and antibiotic free as well as a being a "Heritage Breed" of lamb.

We are the only restaurant serving this rare breed on a daily basis.

A Taste of the Southwest

Crispy Pork Carnitas

Large pieces of crispy pork Carnitas, served on a bed of black beans in a red chile pool, papaya salsa served with our creamy polenta and fresh vegetables.

\$18

*Beaulieu Vineyard "BV" Zinfandel – Napa, CA 2006 \$10 Glass \$45 Bottle

Amazing deep black raspberry character with subtle oak and inherent spiciness.

The Killer Vegetable Platter

Steamed fresh vegetables, grilled tofu, sweet corn tamale, red caboose mashed potatoes, grilled fresh corn, Grilled Anaheim chile stuffed with three cheeses, and wild mushroom corn custard.

\$18

*Duck Pond Pinot Grigio – Willamette Valley 2007 \$8 Glass \$32 Bottle

This wine is bursting with mango and star fruit aromas. It is light bodied with refreshing acidity.

Shrimp Penne Pasta

Large Tiger Shrimp tossed with penne in a spicy Chipotle cream sauce with peppers,

Phone 928-289-2888 Fax 928-289-1288 Email dine@theturquoiseroom.net

Figure 11.5 Page 3 of the dinner menu at The Turquoise Room featuring, "Colorado Elk Medallions with Blackcurrant Sauce."

He talked about the prickly pear he uses. “Using wild, hand-harvested prickly pear not only revitalizes the actual process of harvesting the prickly pear in the wild, but also its use as a natural dye for yarn, its use as medicine, and it also creates a vital economic opportunity for families living in remote regions of Arizona and on the reservation where jobs are scarce, to be able to be paid to harvest this wild fruit.”

This was also certainly true with the making of piki. This specialized and ancient culinary technique, described in chapter 6, is passed down from mother to daughter. It is labor intensive and very difficult to do, from growing the blue corn and grinding it into very fine flour to cooking the batter on a special stone over an open fire. With Chef Sharpe’s open-door policy, women in the Hopi villages north of Winslow can make piki bread knowing that if they bring it in to him, he will purchase it at a fair market price. “The demand is always higher than the yield,” but since he has started buying piki, he said that the yield has increased and more women (especially younger women) now know how to make it. Chef Sharpe concluded that this meant the tradition is being passed down from one generation to the next and that more and more women are making it. He stated that he had created an economic opportunity for the women by purchasing their traditional food product. “Now the women that do make it know they have a secure market to sell it in, once it is made,” he said.

At the time of our interview, in April 2007, Chef Sharpe observed that he had been cooking professionally for more than forty-five years. He corrected himself and said, “Actually, I started cooking when I was five years old and that would be fifty-five years ago.” All of those years of being in the kitchen are what gave him his knowledge. The “life lessons,” as he called them, were the most important any chef could learn. He was not an advocate of the chef schools that are popping up all over the United States. He said, “I’ve come across many young people who have gone the academic route of training, gone to a restaurant school, and then emerged and had to learn how the real world works, and I didn’t do it that way, so I’m not a big advocate of hotel restaurant management programs or chef schools.”

Everything that I do here at The Turquoise Room is based on my classical training. Let me give you an example. I take a European or classic cuisine and then I apply local ingredients to it. On my menu I have a Native cassoulet. This

dish comes from the Southwest and from France. The bean started here in the Southwest; they did not have any beans in France before the Portuguese and Spanish came back with them. The French had no beans, so there was no cassoulet before the introduction of the bean, as it is a stew made from a white bean and combined with meats. I have churro lamb, I have elk meat, I have elk sausage and ducks, although the Navajo do not eat ducks except during special ceremonies. Anyway, I thought, well, it would make sense to me to do a cassoulet, and why not make it Southwest.

So what I do is take the traditional Tohono O'odham tepary beans, I soak them, I bake them just like the French would. Only I add red chile, I add oregano, I add coriander, I add cumin, and mine has churro lamb, elk meat, and duck. So I do an elk-lamb-duck cassoulet. Then I do not present it in the huge earthenware bowls like in France with breadcrumbs on top and all the meats buried inside it. Instead, I have a plate where you get maybe a cup of the beans that have the meats cooked in it with the red chile sauce around it. Then it is topped with crumbled tortillas, crushed or fried tortilla chips, and roasted corn salsa, and then you get a grilled sausage and grilled lamb chop and you get a small leg of duck confit to eat with it. But they are all separate. So I call it Southwest, and named it Native cassoulet. To me it is the embodiment of the classic, so-called Euro-cuisine with the influence of what is local here.

I think that is what really drives me, I think the distinct qualities that I feel and are expressed in the food I do. It is bold, big, tasty, and unpretentious and I think that this is what people want when they come to eat my food. My food is not "fou fou," it is not whimsical, and it's not that light. I feel that there is a lot of mediocrity out there, there is a lot of compromise out there, and the great position that I am in today, being here where I am, is that I have somewhat of a captive audience. I can do what I believe and what I feel is right; it is not like I am back in LA [Los Angeles] and looking over my shoulder to see what he or she is doing. My influence and inspiration here in this environment, at least for the past six years anyway, is self-sufficiency; I am alone out here, and I am not influenced by anyone. I am only influenced by what is around me, so in a sense, it is a really pure creative environment. . . . I am working with what is available to me. . . . I cook with what I can get locally and in this region.

This is a good example of a chef who is improvising and using techniques he was taught while learning to be a chef with ingredients that now are local to him. Chef Sharpe continued to talk about his food, his kitchen, and his limited staff in Winslow. His market is different from some of the Native chefs, and he knew it. His clientele wouldn't pay \$45.00 for an entrée, but they would pay \$25.00 for one with a soup or salad. So he designed his menu and his dishes around what he knew his clientele could and would

pay. “Taste is the most important thing to me,” he said. “I care about how things look, presentation is important to me, but taste is first and foremost.” He commented on how sometimes he would look at his food and think to himself that he could plate it differently and make it more artistic, but then it would take away from the serving size, and for his market, isolated the way he is in such a small town, making the food taste good and giving a good-size portion was just more of a priority.

He continued, “I buy from a specialty purveyor in the valley of Phoenix, Epicurean Foods, as well as a homemade gelato from Berto’s Gelato in Phoenix. I have to pick it up myself. I drive it up to the restaurant in coolers with dry ice every month because they will not deliver, because of where I am. So I do this because I want to serve the best-tasting ingredients and, in the case of gelato, the best gelato that there is. To me it is worth it, so I do it every month. Since that is something I don’t make myself I have to either find the best that there is and go get it or buy a substandard product from the one purveyor that will deliver to me out here, and I don’t want to have to make that compromise.”

Chef Sharpe wanted to address one last topic. Although the interview was structured with the same set of questions that all of the chefs were asked, he began to talk about the intangible essence of cooking. Other chefs had touched on this topic, but they looked at it differently than he does. As he explained:

I’ve taught cooking classes in the past. I only do hands-on classes. I never did a demo class, ever. I’ve always taught between twelve and fifteen people at a time in three teams. Team A, team B, and team C. Each team gets the same recipes, yet the food comes out different in each one. These dishes never taste the same. You all have exactly the same recipe, which you are all going to follow . . . in a different way because they will ultimately be a reflection of your combined personalities, and the fascinating thing is that I would have a bold and assertive group, and their food would come out bold, tastier, sometimes over-salted, over-seasoned, sometimes over-cooked. Then you have another team that is very tentative, quiet, analytical, and the food would reflect them—uninspired, it would just taste okay, and it might not quite have enough salt, maybe it would be kind of pale, the grilling or the browning of something would be lighter, whereas with the other team it would be darker. . . .

So food is a form of expression. It is absolutely a form of expression; it is an expression of how you are and where you come from, what you experienced, and at some point during that experience, you make a decision that you know

what you want, and that is how your food becomes reflective of who you are. For me, I have done all these different kinds of foods, yet here I am today in the middle of the Southwest, surrounded by a plethora of indigenous Native ingredients that inspire me to cook what I feel is representative of the potential greatness of this region, and I just stick with that. I don't try to embellish it, and I don't try to fancy it up, I just try and stay true to what it is.

He acknowledged, "I am very aware of the egocentric and self-obsessed chef image that we often carry with us, but at some point in one's professional life, one can make a decision about what good food is like." He didn't expect everyone to like what he does and how he cooks, but he wasn't going to compromise what he believes in. "This," he said, "comes with the maturity of a chef." Our interview lasted for hours, we sat in a private room downstairs between the bar and restaurant. This way, Chef Sharpe thought we would have privacy but he could still keep one eye on the restaurant and things that were going on in the kitchen that day. His next big project, he said, "was to do a cookbook." He was having trouble finding a publisher that would pay for the project, so he and his wife Patricia were shopping around to self-publish. Patricia is from Singapore, and they were confident that they could find someone over there to print and bind his book for a reasonable price. "And like everything else we've had to do out here, we are going to go ahead publish it ourselves, if we have to," he stated. In 2009, after several years of work, Chef Sharpe released *The Turquoise Room Cookbook* (Sharpe 2009), featuring more than seventy of the dishes he has created over the years. He sells the cookbook at the restaurant and on the restaurant's website (<http://theturquoiseroom.net/items-for-sale/new-complete-cookbook.html>).

As he continued to talk about his life—where he had been, what he had done, what some of his favorite food memories were, what his favorite food dish was—he touched on all of the components that made him who he is today. He got very emotional. His eyes welled up as he recited some of his food memories. "Cooking is emotional," he commented. "I can see all the things we've talked about as if it were yesterday." Even the memories from 1966, in the pantry at Schweizerhof in Bern on the cold winter mornings when the room was filled with carcasses of chamois, wild goats, venison, pheasants, and wild gazelle from the Alps, were crystal clear in his mind. "As I flash on all of the meals

we've all done together, I realize it's all about the creative process." he said. He continued to regale me with stories and descriptive details of his past.

Let me finish by just saying that Native American cuisine is earthy, unpretentious, spiritually satisfying, because when you think about it. . . . I think about the Native American experience and how different their ties to food are from what I grew up with. None of my food experiences as a kid had any symbolic meaning with my spiritual development. I was brought up as a Christian in the Church of England, so the only food tie I had with the church would be Holy Communion, wine and bread. . . . When I look at Native American food, it is more spiritual in its meaning to Native American people. The ingredients that make up Native American cuisine are everything that I cook with here, from the bean to the corn, to the peppers, to the elk, to the quail, to the duck, to the venison, to all of the different corn products, bean products, cactus buds, prickly pears, all of those ingredients that go back into Native American culture that mean something symbolically and spiritually in the sense of being used in ceremonies, so all of that makes up Native American cuisine to me.

This was his connection to the food he was now serving in his restaurant. Chef Sharpe didn't distinguish between Native American cuisine and Native American foodways in the same way that the Native chefs do, but he did say he thought it was a very distinctive cuisine. He observed that all of the chefs doing Native American cuisine, himself included, were celebrating Native American culture and bringing Native American foods to a group of people for the sharing of a Feast. "I suppose I can see . . . the foodways and their cuisine as being a truly honest expression of the development of their existence, of their culture, of their spiritual ceremonies, of their ways of living that go back to very basic simple ways, far more honestly than what [we] do."

Native American cuisine is cooked only in a specific region. "It is place-based; in the past the Native people only worked with what they had," he said. "My greatest concern is that it retains its honesty. I never want to push it out of its origins." He stopped, thought for a moment, and then said, "I think chefs need to think carefully when they prepare something, so that it doesn't get too far away from where it started."

He paused and then said, "If we took dishes to a group of Elders from that tribe, would they like it? Some things on some of these menus—the Elders wouldn't even know what it was. There would be no point of reference," he said. "The Native American achievement is being able to look at things simply, apply it with technique, and make it

not too far away from the ‘truth.’” He stopped. It was getting late. He looked at his watch. “Wow, it is already 4:30pm,” he said. It was time to stop. We were done.

We both stood up; we had talked for hours. “Let’s go into the kitchen,” he said. “That way I can prep for dinner and you can take some photos while I cook.” We walked into the kitchen, and Chef Sharpe started to get his staff ready for that evening’s service. I took some pictures and then helped them set up for dinner.



Photo 11.5 Chef John Sharpe in The Turquoise Room kitchen preparing one of his signature dishes, “Piki Bread with Hopi Hummus.”



Photo 11.6 Chef Sharpe uses fresh vegetables from locally sourced vendors.



Photo 11.7 Chef Sharpe cuts local organic green onions for his dish.



Photo 11.8 Chef Sharpe spoons the Hopi Hummus, made from reservation-grown tepary beans, pit-roasted corn, corn and sunflower oils, and garnished with sunflower seeds.

Additional non-Native Chefs Cooking Native American Cuisine

Other non-Native chefs have also been important in the development and practice of Native American cuisine. Michael O'Dowd, the executive chef at the Sheraton Wild Horse Pass Resort, oversees the operation at Kai Restaurant. He worked from a triple-wide trailer in 2002 before the restaurant was completed, and he went into the Gila River Indian Community and asked people about their food and how they prepared it. "They resisted the food inquiries," Sunbird Martin, a community member, said. The chef, however, worked closely with the people and learned many of their traditional breads and dishes. Chef O'Dowd has also worked, first with Chef Sandy Garcia and then with Chef Jack Strong, to bring Native American-sourced foods into the restaurant at Kai and keep up the relationships with the neighboring tribes who provide produce and products such as tepary beans and cholla cactus buds. He works with the tribe's cultural advisor for the

casino, Ginger Martin, and with tribal elder Emmit White “but,”⁷⁰ who had been very helpful. “I have to give back to the people here. . . . I can do my part to change things.” He commented that the name of the restaurant, Kai, means “seeds.” He and Chef Jack Strong were working together to plant seeds and help to revitalize important culinary traditions. Chef O’Dowd developed Kai’s unique cuisine, which he calls “Native American with Global Accents,” and has been in charge of putting this concept into practice and keeping the relationship between the resort and the community strong. Their cookbook, *The New Native American Cuisine*, featuring recipes from the chefs at Kai, was written by Marian Betancourt (2009) with Executive Chef Michael O’Dowd and Chef de Cuisine Jack Strong.

Richard Hetzler is another key chef in the genre of Native American cuisine genre. He is executive chef at the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C., in the Mitsitam Café. He too has created relationships with farms within a one hundred and fifty miles of the museum that supply produce for the museum during the summer. He also purchases the bison meat they serve in the café from the Inter-Tribal Bison Cooperative and has become their biggest client. During the peak of the season the café serves anywhere from five hundred to three thousand meals a day. This has a huge impact on Native-owned and -operated enterprises as well as the local purveyors growing food for the café. Chef Hetzler is always looking for Native American-sourced ingredients and is conscious of the impact his orders make on small, family-owned businesses. The Mitsitam Café draws on tribal culinary traditions from five Native culture areas in the Americas—Northeast Woodlands and Great Lakes, South America, North Pacific Coast and Columbia Plateau, Mesoamerican, and the Great Plains.

Native American cuisine, for Chef Hetzler, is family-based foods, which is what he used to develop his menu at the café. It is wholesome, hearty food that is good for you. He established an externship program to train young Native American chefs, which has given many young chefs the opportunity to learn culinary skills at the museum with the option to stay or to return to their own communities with the skills they have learned. Two of the young Native chefs I worked with in this research had set up externships with

Chef Hetzler. He said that helping the general public to understand the culinary traditions of the Native people of the Americas is one of his most important missions as a chef.

I think just having the people come in and see what these foods are . . . just the realization that they are eating a turkey, and that that is Native American, or have a piece of wild-caught salmon, and they notice it tastes a lot different than the salmon [they] had last night in [their] house, and . . . for them to understand what the difference is, and why these things taste that way, and why they look that way.

Chef Hetzler is serving good, clean, sustainably sourced foods, but he is also educating people who may not have had access to Native American food or culinary traditions. *The Mitsitam Café Cookbook* (Hetzler 2010) has recipes from the National Museum of the American Indian.



Photo 11.9 Chef Richard Hetzler, executive chef of the National Museum of the American Indian's Mitsitam Café in Washington, D.C.



Photo 11.10 Chef Richard Hetzler, the author, and Chef Doxtator (background) plate the Three Sisters sauté at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center’s “Connecting Communities: Native Foods and Wellness,” event in 2007.



Photo 11.11 Native American cuisine chefs and cooks: (front row, left to right) Nephi Craig, Norma Naranjo, Walter Whitewater, the author; (back row, left to right) Richard Hetzler, Sandy Garcia, and Arlie Doxtator.

Fernando Divina is another chef who has played an important role in the development of Native American cuisine. Chef Divina was the first chef to host the Tohono O'odham TOCA fundraising dinner at Lon's at the Hermosa in the Paradise Valley of Scottsdale, Arizona, in 2004. This dinner featured Native Chefs Nephi Craig, Walter Whitewater, Sandy Garcia, John Sharpe, Loretta Barrett Oden, and myself.

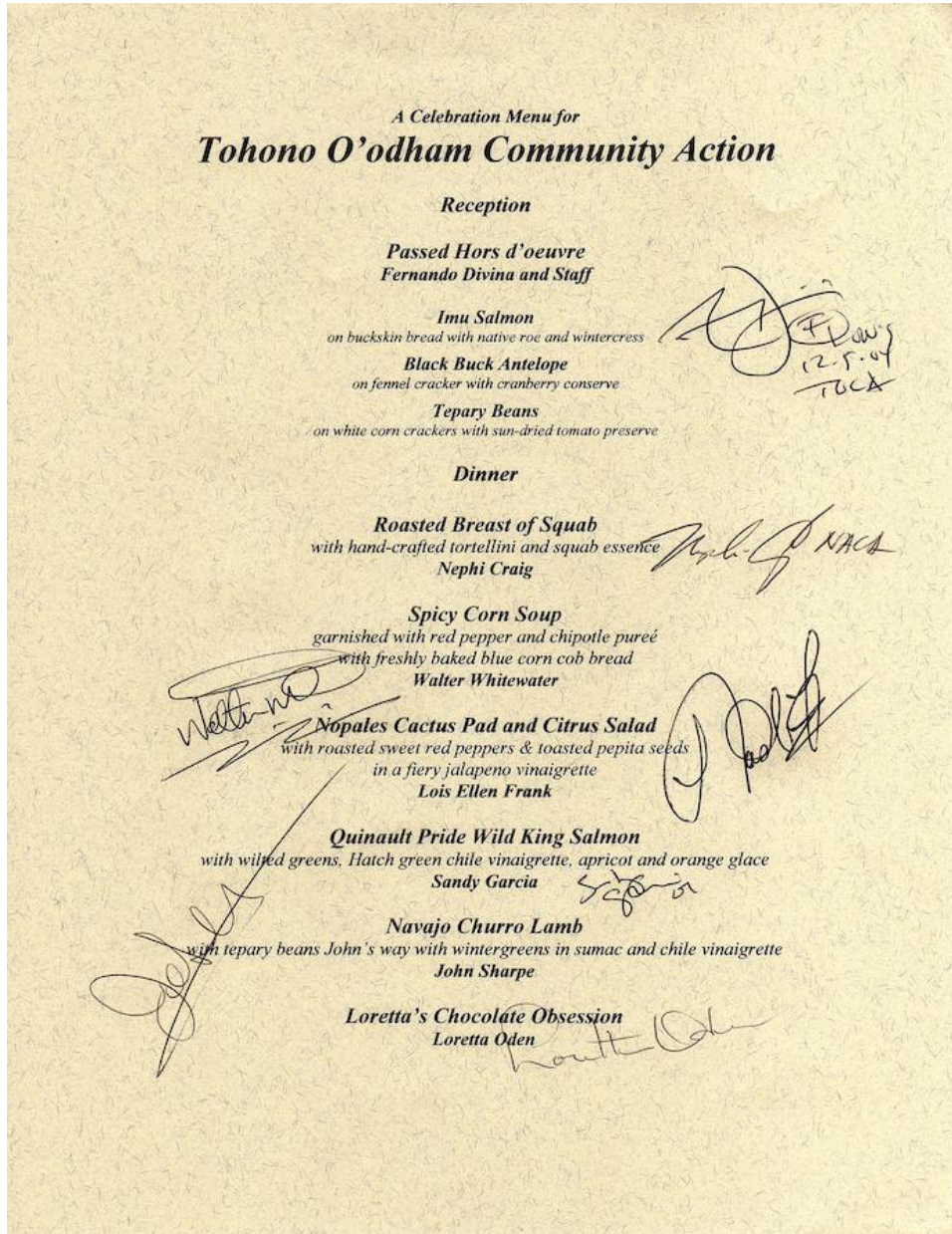


Figure 11.6 Menu for the first TOCA fundraising dinner at Lon's at the Hermosa in 2004.

Lon's was originally the home and studio of cowboy artist Alonzo "Lon" Megargee in the 1930s, which he called "Casa Hermosa." The restaurant was currently putting in raised beds to grow organic produce, with Chef Divina spearheading the effort. Chef Divina went outside, picked some fresh herbs to garnish one of the dishes on the menu that night, and brought it back into the kitchen. It was amazing to be in a kitchen, need something for your dish, go outside into the garden, pick it, and then use it immediately. This has always been a part of Chef Divina's mission and his goal of serving fresh food. Today the restaurant has a one-acre garden located just outside the kitchen that provides fresh food and a natural training ground for the culinary team. Every morning, the chefs take turns watering and harvesting the produce. The dinner at Lon's was so successful for TOCA that they held fundraisers in 2005, 2006 and 2009.

Chef Divina left Lon's in 2006 to become the opening executive chef at Tendrils Vineyard Restaurant, at the two-year-old Cave B Inn and Cave B Estate Winery at SageCliffe in Quincy, Washington, located in the central part of the state. The Wanapum, which means the River People, live along the Chiwana, now called the Columbia River. SageCliffe is located close to the Wanapum Heritage Center in nearby Beverly and overlooks the river and extraordinary rock formation and cliffs. When I stayed there to work with Chef Divina, the sunrise over the cliffs and the river was so spectacular it seemed like I was at the Grand Canyon. Being the opening chef gave Chef Divina the chance to create something from the ground up.

Here, Chef Divina's garden was even more impressive, growing many indigenous crops, such as amaranth, quinoa, orach (mountain spinach), berries, lettuces, melons, tomatoes, potatoes, numerous herbs, and several varieties of corn. He started the Center for American Food and Wine at SageCliffe as a venue for culinary events that celebrates regional foods and a "Savor the Region" series of cooking classes and dinners that focus on the area's bounty. The center's broader responsibility is to serve as a guardian of traditional foodways. The restaurant Tendrils also featured freshly harvested produce on their menu prepared daily by the chefs for that evening's meal. When I visited the Cave B in July 2007, the restaurant garden was one of the most impressive I had ever seen. Chef

Divina based his specials each day on what was ripe, so he could harvest at the peak of flavor and feature the garden produce in his dish.



Photo 11.12 View of Cave B Inn looking toward vineyards and Tendrils Vineyard Restaurant, showing landscaped gardens.



Photo 11.13 Garden beds with indigenous crops.



Photo 11.14 Heirloom tomatoes being grown for use in the restaurant.



Photo 11.15 Amaranth. Chef Divina uses the leaves in salads and the mature grain in a variety of breads and other dishes.



Photo 11.16 Banana chiles to be used fresh as well as dried.

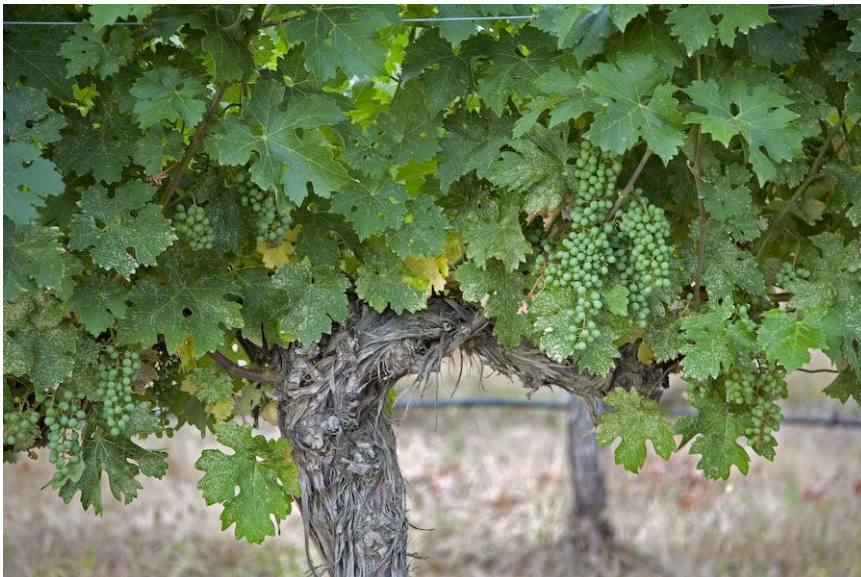


Photo 11.17 Wine grapes are harvested in the fall.



Photo 11.18 View from Tendrils Vineyard Restaurant looking down towards casita.



Photo 11.19 View from casita towards the Columbia River.

Chef Divina grew up in Olympia, Washington. His family and extended family, some of whom are Filipino, were truck farmers in the Yakima Valley, and he spent many summers pitching in. Cooking for him was “the only way to get off the farm.” He has always been interested in exploring the local cuisine(s) of his youth, which he classified as Northwest Native American cuisine. He has done a lot of research on the Native foods

of the Northwest Coast and inland regions as well as some of the local tribes. “Northwest cultures,” he states, “traditionally relied almost exclusively upon wild foods rather than domesticated foods.” He went on to say,

The salmon nations, for example, still have the abundance of all of their traditional foods that are still available. There are many that have gone by the way, and some that are in danger of going by the way, but at the moment many of those foods are still at hand. The migrant influences have been often times positive, though not always from a standpoint of the cuisine.

Chef Divina believes that the public and the consciousness of the employer with whom contemporary chefs work have the power to make a difference. Kai Restaurant at the Sheraton at Wild Horse Pass, which he described as being dedicated to the preservation of food and specifically of Native foods and cuisine, is not the norm, he stated. He continued,

Many tribes up here have now ascribed to this; they see what’s happening, they believe, and the information is available, that the reintroduction of traditional foods and lifeways can add to a healthier community in all the ways we have spoken about from a physical and health standpoint and overall welfare of the community. I think there is a real desire for it but I think that each community deserves special attention to sort of make it happen.

Staying true to the environment is important for Chef Divina. When he was executive chef at Lon’s, he used a lot of mesquite because it was available and he was in the Southwest. Now that he is in the Northwest, he no longer uses it. He is a strong advocate of mesquite in the Southwest but now is focusing on foods from the area where he is currently practicing as a chef. He said that probably the single most important thing to him is to use foods that are not only produced but also indigenous to the area. “The two are not mutually exclusive,” he observed. It is always a temptation to bring in exotic foods, but his focus is to start from what is close by. He draws on the indigenous community and indigenous foods for his menu but must deal with gaps in food availability owing to the seasons. “Here in January,” he said, “we use a lot of the foods we dried and canned from the growing season or have frozen ourselves to extend the natural bounty.”

Regional, local, sustainable, and Native foods are all a part of how he constructs his menus and food. “There is no sense of place,” he said, “until you keep introducing

those things [regional place-based foods], and certainly food is one of the most tactile ways to do that as a consumer, but also I just think it's a responsibility of society, and if we are trying to be stewards of the planet or trying to be good citizens, we have to do that from within our own communities." Chef Divina stated that properties that succeed in contemporary America, hotels, restaurants, etc. are not necessarily focused on place. He said that you could be sitting on a property in the Northwest or you could be anywhere in the world. The sense of place and the foods that reflect that sense of place were what made his cuisine unique and where he focused his cuisine. He works on contextualizing how his food fits in as a whole, and understanding its origins. "I look backwards rather than trying to be on the cutting edge."

Chef Divina and his wife, Marlene Esther, a member of the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa of Montana, who is also Cree and Assiniboiné, were consultants for the National Museum of the American Indian to developing the museum's Mitsitam Café. They also co-wrote *Foods of the America: Native Recipes and Traditions* (Divina and Divina 2004), which won a James Beard Foundation Award in 2005.

Marlene grew up in the Portland area and learned to cook from her mother, but more importantly, she said, "I learned how to harvest foods first." She and her mother would go to Sauvie Island along the Columbia River about ten miles northwest of Portland, the largest river island in the United States. They would harvest a wild root called the wapato, which they ate as they would a potato. In fact, Merriwether Lewis (of the Lewis and Clark Expedition) originally called this place Wapato Island. The tubers are a starchy root vegetable and can be cultivated, as they have been in North America and East Asia for centuries. The plant grows in fresh, still water, along streams, canals, ponds, ditches, and slow rivers.

Sagittaria is a genus of about thirty species of aquatic plants that go by a variety of names, including arrowhead, duck potato, and wapato. It is mostly now called arrowhead because of the shape of its leaves; when you see the leaf, you can dig up the root and cook it. It tastes a bit like a roasted potato but is nuttier, she said. She and Fernando use that wild food in some of the dishes in their restaurant.

She said didn't realize how important food was, or how much she appreciated food, until she met Chef Fernando. She had always harvested wild foods with her family; it was just something that she grew up with. The wapato used to grow everywhere, she said, until cattle were introduced, because they disturb the ponds.

Native American foodways for Marlene are different from Native American cuisine, even though her husband considered them to be the same. For Marlene, Native American foodways are part religious and include spirituality. She believes food of the American Indian is deeper than just what you eat, and it also includes many foods that are used in ceremony. She shares this perspective with many of the other Native American cooks and chefs. "The greatest gift you can give someone," she said, "is food."

Chef Fernando and Marlene Divina are presently the owners of the Terrace Kitchen in Lake Oswego, Oregon, south of Portland. Their new restaurant features "Rustic Cuisine of the Americas" and serves locally sourced ingredients and seasonal foods. Together the two offer cooking classes and a variety of programs featuring local foods, both wild and cultivated, and with ingredients from neighboring farms. They both stated that it felt good to return to the Northwest and be close to home.



Photo 11.20 Marlene and Chef Fernando Divina.

The last chef that I want to mention in this chapter is Michelle Roetzer. Chef Roetzer is the lead instructor and head of the department at Santa Fe Community

College's culinary-arts degree program. She has been influential in the lives of many students and young chefs, two of whom I featured in the previous chapter. Chef Roetzer has been cooking professionally for twenty-six years and is also a chef at the Santa Fe School of cooking, where she teaches about cuisines of northern New Mexico. She buys as much local ingredients as she can. She believes in supporting the local economy, and it gives her students the important opportunity to work with local and fresh ingredients.

Roetzer is part Mexican on her mother's side and part German on her father's side. She grew up in El Paso, Texas, but her family lived in Gallup, New Mexico, where she first came in contact with the Native American communities of Navajo (Diné), Hopi, and Apache. She finished junior and senior high in the San Francisco Bay area. Since coming to Santa Fe in 2003, working locally and then heading the SFCC Culinary Arts program, she has taught a variety of classes that feature foods from both of her lineages, which she considers to be a form of communication and a way to define culture.

Chef Roetzer brought her culinary students to the IAIA event in May 2007. The students assisted the chefs who participated in the event, making it possible for each of them to serve more than a hundred samples in a relatively short amount of time, using an outdoor kitchen with only a wood-fired grill. She was also one of the featured chefs at the IPCC "Connecting Communities: Native Foods and Wellness" event in October of that same year. Below is a listing of the chefs' demonstrations from that event.

Chef Roetzer's experience working at and visiting many of the Pueblos in New Mexico and the Hopi communities in Arizona led her to conclude that Native American cuisine is made up of foods that are more contemporary, whereas Native American foodways are the foods from the past. Her biggest concern, however, is that Native American chefs preparing Native American cuisine are one of the most under-represented populations in commercial kitchens today. She said that if she could train young Native cooks to become chefs and help them engage in the discourse and practice of Native American cuisine, that was where she was going to concentrate her efforts as an educator in the culinary arts.

Chef Food Demonstrations
Sunday, October 21st

10:30 am	Chef Sandy Garcia from Santa Clara & Ohkay Owingeh Pueblos, and Chef at Bon Appetit Management Company (BAMCO) in San Jose, California will prepare a Quinoa Stuffed Quail wrapped in Bacon.
12 noon	Chef Fernando Divina, Executive Chef and Manager, Tendrils Restaurant at SageCliffe, in Quincy, Washington will do a presentation entitled Modern Food Preservation: Preserving New World foods and flavors through Old World techniques by preparing Pickled Chiles and Green Tomatoes, Nasturtium and Tiny Tomato Pickles, and Wild Mushroom and Oregano Preserves.
12:30 pm	Chef Richard Hetzler, Executive Chef at the Mitsitam Café at the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington D.C. will prepare an Oak Smoked Breast Duck, Warm Corn Pudding, Shallot Roasted Patty Pan Squash with Dried Current Port Wine Reduction.
1:00 pm	Chef Nephi Craig from the White Mountain Apache and Diné, (Navajo) Nations and Founder of the Native American Culinary Association, (NACA) will prepare Pan Roasted Salmon, Three Sisters, (Corn, Beans, and Squash), Tomatoes, Sauce Dineh and Yellow Apache Salt.
1:30 pm	Chef Michelle Roetzer, Head Chef/Instructor at the Santa Fe Community College Culinary Arts Program, will prepare a Traditional Turkey Mole Negro.
3:00 pm	Margaret Campos, from Comida de Campos will prepare a Vegetarian Quesadilla with Garden Fresh Salsa.

Figure 11.7 “Connecting Communities: Native Food and Wellness” Chef Food Demonstration Schedule for Sunday, October 21, 2007.



Photo 11.21 Chef Michelle Roetzer works with Chef Arlie Doxtator and one of her SFCC culinary students (on her right) to plate a vegetarian quesadilla with garden fresh salsa prepared by Margaret Campos (in background) at the IPCC Native Foods and Wellness event in 2007.

In summary, the chefs in this chapter illustrate part of the community of chefs that not only practices Native American cuisine but also perpetuates Native American foodways by preparing, serving, procuring, harvesting, cultivating, and purchasing Native American ingredients and products from Native-owned and -operated enterprises. These chefs play a key role in both the practice and discourse of Native American cuisine. They also interact with Native American chefs in a professional capacity as well as support the contribution that Native American cuisine has made to “American cuisine.”

Some of these chefs are in a position to hire and mentor Native American chefs. Some of the chefs hire Native students as interns, as in the case of Chef Hetzler, or inspire and educate, as in the case of Chef Roetzer. These two chefs work with Native American students to prepare them for jobs in the culinary industry. All of these chefs are very much a part of the Native American cuisine movement and play an important role in this movement.

Chapter 12

Native Chef Collaborative Cooking Events: Expressions of Identity and of a Chef's Senses

Specific cooking techniques, as I have previously discussed, are the construction of skills necessary to become a chef. Learning the profession of cooking takes time and dedication. What holds greater symbolic meaning, and a focus in this chapter, is what lies beneath the skills, in the multiple layers of the person executing them. This is represented in different ways. It is represented through place-based memories and how each chef experiences these memories. It is represented by how each chef interprets and expresses himself or herself, through cooking. And it is represented in the food each chef creates through his or her aesthetic presentation, taste, and sensory expression. The manner in which each chef does this is unique and is the foundation for this ethnography. The descriptions of each chef in previous chapters illustrate these components, creating the story of who each chef is. A chef's expression of food is a form of his or her identity; it is a process through which each chef expresses his or her artistic sensibilities, and it is how each chef interprets bodily senses and how these senses are transformed into being a chef cooking Native American cuisine. Local symbolic materials can be verbal, visual, sonic, oral, sensory, graphic, as well as written. All are modes for communicating this information—all are components from which I draw for this ethnography. Locating the intricate strengths and fragilities that connect these chefs to the larger culinary arena, social imagination, and practice are all a part of what I develop in this chapter.

Place-based food memories can be evoked in a multitude of ways and through an array of poetic means. The works of Steven Feld and Keith Basso illustrate how Kaluli songs and Apache stories both hold and unleash wisdom. They embody memories in manners of voicing, and they animate the sensuality of place as both landscape and soundscape (Feld and Basso 1996). I use a contemporary "foodscape" as a means and a form of expression for chefs. "Foodscape" in this instance melds together elements from the anthropology of food with the anthropology of the senses. In the instances of these chefs practicing Native American cuisine, a foodscape illustrates how deeply connected food and the senses are. Just as contemporary fusion cuisine melds food components

from multiple cultures, foodscapes synthesize the history of Native American traditional foodways with the contemporary Native world of food and Native American cuisine. These foodscapes interact with food in a multitude of ways—via locality, local environments, remote places on the reservations, from the very traditional and local to global genres. Foodscapes move from ancestral foods of the past to the foods introduced to the Southwest by the Spanish to the foods introduced by the government through the commodity foods program. They fuse the food world of Native American cuisine with European high cuisine, and European high cuisine with the food world of Native American cuisine. Foodscapes in this instance include both of these cuisines and exemplify how the chefs and cooks that practice Native American cuisine mutually and equally illuminate the two.

David Abram (1996) presents an expressive form of sensuous ethnography, which draws from nature, its impact on the physical body, and its influence on perception of place. Paul Stoller's work (1989, 1997) on the subject of sensuous scholarship advocates the importance of incorporating the sensuous body—its smells, tastes, textures, and sensations—all of which are an integral part of being a chef and cooking Native American cuisine. As Stoller advocates, this is especially important in societies where the Eurocentric notion of text—and of textual interpretations—is not central. Although these chefs are using European culinary techniques in contemporary Southwest kitchens, the way in which these chefs interpret information is what becomes relevant in this study. Native American traditional knowledge is based on oral accounts, and text is not central to Native American ideology and ways of knowing (Cajete 1999; Nelson 2008). In Native American traditions, the senses play a more significant role in the place-based memories, identity, and sensual body.

In addition to the symbolic importance and meaning of what it is to be a chef being different for each individual, how each chef interprets a collaborative culinary event is unique. In some instances the difference between the chefs is sharp and clearly delineated. In others the difference between the chefs and the greater culinary genre is not always clear, concise, and apparent. Finally, there are distinct differences between the Native and non-Native Chefs, but they still shared practices. Each chef's individual and

ethnic identity is part of the role the senses play in perceiving common “foodscapes.” The senses as used here refers not only to the physiological sense regarding the use of taste and smell in relation to food, but also the importance of touch in cooking, the impact of vision and sound in the preparation of dishes, as well as elements of individual presentation and aesthetic expression. Taste includes the fact that food is an element that feeds the soul as well as what and how specific food ingredients are used. The senses here also act as a mechanism for triggering bodily memory. The senses are thus a means for connecting these memories to place.

The works of Diane Ackerman (1990), Carolyn Korsmeyer (1999), Eric Rolls (1998), Anthony Synnott (1993), and Kathryn Linn Geurts (2002) are noted here. However, my aim is to push beyond the traditional anthropology of the senses to elicit a description of individual “foodscapes.” Understanding through their senses what food is to the chefs helps to define their role in the discourse and practice of Native American cuisine. The anthropology of the senses in this instance converges with the anthropology of food. Tastes and smells are not only memory-linked but also identity-linked and central to a chef’s way of cultural knowing (Geurts 2002:26). Many layers are investigated to fully understand this notion, and many of them overlap. An individual chef’s ways of cultural knowing is exemplified via his or her “foodscapes.” These “foodscapes” are also the fundamental ingredients central to their knowledge. All individuals sense differently. Cultural backgrounds influence each person’s perspective, thus influencing their expressive aesthetic qualities. Foods qualify as symbolic and meaningful in a host of ways because they are representational and expressive. These functions are articulated in some of the most important social rituals, such as religious ceremonies as illustrated by the Native cooks, as well as in commemorative occasions, such as eating in the resorts and restaurants I discuss here, where a number of the Native chefs work. The contemporary ritual of fine dining can also be seen in the common and familiar actions of everyday eating which occur in a different context.

As the chefs prepare courses, dishes, tastings, and samples for a variety of events, we see how food is performed with some of the same symbolic activities as works of art. Korsmeyer (1999) adapts Nelson Goodman’s theory of the symbols that operate in art in

support of this contention. These events are presented here in textual form, which represents only one layer of the artistic experience. The incorporation of photos with the text integrates another layer of experiential knowledge by providing visuals of the chefs preparing their courses for these meals, but it still does not illustrate the entire sensory experience. If it were possible to add aural components, tactile, olfactory, and other sensory elements from each culinary event I present here, additional layers concerning the sensory experience could contribute toward the interpretation and understanding of each of the chef's dishes.

The First Tohono O'odham Community Action Dinner in 2004

The kitchen was quiet when I walked in. It was still early, and the afternoon staff hadn't arrived yet. The evening cooking shift wouldn't begin until 2:00pm. The first TOCA fundraising dinner took place on Sunday, December 5, 2004. Seven chefs had come together to prepare the dinner as part of the Celebration of Basketry and Native Foods. Chef Whitewater and I were the first guest chefs to arrive that day to begin prepping the food for our dishes. Several of the other chefs had come into the kitchen at Lon's at the Hermosa the day before. They did some of the work necessary to prep their ingredients, reduce their sauces, and marinate their meat for the dishes they would serve the following night.

Fernando Divina, the executive chef and food and beverage director at Lon's, came to the kitchen door to greet us with a big smile. "Welcome to the kitchen at Lon's at the Hermosa," he said. We both walked into the kitchen and looked around. Being a guest chef in another chef's kitchen is always a challenge. Not knowing where kitchen items are located puts a chef at a disadvantage. Cooking in an unfamiliar culinary environment, regardless of how state-of-the-art it is, is always difficult. In a chef's own restaurant kitchen, he or she knows where everything is, how to find it quickly, and how everything works. This includes the ovens, stovetops, mixers, blenders, bowls, spoons, ladles, containers, etc. On this particular night there would be four other guest chefs for the evening's event in addition to myself and Chef Whitewater. We set our knife kits down in the area of the kitchen where we would prep our food.⁷¹ "Marking your territory" in a

commercial kitchen environment is an important step in claiming a workspace in the host kitchen.

Chef Divina had already done the majority of his prep for the hors d'oeuvres he was making for the dinner. His hors d'oeuvres included "Imu Salmon on Buckskin Bread with Native Roe and Wintercress," "Black Buck Antelope on Fennel Cracker with Cranberry Conserve," and "Tepary Beans on White Corn Crackers with Sun-Dried Tomato Preserve." Because his dishes were primarily prepped, all he had to do was assemble the finished components and put them on trays just before the guests arrived. He also had his entire kitchen staff available to help. This enabled him to greet the guest chefs as they arrived and get all of them situated and working on their respective dishes.

Chef Divina gave us both a tour of the kitchen and then walked us into the dining room. Lon's at the Hermosa is a spectacular high-end restaurant. The dining room has the finest Southwest furnishings, with original Native American and Western artwork on the walls. It is elegantly laid out. Lon's is a part of the Hermosa Inn, a resort in Scottsdale, Arizona, which is called "a boutique hideaway" on their website (<http://www.hermosainn.com/lons/>). It is a four-diamond resort and is cited as one of the "Top 25 resorts in the U.S." by Conde Nast Traveler on the accolades page of their website.

Chef Whitewater and I just looked at each other at the end of the brief tour by Chef Divina. There was an unspoken communication between us. We both knew at this moment the type of clientele we would be cooking for that night, and we were both anxious to get started on our dishes. I had a lump in my throat. This was by far the highest-end restaurant either of us had ever cooked in. We knew our dishes would have to be impeccable in taste, smell, color, and presentation. We walked back into the kitchen to get started.

Chef Divina asked us to accompany him outside to see the restaurant's gardens with their fresh herbs and baby salad greens. "Whatever you both need for a garnish tonight, you'll be able to come outside and pick whatever you want later on, before dinner service," he said. The gardens were raised beds of vegetables and culinary herbs covering about an acre. "Lon's at The Hermosa is fine dining at its best," Fernando

stated. “We use age-old cooking methods, including smoking, roasting, and wood-grilling. Our goal is to utilize the flavors of the region from natural and sustainable resources. We specialize in authentic Arizona flavors with cutting-edge ingredients which we either grow ourselves or purchase locally from Phoenix-area organic farmers,” he told us. “Whatever I can do for you, just let me know.” We walked back into the kitchen to get started.

The only sound I could hear as I walked back into the kitchen was the humming and vibration of the exhaust fans. At first it was loud, and then it seemed to dissipate as we spent more time in the kitchen. Actually, it was that my ears had acclimated to the sound so it wasn’t as dominant. Exhaust fans are a constant in all commercial kitchens. Depending on the size of the kitchen and the type of food being cooked, they range from one to many. The majority of the chefs I interviewed stated that this is the most common sound they hear every day as they work. The chopping of food being prepped, as well as the crackling sound of the food as it cooks, are the next most dominant sounds.

Chef Whitewater went to his area in the kitchen and started to chop the onions and garlic for his soup. His dish for that night’s dinner was “Spicy Corn Soup Garnished with Red Pepper and Chipotle Purée with Freshly Baked Blue Corn Cob Bread.” His hands moved swiftly as he chopped the onion into a small dice. His precision with the knife was amazing to watch. “I’ve already put the fresh corn in the oven to steam it for the soup,” he said. Chef Whitewater makes this soup by roasting fresh corn, still in its husks, on a tray in the oven with some water in the bottom, which gives the corn a delicious flavor, he said. He cooks it for ten to fifteen minutes at three hundred and fifty degrees. “Back home we use the cobs for flavor and then take them out of our stew or soup and feed them to the sheep. The sheep love them,” he said with a bit of a giggle. After the corn had roasted he removed the cobs from the oven, peeled off the outer husks (which he retained), and then cut the kernels off the cobs. This, too, he did with a swift and fast motion. It only took him a matter of minutes to shuck all the corn and cut the kernels from the cobs. The next thing he did was sauté the corn kernels on the stove with the chopped onions, garlic, and chipotle chiles.⁷²

Chef Craig arrived. His dish, “Roasted Breast of Squab with Hand-Crafted Tortellini and Squab Essence,” involved rolling out freshly made pasta dough and stuffing the tortellini with what he called squab essence. Squab today is a young domestic pigeon, but historically, as stated in Merriam-Webster Dictionary, it was used to describe fledgling birds about four weeks old from several species, including game birds. According to most of the chefs I interviewed, it is not a traditional Native term. Chef Craig said in terms of Native foods the term most closely approximated small game or song birds, including dove and robin. He had prepped his squab breasts the day before and only had to sear and roast them for dinner service. Chef Craig greeted both Chef Whitewater and me and then found a space to work in the cold prep area. Chef Craig collected all of his necessary food ingredients and began to arrange the tools to make his pasta.

I was in the station next to him, cutting orange segments from locally purchased organic oranges for my salad. I was preparing “Nopales Cactus Pad and Citrus Salad with Roasted Sweet Red Bell Peppers and Toasted Pepita Seeds in a Fiery Jalapeño Vinaigrette.” My red bell peppers were already roasted. I let them sweat in a plastic bag and then peeled off the skin off, removed the seeds and stems, and cut them into thin strips about one and one-half inches long. The pepita (pumpkin) seeds were roasted and salted and sitting in a small Lexan plastic food container near my prep station.⁷³ I still had to clean and cut the nopal cactus pads into thin strips, and then blanch them in boiling water. Last, I had to make the jalapeño vinaigrette. I was in good shape for the evening in terms of executing my dish and having the majority of the work done.

I finished cleaning and cutting the cactus. A pot of water was on the stove, nearly to the boil. As soon as the water boiled I was going to blanch the cactus and then shock it in an ice water bath to stop the cooking. Cactus is an important ingredient in the Southern Desert communities. Research conducted at the University of California and the University of Sonora in Mexico has demonstrated that these cacti, when consumed as a fresh vegetable, show promise in reducing heart disease and have a positive effect on individuals with Type 2 diabetes. These cacti have a mucus sap that helps to regulate blood sugar. Several elders in the Tohono O’odham community told me that this cactus

has been a traditional Native food in that region for centuries. We were near the traditional O’odham ancestral lands. We were cooking in their place. That’s why I chose the dish I was making. It consisted of ingredients local to the area and foods that were a part of the landscape there. Several ingredients were from the precontact era. Citrus came to the region with the Spanish but is now a major crop in the area.

Chef Craig made a mound of flour and cracked several eggs into the center. He began to mix the dough with his hands and gently knead it into a ball. He said that his favorite thing to make with his hands is dough. “You just form it out into almost a belt, and depending on how much you have done or how your dough is, you can make it as big as two feet, and then you cut them off—it’s just all hand technique.” He commented that he loved to touch dough, any kind of dough—pasta dough, bread dough, dumpling dough. He liked to mold it and form it into shapes, and he loved to make tortellini. It was his favorite kind of pasta to make. “It’s the tactile sensation, that I love the most. I really like using my hands when I cook,” he commented. In Italian cuisine, tortellini are traditionally ring-shaped pasta that are typically stuffed with a mix of meat or cheese. Chef Craig was stuffing his with the remaining squab meat after he had filleted the breast. He made a meat reduction using the leftover meat from the birds. Then he made a stock reduction from the bones, to which he added some seasonings and spices. He pulled the meat off the bones and shredded it to stuff the tortellini. I could smell the meat and stock reductions cooking while I was blanching my cactus pads on the stove. The reductions were cooking on the rear burners behind the boiling water I used to blanch the cactus pads. Chef Craig attached a hand-crank pasta machine to the end of the table, tightened it, and then fed the dough through until it was the desired thickness.

When I returned from blanching the cactus pads and was shocking them in ice water, Chef Whitewater was still working on his soup. “The unique thing about this recipe is that once the corn is roasted, I cut it off the cob and then place the cobs into the stock for the soup to extract the corn flavor from the cobs,” he mentioned to me. “Nothing is wasted.” “I’m going to use the corn husk leaves for a garnish on my plate,” he said. This is his style. He likes to use fresh ingredients when he can, and he loves to use fresh corn. Chef Whitewater had already roasted his red bell peppers, combined them

with the chipotle chiles, and put the puréed mixture into a squirt bottle so he could paint a design onto the finished soup creation. (Most high-end chefs have certain techniques that they follow, and specific forms of presentation; Dornenburg and Page 1996; Ruhlman 2000.) He removed the corncobs, placed the sautéed corn, onions, garlic, chipotle chiles, and the stock that had been simmering for approximately half an hour and let it cook for another ten minutes. Then he put batches of the soup into a Vitamix blender and blended it into a fine purée.⁷⁴ “I’m going to strain the soup now to give it a silky texture, almost as if it has cream in it,” he said. “But it doesn’t have cream; it’s just the sweet corn milk that I’ve extracted from the roasted fresh sweet corn.” “This is the secret to this dish,” he laughed. “You can add cream, that’s the European or French way to make the soup, but I like to serve it more traditionally, with only the corn in it,” he said. Chef Whitewater poured the strained corn soup mixture into a soup pot and then placed it on the stove over a very low flame. Once it heated to the proper temperature, he would taste it again and then adjust the seasoning to taste.

Chef Garcia was the next chef to arrive. Because he worked at Kai Restaurant, which is only about twenty miles from Lon’s, his dish, “Quinault Pride Wild King Salmon with Wilted Greens, Hatch Green Chile Vinaigrette, Apricot and Orange Glace,” was primarily done. He brought everything prepped, cleaned, cut, and ready to go. The salmon was marked and just need to be finished for service.⁷⁵ His green chile vinaigrette was prepared, as was the apricot and orange glace, which he would brush on the fish when he finished it off in the oven. Chef Garcia found an area of the kitchen where he could work and began to set up for dinner service. He had brought his sous chef and a line cook from Kai to help with the execution and plating of his dish. Chef Garcia regularly uses Quinault Pride Wild King Salmon at Kai. Chef Garcia had formed a good working relationship with the Quinault tribe and bought salmon from them on a regular basis.

Next to arrive was Chef Sharpe. He too had brought his dish, “Navajo Churro Lamb with Tepary Beans John’s Way with Wintergreens in Sumac and Chile Vinaigrette,” almost completely done. He had driven down from Winslow after preparing the dish in The Turquoise Room kitchen. Although it was a two-hundred-mile drive, the

only way for him to get to the Phoenix area was by driving. This was something he did quite often anyway, to pick up food from purveyors, he told us. Chef Sharpe found a spot, albeit smaller than the rest of ours because the kitchen was quite crowded at this point, and set up the area for his dish. He began to slowly heat his tepary bean side dish on the stove.

Chef Sharpe was using the Tohono O'odham ancient floodplain beans, the tepary, which he purchased locally from TOCA. He was also using a hand-harvested sumac berry infused into vinaigrette. His protein was Navajo churro lamb, which he bought from a Navajo sheepherder not far from his restaurant. He had slowly cooked the meat until it was perfectly tender. The Churro was the first breed introduced to the region by the Spanish and well suited for the desert environment. It was one of Chef Sharpe's favorite kinds of meat to cook.

It was getting busier. There were more sounds in the kitchen. You could hear chopping sounds from the chefs prepping their ingredients. There was clanging of the pots and pans. People were talking. Chef Sharpe commented to one of the other chefs that it felt "Exciting, thrilling, rewarding, satisfying, and still a lot of fun to be cooking together for a collaborative event and to be in the kitchen with other famous Native American chefs." Chef Whitewater added, "I hear the crackling, chopping, people laughing, you know, and things are going on in the noisy kitchen with the pans, sauté pans, left and right things are boiling, things are going in and coming out. . . ." He said he was happy to be working with the other chefs. One of the chefs was roasting a pepper on one of the burners, and the pungent smell was wafting throughout the kitchen. "Ah, this is my favorite smell," he commented as he walked up to the hot cooking line area. "The roasting of corn and peppers, something so simple as that, and roasted peppers on an open flame."

Chef Loretta Oden walked in. Until that moment, I had been the only woman in the kitchen. All of the chefs were men, including the kitchen staff from Lon's. She gave each chef a big hug, with a smile from ear to ear. She was elated to be a part of the first TOCA dinner and happy to be in the kitchen. Chef Oden had been in the day before, worked with the pastry chef from Lon's, and they had made all of the chocolate desserts

from her recipe the day before. She knew she wouldn't have time on the day of the event, and her dessert did better once it sat overnight. She was making "Loretta's Chocolate Obsession" for the dessert course that night. She took out one of the tortes and inspected it. She called me over to have a look. Her torte was dark, dense, moist, and very chocolaty. It smelled amazing. I smelled the undertones of the chocolate. It had a rich, earthy smell like after a desert rain. I could smell some sweetness, but I couldn't detect a lot of sugar. Chef Oden said that the dessert was primarily a high-grade dark chocolate infused with several seasonings, including vanilla bean. The smell began to waft through the kitchen as she took the tortes out of the walk-in refrigerator. I smelled the rich dark chocolate cacao coming from the torte she had opened.

Chef Oden had baked nine-inch rounds and was planning on cutting triangular wedge-shaped pieces for her plate that night. She was getting about ten slices per nine-inch torte. "Look," she said. She took out a flat piece of cardboard that was wrapped and opened it up. "It's real edible 23kt gold leaf for my dessert tonight," she whispered to me. "This is the food of the ancient kings and Aztec royalty." I had never seen edible gold leaf before. It was in small sheets, very thin, and very yellow gold. She peeled off a little piece to let me taste it. I was excited to see how she would use it on her plate that night.

Chef Oden began to talk to everyone else. She was happy with the way her dessert had come out and, except for the plating of her dish, was done. Chef Craig was still rolling out and stuffing his tortellini; I still needed to finish cleaning and cutting my cactus pads. The other chefs were busy getting ready and organizing their areas for dinner service. The dinner was completely sold out. Wait staff had begun to arrive and was starting to set up the dining room. They were polishing silver and cleaning the glassware at each place setting. The dining room captain was overseeing the wait staff to make sure all the tables had the proper place settings.⁷⁶ The dining room captain came into the kitchen to discuss the timing for the evening's dinner with Executive Chef Divina, and how he wanted him to execute the plating for each table.

The chefs were continuing to prepare their dishes and set up stations for the evening's event. Chef Oden remarked,

Well, ya'know how crazy kitchens can be. . . . you start the day and its rather quiet, and maybe, . . . you are standing there prepping and . . . you hear the whirl

of the exhaust fan, then . . . the kitchen starts filling up, and its chop, chop, chop, of your own hand. So it becomes quite musical, and it's almost . . . as more people come into the kitchen, "rrrrrrrrrr," a blender comes on, . . . and then the clatter comes and it's an orchestra, it really is an orchestra. And the crescendo grows and the beat gets more rapid and we get into the "rock" mode, . . . we really say that a lot in the kitchen. When it's time to plate and serve, everyone always says "It's time to rock 'n roll." So it's like getting ready for a show, it's a performance, every single night that you are in a kitchen. You may start at six or seven o'clock in the morning, but it builds, I mean the excitement builds, the tension builds, and then it is just BOOM! It's show time! And then for me, it's like I feel done and it's a big sigh of relief, and . . . it's crazy when the last plate goes out, it's almost like I hear tinkling little wind chimes or a violin or something. Pressure might start slowing down and then, in the middle of the night, when you are trying to sleep, you are thinking about tomorrow's menu.

She was right. There were sounds all around. Smells of various ingredients were wafting all over the kitchen. There was movement. It was alive. Chef Oden had tuned into all that was going on around us and was verbalizing it to everyone else. All these chefs were creating different dishes, each with unique Native ingredients from all over the Southwest and with the salmon from the Northwest Coast. It was getting close to the time of dinner service, and the energy was increasing. It was indeed, as Chef Oden stated, building. All the chefs were focused on making sure that their items were ready to plate. Each of the chefs would have a turn. The three different types of tray-passed hors d'oeuvre's from Chef Divina would be followed by six courses that night. Soon it would be time for the guests to arrive.

Chef Divina came over to where Chef Oden was cutting up her chocolate desserts and placing them onto sheet pans for service. "Smell," she said. "It has got to be chocolate," replied Chef Divina. The two chefs talked about her dish. He asked if she needed any help. Chef Oden was reminiscing with Chef Divina about cooking—their favorite smells, memories of a variety of dishes and events that they both had created and participated in. Chef Oden's favorite food to prepare is chocolate. Chef Divina talked about a memory that was triggered by the smell of the chocolate. It brought him back to that exact place in time, he said. Chef Oden responded by saying, "There is that smell of a kitchen that gets permeated into your hair and on your clothes. When you go outside the kitchen and you meet up with someone, . . . like if I hug my son, Clay, after we closed

down the restaurant at night, there is that kitchen smell of whatever we cooked, whatever I made, whether it's a big stew, or a chocolate dessert. I don't know if you realize, but I can tell by the smell of someone's hair or their clothing whether they have been in a kitchen. I love the smells of cooking, of food," she said. "There are certain herbs and spices, like sage, and whether we cook with it or we burn it (we burn sage a lot for purification), I think that sage may be one of my favorite smells." She couldn't wait to serve her dish, she said, but realized hers would be the last course to go out that evening and there were still several hours to go before it would be time to plate it.

Edward Casey (1996b) reminds us how the intimate relationship between embodiment and emplacement brings the problem of place into close resonance with the anthropological problem of knowing "local knowledge." Casey examines how to be in place is to know, is to become aware of one's very consciousness and sensuous presence in the world. This place, this kitchen at Lon's at the Hermosa, was the fundamental form of the embodied experience and the site of a powerful fusion of self, space, and time (Feld and Basso 1996). This place was connected to the social imagination and practice of the chefs. The embodied experience of preparing the foods was integrally linked to that place.

Knowledge of place is not subsequent to perception but an ingredient in perception itself (Casey 1996b). Local knowledge therefore is experiential in the manner of a "lived experience." As Feld puts it, "as place is sensed, senses are placed; as places make sense, senses make place (1996:91)." The chefs are not only in the places they cook, they cook of the places they are from. The memories (local knowledge) are linked to what they prepare, how they prepare it, and what their dishes smell, taste, and look like. The bodily way of knowing, of sensing foods and the experience they trigger within the body, is not only a physiological response, but linked to place as well as to the memory of place.

Mary Paganelli, Terrol Johnson, and Tristen Reader came into the kitchen. Terrol and Tristan are the co-founders and co-directors of Tohono O'odham Community Action, the organization for which the dinner was raising money. Mary is the culinary and nutrition consultant at TOCA and was in charge of coordinating all of the chefs for this

event. She had been responsible for the demos the chefs had performed at the Heard Museum. They were excited. They greeted each chef, checked in on what they were making, and commented on the smells in the kitchen. It was almost time to start.

The dining room captain came into the kitchen. “Guests are starting to arrive, so let’s get the tray-pass hors d’oeuvres ready,” he said. It was Chef Divina’s turn. He began to plate his appetizers on elegant trays. The wait staff came into the kitchen to get the trays. Chef Divina explained each hors d’oeuvre to them, giving them a sample of each one so they would be able to describe the ingredients and flavors to the guests. This is an important part of the fine-dining process. Many chefs consider the servers to be an extension of themselves. The servers are the link between the kitchen and the dining room. One chef described servers as being similar to the tentacles of a jellyfish. They are part of the organism but are the last component that extends out from the kitchen.

Chef Divina sent the servers out into the dining room to serve his hors d’oeuvres. The dining room was filling up. Each server came back and picked up another tray, then returned to the dining room. Someone came into the kitchen—I think it was the dining room manager or the captain—and said that the guests had been seated and that the first course was about seven minutes away. Timing is crucial. Because there were so many chefs, each with his or her own course, timing of the individual dishes would be an important component in the flow of the overall dinner.

First up was Chef Craig. He put his plates in the oven and began to orchestrate his course. The other chefs assisted. The tortellini were being cooked, the breast of squab was in the oven, and the sauce was on the stove, warming. Chef Craig made a sample plate to show how he wanted his plate to look. Everyone was assigned a task, and Chef Craig was the last person on the line, checking each plate before it went out and making sure it was how he wanted. His plates looked beautiful. The fresh herbs he had picked from the kitchen garden were the last component placed onto each plate. “Hot plates,” he shouted to the wait staff. They served each table in a flight; with a table of eight guests, for example, four servers each carry two plates to the table at once and serve the guests in unison, first to the person on the server’s right and then to the person on the left. After all of the plates have been served, they return to the kitchen for the next flight. This

technique ensures that everyone at the table can begin eating at the same time. No one is without food, and all of the food is hot. It is actually quite amazing to watch. It is like an orchestrated piece of music. Perfectly timed and in sync, a flight service is the equivalent of an orchestra's conductor (the chef) and its members (the servers).

"Next on deck is Chef Whitewater," Chef Divina announced loudly. All of Chef Craig's dishes had gone on. He was done. The chefs wiped down the hot line area and began to get ready for the next course. Chef Whitewater's soup was hot, his purée was already in several squirt bottles, and the blue corncob breads were heating in the oven. Chef Whitewater used an open, flat-rimmed white soup bowl on an underliner plate. The cornhusks placed underneath the bowl looked like feathers coming out from underneath the soup. Chef Whitewater called the cornhusks his headdress, as one would see on a ceremonial dancer. The plate of soup was the face, and the cornhusks the adornment, he told us. He filled plastic pitchers with his soup so it could be poured into each bowl without dripping on the edge. He assigned each chef a task. Two of the chefs were pouring the soup, Chef Whitewater painted his purée onto each bowl of soup, and then Chef Oden and Chef Craig placed blue corncob bread on the rim of each soup bowl. They also checked to make sure there were no drips before the servers picked them up and brought them out to the dining room. I was in the pantry area, orchestrating the components for my salad and mixing the ingredients with the vinaigrette dressing, and getting ready to plate the salad from the cold line area of the kitchen.

"Chef Frank, you are on deck," Chef Divina shouted. It was my turn. I chose a large, flat square white plate with a wide rim for the salad. I tasted the salad to make sure I was happy with the flavor, and then we began to plate the salad. I showed the chefs how I wanted each plate to look. Two chefs were helping me, Chef Oden and Chef Whitewater. Chef Garcia and Chef Sharpe were on the hot line, getting ready for the salmon dish, which would go out after my salad. I placed the serving of cactus pads, roasted red peppers, and citrus on each plate, and then sprinkled the roasted pepita seeds on top. I garnished the salad with fresh herbs from the restaurant's garden and then drizzled some salad dressing in a circle around the salad in the center, and then one of the chefs wiped the edge of the plate to make sure it was clean. I was happy with the

presentation. It looked clean, simple, and elegant. There was a rush of adrenaline going through my body. Plating your course is the climax of the process for each chef. What started out that morning or the day before by prepping all of the food ingredients was climaxed by completion of the process as each plate was sent out to the dining room to be served to each guest. Many chefs would watch the plates come back into the kitchen after their course, to see if there was any food left on the plate. If all the plates came back empty, the chef could reasonably assume that the dish was enjoyed by the guests. When plates come back to the kitchen with food still on them, many chefs will inspect the plates to assess what might have gone wrong with that particular dish. I was relieved to see all my salad plates came back empty.

Chef Garcia was heating his plates and had the salmon in the oven. At any moment he would begin to sauté the greens. Each course went through the process of plating according to instructions from the head chef for that course. It took hours to plate and serve this many courses. The time flew by, as we had only minutes between each course. When a kitchen has to put out that many plates for a large event, it is orchestrated differently than when individual orders come into a kitchen in a staggered fashion. With this type of event, all the courses were put out all at once, and then the kitchen focused on the next course. Chef Garcia's salmon course was elegantly plated, it was simple, the colors on the plate flowed together nicely, and the dark green from the wilted greens complemented the pink of the salmon.

Chef Sharpe served his dish on a large round plate, with a rim. He heated them in the oven to ensure that his dish would stay hot on its journey to the dining room. Probably one of the hardest issues with serving large amounts of hot food for an event like this is keeping the food hot on its way to the diners. His dish was earthy, the churro lamb was cooked perfectly, and the meat was tender. It was simple in its presentation, but the aroma stimulated all of my culinary senses. Most of the chefs commented on the smell of this dish. Chef Sharpe always placed more emphasis on the smell than on the presentation of his food. That was his priority. The beans were placed first, followed by the wintergreens and then the meat off to one side. It was the final entrée course, and I could feel the kitchen winding down. Chef Sharpe sighed with relief once his plates had

gone out and said how happy he was to be done with this course. All the chefs felt that way. It was the calm after the storm. Each chef stated that after they plated their course they could come down off of their adrenaline high. Cooking is an intense energy. It is a great deal of pressure and stress to perform at such a high level of energy for so many hours, and then a huge relief once the performance is completed.

Loretta was in the pastry area, placing the gold leaf pieces onto each dessert plate. She was alone at first until all of Chef Sharpe's entrées had gone out. Then everyone moved into the dessert area to help her finish plating. The last plate went out, and we were finished. All of the chefs smiled. "Ahhh," everyone said. We were so happy to be done. Everyone told one another that each chef had done a great job. All the chefs were pleased with the work on the collaborative dinner.

Terrol and Tristan came into the kitchen and asked if all of the chefs would come out into the dining room. We all walked out, and the guests stood up and gave each of the chefs a standing ovation. I looked around to observe the other chefs, and each one was poised with a smile. We had worked hard on our preparation, taste, and presentation. From the audience response, it was obvious that they had liked what we had done. Each chef said a few words about their dish and why they chose their ingredients. Then most stated that they were honored to be a part of this fundraising event for TOCA and how much they supported and advocated the work TOCA was doing in the Tohono O'odham Native community. After the last chef spoke, all of the guests began to get up from their tables and talk to one another. Most of the chefs stayed in the dining room for a little longer and visited with the diners, and then returned to the kitchen and collected their knife kits. It was late. I didn't look at the clock, but my body felt the effect of working and standing on my feet for so many hours. It was at least twelve hours since some of the chefs had arrived, and most of us had worked well over sixteen hours. The dinner was a success, and TOCA was happy with the funds we were able to help them raise.



Photo 12.1 Chef Divina plating his hors d'oeuvres, featuring Imu salmon, black buck antelope, and tepary beans on white corn crackers.



Photo 12.2 Imu salmon on buckskin bread with native roe and wintercress.



Photo 12.3 Chefs Craig and Garcia plating Craig's dish, the "Roasted Breast of Squab with hand-crafted tortellini and squab essence."



Photo 12.4 Chef Garcia helping Chef Craig plate his course.



Photo 12.5 The author with Chef Whitewater (background) plating the “Nopales Cactus Pad and Citrus Salad.”



Photo 12.6 Chef Whitewater puts the finishing touches on the salad plate before it is served.



Photo 12.7 “Nopales Cactus Pad and Citrus Salad with roasted sweet red peppers and toasted pepita seeds in a fiery jalapeño vinaigrette.”



Photo 12.8 Chef Garcia plating his “Quinault Pride Wild King Salmon with wilted greens, Hatch green chile vinaigrette, apricot and orange glaze.”



Photo 12.9 Chefs Garcia, Sharpe, and Whitewater plate the meat course with a chef from Lon's.



Photo 12.10 “Navajo Churro Lamb with tepary beans John’s way with wintergreens in sumac and chile vinaigrette.”



Photo 12.11 Chef Oden preparing the sauce for her dessert course.

This dinner exemplifies how all of the chefs worked together, both in the sense of unison as well as in a creative sense. Each dish used innovative techniques with ancestral foods as well as foods from the first contact era. Each dish, in its own cosmopolitan way, “fused” the Native world with the world of high cuisine, and the world of high cuisine with the Native world. Then the dishes were woven together, like a perfectly designed Navajo rug, into a complete meal. Each component fit with the others. These foodscapes performed and executed by the chefs were creative, innovative, and very new in the genre of Native American cuisine. This was the first time an event like this had taken place.

The TOCA Fundraiser Dinner at Kai in 2005

Kai means “seed: in the Pima language. Chef Sandy Garcia was the chef de cuisine and host chef the first year Kai hosted the TOCA fundraiser dinner, and Chef Jack Strong was the chef de cuisine the second year the event took place. There were only five chefs this year, two fewer than when it was held at Lon’s at the Hermosa. I’d never been

out to the Sheraton Wild Horse Pass Resort, which is owned and operated by the Gila River Indian Community. It's located about fifteen miles from downtown Phoenix and the Heard Museum, where the Celebration of Native Foods and Basketry was taking place. Most of the chefs had performed cooking demonstrations at the Heard Museum over the weekend and headed out to Kai Restaurant on Sunday to prep for their dinner. Several chefs, including myself, had gone out the day before to prep ingredients or prepare components for their dishes. In 2005 the TOCA fundraiser dinner included Chef Fernando Divina (who had relocated to Washington). He prepared "Little Tastes of the Tohono O'odham," Chef Loretta Barrett Oden prepared "The Sonoran Meets the Bayou," Chef Walter Whitewater prepared "Marinated Grilled Quail with a New Mexico Chile Ristra Glaze," and Chef Sandy Garcia, the host chef from Kai, prepared "Buffalo Tenderloin from the Cheyenne River Sioux." I prepared a "Feast Days Piñon Torte" for the dessert.

I drove out to the resort in the afternoon on the day before the dinner. The Sheraton at the Wild Horse Pass Resort is one of the most luxurious resorts I have ever seen. As you exit off of the interstate (I-10) onto Wild Horse Pass Blvd., you drive through unspoiled desert and then pass the golf course and the Aji Spa before reaching the hotel.

Chefs Whitewater, Oden, and Divina were already there. Chef Garcia greeted me and gave me a quick tour. Kai is located to the left when you walk into the resort hotel. It is an elegantly designed restaurant and bar. Executive Chef Michael O'Dowd is in charge of all of the restaurants at the resort, including Kai, the Rawhide Steakhouse, Ko'Sin Restaurant, Sivlik Grill, and Hanyo Grill. Chef Garcia brought me to the pastry area of the kitchen so that I could prepare my dessert for the following evening.

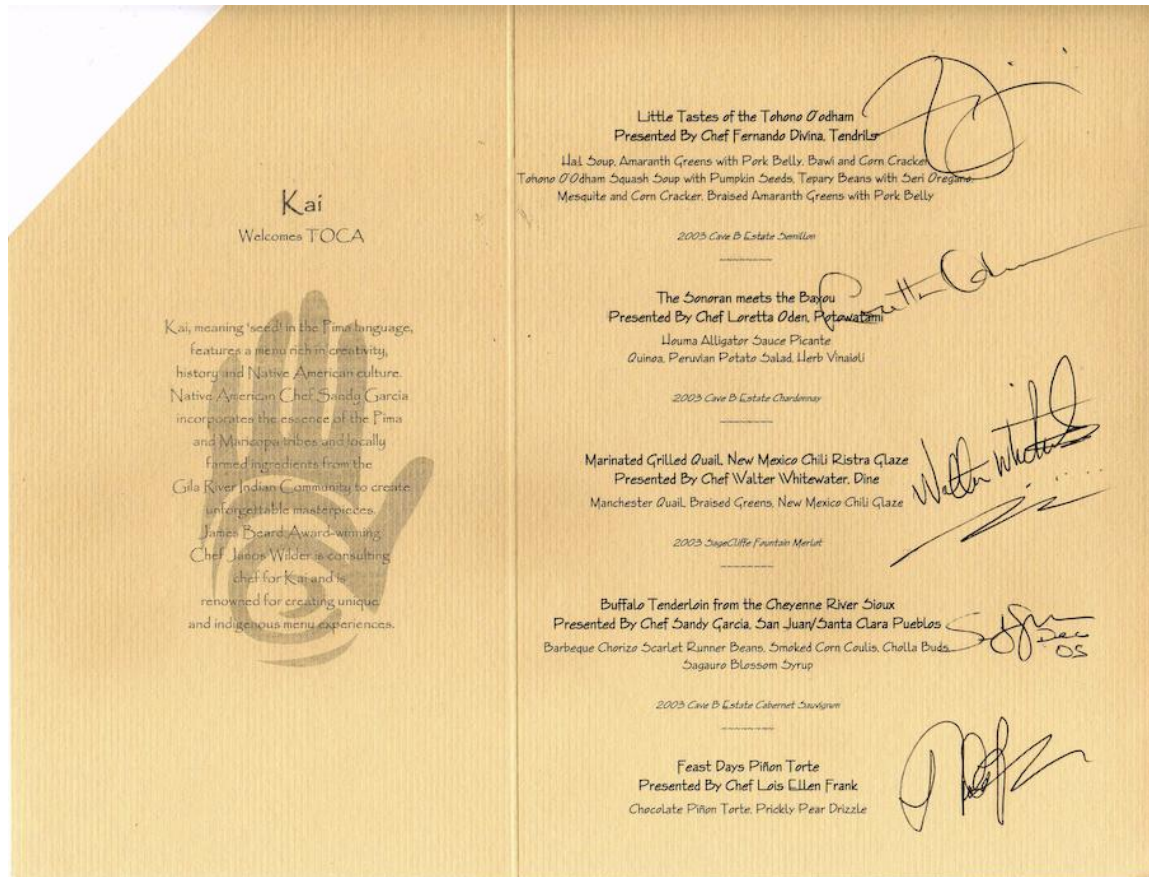


Figure 12.1 2005 menu for TOCA fundraising dinner at Kai Restaurant.

The other chefs were busy preparing their courses for the dinner and wanted to get a jump-start on the prep. Chef Whitewater was preparing the marinade for his quail, Chef Oden was filleting her Houma alligator, and Chef Garcia was cooking his scarlet runner beans. We worked for several hours. Kai Restaurant was open that night, and the kitchen was in full swing when I arrived. The pastry department was removed from the main kitchen, and I didn't interact much with the other chefs. Working in the pastry department is quiet; a pastry chef is often alone, and baking is completely different than any other part of the kitchen. It is more precise and less forgiving. Recipes need to be followed exactly, and there is little room for error. Dessert is not my favorite course to prepare, but I was happy to be baking the chocolate piñon tortes for the following night's dinner. After Kai's dinner service was finished, we wrapped up our stations and left with the

remainder of the kitchen staff. Only Chef Garcia stayed behind; he still had more to do for the dinner.

The following day, when I arrived in the early afternoon, the other chefs were already working in the kitchen. Because I had baked my desserts the night before, all I needed to do was prepare two sauces, a peach honey sauce made from peaches frozen at the peak of the previous season and prickly pear syrup made from prickly pears that had been harvested and frozen several months earlier. Both the peaches and the prickly pears had been thawed out and were in Lexan containers in the walk-in refrigerator. I got my ingredients and began to cook the fruit so that it could be blended and put in squirt bottles for that night's dessert course.

The kitchen was humming with energy, and everyone was scrambling to get everything done in time for the event. I was working in the hot prep area of the kitchen until it was time to assist with plating the courses. Chef Oden, Chef Whitewater, and Chef Garcia were all on the hot line, preparing their dishes.

Chef Divina was first up and had compiled an assortment of appetizers, which were to be served at the table to the guests. He made "Ha:l Soup, Amaranth Greens with Pork Belly, Bawĩ (Tohono O'odham for tepary beans) and Corn Crackers" followed by "Tohono O'odham Squash Soup with Pumpkin Seeds, Tepary Beans with Seri Oregano,"⁷⁷ and "Mesquite and Corn Cracker, Braised Amaranth Greens with Pork Belly." They were served in small portions, the soup in small cups, and the cracker on a rectangular plate next to the soup, which Chef Divina called "Little Tastes."

Chef Oden had alligator meat flown in from the Seminole Nation for her dish. This was the first time I tasted alligator, which is a white meat. Chef Oden combined the marinated, cooked alligator meat with other ingredients into a salad. Her dish, "Houma Alligator Sauce Picante with Quinoa, Peruvian Potato Salad, and Herb Vinaigoli," was the first course after the "Little Tastes." Next was Chef Whitewater's poultry course. He prepared a Manchester quail that was served with braised greens and a New Mexico red chile glaze. He brought red chile pods from New Mexico to make the glaze that was brushed onto the quail before it was grilled to enhance the flavor of the meat and then dots painted onto the plate for service, which for Chef Whitewater always represent the

four directions. Chef Garcia prepared the main entrée course from buffalo tenderloin he purchased from the Inter-Tribal Bison Cooperative. Chef Garcia was one of the first chefs at a major resort to buy bison meat from the cooperative. His dish featured the bison tenderloin, “Bison Tenderloin from the Cheyenne River Sioux,” with “Barbecue Chorizo Scarlet Runner Beans, Smoked Corn Coulis, Cholla Buds, and Saguaro Blossom Syrup.” The dessert course, which I prepared, was a “Feast Days Chocolate Piñon Torte and Prickly Pear Drizzle.” The chocolate torte is made from organic shade-tree-sourced chocolate with New Mexico pine nuts, (also called piñons) and then served with a prickly pear cactus syrup reduction. Chef Whitewater and I had hand-gathered the prickly pear earlier in the season when they were ripe, and then they were frozen for storage. Some of the dishes were hybrids, combining ingredients from several periods of Native American cuisine and others were more pan-Indian in their style, combining ingredients from multiple regions of the Americas.



Photo 12.12 Chef Garcia plating the “Little Tastes of the Tohono O’odham.”



Photo 12.13 Plating Chef Divina's "Little Tastes of the Tohono O'odham," featuring the mesquite and corn crackers, braised amaranth greens with pork belly.



Photo 12.14 Chef Whitewater plating his marinated grilled quail.



Photo 12.15 “Marinated Grilled Quail with a New Mexico Chile Rista Glaze,” served with braised greens.



Photo 12.16 Chef Divina (center) and Chef Whitewater with Kai staff as they prepare to plate the meat course.



Photo 12.17 Chef Garcia preparing to plate his buffalo tenderloin meat course.

The TOCA Fundraiser Dinner at KAI in 2006

The following year Kai hosted the dinner again, this time with Chef de Cuisine Jack Strong. Chef Strong took over as the chef de cuisine when Chef Sandy Garcia moved to California. The second year of cooking at Kai was much easier on the chefs who participated. We were familiar with the kitchen; we understood the layout and how the plating worked on the hot line. This is crucial, especially when a large number of plates need to be served, all at the same time. That was the case for this dinner, and it was sold out again. This year's menu was more intricate than the previous year. It involved more chefs, and it had more courses.

The chefs who participated in the 2006 TOCA dinner were Chefs Jack Strong, Walter Whitewater, Loretta Barrett Oden, Michael O'Dowd, Nephi Craig and Franco Wayne Lee (who were doing a dish together), Arlie Doxtator, and myself—eight chefs and seven courses. All of the chefs were also scheduled on either Saturday or Sunday for

food demonstrations at the Heard Museum for the public. Chef Whitewater and I did a demonstration on Saturday in the early afternoon, which freed us up to go to Kai on Saturday night and get some prep work done. Most of the chefs had planned to go into the kitchen the night before and start preparing their dishes for Sunday. Each dish involved too much work for one day. Several of the chefs who flew in from out of town didn't have vehicles. All of us were staying at a hotel close to the Heard Museum, so we carpooled to make things easier. After the Heard Museum closed at 5:00pm on Saturday, I went over with Chef Whitewater and Chef Oden, and we worked until well after eleven. When we left to head back to the hotel, Chefs Craig and Lee were both still at the restaurant, filleting their rabbits. Their dish was probably the most complex and most labor intensive. Chef Craig was using whole rabbits and preparing them three ways: in a stew, as a dumpling, and roasted. Chefs Craig and Lee had to "dress" each rabbit, cutting the prime meat from the bones. They made a stock from the remaining bones. Rabbit is one of the more difficult animals to butcher. Only the loin and a small rack of chops are good cuts of meat. The other meat tends to be tough and needs to be stewed, braised, or cooked very slowly to ensure that it is tender. Chef Craig was experienced at cooking rabbit; he grew up with it. Dressing the rabbit for that many guests was going to take hours, and Chefs Craig and Lee wanted to have all the hand cuts and prep work completed the day before the day of the dinner.

A lot of knife work is involved. The two chefs had cut the small racks of rabbit and left the rib bones on, which they frenched, a technique that is usually done with rack of lamb. To french a rack of meat, the fat, meat, and membranes that connect the individual rib bones are trimmed. This gives the rack a clean, elegant look. Even on a rack of lamb, which is much larger and has more space between the individual rib bones, this butchering task takes time and is difficult for many chefs to master. On a rabbit, which is much smaller, the individual rib bones are much closer together. The frenching process is much more difficult and takes even more time and patience.

The day of the event, Chefs Oden and Whitewater and I arrived at Kai just after ten in the morning. All of us had intricate dishes, and we wanted to be sure we had time to prep everything before dinner service that night. The chefs worked independently

throughout the day in their designated stations. The kitchen was calm. For the most part it was quiet, and everyone was intently focused on the tasks at hand. You could only hear the exhaust fans whirring and the sound of ingredients being chopped in various sections of the kitchen.

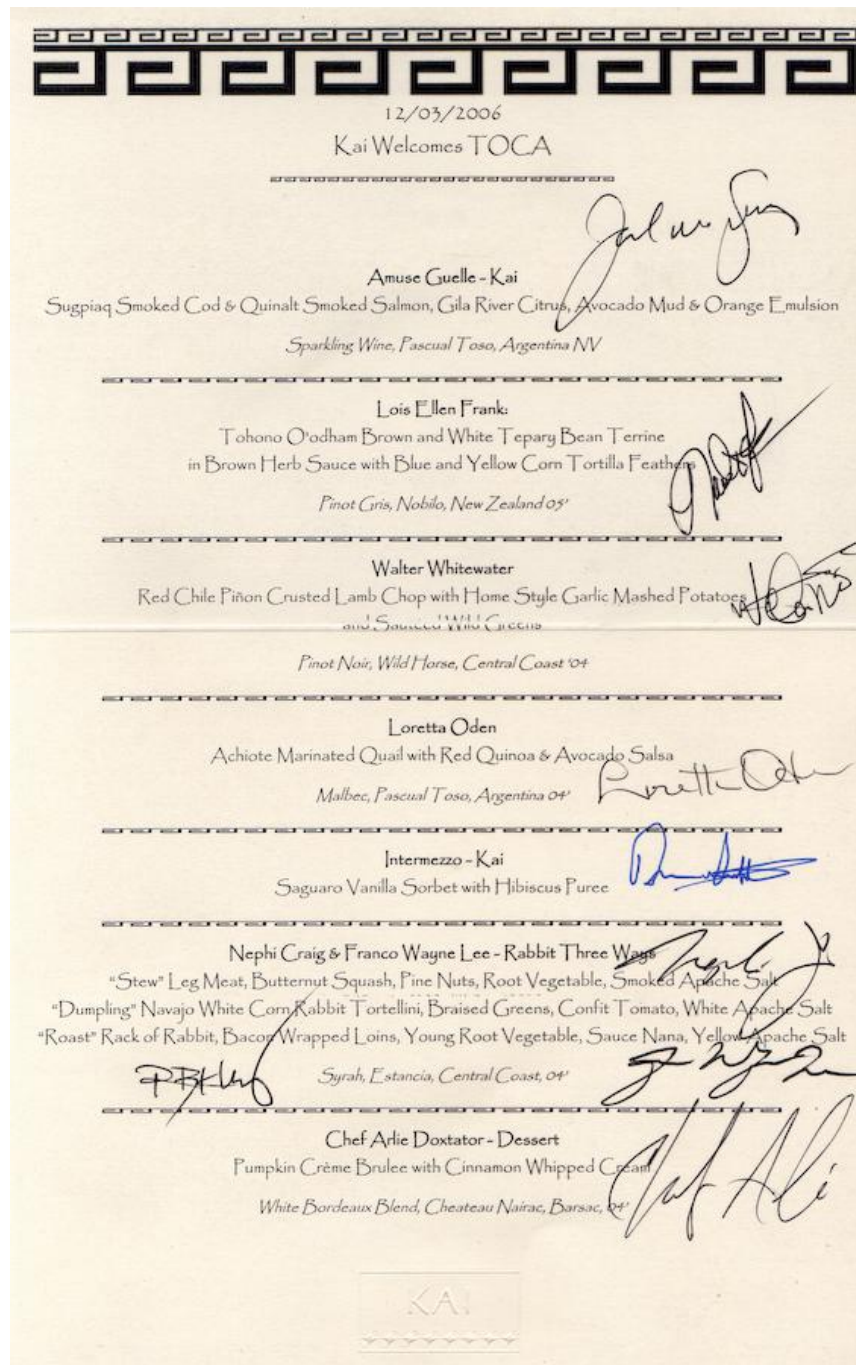


Figure 12.2 2006 menu for TOCA fundraising dinner at Kai Restaurant.

As morning turned into afternoon, Chef Strong suggested we all take a break and go down to the staff cafeteria to get something to eat. I hadn't been down to the staff area before and was curious to see it. Chef Strong brought several of the chefs downstairs. The Sheraton has a large staff base with many kinds of employees. We ordered something to eat, sat briefly, and met employees from other sections of the resort. The staff area was clean, modest in appearance, but a nice place where staff could go on their breaks and during their lunch hour. Signs were posted in the cafeteria about the Gila River Indian Community, what specific words meant in their language, and the mission of the resort. Chef Strong sat with us briefly and explained that because the resort is Indian owned and operated, the Gila River community wanted to educate the staff on pertinent cultural issues. This, Chef Strong stressed, was to ensure that all employees were good representatives and ambassadors of the Gila River community to the outside world. The staff is key to how things would be executed and represented outside their community, Chef Strong said, and the Gila River Indian Community was fully aware of this. The management wanted to ensure that all employees knew some of words in the Pima language, that they had been to visit the Gila River community, and that they understood the goal and mission of the resort. We had something to eat and then headed back upstairs to the Kai kitchen. It was time to orchestrate the dinner service, and the energy was upbeat in the kitchen.

Chef Strong started the dinner with an amuse-gueule of "Sugpiag Smoked Cod and Quinault Smoked Salmon, Gila River Citrus, Avocado Mud and Orange Emulsion."⁷⁸ Chef Strong was very calm in the kitchen. During the dinner service, he commented,

Cooking to me is soothing or calming. It's definitely calming. I have to admit that the position that I am in [there's] a lot to do, and a lot going on, and I have a lot of duties . . . that I have to get done, and . . . any other chef would do the same. When I get into the kitchen, I am just cooking, and it's just about the food at that point, whatever it is. If there is a PR [public relations] thing in the morning, or a demo the next day, and as a chef you know as well, . . . [there are] all these things going on the back of your head. I've got to order this and order that, or my staff [has to do] this and that; there are a lot of things that go on . . . [all at] once, and you can use this dinner as an example. I have to make sure all of your stuff is here and figure out the time each chef is coming. She's coming in at six, he is coming in at four, he is coming in at one, and oh, he's now a little bit late, what is that

going to do to the overall timing? . . . And then all that all goes away when I'm just cooking or sautéing or just plating up food, and it's almost like a vacation.

I generally work six days a week, and that keeps me ahead of the schedule and keeps me on par. And coming in six days a week is not as stressful because I can do stocks, get some big prep done, and it keeps it easier to do any paperwork that I have to and check emails and clean them and things like that; I have a lot to do.

Chef Strong said that having guest chefs in his kitchen was rejuvenating for him and reinvigorated his culinary creativity. This dinner was a well-needed break in his daily routine, and it gave him the opportunity to see other chefs create—something he didn't have a chance to do much in his position as chef de cuisine.

He ran a quiet kitchen. He even commented to me about the sounds. "I hear the exhaust system first and foremost, it is always a little loud at first." He stopped for a moment and listened to the sounds around him. Then he continued,

It's like "shhhhhhh . . . shhhhhhh," like the water spraying. I would say that that sounds good to me, that the other sounds are our guys, they are not really talking too much. They have a lot to focus on to keep up with their station. So really it's just chop, chop, chop. And that is just the knife work for dinner.

Chef Strong's dish was plated in advance and chilled in the walk-in refrigerator on sheet trays on a speed rack.⁷⁹



Photo 12.18 Amuse gueule presented by Chef Strong from Kai Restaurant, ready to be served.



Photo 12.19 “Sugpiag Smoked Cod and Quinault Smoked Salmon, Gila River Citrus, Avocado Mud and Orange Emulsion,” presented by Chef Strong.

The second course was the “Tohono O’odham Brown and White Tepary Bean Terrine in a Brown Herb Sauce with Red and Yellow Corn Tortilla Feathers,” which I prepared. I had come in the night before to prepare the cooked beans, using cornmeal to bind them together, along with the spices, and then let them set overnight in the walk-in. The terrine had set perfectly. At the bottom was a white tepary bean layer, and at the top, a brown tepary bean layer. Each guest was served a slice of the dual-colored bean terrine with a brown herbed sauce and tortillas hand-cut into the shape of feathers. The tortillas, one yellow and one red, were fried into chips just before service and then placed on the sliced bean terrine, standing up and overlapping each other.

Cooking with this caliber of chefs is always a little nerve-racking, and I was a bit anxious about my dish coming out properly, remaining hot, and being able to plate it without the terrine slices breaking apart. Terrines are always a challenge. After they set, you have to remove them from the terrine pans and then slice them. I was using bread loaf pans from the pastry department. First I had lined the loaf pans with plastic wrap and then poured the first bean mixture into each pan. Once the first color had cooled I added the second bean color layer. We took the terrines out and began to slice them and place them onto plates. The original plan was to put the plated terrines into the oven right

before service, but when I assessed the amount of space I had for the large shallow bowls I would be serving my dish in, there wasn't enough space to heat all of them at once. Chef Strong and I came up with an alternative plan to keep the terrines warm and then add the other components right before service. The plates with the terrine slices were placed in a warming box (a metal box with a heat source and racks for trays) until my course was ready. We would then sauce each plate, place the tortilla feathers in the terrines, and add the herb garnish.



Photo 12.20 Chefs Jack Strong, Michael O'Dowd, Walter Whitewater, and the author work with staff at Kai to plate the bean terrine.



Photo 12.21 “Tohono O’odham Brown and White Tepary Bean Terrine in Brown Herb Sauce with Red and Yellow Tortilla Feathers.”

All the chefs formed a hot service line; the head chef for each course assigned tasks to other chefs, made a sample plate, and then the chefs executed the dish together. Executive Chef O’Dowd was working with us this year. This was the first time any of us had met him. My dish, the first course, went out smoothly and without any major concerns. Chef Whitewater was on deck, making sure his plates were hot and all of his ingredients were ready. As soon as the first course went out, we only had a couple of minutes to clean the hot line area, regroup, and then begin plating the next course. With large dinners, by the time you finish plating one course and the last guest gets his or her plate, the first person who was served is done, so the servers are clearing their plates and

getting ready to take out the next course. It all moves constantly throughout the evening, and very quickly.

Chef Whitewater began plating his course. He was very particular about how he wanted his plate to look and illustrated how to do each step by making a sample plate. He assigned me to check the plates before the servers took them, wiping the edges and making sure there were no fingerprints on the edges, while he and the other chefs focused on plating. His dish was a “Red Chile Piñon Crusted Lamb Chop with Home Style Garlic Mashed Potatoes and Sautéed Wild Greens.” He had cooked the whole racks of lamb and had one of the chefs slice them right as the plates went out. They were cooked perfectly; not too rare and not overcooked. They were pink in the center. Some chefs like their lamb chops really rare, but I am not one of those chefs. Each plate had one lamb chop placed on top of the home-style mashed potatoes. Next to the potatoes was a small portion of sautéed greens. Chef Whitewater’s plate was clean, simple, and elegant. It was one of the nicest designed plates of the evening.

Chef Whitewater used a large, flat, white plate with a rim. He squeezed some of his home-style mashed potatoes from a pastry bag onto the plate, and then painted dots of two different sauces in the front. The lamb chops were placed on top of the potatoes and garnished with a piece of rosemary tied with two strips of cornhusks. As soon as the final lamb plates went out, we cleaned the hot line area to get ready for Chef Oden’s course.

Chef Oden was behind the hot line, getting her course ready. She stepped up to the hot line plating area. She had made an “Achiote Marinated Quail with Red Quinoa and Avocado Salsa.”⁸⁰ This dish requires several steps and took some orchestration. Chef Oden used a pastry brush to paint a line of the achiote sauce onto each plate. This took some time, because only one person could do it at a time. Next the avocado salsa was placed down. She designed her plate so the avocado salsa was adjacent to the painted achiote line. Next the quinoa was placed next to the avocado salsa, some cooked cholla buds place around the quinoa and avocado salsa and then the quail was then placed on top of the quinoa. Chef Oden was using red quinoa for this dish. Red quinoa, like white quinoa, is a seed from an indigenous species of goosefoot (*Chenopodium*), a grain-like crop grown for its edible seeds. As a chenopod, it is related to species such as beets,

spinach, and tumbleweeds. It is an indigenous crop of the Inca and very high in protein. Chef Oden was using a red quinoa, although quinoa seeds can be white, purple, red, orange, or black. I had neither seen nor tasted red quinoa, so it was a learning experience for me to see her prepare the quinoa and to be able to taste it after the plates had gone out to the guests.



Photo 12.22 Chef Whitewater places home-style garlic mashed potatoes onto a plate for the meat course.



Photo 12.23 Chef Lee assists Chef Whitewater with his meat course by adding the dots of sauce on the plate.



Photo 12.24 Chef Doxtator (left) works with Chef Whitewater to plate his lamb course while Chef Strong (right) cleans the plates before the lamb chop is placed onto them.



Photo 12.25 Chef Oden explains to Chef Whitewater how she wants the achiote paint applied to her plates.



Photo 12.26 Chef Whitewater applies the achiote paint to each plate, while Chef Craig assists in the background.



Photo 12.27 Chef O'Dowd places the quail on each plate.



Photo 12.28 Quail plates ready to be served.



Photo 12.29 “Achiote Marinated Quail with Red Quinoa and Avocado Salsa.”

Executive Chef Michael O’Dowd was doing the intermezzo this year. An intermezzo on a tasting menu is designed to clean the palette. His was entitled “Saguaro Vanilla Sorbet with Hibiscus Purée” and featured local, hand-gathered saguaro syrup, which Kai purchased from TOCA. It also had a local hibiscus purée product, which the chef made into a sauce that was placed on top of the sorbet. The sorbet had been prepared in advance, scooped out with an ice cream size scoop into a ball about the size of a key lime, and placed into sorbet dishes that had been chilled in the walk-in freezer. Chef O’Dowd wanted to offer the guests a palette cleanser between the quail and rabbit courses.

Chef O’Dowd is very sensitive to sound. He stated that sound in the kitchen was associated with time and space. “I hear muted voices. You know, voices that are sort of muted. Because it’s something like fly fishing to me.” He continued,

O.K., so when I get up at five o’clock in the morning and the sun is just about to come up, and all that you hear around you is like being in the middle of the Apache White Mountains or Patichia Lake. The sound is in slow motion, and then it is like it is in black and white. So, in the kitchen it is the same thing, it is the voices that are muted with a certain focus. There is a focus there in the kitchen, and then as each and every one of them [the chefs] gets closer, and the closer we get to this sort of a nirvana, the louder the voices become. You know this because it is becoming a slow color.

That was why he wanted to work this year with other guest chefs. He was fascinated to see how each chef worked, what their internal process was, and the final outcome of their dish. Sound, smells, and visuals were all part of the process that was different for chef. This is how chefs learned, he explained. Chefs learned through a sensory process. This learning was different than for any other profession, he said, and that is why being a chef was unique. He was observing and conducting his own fieldwork in the kitchen that night when he said to me, “Very much like what you are doing for your dissertation.”

All the chefs were aware of my fieldwork and the fact that they were not only cooking with me as a chef at these dinner events but also being documented by me as an anthropologist. Chef Craig said to me the night of the dinner at Kai,

I think this collection of work that you have put together right now is very, very important. I am looking forward to seeing its production and completion. I think it is important for whoever is reading this to know that it is a representation of who we are as people. . . . We are sharing these intimate details of the foundation of our people, and it’s because we do believe that it is right and it is something to do. So I guess it is just going to be a really good body of work, and I know it is years of research that have been going into it. So I think it is important to hear and important to see the work you are doing, because cooking for me has changed; cooking, I guess the meaning of cuisine, has changed throughout time—different stages of my culinary development mean different things.

He stopped for a moment and then told me I was the first person he had ever known to document Native American cuisine, and to document contemporary chefs in commercial kitchens. This was important to him and something he wanted to promote through NACA, the organization he started.

The last entrée of the evening was “Rabbit Three Ways.” Chefs Nephi Craig and Franco Wayne Lee had prepared a stew made from leg meat, butternut squash, pine nuts, root vegetables, and smoked Apache salt, and a dumpling made from Navajo white corn rabbit tortellini, braised greens, confit tomato, and white Apache salt. The third component was a roast rack of rabbit, bacon-wrapped loins, young root vegetables, sauce Nana, and yellow Apache salt. This was the most intricate and complicated dish of the evening.

The racks of rabbit were marinated in olive oil and herbs overnight and would be seared just before service. The chefs made their tortellini by hand and from scratch. They had prepared and rolled it out the evening before. Their stew was made from the leg meat; it had been cooking slowly all day. The tortellini was cooking in boiling water. The racks of rabbit were seared first in a hot pan on the stovetop and then placed on a sheet pan to finish cooking in the oven. Finishing them off in the oven kept them moist and gave the chefs the ability to control the cooking process more efficiently, without overcooking.

Chef Craig and Chef Lee lined up their plates on the hot line. They assigned all of the other chefs a specific plating task. It was tense. Their course had a lot of components and was complicated to plate. It took time—time that seemed to be moving both “as quickly as possible” and, simultaneously, slowly and tediously. Chef Craig said that with each step in making this dish and with each component that he placed onto the plates, he remembered something about his home. He was in the Kai Restaurant kitchen, but he was filled with the memories of what rabbit meant to him and the sacredness of the place the rabbits came from. According to Keith Basso (1996a), native concepts and beliefs find external purchase on specific features of local topography; the entire landscape seems to acquire a crisp new dimension that moves it more surely into view. In native discourse, the local landscape falls, neatly and repeatedly into places (Basso 1996a). Both Chef Craig and Chef Whitewater describe their way of preparing and plating their food as *hozho*, an untranslatable term which can only be approximated in English by combining words such as “beauty,” “balance,” and “harmony” (Zolbrod 1984).

The final course for the evening was prepared by Chef Arlie Doxtator, who had flown in from Wisconsin with his wife. The dessert was “Pumpkin Crème Brûlée with Cinnamon Whipped Cream.” Chef Doxtator had come in the night before, prepared his dessert, placed the individual servings into champagne glasses, and kept them in the walk-in so they would be ready to go the following day. This made dessert service easy and gave him an opportunity to work with and assist the other chefs—something that he felt was important.



Photo 12.30 Intermezzo presented by Kai, “Saguaro Vanilla Sorbet with Hibiscus Purée,” is served between the quail and rabbit courses.



Photo 12.31 Chef Strong serving the Kai intermezzo course.



Photo 12.32 Chefs Doxtator, Oden, and O'Dowd assist Chef Craig with his rabbit dish.



Photo 12.33 Chefs Lee, Strong, and Craig plating the rabbit dish.

During the day of the event, Chef Doxtator talked about what cooking means to him.

“It is everything. It is life. To me, cooking is life. To me, to be in the kitchen is living, everything, all my senses are at peace. I mean, from the stainless steel of the kitchen to the humming of a convection oven, the sound of a slicer, the sound of a dish[washing] machine, the sound of the hoods humming, the feel of the stainless steel, you know, the feel of the heat from the stove as you are cooking—it’s where I want to be, and it’s where I have had my best experiences. It is where I am most comfortable, and when I am not in a kitchen for long periods of time, I am lost.”

Working with the other Native chefs was an honor and a privilege for him, he stated. He liked interacting with this community of chefs—other Native American chefs with whom he could share his ideological views and perspectives. There are not that many professional Native American chefs, he said, only a handful at this point in time. To be able to cook with the best of the best, he told me, was important, and an important part of helping him define who he is.

I hear the food being taken care of and fabricated and cooked. I even hear the food being plated. You know, when you have spent twenty years in a kitchen, you notice everything. . . . My senses come alive; . . . there are times when you will be in part of the kitchen and you can smell everything.

All of the senses were components in each chef’s “foodscape.” It was how they knew what and how to cook. It was how their bodies interpreted information.

Chef Oden and I were the only females in the kitchen that night. But there was a community of chefs in the kitchen, regardless of gender, and several chefs commented on that fact. Chef Craig stated,

These chefs that are at this dinner, probably over half of them have been doing this for over a few decades, and there is a group of us that were there that have just started. So there is a community that has kind of evolved on its own. In the beginning, I didn’t know about any of these Native American chefs, but I was searching them out, and now, you know, it’s neat to see the chefs whose cookbooks I was reading back when I was in culinary school. I get to cook with them today, and these people that have come before us have laid down this information and did a lot of good things for Native American food and cuisines. So there is definitely a community practicing Native American cuisine out there.

Chef Craig was happy to be a part of that community. He continued, “I feel like I have finally found a place where I belong and people that are like me and have the same views and opinions of indigenous food culture. I think that this community is helping to define what Native cuisine is.” He said a lot of chefs had inspired him, but that the Native chefs were particularly important role models for him because some of them had accomplished things that he still wanted to do and he looked to them for inspiration.



Photo 12.34 “Pumpkin Crème Brûlée with Cinnamon Whipped Cream.”

The Senses and Cooking

In *Coming Home to Eat: The Pleasure and Politics of Local Foods* (2002), Gary Nabhan states, “There are moments in this life that I recall not as visual snapshots but as tastes and fragrances. They make sense to me, to who I am, in ways that I suppose are profoundly rooted. . . . They are truly re-membered, that is, those moments seem as deeply etched into the matter of my body now as anything can be” (Nabhan 2002:17). Bodily way of knowing, then, of sensing foods and the experience they trigger within the

body, is not only a physiological response, but linked to place as well as to the memory of place.

For this dinner, several of the chefs wore symbolic elements. Chef Craig tied an eagle feather to his longest lock of hair. It was visible on the front of his chef's jacket and was a symbolic element to remind him of who he was, he stated. Chef Oden wore her medicine bag on the front of her chef's jacket, and she was the only chef to wear a colored jacket in the kitchen that night. Her jacket was a pale turquoise, which represented turquoise to her, a symbol of the Southwest chefs cooking Native American cuisine. All of the other chefs wore the traditional white chef's jacket and black pants.



Photo 12.35 Kai Restaurant kitchen staff with (from left) Chefs Nephi Craig, Franco Wayne Lee, Loretta Barrett Oden, Jack Strong, the author, Walter Whitewater, and Arlie Doxtator (in back).

Anthony Synnott states in *The Body Social: Symbolism, Self and Society* that The body is not only a biological phenomenon, it is also a social creation of immense complexity. It is not so much a “given” as a social category, with different meanings, composed, imposed and developed in each age by each

individual. The attributes, functions, and specific organs of the body and the senses are likewise highly controversial (1993: inside cover).

In addition, Basso (1996a) states that relationships to places are lived most often in the company of other people, and it is on these communal occasions—when places are sensed *together*—that the native view of the physical world becomes accessible to strangers. Thus represented and enacted—daily, monthly, seasonally, annually—places and their meaning are continually woven into the fabric of social life, anchoring it to features of the landscape and blanketing it with layers of significance that few can fail to appreciate (Basso 1996a). To determine what these acts of expression involve, why they are performed, how they are accomplished, what they are intended to achieve, is to disclose their importance by relating them to larger ideas about the world and its inhabitants. These are all the individual vignettes that make up the story of each chef.

Bodily ways of knowing—sensing and sensorial modalities can also be construed as knowing and are a bodily way of action (Feld 1996). Ways of embodying cultural categories, or giving the body certain cultural values or aspects of *being* that the particular cultural community has historically deemed precious and dear, are a part of cultural knowing (Geurts 2002:10). In the case of these chefs, their bodily ways of knowing came from their individual experiences of cooking. The reenactment for each chef of the preparation of the food dish they created for this dinner illustrates knowing as a bodily way of action, because they used their bodies to make the food. The physical part of cooking was to perform the action of making the food. Physiologically, spiritually, and socially, each chef's way of being was tied together with their identity and inseparable in their minds. Chef Whitewater stated, "It's hard for me to explain in English. Diné ways of knowing are different. We need to physically do it so that we feel it inside; it takes us back to where we first had that experience." Here he is stating that the body knows and remembers place by experiencing it. And that each time it is reenacted it is also re-experienced.

If the body is central to sensory experience, if it actively situates the subject, then it is also possible for it to be experientially out-of-focus. Guerts argues that *sensing*, which she describes as "bodily ways of gathering information," is profoundly involved

with a society's epistemology, the development of its cultural identity, and its forms of being-in-the-world (2002:3). Sensing, then, cannot be understood or defined in any universal way, but involves cultural variation (Geurts 2002:10). Establishing this complex and multiple presence of the body clearly implicates another interactive figure-and-background, which is that of the senses.

Chef Lee commented that smell is one of the most important senses to him. "What I do is I use my smell and walk up to it [referring to the dish he was preparing]. I've got it, just by the smell. I know what the dish needs and what other ingredients I need to add just by the smell." He said that the kitchen exhaust fans, while necessary in commercial kitchen and a health code requirement, "sucked up all the smells," and that at times he would turn off the fans so he could really smell the food. Then he would turn them back on and continue to cook. Smells are memory-based for Chef Lee, and certain smells trigger certain memories.

Cognitive developments associated with sight and hearing have been classified as being superior to those of the other senses, in that perception studies have labeled them as the "cognitive" or "intellectual" senses—in short, the "higher" senses (Ackerman 1990, Korsmeyer 1999). The sensory information necessary for the development of human knowledge, or the rational faculties, is provided by seeing and hearing. Vision and hearing, however, are less involved with the experience of pleasure and pain and thus appear comparatively detached from experiences that are phenomenologically subjective—that are felt as sensations in the body (Korsmeyer 1999). These remaining senses—touch, smell, and taste—are less amenable to textual representation and analysis, making them more difficult to document. These "lower" senses warrant serious academic investigation, according to Korsmeyer. By incorporating the senses into the presentation of information, the viewer is forced to address issues that might not otherwise be addressed. Stoller (1997) states that embodiment is not primarily textual and that the human body is not principally a text; rather, it is consumed by a world filled with smells, textures, sights, sounds, and tastes, all of which spark cultural memories. Smells, one of the strongest catalysts of memory, cannot be silenced. One can virtually taste the various

points of a scholar's journey from city to country. One can taste the seasons (Stoller 1997).

Eric Rolls, in *Celebration of the Senses* (1998), describes a serious flood on the family's farm. The smell of the flood had seeped into the walls of the house. For years afterwards, humid weather brought the smell out again. "Our noses relived the flood," he said (Rolls 1998). Memory here is triggered by smell and has become imbedded in the lives of the individuals and the experience of the flood.

Smell was extremely important to all of the chefs. Smells triggered a different memory for each chef, taking each chef to a different place. All of chefs used their sense of smell before their sense of taste. I watched them that night first smell, then taste their dishes before service. Smell was how they used their body to determine what their dish needed in terms of flavors, ingredients, and culinary components.

Often called the social sense, taste is one of the most important senses used by chefs. Humans rarely choose to dine in solitude, and food has a powerful social component. "Not only do humans rarely choose to dine in solitude, it is almost considered socially unacceptable. Those who dine alone in public are often pitied, or considered 'losers.' Lone diners themselves often feel uncomfortable" (Schwerin n.d.). Foods qualify as symbolic and meaningful. Some of the most important social rituals are expressive of this. Food brings families together, weddings usually end with a feast, friends reunite at celebratory dinners, and food can even tie together a business deal. The act of eating, and the social significance of this act, varies greatly within the spectrum of cultural groups.

Taste and eating are so closely tied to the necessities of existence that taste is frequently catalogued as one of the "lower" functions, operating on a primitive, near-instinctual level (Korsmeyer 1999). In the Western intellectual tradition, taste preferences have been understood and misunderstood in a multitude of ways. The most common assumption, that taste presents very little in the way of interesting philosophical or anthropological problems, has prevented it from being a potentially fascinating subject of inquiry. The sense, its objects and its activities—taste, food, drink, and eating and drinking—are too complex to be considered from any single perspective, making

ethnographic inquiry into this area difficult. In the case of the chefs preparing Native American cuisine, cultural categories of taste become multilayered, with fuzzy and nonlinear boundaries, and very complex. In terms of attempting to clearly articulate ideologies of varying degrees of taste, especially in non-textual societies, these layers can only be extrapolated with great attention and a certain amount of sensitivity.

For the chefs described here, taste is a complex layer in which perceptual framing of material reality has its own cultural basis. The problem here is how history returns to nature. These embodied forms, then, according to Geurts (2002), constitute vital aspects of people's sense of identity. Their ideas and experiences of well-being and their conceptions of the person and the self are embedded within that notion of identity (Geurts 2002:10). Although these contrasting perceptions are difficult to describe, one layer being the scientific analysis of taste and the other layer being the cultural analysis of taste, they are both relevant for this investigation of the chefs and of Native American cuisine.

Chapter 13

Conclusion: The Practical and Public Anthropological Applications of This Research

This ethnography derives from my longstanding involvement with the Native American cuisine movement. That involvement created a unique opportunity and the rare permission to observe and document these Native chefs, Native cooks, and non-Native chefs in their own culinary environments—at ceremonies, in private homes, on farms, in personal and professional kitchens, and at culinary events. Because I have known the chefs and cooks for an extensive period of time, I have been able to describe their culinary work in great detail and to provide insight into sensory dimensions of their culinary performance. In addition to observations in kitchens, restaurants, and homes, this ethnography presents information from many formal or informal interviews conducted between 2004 and 2010 with each of the participants in a variety of circumstances. Digital voice recordings of these interviews and events, and their transcription, are augmented by extensive use of photography as a research and presentation method to document the process of food preparation and its presentation.

The work I present here comes not only from an ethnographer, but also from a professional chef and photographer. Throughout the research, I observed, interviewed, and participated with the chefs and cooks, giving this ethnography a unique perspective and a distinctive professional and personal positionality. My demonstration of competence in the kitchen gave me the rare opportunity to work alongside these chefs and cooks during the documentation process. As they performed and created dishes for culinary events, I performed and created dishes alongside them. This made it possible to penetrate their worlds much deeper than if I had not had those professional culinary skills. As a culinary colleague, the research dialogue opened in unique ways, mixing verbal, visual, tactile, and olfactory sensations.

In addition to the culinary aspect of the work, I also documented traditional methods of planting, growing, and harvesting of both domesticated and wild foods as well as the preparation of food. Again, photography was a critical method for creating a record of agricultural techniques. As the first ethnography of its kind, it is crucial to

document not just the words but the images of people who are among the key players in the Native American food movement.

The significance of this ethnography comes from the key themes I introduce and develop: (1) the importance of understanding cultural and social difference in and through food; (2) the historical relationship of the European system of cuisine and chefs to the work of Native chefs and cooks; (3) the attempts, past and present, to integrate traditional Native American regional foods and foods of the Americas into a cuisine; (4) the importance of understanding food as a continuum from precontact to the present in the definition of Native American cuisine; (5) the importance of understanding the foodscape and foodways of Native American cooks and chefs through the study of the senses and performance—that is, of understanding Native cooking as a sensuous performance.

In the presentation of these themes, I address and investigate hybridity and interaction, showing how “tradition” is a fluid, moving, and emerging concept. I also explore how the information and research findings from this body of work can be used for practical outreach through public anthropology in Native and non-Native communities. The research from this investigation thus offers practical applications, particularly with regard to pressing concerns of Native health and well-being, and makes a multidisciplinary contribution to understanding the place of Native American cuisine in “American cuisine” as a whole.

To return to my critical themes, the first theme focuses on understanding cultural and social difference in the history of Native American chefs, Native American cooks, and multicultural chefs cooking Native American cuisine. Here we see the importance of the cultural landscape of food through several issues connecting chefs and cooks with food producers in the Southwest. My work here investigates multiple key actors. First I take up Native women cooks who are cooking for their families, their extended families, and for ceremonial events. I also investigate Native chefs who have a significant amount of culinary experience cooking in a professional setting, as well as younger Native chefs just beginning their careers. And I also document non-Native chefs who identify with and prepare Native American cuisine in their own restaurants or in high-end resorts or other

establishments. I analyze the roles that all of these actors play in shaping the Native American cuisine movement through many layers of activity, including sourcing, preparing, and presenting Native American foods.

As part of this contextualization I incorporate the issue of gender and look at how this affects what the chefs and cooks do in their culinary settings. Women have always been the primary cooks in the Native American communities in which I worked, whereas chefs in professional kitchens have primarily been men. Crossing this gender line has neither been frequent nor easy. But this is important to the story of Chef Walter Whitewater (Diné) from the community of Pinon, Arizona, on the Navajo Reservation. Walter Whitewater became one of the first Native American men to cook professionally in a commercial kitchen. As he stated on multiple occasions, “Men don’t cook in my tradition.” He declared that when he first started cooking in commercial Southwest kitchens in Santa Fe, “I never really saw any other Native American men in the kitchen. Now I am starting to see some younger Native chefs that are young men, and they are cooking professionally in commercial kitchens.” Chef Whitewater crossed a culinary gender line and now represents to his community, and the Native American community as a whole, that men have a practical position both as cooks, for example in the Peyote Ceremony and the Sun Dance Ceremony, as well as chefs, for example at the Picuris governor’s home for his Feast Day celebration meal. What is exceptional here is that he has integrated both his ceremonial culinary obligations with his professional culinary obligations.

Chef Sandy Garcia (Ohkay Owingeh and Santa Clara) graduated from one of the best culinary schools in the United States and has had a successful career in one of the finest Native American-owned resorts in the Southwest, and now is developing his cooking career in California. He is using Native American food suppliers to foster new relationships and create menus appropriate for his new clientele, and pushing them to try Native-sourced ingredients to which they might not have been previously exposed.

Chef Jack Strong has fused his traditional Northwest identity and foods with innovative foods from his professional culinary experiences outside the Northwest, as well as with locally raised food. And Chef Arlie Doxtator is also a role model and

outstanding example from the Oneida region. He uses Native American foods and locally grown ingredients in his style of Native American cuisine. Each of these chefs has demonstrated, albeit in different ways, how being a male Native American chef is a viable career option that has validity in the Native American community. These men have paved the way by crossing the culinary gender line, thus creating a pathway for the younger Native American male chefs whose stories are also told in this ethnography: Nephi Craig, Franco Wayne Lee, Franklin George, and Orson Patterson.

These young chefs practice a balancing act whereby holding onto their traditional Native values and ideologies while working in a fast-paced professional kitchen environment shapes their experiences of being Native American chefs. Chefs Whitewater, Garcia, Strong, and Doxtator have thus enabled and inspired young Native chefs to fuse past and contemporary Native traditions with the culinary present to create an innovative new Native American cuisine. This new cuisine is also very much a part of the Native American foods movement. Even the elder grandmothers in Chef Whitewater's community realize the importance of the role he plays as one of the first Native men to cross this culinary gender line. Now they have a professional chef to help them to execute and cook at ceremonial events. Not only does Chef Whitewater cook professionally off of the reservation in a commercial kitchen, he is just as busy preparing food in a ceremonial or community-based situation whenever he is home on the reservation. The elders and other community members have begun to use his culinary talents at each ceremonial event for which he helps prepare foods. The "Grandmas" of his community stated that now they have their own chef.

Gender issues affecting women are different from those for Native men. Loretta Barrett Oden is one of the first Native American women chefs and, as far as I know, the eldest professional woman chef in the Native American foods movement. She is also one of the few Native American owners of a Native American cuisine restaurant. Chef Oden has not only crossed the culinary gender line into that of a commercial kitchen, where men dominate, but also combines ingredients from South America with ingredients from the Plains, Southwest, Northwest Coast, and other Native American regions into her version of Native American cuisine. Gary Nabhan (2011) labels Chef Oden's practice

“Pan-Indian cuisine,” but I’ve also seen it termed “multi-Native American cuisine” (Garcia 2006; Craig 2006; Frank 2011) and, more commonly, “Foods of the Americas” (Divina and Divina 2004; Craig 2006; Oden 2006).

Chef Oden uses foods that are representational of the Americas and does not focus on European foods as part of her culinary expression. This seems to be a pattern among many of the Native American chefs and a part of how some of the chefs position themselves in the culinary arena. The multiple influences in her life, not just from her family or her tribe, have influenced what she cooks and helped her to define what this new Native American cuisine is to her. Chef Oden is not only multicultural in her approach to food but also understands what indigenous foods of the Americas are and uses them interchangeably in her cuisine. What is interesting to note here is a framework wherein substituting or integrating these foods don’t disrupt Native identity. Instead, the chefs focus on foods from all of the Americas (North, Central, and South) as part of their Native American cuisine lens. Yet many of them note that they are not appropriating or misrepresenting themselves or the foods that they serve because all of the foods have existed in the Americas for millennia. All the same, they acknowledge that they are using European techniques to execute some of the foods they serve and the dishes they create. As Chef Oden stated in one of her interviews, the trade routes were so sophisticated and well-developed that many foods from the south traveled north and many foods from the north traveled south (e.g., the evidence of chocolate in Chaco Canyon more than a thousand years ago; Crown and Hurst 2009).

Chef Oden is improvising and using these pan-Indian ingredients or “Foods of the Americas” as innovative components in her style of Native American cuisine, which combines many contemporary culinary techniques with ancestral foods from all over the Americas. The hybridity and the interaction of the Native foods she and other chefs use in the dishes they create in unique ways are a part of their Native form of individual and collective expression. Chef Oden acknowledges that because she mixes hand-gathered wild rice from Minnesota tribal nations with quinoa from a small South American coop in La Paz, Bolivia, her food may not be regional, but it is still Native American. To define Native American cuisine, she states, “Again we have to go back to place. . . . It is what

our people survived on. It is what kept the communities together; if not for the food of place wherever they were, wherever they settled, then they would not exist as tribes or communities today.” Although she may not be doing regional Native American cuisine, she said that the seeds, grains, etc., were probably traded up and down the Americas on trade routes that were much more extensive than people are aware of today. Chef Oden summarizes, “People have this stereotypical view of Native American cuisine because of what the people have had and then were forced to survive on, which due to poverty, displacement, and relocation was commodity foods.” So for her, using the ingredients of the foods of the Americas is part of what Native American cuisine was from the past and most definitely an expressive form of what the cuisine is today. This was also a common theme and pattern among both the Native American chefs and the non-Native chefs preparing Native American cuisine.

Most well-known for her style of painting plates, Chef Oden uses a pastry brush with a variety of culinary ingredients, such as red chile sauces mixed with achiote paste, as well as edible 23kt gold flakes on some of her desserts, and a variety of colored spice powders which she makes into edible paints. Although Chef Oden has been outnumbered by men in commercial kitchens her entire career, she has remained an important and creative force in the Native American cuisine movement, and one of the few women preparing Native American cuisine in a professional kitchen.

Bertina Cadman, the only other woman chef in this ethnography, has also crossed a culinary gender line, not only as a women chef in a commercial kitchen but also as an educator in a classic cooking environment. By leaving the Classic Cooking Academy to pursue a career on the reservation near her home and make a more regional impact with her culinary skills, Chef Cadman makes yet another powerful statement. Chef Cadman made a conscious decision to return to the reservation and cook for a Native American audience in a variety of venues as opposed to a non-Native audience in a classic cooking environment or high-end resort. She is deeply committed to the community where she grew up. She has also shown the traditional Navajo community members that women too can be professional cooks and chefs. Here tradition becomes fluid. Chef Cadman is open-minded and expansive in terms of what she wants to do with her culinary skills but is also

very clearly focused locally. She is a role model in the sense that young Native women all over the Southwest can see that the professional culinary field is a viable career option for Native American women as well.

These examples illustrate how men and women chefs are crossing culinary gender lines in both directions. Native men now cook in ceremonial settings, and Native women now cook in professional and commercial applications. Native cooks are crossing gender lines as well, as in the case of Norma Naranjo and her husband, Hutch. Norma and Hutch both farm, traditionally a Pueblo man's work, and both cook, traditionally a Pueblo woman's work. They have formed a partnership and collaborative enterprise, The Feasting Place, which teaches about their traditional farming and foods and supports them economically. They too are role models and a good example of the context in which these innovative cooks are making a difference in their own communities and in Native country as a whole.

The Native women cooks and community members from Seba Dalkai and Pinon, whose stories are documented in chapter 7, add yet another component to this "big picture" of the Native American foods movement. These cooks honor many traditional Native elements and are the working basis for revitalizing these foods in ceremonial situations and claiming them in terms of Native identity. In the context of the traditional ceremonies we saw the most pan-Indian foods, yet the explanation is mostly economic and not based on cultural sensory issues. The primacy of ceremony was most important, and the food became secondary to the overall ceremony and traditionality of the event.

More than focusing on the nutritional content of food, the Native cooks collaboratively initiate and create memories of family through ceremonies. Just as many of them weave Navajo rugs, in cooking they weave together issues of family, ceremony, ancestral foods, and tradition as elements of embodied knowing, fusing ingredients of the past with ingredients of the present. Ceremonial events are understood through sensory acts via experiential knowledge. Feasting in these instances is the glue that bonds the family. As Native cooks construct memories for this new generation, what it means to be "Native" to young cooks like Tedra Begay and Calandra Willie, relates to but is not identical to the proximal memories of the elders of their communities. The commodity

food memories of the past are being replaced by new Native American cuisine memories. The Native cooks are filtering out and adding what they want those memories to be for the younger generation. Whereas foods were imposed on communities several generations ago, foods now are a choice that Native cooks are making. Nabhan (2011) speaks of immigrants having disrupted eating patterns owing to stress relating to contemporary border issues, but the embodied knowing of Native identity may be one of the keys to discarding unhealthy eating habits and fostering the revitalization of Native foodways for health and wellness.

Some Native community members have begun to work with local agricultural movements. The Slow Food Northern Arizona local convivium (or chapter) of Slow Food USA is helping reintroduce techniques of food and farming as well as wild food gathering to community members not only for health and wellness reasons but to keep these Native foodways vital and alive in the younger generation. They are helping community members develop an economic viability for these products so they will continue into the future.

Many innovative Native cooks, chefs, and community activists are putting their own take on the political ecology of the global movement of food and regionalizing it to fit in within their Native agenda. Traditional Ecological Knowledge has become an essential ingredient in dialogues about traditional foods, cultural practices, and eco-cultural ways of life. Examples include the Native American delegation that went to Torino, Italy, in 2006, 2008, and 2010 as part of the Slow Food movement; the Slow Food Nation Native American booth organized by Melissa Nelson and the Cultural Conservancy in coordination with Native American chefs in 2009 in the Bay Area; and Justin Willie from the North Leupp Family Farm in Leupp, Arizona, educating community members on pertinent agricultural techniques and issues.

Willie translated “Slow Food” into Navajo to mean slowing down and chewing food to get the flavor from it, which is not the definition that Carlo Petrini (2006, 2007) used when he created the Slow Food movement. Willie used his own filter and lens to describe what “slow” meant to his people, and he did it in his own language. He explained to community members that Navajo people were eating too fast and that they

needed to chew more slowly. He told them that to appreciate the flavor of the food by chewing it slowly was also one of the key ways to understand the significance of the taste of native plants and crops using their own traditional culinary arts. He explained how it related back to flavor and how community members could use their senses to reclaim this part of their own traditional foods and identity.

The study of food and the study of the senses are deeply connected in this ethnography with two components that illuminate each other. Food is investigated biologically as sustenance (chef and cooks are using food to feed family members, patrons, and guests), but food is also investigated via the senses. By investigating how the study of food and the study of the senses work together in the formation of individual identity, identity in connection to place and bodily memory, and expression of that identity, the senses (visual, sound, smell, touch, and taste) play a significant role in defining a Native culinary cultural expression and deep embodied ways of knowing. Each chef and cook uses food differently. Not only is food a form of expression, it is also a means for interpreting who they are. The senses are literally used by the chefs to make sense of who they are and to help define why they perform, express, and create their dishes the way they do. The use of visual representations in their food combined with auditory, olfactory, tactile, and gustatory sensibilities become the means of both performance and expression.

For instance, Chef Whitewater uses the number four when he aesthetically creates his plates. Many of his dishes have four dots of a colored sauce or are laid out in four lines woven together with four components. Four is symbolic of the four directions, the four colors of corn, the four races of man, and the four sacred plants in Diné tradition. And Chef Oden paints on her plates with a brush the same way a warrior from the past might paint his horse before going on a hunt. The senses are linked to each chef's and cook's performance, and each chef's and cook's performance is linked to the senses. What they do and how they do it is deeply performative. Not only do the senses help to define who they are individually as chefs and cooks, they also help to define collectively, as a part of a larger culinary community, what this new Native American cuisine is. This

is where the two worlds intersect. The Native world fuses with the world of high cuisine, and the world of high cuisine fuses with the Native world.

This interaction focuses on Native cooks on the reservation with professionally trained and self-taught chefs in contemporary professional kitchens. These cooks and chefs are cooking Native American foodways and Native American cuisine in very different ways. The reaching out, this new emerging cuisine, is not a contradiction at all.

Investigating the dimension of the chefs' performance with my unique positionality (ethnographer, chef, photographer) is one of the fundamentals in this body of work. Culinary anthropology is so new that the anthropology department at the University of New Mexico doesn't list it as one of their subfields. Yet interest in this area is developing, and it may be a subfield in the future.

While some might interpret hybridity as the opposite of tradition, I observed that these chefs and cooks are fusing the interaction of foodscapes of the past with foodscapes of the present. What is taking place in the discourse and practice of Native American cuisine are some of the basic principles that help define this innovative use of tradition by combining ancestral ingredients in unique ways in a contemporary fashion. In essence, these chefs, cooks, and key players in the Native American cuisine movement are improvising by using contemporary elements in conjunction with tradition. Here tradition is fluid, moving, and deeply expressive. And tradition then becomes one of the ingredients in Native American cuisine as a whole, without losing the very clear focus of place-based foods, local foods, and regional, culturally embodied knowing. Thus, again there is no contradiction, and hybridity becomes a part of the open-minded and expansiveness the chefs and cooks are expressing in this Native food and in these Native food practices.

These Native American advocates are making decisions as to how they want to interpret the information that is now available to them, and they are uniquely applying it to their own culturally important issues and ideological relevance. Native chefs, cooks, and food activists are filtering out what they don't need and incorporating what they do into their own Native agenda. As community members revitalize ancestral foods, food traditions, recipes, wild harvesting, and agricultural practices into the components of their

lives, they revitalize everything associated with them, including the language, stories, songs, and ceremonies.

Many of the cooks and chefs had cultural memories from their childhood of the commodity food period. These memories, from their own pasts, are being replaced by new memories. Children in some Native communities today are creating memories of traditional planting techniques, agricultural practices, wild food harvesting, and food preparation and dishes of the present, but based on a more ancestral past.

Some of these cooks and chefs are replacing family memories of the commodity food period with new memories of traditional ingredients and cultural components important to them. They are jumping over a generation, so to speak, from those who have memories of growing up with commodity foods to those who don't. Based on the research on foods from the precontact and first contact periods, and understanding that the period of government-issued food introduced unhealthy foods into the Native diet, the new Native American cuisine as part of the Native foods movement is taking steps to change the future.

The contemporary Native world is interacting with food in multiple ways. Native food producers are now providing food in both small and large quantities. On one end of the spectrum, Eloy and Frances Trujillo of San Juan Pueblo harvest wild Indian tea (*Thelesperma gracile*) and sell it at the Santa Fe Farmers' Market; on the other end is the Inter-Tribal Bison Cooperative, composed of tribes from nineteen states, which supplies bison meat to major clients such as the Mitsitam Café in Washington, D.C. Native food procurers have also started their own small businesses. They harvest and sell food products to chefs as well as the general public.

Native Harvest, the White Earth Land Recovery Project, sells multiple food products, but here I focus on hand-harvested wild rice. The wild rice is harvested by Native people, on Native lands. Winona LaDuke, Anishinaabekwe (Ojibwe) and the founding director of WELRP, is working on legislation in Minnesota that would require an environmental impact statement be issued and reviewed before any genetically engineered wild rice can be introduced into that state. She is focused on changing policy

to address the Native agenda regarding one of the Ojibwe's most sacred foods (LaDuke 1999, 2006).

Non-Native food purveyors are also beginning to sell Native American food products. The Tohono O'odham Community Action group not only sells their traditional food products directly, they also sell their products to several other distributors. Native American entrepreneurs, tribal enterprises, and role models are leading the way to make Native foods accessible to tribal members and the general public.

Locality is addressed by examining how reservation and local environments intersect with global and urban environments in relation to food and Native foodsheds. Place-based foods from other regions are now available.

Some of the ways communities are implementing these goals include land restoration and access for community members, saving of heirloom seed and native plant propagation, traditional farming practices and wild food gathering, cooking and nutrition classes on traditional foods, as well as revitalizing the cultural, spiritual, and physical connections between the environment and community for health and wellness.

Indigenous communities can use traditional food knowledge to solve contemporary health problems. Young, educated Native American activists, such as students at IAIA, are beginning to foster a dialogue about how to decolonize Native diets and their bodies by recovering their ancestors' gardens and foodways. Here they are using a traditional foods framework to share experiences and build collaborative networks. Thus, this new younger generation will have woven cultural memories of embodied knowing of locally based foods native to their own communities and knowledge of how to plant, harvest, prepare, and cook them into the fabric of who they are.

A good example of a food being revitalized is the Navajo churro sheep. Diné bé liná (The Navajo Lifeway) holds a "Sheep Is Life" celebration every June to celebrate the sheep, with exhibits, a sheep camp, fireside discussions, youth programs, sheep and wool shows, and food activities and events to restore the Navajo sheep culture. Both Native cooks and chefs participate. The cooks and chefs play a huge role in this event, and in the Native foods movement as a whole, as they revitalize culinary techniques from the past

and create new versions of traditional foods now known to be unhealthy. This innovative approach to food traditions and culture is new, emerging, dynamic, and according to these cooks and chefs, vital to their communities and to their future.

Many of the chefs in this ethnography show how indigenous identity is linked to place and how deeply connected to place many of them are. Their dishes are inspired by place. For example, Chef Whitewater uses Navajo churro sheep, some of which he raises himself, and Chef Craig uses rabbit, which he remembers hunting as a child, whereas Chef Strong prefers foods from his Northwest Coast homelands.

By giving the same attention to detail to the Native cooks and the Native chefs, I have intentionally chosen to make the voices of each participant equal. Regardless of education and status, the voice of each Native cook and chef is of equal importance and has been given equal attention. Each is a “celebrity” in his or her own domain. The knowledge required to cook and serve in ceremonial situations is just as important as that of chefs serving innovative Native American high cuisine in the finest resorts and spas in the West. Each has a voice, and each voice is vital to the Native American foods movement.

Chef Whitewater is a good example of the fusing of these two worlds. He has fused the roles of being a Navajo man deeply immersed in his traditional and cultural values with that of being a chef. He helps at ceremonies, he raises and butchers sheep, and he cooks at elaborate, high-end culinary events. He has reached a celebrity status and is renowned in both of these worlds.

The power, privilege, and fame some of these chefs are obtaining are being used in a variety of ways. Chef John Sharpe, for example, is purchasing food for his restaurant from Native-owned and -operated enterprises as well as from local, organic, sustainable resources on a regular basis. This fosters the development of Native food products on and off reservations and makes a political and ecological statement about sourcing ingredients from sustainable businesses, whether local, regional, extra-regional, or extending to foods of the Americas.

Chefs and cooks are becoming educators in the food arena. Their objectives include reclaiming ancestral foods; revitalizing the associated traditional cooking

techniques and recipes; educating children, college students, and adults of the importance and role of traditional foods in health and wellness; helping to develop well-rounded culinary professionals in both the theory and technique of cuisine; developing specialized workshops tailored toward individual and group needs that include health, nutrition, teambuilding, youth development, and technical skill enhancement as well as creating an overall awareness of traditional and contemporary Native American culinary customs and technologies that include concepts of sustainable agriculture, health, and nutrition.

This is being executed through indigenous partnerships (Nelson 2008) based on short- and long-term reciprocal alliances of indigenous groups; Native American tribes, communities, and organizations; other ethnic or Euro-American groups, organizations, institutions and individuals, where the indigenous agenda(s) takes priority. New partnerships are emerging every day. The essential ingredients for these partnerships are addressing what each community wants and needs followed by acknowledging that each partner is rooted in a specific ethnic background, cultural identity, and useful position. Positions of power and privilege are treated with respect and acknowledged. Indigenous cultural traditions and diverse worldviews, including cultural privacy and intellectual property rights, are held in esteem. Dedicating time to commit to a collaborative process to build trust, make a difference, and focus on both short- and long-term goals is a prerequisite. Mutual respect and shared decision-making processes are important in working toward Native goals with the realization that all partners are learners as well as teachers. Equitable sharing of both tangible and intangible benefits by all participants is also involved.

The information in this ethnography will be made available to a wide array of people. Public anthropology is the major outlet for this work, through education, outreach, and community empowerment, where knowledge can become action. This work has already had practical applications that were initiated during the final phases of this project.

The Physicians' Committee for Responsible Medicine (PCRM) sponsored an eight-week series of cooking classes on plant-based ancestral foods in the Native diet. The classes were held at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center in Albuquerque and the

Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe. They focused on how to prepare traditional, place-based foods, including grains, legumes, fruits, and vegetables, for Native Americans with diabetes to implement healthier eating habits. The majority of the foods were based on Southwest foods from the precontact and first contact periods. Popular foods from feasts and ceremonial events were recreated into innovative Native American dishes that are low in fat, high in fiber, and much more healthy.

One of the diabetes educators from Jemez Pueblo, Anita Toya, took the eight-week series of cooking classes and has now contracted with Native chefs, including chef Whitewater and myself, to teach some of the recipes to community members at her pueblo, as well as to work with the Jemez Pueblo diabetes program to develop curricula on how to cook and prepare foods representative of and traditional to the Jemez community (Toya 2011). Other participants from the trial classes asked the chefs to work with Native educators to implement a class on how to harvest and prepare the wild foods from the area around Jemez Pueblo. Community members are requesting to re-learn traditional knowledge that has lapsed or been forgotten. Thus this research has also been instrumental in fostering a dialogue with community leaders on TEK.

In addition to the practical applications in the Southwest, the Guam Humanities Council has learned about the work that some of the Native chefs are doing and is sponsoring several Native chefs to travel to Guam as part of their NEH project, “I Tano yan I Tasi, Land and Sea: Ecological Literacy on the US Pacific Island of Guam” (Kihleng 2010). They will work with indigenous chefs from that region, local schools, and traditional farmers to see how they can apply these principles to the traditional foods of Guam. The potential for global cultural areas to follow this example is substantial. Other Native communities can then begin to reclaim their own ancestral foods for the same reasons communities are reclaiming and revitalizing their ancestral foods here.

This work also unlocks the contribution that Native American cuisine has made to the foods we eat today. It claims a place in “American cuisine” history and creates a place in American cuisine as a whole for the historic contributions of Native American cuisine and Native American foodways.

The contributions of this new ethnography are numerous. It forms a basis for future work in both academic and grassroots genres. The ethnography is relevant to other disciplines, such as history, sociology, ethnobotany, and public health. Other Native scholars and community leaders will be able to use this ethnography in their own research. It has the potential to encourage future Native chefs, cooks, educators, and scholars to publish works on a multitude of topics ranging from the movement to bring back traditional foods to the revitalization of culinary and agricultural techniques associated with ancestral foods in the Southwest. It also opens the door to engage academics in dialogue with Native communities, who can exchange ideas about food sovereignty initiatives and traditional food revitalization projects with tribal communities outside their region.

Using a traditional foods framework to foster dialogue, share experiences, build collaborative networks, and develop policy recommendations, the Society for Applied Anthropology (SfAA) at its annual meeting in March 2011 in Seattle held a Traditional Foods Summit with academics, tribal community leaders, and activists to address issues of cultural perpetuation. Indigenous groups working to maintain their cultural identity, through education, language, protection of cultural and natural resources, and access to traditional foods, were able to exchange ideas about traditional foods projects, investigate successful models, and offer advice to each other on environmental, financial, and social challenges relating to these issues.

The issue of traditional foods arose as an integral ingredient to the continued health and well-being. Tribes, natural and cultural resource managing agencies, and applied social scientists can better understand the needs and rights of tribal communities once a dialogue is initiated. The applications of this work are still emerging and there are many possibilities for the future.

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Appendix A

Documentary Sources for Audio Field Recordings and Photographs of
Native and non-Native chefs, Native cooks, a medical doctor, and Native farmers

Native Cooks: Digitally Recorded

1. Begay, Marie, digitally recorded on July 17th, 2006 at 12:40pm
2. Willie, Alice, digitally recorded on April 14th, 2007 at 2:33pm
3. Willie, Caroline, digitally recorded on April 14th, 2007 at 1:30pm
4. Divina, Marlene, digitally recorded on July 14th, 2007 at 4:47pm
5. Naranjo, Norma, digitally recorded on March 29th, 2008 at 1:44pm

Native Cooks: Tape Recorded

1. Begay, Susie Whitewater, undated tape recording in Pinon, Arizona
2. Begay, Linda, undated tape recording in Pinon, Arizona
3. Begaye, Louise Tohlakai, undated tape recording in Pinon, Arizona
4. Whitewater, Walter, undated tape recording in Pinon, Arizona

Native Chefs: Digitally Recorded

1. Cadman, Bertina, recorded on March 23rd, 2009 at 8:03am
2. Craig, Nephi, recorded on December 4th, 2006 at 10:34am
3. Divina, Fernando, recorded on July 15th, 2007 at 8:39am
4. Doxtator, Arlie, recorded on December 3rd, 2006 at 11:41pm
5. Garcia, Sandy, recorded on June 28th, 2006 at 2:30pm
6. George, Franklin, recorded on August 24th, 2007 at 11:18am
7. Hetzler, Richard, recorded on October 21st, 2007 at 6:40pm
8. Lee, Franco Wayne, recorded on December 4th, 2006 at 9:51am
9. Miller, Mark Charles, recorded on March 25th, 2006 at 9:39am
10. O'Dowd, Michael, recorded on December 3rd, 2006 at 1:05pm
11. Oden, Loretta Barrett, recorded on December 4th, 2006 at 1:56pm
12. Patterson, Orson, recorded on August 24th, 2007 at 12:17pm
13. Roetzer, Michelle, recorded on July 22nd, 2008 at 2:59pm
14. Sharpe, John, recorded on April 13th, 2007 at 9:30am
15. Strong, Jack, recorded on December 3rd, 2006 at 11:41am

16. Whitewater, Walter, recorded on June 28th, 2006 at 3:08pm

Medial Doctor: Digitally Recorded

1. Barnard, Neal, M.D., digitally recorded on April 14th, 2010 at 3:35pm

Native Farmers: Tape Recorded

1. Ballon, Emigdio, undated tape recordings in Cochabamba, Bolivia, and Santa Fe, New Mexico

2. Ramirez, Alberto, undated tape recording in Kalpulli Koakalko, Coacalco, Mexico

3. Tlakaheel, undated tape recording in Kalpulli Koakalko, Coacalco, Mexico

All recordings are in the possession of the author.

Photographs:

Photographs of events discussed in the document were taken during the fieldwork from 2004 to 2010. Additional photographs were taken between 1987 and 2011. Digital and film copies of all photographs are in the author's possession.

Endnotes

¹ In the mid 1990s, vintner Robert Mondavi; his wife, Margrit Biever Mondavi; and other wine community leaders began to explore the idea of establishing an institute to educate, promote, and celebrate American excellence and achievements in the culinary, winemaking, and visual arts arenas. Partnered with the University of California at Davis, the Cornell University School of Restaurant and Hotel Administration, and the American Institute of Wine and Food, COPIA: The American Center for Wine, Food, and the Arts was opened in 2001 through a generous gift of both funds and land from the Mondavis. Located in the heart of the Napa Valley, in Napa, California, COPIA, from the Latin word for “abundance,” had a cultural museum and education center and also featured three and one half acres of organically grown gardens that were harvested for use in COPIA’s on-site restaurant, Julia’s Kitchen (named for Julia Child), as well as for classes taught in their cooking center. Unfortunately, COPIA closed in November 2008 (<http://www.northbaybusinessjournal.com/17290/napa-retains-high-hopes-for-new-copia/>).

The Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture also focuses on food and agriculture. The center is built on land that, for nearly a century, was part of the Rockefeller family estate in the Pocantico Hills, New York. In 2001, David Rockefeller gave the stone buildings and 80 acres of surrounding land to the nonprofit Stone Barns Restoration Corporation. Rockefeller wanted to ensure that the wishes of his late wife, Peggy, to preserve, restore, and return the stone barns to their original use, could be realized. With a founding gift from David Rockefeller, the Stone Barns Restoration Corporation oversaw the restoration and development of the property and the creation of the Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture, which opened to the public in 2004. Today it is a farm, kitchen, classroom, laboratory, and campus. Its mission is to celebrate, teach, and advance community-based food production, from farm to classroom to table. It teaches the importance of where food comes from, and how choosing what to eat affects individual health as well as the health of the land, the community, and the environment. It also educates about what food systems we support with the foods we choose to buy. The Stone Barns Center has a farm where nutritious produce is grown and harvested in all four seasons. The center raises its own chickens, turkeys, rabbits, sheep, pigs, and bees that are suited to the local ecosystem. The Blue Hill restaurant at the Stone Barns Center embodies the farm-to-table connection by serving seasonal ingredients locally grown or raised.

The University of Gastronomic Sciences in Pollenzo, Italy, was founded with Slow Food in conjunction with the regional authorities of Emilia-Romagna and Piedmont. The Slow Food movement was founded by Carlo Petrini, in Italy in 1986 after the first McDonalds was to be opened in an Italian village. Mr. Petrini argues that the industrialization of food is standardizing taste and leading to the annihilation of thousands of food varieties and flavors. To counter the effects of a fast-food culture, and fast-food nations such as the United States (Schlosser 2001), and to keep alternative food choices alive, he focused the movement on ecogastronomy and a concern with sustainability. With the preservation of taste, he sought to support and protect small growers and artisanal producers, and the physical environment, and to promote

biodiversity (Cooper 2000; Pollan 2001, 2006, 2008; Shiva 2000a, 2000b). In the United States, the University of New Hampshire offers a dual major in ecogastronomy integrating UNM strengths in sustainable agriculture, hospitality managements, and nutrition (<http://www.unh.edu/ecogastronomy/>).

² The Slow Food organization today is represented in more than one hundred countries and has a worldwide membership of more than 80,000. Slow Food coordinated the Terra Madre Conference, a biennial event which first took place in 2004 in Turin, Italy. In its first year, more than 5,000 delegates from 150 different countries attended. In 2006, the number of delegates exceeded 6,500. I traveled to Italy as one of more than 40 Native American delegates from the United States for the 2006 conference. We represented various programs from across the United States, Canada, and South America that are working with tribal communities. Terra Madre was designed to be a network of food communities, each committed to produce quality food in a responsible, sustainable way. An international forum, Terra Madre includes individuals who seek to grow, catch, create, distribute, and promote food in ways that respect the environment, defend human dignity, and protect the health of consumers.

³ I have been asked by a Pueblo elder to capitalize the word Pueblo when referring to the place, as in Picuris Pueblo, and the people as in Pueblo people. I have chosen to do this throughout the manuscript.

⁴ I use the term *non-Native* throughout to indicate any chef who is not from a Native American community or does not identify with a Native community. It does not mean that each chef labeled “Native” is a registered member of a Native American tribe and possesses a CIB (Certificate of Indian Blood) certificate. All of the chefs not from a Native American community, regardless of their ethnic background, are considered non-Native. In my interviews and fieldwork I encountered chefs who were intercultural and American born as well as intercultural and born outside the U.S. One chef who is very active in Native American cuisine, Chef John Sharpe, was born in England, educated in other European countries, and is now preparing Native American cuisine at the La Posada restaurant in Winslow, Arizona.

⁵ The term I use here is based on the research I have conducted with each chef, but I came to understand how to use “bodily interpretation” from Kathryn Linn Geurts’s *Culture and the Senses: Bodily Ways of Knowing in an African Community*. This term will be explored further in the ethnographic chapters on the cooks and chefs.

⁶ Veritable Vegetable was started in the early 1970s as part of a movement that sought to bring low-cost, nutritious food to neighborhood coops and community storefronts. Called simply The People’s Food System, and extending throughout the greater San Francisco Bay Area, the idea was to provide a large-scale collective alternative to the corporate food system. Fresh, healthy food free of chemical poisons, with guaranteed farmworker protections, and profits spread among the rural and urban communities were primary objectives. Veritable Vegetable established relationships with growers and began distributing produce beyond the original Food System (now in California, New Mexico, Arizona, and Colorado) to promote sustainable agriculture and extend knowledge about fresh food and agricultural issues, working toward an extended network worldwide (<http://www.veritablevegetable.com/>).

⁷ Sysco is the global leader in selling, marketing, and distributing food products to restaurants, healthcare and educational facilities, hotels and resorts, and other customers who prepare meals outside a home environment. Its family of products also includes equipment and supplies for the food service and hospitality industries. Sysco's sustainability path has led the company to seek ways to implement and influence the entire foodservice lifecycle. (See <http://www.sysco.com/about-sysco/green-products-and-practices.html> and <http://www.sysco.com/investor/OnlineSustainabilityReport/index.html>)

⁸ Sodexo is a leader in integrated food and facilities services across the U.S., Canada, and Mexico, serving hospitals, senior services, colleges and universities, school districts, independent schools, corporate environments, the federal government, military bases, and others, serving 10 million consumers in 6,000 locations every day (<http://www.sodexousa.com/usen/aboutus/aboutus.asp>).

⁹ TEK is a particular form of knowledge of the diversity and interactions among plants and animals, landforms, watercourses, and other traits of the biophysical environment in a given place. Sometimes called Traditional Ecological Knowledge, it is typically associated with aboriginal and Native peoples. These traditional and local knowledge systems are dynamic expressions of perceiving and understanding the world that can make and historically have made a valuable contribution to science and technology. Scholars recognize the need to preserve, protect, research, and promote this cultural heritage and empirical knowledge (see <http://www.silverbuffalo.org/NativeAmericanAcademy.html>, <http://www.silverbuffalo.org/NSA-ScienceOfLearning.html>, and Carter 1993: <http://archive.idrc.ca/books/reports/v211/trad.html>). Millennia-old Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) are tribally and geographically specific (Nelson 2008:12). TEK lies within these knowledge systems or teaching bundles of Indigenous Knowledge, and it holds the memories, stories, understandings, and practices for how the follow the natural laws of a particular place.

¹⁰ I am from the Kiowa Nation on my mother's side, with family ties to Oklahoma, although we were not raised on the reservation, and neither my siblings nor myself are registered members of the Kiowa Nation. My mother has a little European lineage, primarily English from her mother's side. My grandfather on my mother's side was Native American. I am Sephardic on my father's mother's side, as far back as we can trace; my father's mother's family originated in Spain. They were forced to leave during the inquisition and migrated via Turkey to Palestine. My grandmother's family immigrated through Ellis Island when she was a child and settled in Brooklyn, New York, in a Jewish neighborhood where my father and his brother were raised. My father's father's family was of German Jewish descent.

¹¹ Shortly after my cookbook, *Foods of the Southwest Indian Nations*, was released it was nominated for the James Beard Award in the Americana category. The James Beard Foundation awards, deemed "the Oscars of the food world" by *Time* magazine, are the country's most coveted honor for chefs, food and beverage professionals, journalists and authors working on food, and restaurant architects and designers. The cookbook received the award in 2003, the first time that the James Beard Foundation has acknowledged

Native American foods as being contributory to American cuisine. Since then, other Indigenous cookbooks and authors have won awards as well.

¹² Although I have heard this ceremony called a Tipi Meeting, Peyote Ceremony participants told me that the Roadman elders prefer “NAC Peyote Ceremony” or “NAC Peyote Tipi Ceremony,” which is how I have chosen to refer to this ceremony and feast in this manuscript.

¹³ With ailments such as obesity and Type 2 diabetes rampant, especially in Native communities, there is a return to dietary research and a look to the foods consumed in ancestral diets to help solve these contemporary health problems (Barnard 2007; Milburn 2004).

¹⁴ In spit roasting, often called rotisserie, meat is skewered on a spit: a long solid rod is used to hold food while it is being cooked over a fire in a fireplace, campfire, or oven. It is a common method for cooking entire animals, such as pigs, turkeys, goats, sheep, or, historically, even entire cattle, as well as large joints of meat. Today it is commonly used for chickens. The rotation cooks the meat evenly in its own juices and allows basting as part of the cooking process. Meats can be cooked horizontally, as for a pig or a chicken, or vertically, as in cooking gyros from Greece, shawarma from the Middle East and the Arab world, and tacos al pastor from Mexico. It was a preferred method for cooking meat in large households or for large groups of people. The word “rotisserie” is derived from French; it is believed to have first appeared in Paris shops around AD 1450.

¹⁵ By the time of the Spanish conquest, it had become a staple for Native peoples in South America, southern Mesoamerica, and the West Indies, and continued to be cultivated by the colonial Portuguese and Spanish. Today it is the third largest source of carbohydrates for humans in the world, with the majority of its production in Africa.

¹⁶ There is no Old World language word for chile peppers before AD 1492. “Chilli” comes from Nahuatl and is roughly translated as “a pungent fruit that ripens.” Most of the earliest references are spelled “chilli.” The word was changed in Spanish to *chili* and then to *chile*. On the islands of the Caribbean, the plant has always been referred to as *aji*, and most chiles in the Caribbean and parts of South America are still referred to as *aji chiles*. Chiles became “peppers” when Columbus, having failed to find a route to the spice lands of the Far East, called the unfamiliar spice a “pepper” (*pimiento*) after the black pepper (*Piper nigrum*) that he was seeking. Today it is still called a chile pepper, although black pepper is derived from an unrelated plant. Throughout this study I use the spelling *chile*, as this is currently the most common spelling in New Mexico.

¹⁷ Although botanically speaking the fruit of *Capsicum* spp. are berries, based on their culinary use they are considered to be vegetables or spices. Depending on the flavor intensity and the consistency of their flesh, they can be used in a variety of ways, for example as a vegetable like a sweet bell pepper or New Mexico green chile, or a spice, like the habañero chile or cayenne pepper, which are used for flavoring.

¹⁸ John Gambini and I have known each other for many years. My father still lives in Remsenburg, Long Island, where I grew up with his side of the family. John Gambini and his brother opened a restaurant many years ago, featuring the simple foods of his family from the town in Sicily where he grew up. Since they opened the restaurant, John has become the executive chef and made the foods from his childhood famous in that area

and sought after by many New Yorkers who spend their summers in the Hamptons on eastern Long Island. His brother, Peter, returns every summer to help with the restaurant but prefers to spend his winters in Sicily. All of their children and relatives who live in the area work in the restaurant, and my father still eats there often, because it is his favorite Italian restaurant.

¹⁹ The northern bluefin tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*) is a species of tuna in the Scombridae family. It is highly prized as food and reaches up to 330 pounds. It has been very valuable as a commercial catch since the time of the ancient Greeks and Phoenicians. However, according to the Monterey Bay Aquarium, this fish is now endangered because of overfishing and is on the list of species to be avoided

(http://www.montereybayaquarium.org/cr/SeafoodWatch/web/sfw_regional.aspx).

²⁰ As explained in chapter 1, for the purpose of this research I use the term *traditional cuisine* with regard to Native American communities of the Southwest to mean foods served in this region from all three groups on the food continuum: precontact, first contact, and government-issue.

²¹ This corn is adapted for deep planting in the deserts of the Southwest and has an elongated embryonic organ (mescotyl) that enables it to sprout from depths of more than eighteen inches, where desert soil retains its moisture and sustains growth (Galinat 1992; Mangelsdorf and Reeves 1939). This will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

²² Cornmeal is a flour ground from dried corn. It is a common staple for indigenous populations throughout the Americas. It can be ground into a fine, medium, or coarse consistency and can be from white, yellow, blue, or red corn. In the United States cornmeal is also referred to as corn flour. In the United Kingdom, corn flour is used to denote cornstarch (Herbst 2001). Here it is used to mean a finely ground corn flour used in cooking.

²³ Culinary ash is made by burning wood from certain trees until only ash is left. The cooled ash is strained to remove any pieces that did not burn completely and is then stored in a sealed container. When mixed with other ingredients in cooking, it increases their nutritional value. Most Native communities make the ash from local bushes or trees. For instance, the Diné (Navajo) use juniper primarily, and the Hopi use green plants such as four-winged saltbush (also called *suvvi* or *chamisa*; *Atriplex canescens*). The green twigs, when burned, produce a highly alkaline ash with a high mineral content. When culinary ash is mixed with boiling water and cornmeal, the alkali in the ash reacts with the cornmeal and intensifies the color. After cooling, the corn mixture changes back to something closer to its original color.

²⁴ RAFT is a consortium of seven organizations: the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy, the Center for Sustainable Environments, the Chefs Collaborative, the Cultural Conservancy, Native Seeds/SEARCH, Seed Savers Exchange, and Slow Food USA. The original map used the term “Nation” next to the place-based food sources from the various regions, but since 2007 RAFT calls these place-based food regions Foodsheds, and not Nations (Nabhan 2010a, 2011; Nabhan, Rood, and Madison 2008).

²⁵ Bosque is the name for areas of gallery forest found along streams and rivers in the southwestern United States and is derived from the Spanish word for woodlands. The

Bosque is an oasis-like ribbon of vegetation that only exists along watercourses. The most notable is a 200-mile-long ecosystem in the middle Rio Grande in New Mexico, extending from Santa Fe past Socorro and including the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bosque>).

²⁶ These are yellow, black, red, green, and are named after the dominant chile in the sauce, e.g., mole poblano. It is a dark and very complex sauce made of dried chiles, nuts, seeds, vegetables added for flavoring, spices, and chocolate. Unlike a light butter sauce or a hollandaise sauce, in Mexican cooking the sauce itself is the dish. It includes the vegetables, the flavorings, the nutrition, and the bulk. Chef Rick Bayless, a renowned American chef who specializes in traditional Mexican cuisine, suggests that a *mole* sauce is actually the stew itself.

²⁷ Schools such as the Le Cordon Bleu in France, and in the United States the Culinary Institute of America (CIA) in Hyde Park, New York, with branch campuses at Greystone, California, and San Antonio, Texas; the French Culinary Institute (FCI) and the Institute of Culinary Education, both in New York; the California Culinary Academy (CCA) in San Francisco; Le Cordon Bleu in Boston, Chicago, Minneapolis/St. Paul, and Scottsdale; and the Arizona Culinary Institute (ACI) and the Scottsdale Culinary Institute, also both in Scottsdale. The Texas Culinary Academy is the only Cordon Bleu-affiliated school in Texas. Johnson & Wales University became the first school in the United States to offer a Bachelors of Science degree in the Culinary Arts in 1993. L'Academie de Cuisine in the Washington, D.C. area is recognized as one of the finest culinary schools in the United States. These schools have set the standard for contemporary professional chefs and have the largest enrollment today.

²⁸ I am using this spelling of the word Pow Wow out of respect for the ceremonial aspect of this type of gathering.

²⁹ Most New Mexican Pueblos celebrate a Feast Day named for the village's patron saint. It is one of the biggest celebrations of the year. On their respective Feast Days the Pueblo villages are open to the public, and visitors can view traditional dances and songs. Feast days bring tribal members together to renew their culture, language, and religion. Native families prepare food for the many guests invited to their homes and participate in the community activities taking place. They serve a variety of stews, meats, salad, breads, and dessert—traditional as well as modern dishes. As requested by a Pueblo elder, I am capitalizing the term Feast Day and Pueblo Feast Day.

³⁰ Chicken scratch is dance music developed by the Tohono O'odham of the Tohono O'odham Indian Reservation, Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community, and Gila River Indian Community. It is usually played with a band consisting of alto saxophone, bass, guitar, drums, and accordion. The name comes from a description of a traditional Tohono O'odham dance that supposedly bears a resemblance to a chicken scratching.

³¹ At the time when men were formulating the culinary profession in France and throughout Europe, women were not permitted to apprentice in professional kitchens and were considered "home cooks" rather than professionals. In the south of France, however, *cuisine bonne femme* ("good wife" or good woman") refers to dishes that are prepared in a simple, family style, frequently served in the casserole dish, plate, or pan in which they were cooked. In French cuisine in general it refers to a style of cooking that is

fresh, honest, and simple, like food that is served at home, no matter who has actually done the cooking. Women's cooking was therefore identified with the home and not with a commercial or professional environment. In Escoffier's time, women who practiced this type of cooking in small, home-style restaurants or other locations were wonderful cooks and prepared food that was as full of taste as that prepared by their male counterparts in French restaurants and hotels to the north. The term *cuisine bonne femme* is still used today.

³² When I first knew I wanted to be a chef, shortly after graduating high school in Manhasset, Long Island, in 1977, I was told that I could be a pastry chef (working as a baker and/or with confection) or that I could work under a man in a commercial kitchen, but the likelihood of my ever owning a restaurant or becoming an executive chef was slim to none.

³³ Julia Child later studied privately with master chefs such as Max Bugnard. She became host of the television program *The French Chef*, which debuted in February 1963 and ran nationally for ten years, winning numerous awards. Though she was not the first television cook, Julia Child was the most widely seen. She wrote many books and was a familiar part of American food culture, and the subject of numerous references. In 1981 she founded the American Institute of Wine and Food in Napa, California, with vintners Robert Mondavi and Richard Graff. Mrs. Child compiled her autobiography, *My Life in France*, with her husband's grandnephew Alex Prud'homme, during the last eight months of her life. It was published in 2006, two years following her death. Released in 2009, the movie "Julia and Julie," starring Meryl Streep as Julia Child and partially based on Julia Child's memoir, chronicled the story of a woman who wrote a blog about cooking all 524 recipes in Julia Child's book, *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* (2001 [first edition, 1961]), as well as many components of Julia Child's life while she was living in France and then upon her return to the United States.

³⁴ After receiving her BA degree in French Cultural Studies in 1967 from the University of California, Berkeley, Alice Waters trained at the Montessori School in London, followed by a year of traveling in southern France. While in France she learned the *cuisine bonne femme* style of French cooking. She opened Chez Panisse in 1971, modeled after what she had seen and tasted in France. Alice Waters had no professional training as a chef in either Europe or the United States, because when she decided to open Chez Panisse no culinary institutions were training women for that level of professionalism. Mark Miller, the famed chef and "father" of the contemporary Southwest Cuisine movement, studied under Alice Waters at Chez Panisee in the early 1970s. He said, "Women just didn't exist in the culinary profession when Alice Waters opened Chez Panisse, wouldn't have been accepted into a culinary academy at the time even if they had wanted to." Regardless of her lack of culinary training, Ms. Waters was inducted into the Hall of Fame at the California Museum for History, Women, and the Arts by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and First Lady Maria Shriver for her contributions in the culinary field.

³⁵ Only a few Indian-owned and -operated casinos in the Southwest presently have Native American chefs and are serving Native American cuisine. As more Native Americans are trained as professional chefs, matching the skills of their European counterparts, and the

Native American food movement takes hold in the United States, it will be interesting to see what impact these components will have on the casinos and gaming operations in the Southwest and throughout the United States. Will more Native American chefs be serving Native American cuisine in these tribally owned casinos? There are no data at this point in time to draw any conclusions.

³⁶ In the late 1980s, when I first pitched an idea to New York publishers to do a cookbook on Native American cuisine, I was told that Native American people cooked but did not have a cuisine. The book, *Native American Cooking*, was published by Clarkson N. Potter in 1991 but went out of print after only a single printing.

³⁷ Radiocarbon dating uses the naturally occurring radioisotope carbon-14 to determine the age of carbon-bearing materials that are up to approximately 62,000 years old. Radiocarbon years are presented as dates “before present” or BP, with “present” being defined as AD 1950. These ages are usually calibrated to provide actual calendar dates. One of the most frequent uses of radiocarbon dating is to estimate the age of organic remains found in archaeological deposits. With the use of Accelerator Mass Spectrometry (AMS), the sensitivity of this method has been greatly increased because carbon-14 isotopes can be detected and counted directly, as opposed to detecting only those atoms that decay during the time allotted for an analysis.

³⁸ Chaco Canyon, the centerpiece of Chaco Culture National Historical Park, contains the densest concentration of Pueblo ruins in the American Southwest. Located between Albuquerque and Farmington in the northwestern part of the state, it is in a remote canyon cut by the Chaco Wash. The Chacoans quarried local sandstone and hauled timber from great distances to erect 15 major and countless smaller buildings. Chaco Canyon was a major cultural center between AD 900 and 1150, and even in ruins it represented the largest masonry building complex in what is now the United States until the nineteenth century. It is a sacred ancestral homeland for, among others, the Hopi and other Pueblo people, who maintain oral accounts of their migration from Chaco and their spiritual relationship with the landscape (Fagan 2005; Stuart 2009).

³⁹ Because *T. cacao* is the only Mesoamerican plant that contains theobromine as the primary methylxanthine, theobromine is used as a marker in organic residue studies of ceramics from Mesoamerica. These studies have revealed cacao residues in ceramics from sites in Belize, Guatemala, and Honduras (Crown and Hurst 2009).

⁴⁰ I trade foods that I grow, such as corn for flour and tomatoes that I have canned, with Zuni friends, and several of the Native chefs that I interviewed also trade food items, including salt, with neighbors or members of other communities.

⁴¹ The term “offering” refers to something that is placed near a plant or plants that are to be harvested. Typically, cornmeal, corn pollen, or tobacco was used by the tribes of the Southwest for offerings. A small amount is “offered” to the Creator and the plant along with an explanation of why it is to be harvested. These offerings vary by tribe, region, and community. The offering is placed, and sometimes covered, beside the first plant found so that the plant will know what it is being harvested for. Each tribe has certain ritual protocols for harvesting a plant or animal.

⁴² Omega-3 fatty acids are essential for human health. They can be found in fish, some plants, and nut oils. These fatty acids play a crucial role in brain function as well as

growth and development, and they may help lower the risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, and arthritis (University of Maryland Medical Center 2007).

Purslane is one of a number of wild plants that provides health benefits in addition to being a food source.

⁴³ Pemmican is a concentrated mixture of fat and protein that was traditionally used as a nutritious food. The word comes from the Cree *pimîhklâ*, derived from the *pimî*, meaning fat or grease. It was traditionally prepared from the lean meat of large game such as bison (buffalo), elk, and deer. The meat was cut into very thin slices and then dried over a fire or in the sun until it became hard and brittle. It was pounded into very small pieces (almost powderlike in consistency) and mixed with fat. Dried fruits such as chokecherries, Saskatoon berries, cranberries, and blueberries were pounded into powder and added to the meat/fat mixture. This mixture was then placed in rawhide pouches for storage. One of the modern producers of pemmican is an Oglala Lakota business in Kyle, South Dakota, that manufactures and distributes the Tanka Bar, based on traditional pemmican (*wasna*, in the Lakota language). It is made from a combination of buffalo meat and cranberries with an herbal-based preservative.

⁴⁴ Several years ago, I planted cuttings of both of these bushes near my house, which is about 13 miles from Santa Fe, New Mexico. The chokecherries, a suckering shrub, have quickly expanded to a much larger area than I had designated for them, well beyond a fifteen foot diameter. Both the wild currants and the chokecherries have sent shoots in all directions, and new plants have appeared a hundred feet away, probably as a result of birds spreading the seeds. Both species produce large amounts of berries each year, which I harvest and use either fresh or dried, and in some cases frozen, in traditional Native recipes.

⁴⁵ I have these wild bushes all over the land at my house in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and have always allowed them to grow wild and naturally spread. In the spring of 2010 we had a lot of rain in the beginning of the season and the bushes produced the most berries I have ever seen which were fully ripened by mid-July. I harvested some of them while writing this manuscript, and prepared them into a sauce although once completely ripe, birds, ground squirrels, pocket gophers and other small rodents competed with me to harvest them. One day there were plenty of them and the next day nearly one third were already gone.

⁴⁶ Here Deloria is framing the difference in mindset between American Indian and European ideologies. Considering the nature of the world from a spatial point of view is not a European approach to identity. Native identity involves time that proceeds in a nonlinear fashion, whereas European identity involves the assumption that time proceeds in a linear fashion, as does space and its connection to place. Native peoples have a different connection to place than descendants of Europeans. I use Deloria's work to help frame the Native groups of the Southwest and their connection to place.

⁴⁷ *Pow Wow* is derived from the Narragansett *pau wau* and refers to an event, usually in North America, in which people come together to dance, sing, socialize, and honor Native American culture. There is almost always a dance competition, often with prizes. A Pow Wow can last more than one day, depending on its location and size. Many Pow Wows are attended by families who camp or set up a teepee at the site. Often, many

family members dance in the various competitions. It is a common meeting place for young Native men and women. Food vendors are almost always included at the event.

⁴⁸ See note 26. Feast Days are named after the patron saints assigned to the mission churches at each village by the Spanish. It may take families several days to prepare the food they will serve and also to prepare for the activities that will take place on the day of the feast. Feast Days bring together tribal members to renew their culture, language, and native religion. All New Mexico Pueblos except Zuni hold a feast day every year.

⁴⁹ The American bison (*Bison bison*) is a North American species commonly known as the buffalo or American buffalo. The term “buffalo” is a misnomer because it is only distantly related to the Asian water buffalo and the African buffalo. Use of the name “buffalo” for the American bison dates back to 1635; the French fur trappers called these large game animals *boeufs* (ox or bullock). It wasn’t until 1774 that the term “bison” was first recorded, and Native American tribes now use both terms when referring to this animal.

⁵⁰ As part of their Dreaming New Mexico project, Bioneers (also known as the Collective Heritage Institute, a nonprofit organization in Santa Fe, New Mexico) uses the term *foodshed* to define foods from specific regions (also see Figure 3.1 and note 22). They have created a map illustrating foodsheds in New Mexico. A foodshed, inspired by the word “watershed,” is the area in which vegetables and fruits, nuts and oils, meat, and grains are produced and/or processed to feed its inhabitants (Bioneers 2010). These New Mexico foodsheds are broken down into the following agro-eco-regions: the Colorado Plateau, Southern Rockies, Transition Mountains, Central Plains, High Plains, and Arid Lowlands, which help to define what foods have existed in different areas of the state.

⁵¹ IAIA is a four-year accredited college in Santa Fe, New Mexico, that was congressionally chartered as the Institute of American Indian and Alaska Native Culture and Arts Development in 1986. Originally funded by the Bureau of Indian Affairs for high school students, it opened in October 1962 on the campus of the Indian School of Santa Fe, New Mexico. Under Superintendent Dr. George A. Boyce, the Institute embodied a bold and innovative approach to arts education, and it has since played a leadership role in contemporary Indian art education. Today the institute offers four-year degrees in studio arts, visual communication, creative writing, and museum studies. Attended by mostly Native American students, IAIA takes great pride in being a place where traditions are rediscovered and reaffirmed, and where American Indian and Alaska Native students can celebrate their art and cultural identity. Having graduated more than 3,800 students who represent 90% of the 562 federally recognized tribes in the United States, it has become internationally known. As a multi-tribal learning center, IAIA provides a bridge between a rich past and the dynamic, ever-evolving American Indian culture of the new millennium.

⁵² Eloy and Frances Trujillo from San Juan Pueblo, New Mexico, are the only vendors that sell the tea along with other medicinal plants at the Santa Fe farmers’ market and are the only couple I know of that sell the tea in the Santa Fe area. Caroline stated that she has seen people selling it at the Gallup flea market and in the parking lot of the supermarket up at the Hopi community of Second Mesa, but she didn’t have any information on who was selling it or how to contact them.

⁵³ John Lorenzo Hubbell purchased a trading post in 1878, ten years after the Navajos returned to their homeland from exile at Ft. Sumner. Hubbell and other traders supplied goods to the Navajo in exchange for rugs and jewelry and other produce, and later for cash earned in wage labor or received in government payments, such as social security. Hubbell built a trading empire, and family members continued to operate this trading post until it was sold to the National Park Service in 1965. The store is now operated by the Western National Parks Association.

⁵⁴ The people of Picuris Pueblo own Hotel Santa Fe, the only venture of its kind in the United States. In 1988, when local business people approached Picuris tribal leaders about a joint venture, Richard Mermejo, one of the tribal leaders at the time, was instrumental in developing an agreement that ensured a culturally appropriate step toward financial independence for his tribe. Along with his wife, he worked long hours on the March 1991 hotel opening. The hotel's four diamond addition, the Hacienda at Hotel Santa Fe, opened in September 2001. Much of the hotel staff is Native American, and Picuris Pueblo tribal members also own the Arts and Crafts Gift Shop (retrieved January 5, 2011, from <http://www.hotelsantafe.com/picuris-pueblo/about-picuris-pueblo/>).

⁵⁵ Some evidence shows continuity between the ritual use of peyote among the Mexican Native people and its use in the Native American Church: the gourd rattle; dedication to the four directions; cleansing in fire, smoke, and incense; all-night peyote meetings; tobacco smoking, and so on. In both contexts peyote is a sacred medicine that protects, allows one to see the future, and instructs users in how to live. To a modern Roadman of the Native American Church who participated in Mexican peyote meetings, they are the roots of the later movement (Reuben Snake (Winnebago) in Smith and Snake 1996:231). Quanah Parker contrasted Peyotism with Christianity by saying, "The white man goes into his church and talks about God. The Indian goes into his [peyote] tepee and talks to God" (Young 2002:306). Each tribe has its distinctive way of erecting its tabernacle, its tipi and the altar within it. What is so interesting to me about these specifications is that they approximate the directions given to the tribes of Israel for constructing their tabernacles. At many points the two sets of instructions are parallel if not identical. This gives Indians insights into why the Israelites did what they did, and continue to do what they do. God told the Israelites to construct their altars from the earth and to keep them on the earth—don't hew them from stone, and don't build steps up to them. Native Americans have similar instructions given them by their ancestors. Their altars, too, are built on the earth and from earth, and they are instructed to sit on the earth around them (Reuben Snake (Winnebago) in Smith and Snake 1996:19). When a person walks through the narrow entry into a tipi, it is a return to the womb of the mother. The Peyote Way is a legacy believed to keep the ceremonial life intact down to its exact details. Cutting and preparing the firewood, erecting the tipi, building the altar, tying the water drum—everything must be done with utmost precision, exactly as the ancestors prescribed. This attention to detail is what preserves the sanctity of Native American traditions (Snake 1996:22). The drum represents the heartbeat heard inside the womb. To the unborn child, this heartbeat represents everything in life that is good. The Sioux call it the Good Red Road, and the Diné (Navajo) call it *Ho-jo-ne* way. The seven stones inside the drum stand for the seven sacraments of life—the Holy Peyote, the dirt Half Moon, the fire, water,

corn, meat, and fruit. On the bottom of the drum the rope forms a star. When the drum is pounded, it's like the "speaking in tongues" the Bible reports (Bernard Ice (Oglala) in Smith and Snake 1996:46).

⁵⁶ In 1974 Congress passed Public Law 93-531, the Navajo-Hopi Land Settlement Act (the "relocation act"). The Navajo Nation bought "New Lands" where tribal members whose families had been living for generations on land newly designated as Hopi could be moved ("relocated"). The "Bennett Freeze" prohibited any construction or improvements in the disputed area (families literally could not repair a fence or build a new outhouse); relocation began. Subsequent laws set new deadlines for relocation. After the first deadline passed, hundreds of families remained on Hopi Partitioned Lands, and the Navajo-Hopi Indian Relocation Commission was formed. The Hopi Tribe was permitted to issue 75-year leases to remaining families in 1996. Criminal trespass charges were filed against five Diné women who were arrested in July 2001, as they tried to enter Camp Anna Mae Sun Dance Grounds in Big Mountain, Arizona, for the annual Sun Dance ceremony. The charges were dismissed in Hopi Tribal Court on March 4, 2002. On October 31, 2005, legal notices were given to Navajo families still living on Hopi Partitioned lands, giving them the option of signing up for relocation benefits or being put on a "no exception" list. The dispute continues to this day (Benally 2011).

⁵⁷ Jon Fast Wolf, from the Oglala Lakota (Sioux) Nation, married a woman from Picuris and has lived on the pueblo for many years. With approval from the Pueblo leadership approval, Jon cleared land in the low-lying mountains north of the village and of the San Lorenzo church. With volunteers from various tribes and neighboring communities, as well as Picuris Pueblo community members, he built an arbor, erected an outdoor kitchen, and cleared enough land to hold a Sun Dance ceremony. The Sun Dance was celebrated with approximately twenty-five dancers from various tribes, who pledged for the entire four years. At the end of the four-year commitment, Pueblo leaders decided that the ceremony would no longer be conducted at Picuris.

⁵⁸ Chefs Collaborative is a network of chefs that is working to change the sustainable food landscape using the power of connections, education, and responsible buying decisions. The mission of the Chefs Collaborative is to work with chefs and the greater food community to celebrate foods and foster a more sustainable food supply. The collaborative inspires action in the culinary community by providing chefs with information and tools necessary to make sustainable purchasing decisions—through workshops, publications, and events—as well as connecting chefs and sustainable food producers (retrieved February 15, 2011, from <http://chefscollaborative.org/about/>).

⁵⁹ As described in chapter 4, the Navajo churro sheep are descended from the churra, an ancient Iberian breed. By the 1930s, because of cross-breeding and U.S. government-sponsored flock reductions, very few purebred Navajo-Churros remained. Restoration began in the 1970s. The breed is listed by the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy as threatened (<http://albc-usa.org/cpl/navajochurro.html>) and is a part of the Slow Food Ark of heritage foods. The Navajo-Churros Sheep Association is dedicated to the breed.

⁶⁰ Elizabeth Berry of Gallina Canyon Ranch was one of the first growers in northern New Mexico (if not the first) to contract with restaurant chefs and grow specific ingredients to fit each chef's needs. She first developed a relationship with Chef Mark Miller, chef and

owner of the Coyote Café in Santa Fe, and later developed relationships with Chef David Tannis of Café Escalera, Chef Eric Di-Stefano of Geronimo, and Chef Loretta Barrett Oden of Corn Dance Café, to name a few. Elizabeth Berry was well known for her fresh, organic produce of the finest quality, including beans, eggplant, squash, squash blossoms, and a vast variety of chiles. She sold at the Santa Fe farmers' market for several years and then moved permanently up to her ranch, where she now lives full-time with her husband, Andrew.

⁶¹ Achiotte (*Bixa orellana*) is a shrub from the tropical region of the Americas. The name derives from the Nahuatl word for shrub *achiotl*. It is best known as the source of the natural pigment annatto, produced from the fruit, and used as a colorant and condiment for a variety of dishes as well as to add color to butter, cheese, drinks, and breads. It has long been used by American Indians to make body paint, especially for the lips. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bixa_orellana). Chef Oden uses it primarily in its paste form to make an edible paint she uses to point on her dishes and on meat.

⁶² As introduced in chapter 5, ITBC is working to reestablish healthy buffalo populations on tribal lands. The cooperative was formed in 1990 to coordinate and assist tribes in returning the buffalo to Indian Country. In February 1991, at a meeting in the Black Hills of South Dakota that was hosted by the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society, it became obvious to everyone that tribes needed assistance with their bison programs. Congress appropriated funding for tribal bison programs in June 1991. This action offered renewed hope that the sacred relationship between Indian people and the buffalo might not only be saved, but would in time flourish. The tribes met again in December 1991 to discuss how these appropriations would be spent. At this meeting, each tribe spoke of their plans for buffalo herds or to help existing bison herds expand and develop into successful, self-sufficient programs. In April 1992, tribal representatives gathered in Albuquerque, New Mexico. It was at that meeting that the Inter-Tribal Bison Cooperative (ITBC) became a recognized tribal organization. Officers were elected and began developing criteria for membership, articles of incorporation, and bylaws. In September 1992, ITBC was incorporated in Colorado, and that summer ITBC was headquartered in Rapid City, South Dakota. Today ITBC has a membership of 57 tribes with a collective herd of over 15,000 bison. ITBC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit committed to reestablishing buffalo herds on Indian lands in a manner that promotes cultural enhancement, spiritual revitalization, ecological restoration, and economic development.

⁶³ The Bon Appétit Management Company is one of the first food service companies to work with a local sustainable food model. They are known for cooking food from scratch using fresh seasonal ingredients, and they take their role in the community seriously, making socially responsible purchasing decisions. In New Mexico, Bon Appétit took over the food service contract at the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe in 2009. Executive Chef Guido Lambelet is working with local farms and through the Farm-to-Restaurant program in conjunction with the Santa Fe Alliance to serve locally sourced, sustainable regional Native American and American cuisine in the cafeteria at IAIA. See <http://www.bamco.com/page/2/about-us.htm> for more information on Bon Appétit Management Company.

⁶⁴ The origins of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians are complex. The ancestors of today's tribal members spoke at least ten different languages—eleven, if you include a few Sahaptin-speaking Klickitat people who were living in the Willamette and Umpqua valleys when the reservation was created. These communities were removed to Siletz along with the original inhabitants of those valleys. Many of these languages have such strong dialectic divisions that, from one end of the same language group's territory to the other, it was sometimes impossible for fellow speakers to understand each other. Although general terms for language group or tribal affiliation are the most common identifiers used, most of the elders and many tribal members prefer to identify their ancestry with as much detail as possible. An example of a general term would be Tillamook Tribe, rather than Salmon River, Siletz, Nestucca, or Nehalem band of the Tillamook Tribe. The inclusive list for the confederated tribes is Clatsop, Chinook, Klickitat, Molala, Kalapuya, Tillamook, Alsea, Siuslaw/Lower Umpqua, Coos, Coquille, Upper Umpqua, Tututni, Chetco, Tolowa, Takelma, Galice/Applegate, and Shasta. All of these tribes were incorporated into the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians. (retrieved from <http://www.ctsi.nsn.us/chinook-indian-tribe-siletz-heritage/our-history/part-i>).

⁶⁵ My brother's godfather, Dan Choy, was Chinese. He was one of my dad's closest friends. Our family often ate with him in New York City's Chinatown, always banquet and family style. He taught us how to take out the cheeks of the fish, a delicacy in his family. He would order whole steamed fish, primarily bass, for our family dinners. Getting the cheek was always the highest honor. This practice was very similar to Chef Strong's accounts regarding fish cheeks, although our "Uncle Dan" never ate the whole head, only the cheeks.

⁶⁶ In a mainstream or casual restaurant today, a *garde manger* or pantry chef could be just a salad chef. In a formal, upscale kitchens of the past, however, the chef garde manger was responsible for salads, cold soups, fresh fruit, fresh vegetables, cheeses, garnishes, preserved meats (*charcuterie*), butters and spreads, and the utilization of kitchen leftovers. Meaning "keep to eat" in French, this position refers to a cool, well-ventilated area where cold dishes such as salads, hors d'oeuvres, appetizers, canapes, patés, and terrines are prepared and other foods are stored under refrigeration. A specialized pantry chef stocks, prepares, and presents all of the cold foods. This was a key position in wealthy homes, where cold storage and well-stocked pantries were symbols of power, wealth, and status. (Retrieved from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Garde_manger and <http://www.culinaryschools.org/chef-types/pantry-chef/> on February 11, 2011)

⁶⁷ The Tohono O'odham i'ittoi onion (*Allium cepa*) is a wild onion that, according to legend, was first gathered from I'Itoi Mountain, also known as Baboquivari Mountain, which is a sacred place believed to be the navel of the earth and the birthplace of mankind. For centuries, the i'ittoi onion played a role in O'odham ceremony, medicine, and food. Botanical studies place the i'ittoi onion among a very old line of clumping onions brought to the United States by Jesuit missionaries in the late seventeenth century, concluding that the onion is not necessarily native. Regardless, the onion has an important place in Sonoran Desert culinary culture. Ms. Ida Lopez of the Papago Indian Reservation rescued the i'ittoi onion from extinction when in the 1980s she brought the tiny, purple, shallot like bulbs to researchers at the Native Seeds/SEARCH project.

Through their efforts, numerous collectors in the Southwest propagated the onion and it has recently gained a small foothold with chefs in the Sonoran region. These onions are a drought-tolerant plant but with steady water can establish themselves as a perennial source for onion “chives,” and the bulbs have a sharp, onion/shallot flavor. The onion appears on the Slow Food USA Ark of Taste. (Retrieved from http://www.slowfoodusa.org/index.php/programs/ark_product_detail/iitoi_onion/# on February 11, 2011)

⁶⁸ With a series of casinos near Green Bay, Wisconsin, the Oneida Nation has, in a matter of only a few decades, gone from being destitute to enjoying a fair amount of social prosperity by investing a large portion of their profits back into their community (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oneida_people, retrieved on February 14, 2011). The means by which this has taken place, Indian gaming, has raised controversy within the tribe, but it has also enabled the tribe to create programs that have revitalized many agricultural and food traditions within the tribe. The tribe’s sovereignty means that the state of Wisconsin is limited in the extent to which it can intervene in tribal matters, which has an impact on how the tribe operates its economic enterprises and endeavors on the reservation.

⁶⁹ Fred Harvey, who built La Posada, is known for “civilizing the West” by introducing linen, silverware, china, crystal, and impeccable service to railroad travel. Harvey developed and ran hotels and restaurants along the Santa Fe Railway, eventually controlling a hospitality empire that spanned the continent. La Posada was built as a major hotel in the center of northern Arizona by the Fred Harvey Company. It was called “La Posada,” meaning “The Resting Place.” Construction costs in 1929 exceeded \$1 million, with a total budget including grounds and furnishings at about \$2 million. Today this would amount to around \$40 million. Winslow is ideally situated for a resort hotel because many tourist sites are a comfortable day’s drive from there. Mary Colter was the hotel’s renowned architect. Although famous for her magnificent buildings at the Grand Canyon, she considered La Posada to be her masterpiece because she was able to design or select everything from the structures to the furniture, maids’ uniforms, and dinner china. Many people consider this to be the most important and most beautiful building in the Southwest. La Posada closed in 1957 and remained closed for the next 40 years. In 1997 Allan Affeldt and his wife Tina Mion purchased the hotel with a strong vision and commitment to returning La Posada to Colter’s original concept. Called the “last great railroad hotel,” it offers a unique cultural experience for Southwest travelers. The hotel has been completely renovated, and work on the gardens continues.

⁷⁰ Executive Chef Michael O’Dowd emailed me after I sent him this section of text for review. The elder with whom he worked had recently passed away. He asked before he left this world that any time his name was used, the word “but” should appear after it, because it will help his name and soul enter the highest level of the spirit world and not get stuck or left behind (O’Dowd 2011).

⁷¹ A professional chef’s knife kit usually includes a paring knife, utility knife, boning knife, meat cleaver, carving knife, chef’s knife, sharpening steel, and scissors in a rolled bag or a box. It may also include a meat thermometer, tongs, peeler, grater, zester, boning pliers, bread knife, Exacto knife, etc. It is usually customized for and by each chef.

⁷² Chipotle chiles are smoked jalapeños. They are a dull to tan coffee brown and are veined and ridged with a medium-thick flesh. They have a smoky and sweet flavor with tobacco and chocolate tones, and a subtle, deep, rounded heat (Miller 1991). They are primarily produced in Mexico, but many Native chefs from the Southwest use them in preparing of their foods.

⁷³ A Lexan food or storage container is a clear polycarbonate plastic container used in commercial kitchens to hold cold or hot foods. They are designed to stack on top of one another in a walk-in refrigerator, and they come in a variety of sizes, shapes, and colors. Sometimes they are called Cambro containers, depending on the size and manufacturer.

⁷⁴ Vitamix blenders are standard in most commercial kitchens (<http://www.vitamix.com>).

⁷⁵ “Marking meat” in a commercial kitchen context refers to searing the meat, fish, or poultry at a very high temperature, usually on a flat grill, flame grill, or in a cast iron skillet, to cook the outside of the meat. The remainder of the cooking to a patron’s specification (i.e., rare, medium rare, etc.) is done immediately before serving, saving quite a bit of time.

⁷⁶ A dining room captain typically oversees each aspect of a catered event, from the initial planning to cleaning up. He or she supervises the staff, working in the background while liaising with the host, who interfaces with the customers or patrons. A captain manages the entire banquet staff, assigning duties to each team member. At the beginning of each shift, he or she inspects all uniforms, table settings, linens, glassware, etc. He or she may also work the floor and may even work as a server or bartender should one be needed. In some fine-dining restaurants, captains may work the floor, overseeing several tables in an assigned area, and managing only those specific tables, but this is not typically the case.

⁷⁷ Seri oregano is a fair-trade Sonoran herb from the Seri Indians of Mexico. This Sonoran oregano (*Lippia graveolens*) is hand-harvested from the islands and coast of the Gulf of California. The Seri have long used this herb for its culinary, medicinal, and ceremonial properties; it is among the highest ranked plants in the world for antioxidants. The Seri are actively engaged in biodiversity and habitat conservation throughout their homeland, as recently documented in *Singing the Turtles to Sea* by Gary Nabhan (2003). Seri oregano is sold to chefs and other consumers through a pilot marketing project coordinated by the Center for Sustainable Environments at Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff and supported by the Overbrook Foundation, a leading contributor to community-based biodiversity conservation in Latin America. (Retrieved on March 24, 2011; <http://www.environment.nau.edu/Seri/index.htm>.) This wild Mexican oregano is also being offered for sale by Native Seeds/SEARCH in Tucson, Arizona. (http://www.nativeseeds.org/catalog/product_info.php?manufacturers_id=andproducts_id=245)

⁷⁸ Sugpiaq means “the real people” in the Sugt’suan language. Sugpiaq is a Native American business owned and operated by Isabella, an Inupiat Eskimo from Alaska. They sell fish harvested by native fisherman who follow a strict quality-controlled process ensuring that their seafood is pure and sustainable. Their Ocean Wild Sugpiaq Salmon taste different than river salmon. They also sell halibut and black cod. Sugpiaq products are cleaned and flash-frozen immediately after harvest, preserving its fresh-

caught quality. There are no hormones, additives, GMOs, or farmed salmon. All the fish is MSC-certified sustainable, Alaskan Native Certified, Sun'ami Tribal Council Member and HAACP Certified.

⁷⁹ A speed rack is a metal cart with wheels. It has racks for approximately ten metal trays. It is commonly used in the pastry department, where baked goods are placed on metal trays, which are then inserted onto the racks. Trays can be placed on each rack or on every alternating racks, depending on the size and type of food. It can be left in the kitchen or rolled into the walk-in refrigerator to cool down plates or hold salads or cold food for large events.

⁸⁰ Seeds of the achiote (*Bixa orellano L.*) trees of the tropical regions of the Americas are used to produce a yellow to orange food coloring and flavoring known as annatto. It is a dark red, tart powder or a paste made from finely ground achiote seeds. In Mexico it is called achiote powder or achiote paste. Annatto can be difficult to find in the United States and is only carried by specialty stores, but it is widely used throughout Mexico and South America.