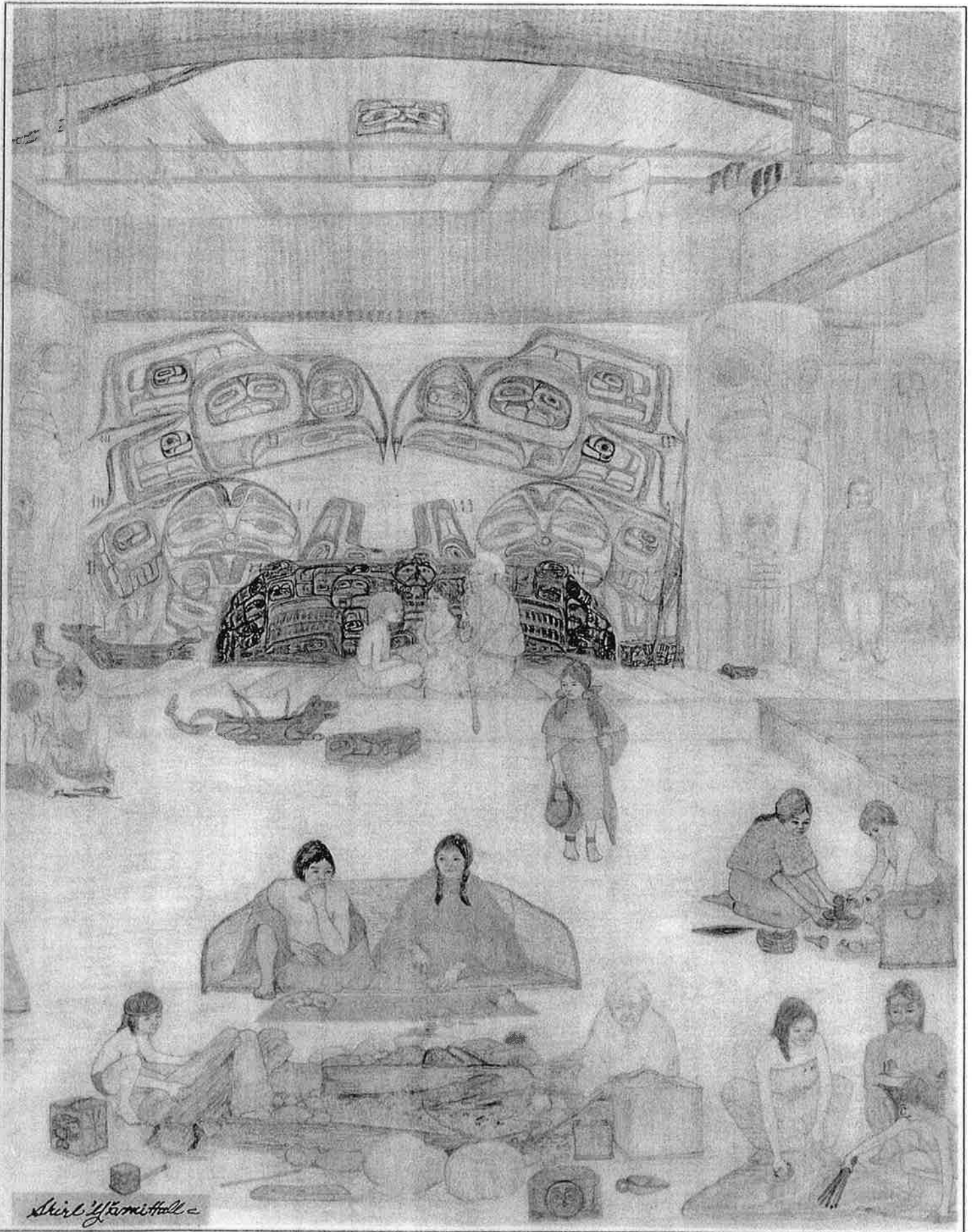


# TRADITIONAL HEILTSUK FOOD



*Shirley Jamittal*

Cover artwork by: Shirley 'Yxwmi' Hall ©. All rights reserved.

HEILTSUK CULTURAL EDUCATION CENTRE

# HEILTSUK COLLEGE



## About the cover:

Courtesy of: Heiltsuk Cultural Curriculum Project, Bella Bella Community School  
Artist: Shirl Yxvmí Hall ©. All rights reserved.

All the artifacts were drawn from Jennifer Carpenter's photographs of the Bella Bella Heiltsuk collections that are in museums across North America.

The Yilistís Elders group met weekly in the Heiltsuk Cultural Education Centre, closely monitored the drawing, and made invaluable contributions to this pre-contact "big house"<sup>1</sup> interior.

Above the main fire, in the rafters, are some foods that would more properly be in the smokehouse: tálus, salmon, and the salmon eggs still in their sac. The box in the centre has a basket-woven bottom that would allow the smoke to flow through to the dried foods being preserved by this method.

Around the fire are chitons, moon shells, sea urchins, abalone, and horse clams, some of the foods that would be kept handy for the odd snack. There were no regular meal times.

The elderly woman at the fire-side is removing hot rocks from the fire with her wooden tongs. She will first wash the hot stones in the small box before dropping them into the large cooking box. These hot rocks will cause the contents to boil. In her other hand she has a rib-bone strainer that she will use to remove things from the cooking box.

To the left in the foreground another woman is cutting a salmon with a black slate knife, while her child shows her the arrows his father has just made for him.

Behind these three is a young woman using a stone frog-shaped mortar and pestle to grind dried berries, while a young boy is pouring in ooligan oil from a bull-kelp coil. Bull-kelp are long and hollow making them useful as storage containers for fluids.

All the clothing was made from the softened bark of the yellow cedar. The girl with the paddle is holding a spruce-root basket with which she will gather some clams.

In front of the Chief seat, which is now in the Victoria B.C. Provincial Museum, a chief holds a talking stick while he passes Heiltsuk history on to his grandchildren. Around them are large, carved, wooden ladles, feast bowls, and goat-horn spoons.

HEILTSUK CULTURAL EDUCATION CENTRE

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<sup>1</sup>When the elders were asked if the proper title would be long house or big house, we were told that they call it a long house because that is what the white people like to call them. However, our houses were not always long but they were always big.

## Acknowledgments & Credits:

We would like to acknowledge the elders of our community, our advisory board, for sharing their wisdom and laughter with us: **Nan Margaret Campbell, Granny Mary Hunt, Sister Ena Bell, Dorothy Walkus, "Doctor" Evelyn Windsor, Tillie Hunt, Peggy Housty, Grampa Moses Humchitt, Philip Hall, Shirl Hall, Granny Maggie Hall, Vi & Ed Martin, Caroline Hall Sr., Clarence Martin** and all the elders of Waglisla for carrying on our traditions to pass on to the next generations.

The College would like to thank the Basic Literacy upgrading students for all their hard work and research: **Robert Hopkins, Beverly Windsor, Florence Windsor, Benny Humchitt, Robert Hall, Kenny Lee Martin, Preston Humchitt, Carl Bolton, & Jimmy Anderson Jr.** They hosted luncheons for the elders, gathered traditional foods, collected recipes, and cleaned and prepared the foods for the luncheons and for a feast the college hosted on December, 9th, 1994.

The students were lead in their gathering and hunting trips by **Ron Martin Sr. and Ed Martin Sr. ("Pops")** Their commitment and traditional gathering and hunting skills are appreciated and are of great value to the community at large. Thank you Ron for your valuable time, energy, wisdom, and knowledge of the traditional Heiltsuk harvesting.

We would like to thank "**the Doctor Evelyn Windsor**", as Ed calls her. Her many years of experience in preparing, gathering, and cleaning our traditional foods was an asset to our group. Thank you Evelyn for sharing your skills and knowledge with us.

**Shirl Hall**, Coordinator of the Heiltsuk Cultural Curriculum Project, BBCS, for her invaluable assistance in preparing the lay-out & editing, and her excellent photography and illustrations, including the beautiful front cover.

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**Maureen Malcolm**, ABE Coordinator, Open Learning Agency.  
**Michael Sadler**, First Nations Advisor, Open Learning Agency.

**Pauline Waterfall**, Director of the Heiltsuk College, for applying for the funding for this project, and providing the students with the opportunity to continue to learn their traditional ways through the medium of education.

**Y. Kathy Brown**, Project Coordinator, for her dedication and commitment to education, and respect for the Heiltsuk ways. Layout and Editor/Writer

**Heiltsuk College & Staff**, for continuing to support the traditional ways of the Heiltsuk, utilizing modern communications so others may share and respect the Heiltsuk culture and way of life.

**Photo Credits: Anja Brown, Frank Brown, Jennifer Carpenter, and Shirl Hall**

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Province of British Columbia,  
and the National Literacy Secretariat,  
Human Resources Development Canada

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## Introduction

This project began in September, 1994. It was a joint project between the Heiltsuk College and the Open Learning Agency. The basic literacy class of the Heiltsuk College took upon themselves the task of producing this booklet through research in the Curriculum Resource Library and having luncheons with the elders of Bella Bella. The students went on collecting, hunting, and gathering field trips with "pops", Ed Martin Sr., and his son Ron Martin Sr. Evelyn Windsor and Ed taught the students how to clean, prepare, and cook the foods. Each luncheon we served traditional foods which the elders thoroughly enjoyed.

The luncheons were more than a luncheon, they were a time of socialization, sharing, and much laughter. The coordinator, Kathy Brown, and the students learned patience from the elders through stories and laughter. When an elder shares with you, one must listen closely, for the lesson, and the way in which one prepares a root or gathers berries, comes out in the story. The sharing of the two mediums, oral and written communication, sometimes became a problem, because the students wanted concrete results today. They soon came to realize that within these stories and laughter there were many lessons to be learned. For this is the way of the Heiltsuk: our governance, our whole way of life, was taught to us orally.

The students were successful in their hunting trips. They provided the College with deer, goose, crab, seal, clams, and ducks to serve at the College potlatch, which was hosted on December 9th, 1994. The college students prepared and cooked the food for the feast. The students also used the feathers of the goose for a cushion for a gift. During this feast there was a cleansing ceremony for past residential school students—healing past school experiences.

Traditionally our culture was our whole way of life, just as education is not just the schooling one receives but is everything one learns in life. "You can give man a fish or you can teach him to fish and give him fish for a lifetime." The Heiltsuk way of life has been, and still is, learning through hands-on experience; you remember it a lot longer. These teachings are usually done with family members, so one remembers not only the teaching but also the socializing, and the good times. These teachings are passed on from generation to generation. My mom took me berry picking, so I then take my children berry picking, etc.

May you enjoy the recipes and create or add your own to this collection. Nutritionally, traditional foods are healthier for us than the processed foods eaten today. May this booklet be of assistance to future Heiltsuk and non-Heiltsuk in preparing and enjoying our traditional food. In the past there were no doctors (as there are today) and people very rarely got sick. The traditional diet has kept us in existence for more than 10,000 years. Let us continue to exist and respect our traditional way of life, especially the foods. The Heiltsuk calendar revolves around the weather as the weather determines when one can harvest.

"Our traditional food sources are disappearing. Abalone harvesting has been shut down for five years. Stocks of cod, sea urchins, sea cucumbers, clams, horse clams, geoducks, and cockles have been depleted by commercial harvesting. People turn more and more to 'white man's' food as it gets harder to gather our own. The process of gathering, storing, and cooking foods is fascinating and basic to our culture. For example, seaweed is best gathered at certain stages of growth in certain prime locations; dried on special cedar racks; pressed in cedar boxes while lightly sprinkled with clam juice and then completely sun-dried; it can be stored indefinitely; it can be prepared as a soup mixed with dog salmon eggs or sprinkled over various types of salmon." (1)

Up until approximately 1950, all foods were dried (like wood) or stored in the ground in wooden cedar boxes (root cellars). There were no limitations on the amount of food gathered or stored. The foods were dried at camp or in the bighouses. All species of fishes were caught all year round, whenever needed. (Refer to Chart, page 38) The chart on page 39 was compiled by Florence Windsor, a student of the Heiltsuk College. The information collected on this chart was provided by elders Maggie Hall, Mary Hunt, and Ena Bell. Once again, thank you to all the students and elders of Waglisla, Bella Bella, for their valuable input to the success of this booklet.

*Y. Kathy Brown*

(1) Larry Jorgenson, Heiltsuk College instructor.

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Traditional Heiltsuk Food Words, Heiltsuk Glossary: From "Short Heiltsuk Classified Word List,"  
 by John Rath, Linguist © 1985 Heiltsuk Cultural Education Centre.  
 Additional information from Native Language Instructor, Evelyn Windsor,  
 and Shirl Hall, Cultural Curriculum Coordinator for the Bella Bella Community School

**FISH**

Salmon: miá  
 sockeye = hísn  
 pink, hump = kápi  
 dog, chum = gváxhís  
 coho = zúh  
 Spring: qáps  
 red = kááqvnxt white = múnqvnxt  
 Halibut = puái  
 Ling cod = nátm  
 Black cod = hádání  
 Rock cod = kákálá  
 Black rock cod = káqa  
 Red snapper, cod = káqvítkv  
 Herring = wáháí  
 Roe, of herring =  
 On hemlock branch = háht  
 On broad kelp = yáka  
 On stringy kelp = gáqáalis  
 Ooligans = záxvn  
 Ooligan grease = káína

**SEA MAMMALS**

Seal = sagvín  
 Seal grease = sakvís  
 Sea Lion = máwák  
 Octopus = táyáqvayax

**SHELLFISH etc.**

Abalone = galghíq  
 Clams = cikva  
 Cockles = zuáli  
 Crabs = kínáxv  
 Prawns = dáxduális  
 China slippers, chitons = káíxačí  
 Sea Prunes = qánás  
 Oysters = kúxvnkúxv  
 Mussels = kvás  
 Sea urchins, purple = cikvíč  
 Sea urchins, greenish = hmđrn  
 Sea cucumber = híás  
 Barnacles = xáyáq

**WILD GAME**

Beaver = qvúluńn  
 Deer = qámílá  
 Black bear = ká  
 Grizzly bear = náń  
 Mountain goat = čáq  
 Smoked goat = wúnú  
 Smoked meat = wáxstúxvs miá  
 Variety of animals = sisákvimas

**WILD BIRDS**

Ducks = kvđín  
 Butterball = náwáci  
 Mallard = ns:náq  
 Sawbill grey = sxh  
 Sawbill white = qvğváus  
 Other ducks found locally  
 háńq  
 múnğvabuakái  
 qğiga  
 yáđnsğm  
 dásdigvnas  
 Canada Goose = hñğaq  
 Grouse = mńkls

**WILD BERRIES**

Berries = gúğv ímás  
 Blueberries = siákvnat  
 Huckleberries = gvadn  
 Blackberries = čúčlčms gúláli  
 Salmonberries = miá gúláli  
 Gooseberries = trńxviáli  
 High-bush Cranberries = ilč  
 Greyberries = qísíná  
 Salal berries = nkvl  
 Saskatoons = híń  
 Strawberries = kxkks  
 Thimbleberries = lqáxa  
 Elder berries = kibát  
 Soap berries = nńvsk  
 Crab apples = hñx

**WILD EDIBLE PLANTS**

Cow parsnip or  
 Indian rhubarb = gísđm  
 Salmonberry shoots =  
 Thimbleberry shoots = or Sprouts = qvahn  
 Chocolate Lily root or Wild rice = xvúkvń  
 Fern roots = híbám  
 Labrador tea = púyás  
 Nettles = dúxva

**YOUR OWN RECIPES**

Plant growing along the shore = qvaxqváisla  
 Plant with red edible berries = kñqvas  
 Plant without berries = kñkvas  
 Seaweed = lqst

**BREADS**

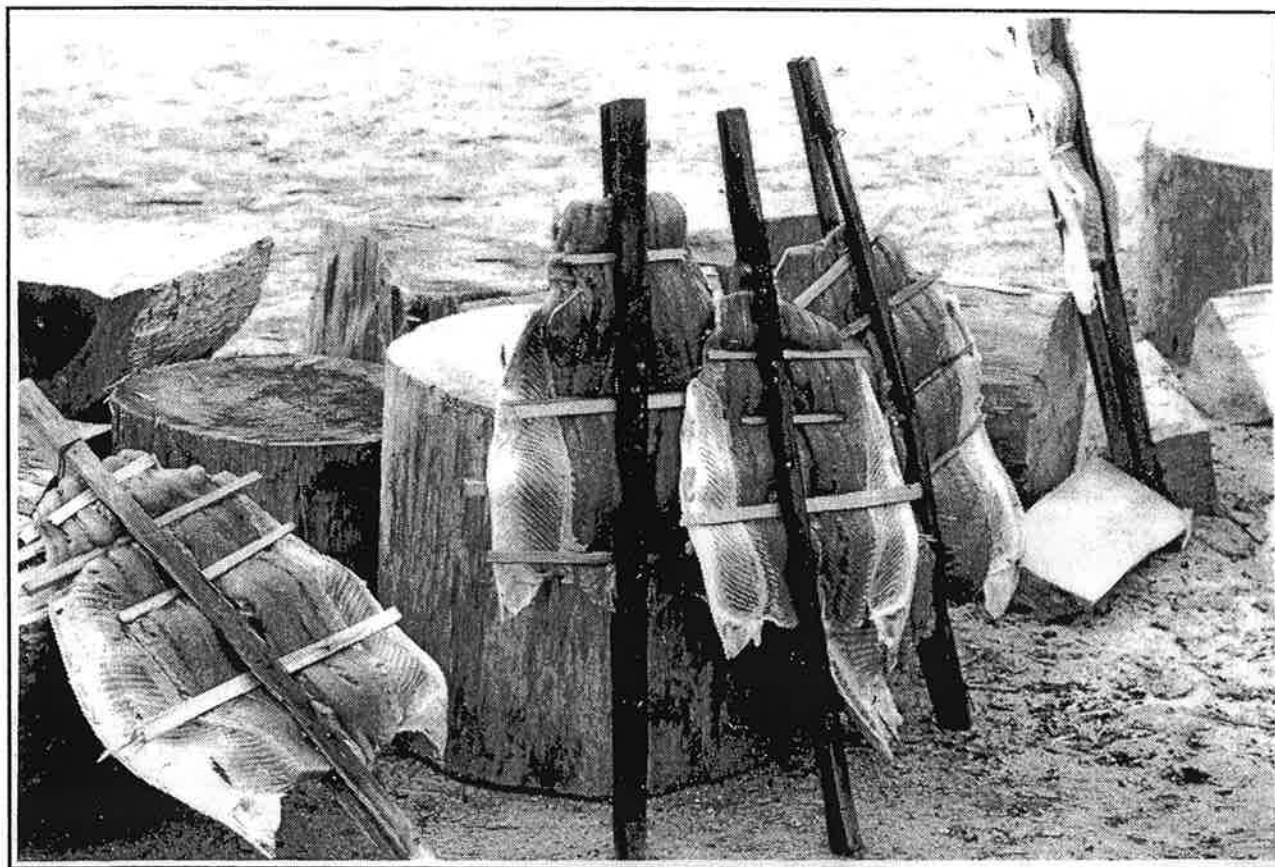
Bread >yeast = púyákvn  
 Bread >baking powder= gváyáx  
 Bannock = káxis

# Fish:

**Salmon:**

- pink—hump (jar/can, bake, fry, boil, smoke)
- sockeye (jar/can, bake, fry, boil, freeze, barbecue)
- spring (jar/can, bake, fry, boil, freeze, salt, smoke, dry)
- dog—chum (jar/can, bake, fry, boil, freeze, salt, smoke, dry, barbecue)
- cohoe (jar/can, bake, fry, boil, freeze, salt, smoke, dry, barbecue)

- Halibut (freeze, dry, bake, fry, boil)
- Ling cod (freeze, smoke, salt, bake, fry, boil)
- Rock cod (freeze, bake, fry, boil)
- Black cod (smoke, salt, bake, boil)
- Red snapper (freeze, bake, fry, boil)
- Herring (freeze, dry, smoke)
  - roe on hemlock branches (freeze, dry, salt, boil)
  - roe on kelp (freeze, dry, salt, boil)
- Ooligan (freeze, smoke, salt, bake, fry, boil)
- grease (jar/can—used for seasoning like butter)



Salmon on red cedar sticks for barbequing

## Tálús = thin dried strips of Salmon or Halibut

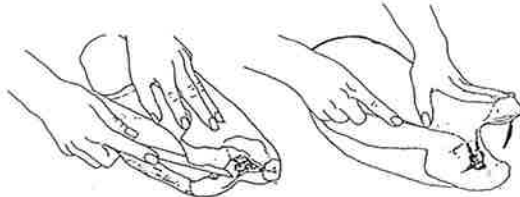
Salmon tálús, to the Heiltsuk people, was like bread is to us now.

*The same cutting method is used to prepare salmon for barbecue,<sup>1</sup> smoking,<sup>2</sup> and to make tálús.*

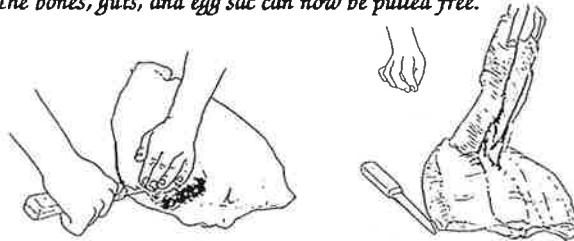


- 1) Make a small cut on one side at tail end, to help hold the fish.
- 2) Cut off head and anal fin.

- 3) Cut along each side of the back bone, freeing flesh to the stomach. Leave dorsal fin on one side.

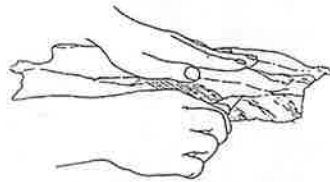


- 4) The bones, guts, and egg sac can now be pulled free.



*To make "tálús" thin slices for smoking, you will need a sharp knife.*

- 5) Cut strips as thinly as possible from each side. This will leave a whole fish ready to smoke.



*Prepare fish for hanging in a smoke house:*

- 6) Cut small slit on skin at tail, on each side of anal fin hole.
- 7) Thread a kindling red cedar stick through these for hanging.



- 8) To keep the salmon spread open during the smoking, use another stick pressed into the flesh on one side of the salmon, and hook the stick behind the dorsal fin. You'll need a long stick with a Y at the top, to get the fish up into the rafters.

*Illustrations: Shiirl 'N'xomi Hall ©*

<sup>1</sup> see page 5

<sup>2</sup> see page 4

### HOW TO JAR SALMON

- Cutting:** Clean, gut, remove heads and tails. Use a jar to measure and cut fish one inch below the rim of the jar.
- Jarring:** Cut down side of back bone, wrap, and fit into jar.
- Salting:** Add 1 tsp. of salt to each jar, then with a clean, hot cloth wash the rim of the jars. This is very important. The rim must be very clean and free of any oil or fish scales.
- Lids:** The lids should be slightly scalded so the rubber is softened and also clean and free of any oils. Apply ring as tightly as possible. This is the last time you will touch the rings until they are finished.
- Packing:** Line the bottom of the canner with cardboard or racks, pack tightly in between all the jars to prevent the jars from cracking during the long boiling process.
- Boiling:** Water should cover the tops of the jars by an inch or two. The water is going to boil for 3-1/2 hours, for pints; 4 hours for quarts. Add boiling water if the water level goes down. Keep the jars well covered in boiling water. The bones, an excellent source of calcium, will be soft after this long boiling time.
- Cooling:** Do not touch the jars until the water has cooled off completely. The rubber seal can be broken if disturbed before they are cool. Wash jars in warm soapy water before storage.

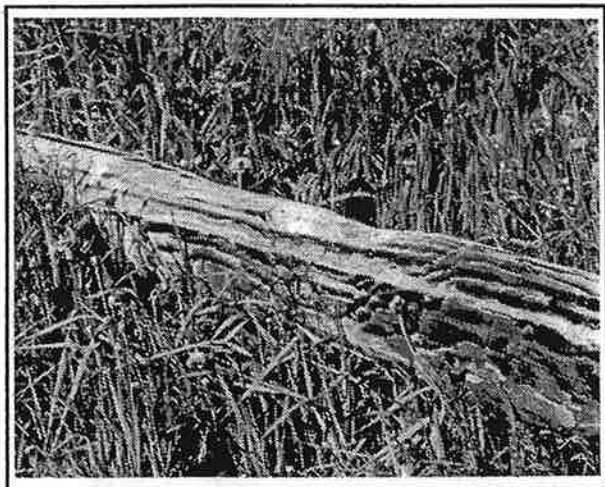
*Shirl Hall*



## SMOKED SALMON

1. Follow the directions for cutting and cleaning.
2. Fully smoked salmon needs to be in the smoke house for 4 days.
3. Use alder wood for a slow steady smoke.
4. Driftwood alder can be identified on the beach by the black patches on the grey logs.

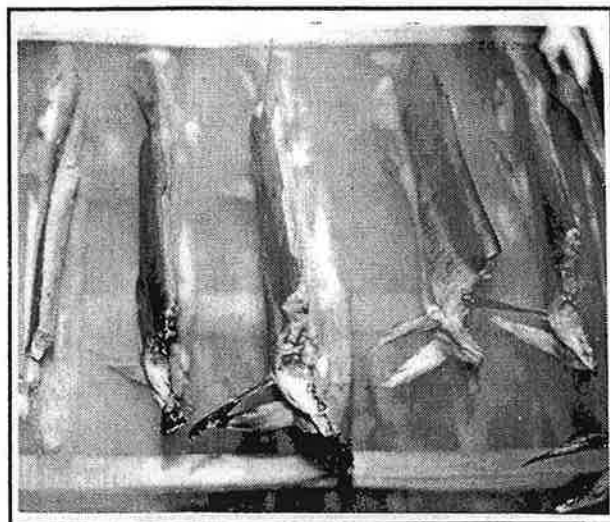
*Shirl Hall*



## HALF SMOKED SALMON

1. Follow the directions for cutting and cleaning.
2. Soak overnight in salted water.
3. Prepare salmon for hanging in smoke house. Make some cuts lightly into the flesh.
4. Smoke overnight.
5. Take down next morning and rub salmon with mixture of soya sauce and brown sugar.
6. Leave in smoke house another day.
7. Can be jarred or frozen.

*Shirl Hall*



## SMOKED SALMON PATÉ

- 1/4 lb smoked salmon
- 7 3/4 oz. can of sockeye salmon
- 1/4 cup softened butter or margarine
- 4 oz. cream cheese

Drain sockeye salmon, remove bones and skin. Combine all ingredients in blender or food processor until smooth. Pack into a mold and chill several hours. Unmold and serve with crackers or thin slices of cocktail bread.

*Madi White*

## SMOKED FISH OMELETTE

- 6 eggs
- 1/2 onion finely diced
- 1 stalk celery finely diced
- 1 garlic clove, finely crushed
- Red, yellow or green pepper finely diced (optional)
- 2 slices of bacon finely diced
- 1 pint jar smoked fish
- cheddar cheese grated

In medium size skillet or non-stick frying pan, sauté bacon, add vegetables and sauté, add jarred smoked salmon. Add well beaten eggs, cover, and simmer on medium-low heat for another 3 to 4 minutes.

Sprinkle on grated cheese, place pan in heated oven (300 degrees) for 10 to 15 minutes, until omelette rises. It should be nice and fluffy. Enjoy!

*Y. Kathy Brown*

**BARBECUED SALMON**

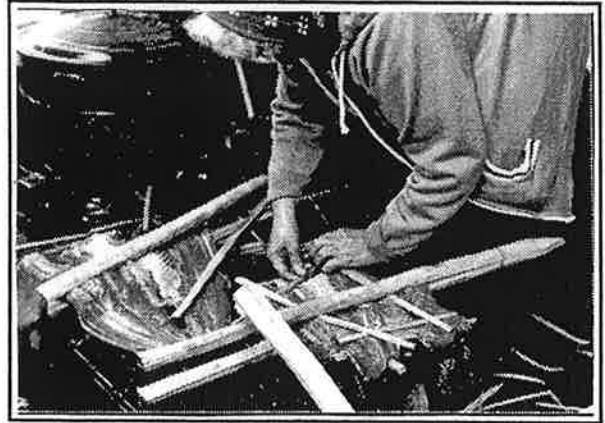
1. The traditional Heiltsuk way to barbecue begins with the carving of long and pointed red cedar sticks that will hold two small or one large salmon.



2. Kindling-sized red cedar sticks are used to hold the fish firmly in the BBQ stick that are split 2/3 of the way and tied shut with a wire.



3. The salmon are barbecued on sticks by an open fire. The fire should be burning well before the pointed end of the sticks are stuck in the ground and rocks piled around to insure they stand up and can be easily turned.



4. Barbecued fish is cooked when the oil from the fish has finished dripping.

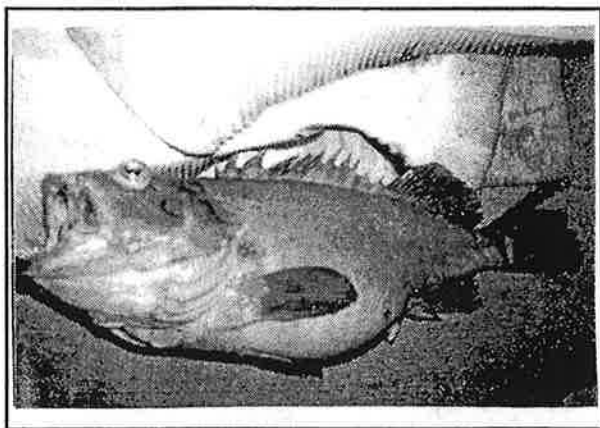
**BARBECUED SALMON STEW**

Into a large pot:

1. Cut up potatoes, carrots, and onions.
2. Cover with water and bring to a boil.
3. Add two tablespoons of ooligan grease.
4. Add one quart of jarred, or one frozen BBQ salmon.
5. Add more water if needed: some people like to add macaroni.
6. Serve with hot tea biscuits.

*Shirl Hall*





### STEWED COD WITH SPRING VEGETABLES

Flecked with green onions and parsley, this satisfying chowder is full of chunks of potatoes and tender carrots. It's marvellous served with fresh biscuits or crusty bread.

- 1 1/4 cod, halibut, or other white fish
- 3 cups chicken or fish stock
- 2 onions, chopped
- 8 new potatoes, scrubbed and cut into chunks
- 4 carrots, sliced
- 1/2 tsp. each salt and pepper
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh parsley
- 2 green onions, chopped
- 1 cup half and half cream

Cut cod into 1-inch cubes; set aside.

In large saucepan, bring chicken stock to boil over medium-high heat. Add onions, potatoes, carrots, salt, and pepper; return to simmer. Reduce heat to medium-low heat; cover and simmer for about 15 minutes or until vegetables are almost tender.

Add fish, parsley and green onions; cover and simmer for about 10 minutes or until fish is opaque. Stir in cream; cook for about 3 minutes or until heated through. Makes 8 servings.

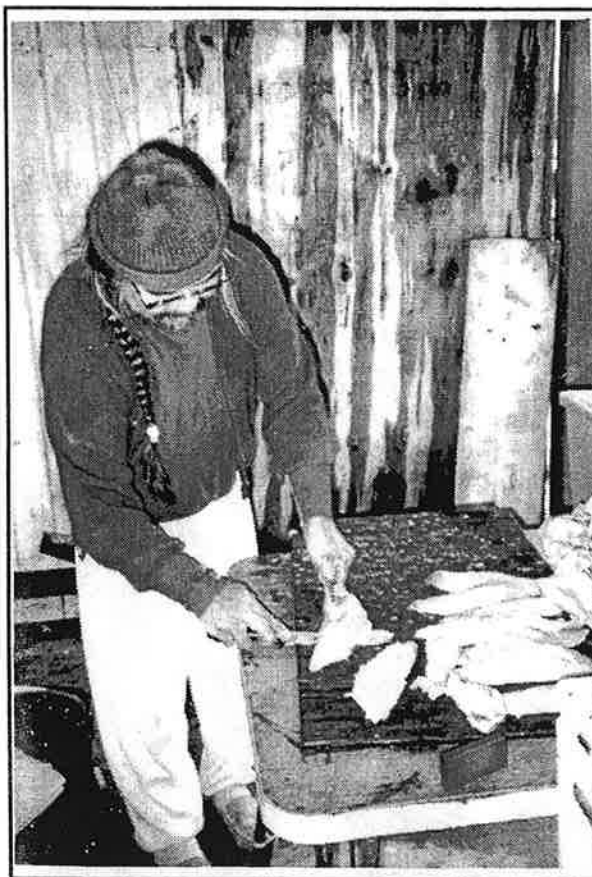
*Brenda Humchitt*

### DEEP FRIED COD

- |                         |                      |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| 2 cups flour            | 3 tsp. baking powder |
| 2 tsp. salt             | pepper to taste      |
| 1 1/3 cups diluted milk | 1 whole cod          |
| 4 eggs, well beaten     |                      |

1. Sift dry ingredients together.
2. Add beaten eggs to diluted milk.
3. Pour mixture into flour and mix.
4. Coat fish with flour, then into batter.
5. Drop fish into hot oil (350°).
6. Then turn heat to low (250°).
7. Cook slowly, brown on both sides, and then let drain on a paper bag or paper towel.
8. Serve with rice or french fries.

*Marie Johnson*

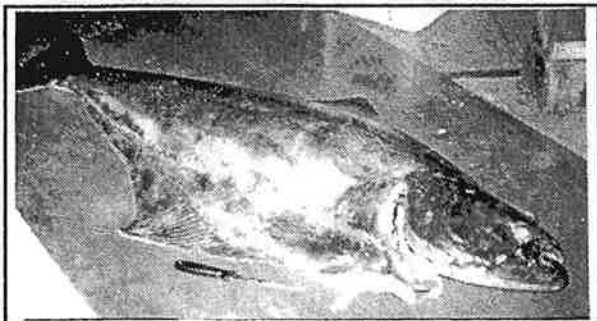


**HALIBUT**

Halibut were also plentiful during the herring spawn as they too fed on herring. It is said that they "come up" during the herring spawn, as they are normally a deep water fish.

Halibut was preserved by slicing the meat very thinly. The pieces were hung on sticks by a (bon)fire for 4 days, turning them over each night for even drying.

*Beatrice Brown*



**BAKED HALIBUT**

1 piece of halibut fillet.  
Line pan with foil.  
Put halibut in pan.  
Add onions, salt, and pepper to taste.  
Bake at 325° for 40-45 minutes, or until firm.

*Joe Hall*

**DEEP FRIED HALIBUT**

2 cups vegetable oil  
1/2 tsp. salt

Add oil to deep fryer and wait for oil to start to boil a little.

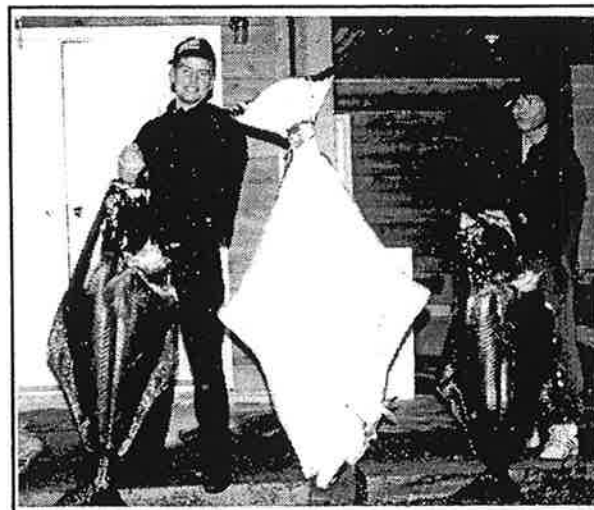
**Batter:**

2 cups flour  
1/2 tsp. baking powder  
1 cup cold water

Mix well and stir.

Dip halibut into batter, flip to do other side, and cook for a few minutes until brown.  
May be eaten with rice or potatoes.

*Cecelia Hopkins*



**BAKED HALIBUT WITH STEWED TOMATOES**

2 tbsp. butter  
2 onions, sliced  
1-1/2 cups canned plum tomatoes (including juice)  
1/2 tsp. each salt & pepper  
1-1/2 lbs halibut steak  
1 tbsp. chopped fresh basil

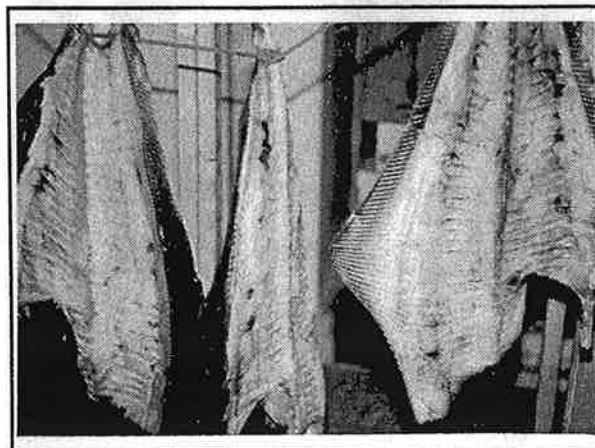
In heavy saucepan, melt butter over medium heat and cook onions for about 10 minutes; or just until beginning to brown.

Stir in tomatoes and juice, breaking up with fork. Add half of the salt and pepper; cook for about 3 minutes or until slightly thickened.

Meanwhile, cut halibut into 6 or 8 pieces; remove bones. Sprinkle with remaining salt and pepper; place in well greased 13 x 9 inch baking dish.

Spoon tomato sauce over fish; sprinkle with basil.  
Bake in 450° F oven for 10 to 15 minutes or until fish flakes easily when tested with fork. Makes 6 to 8 servings.

*Brenda Humchitt*



## OOLIGAN GREASE

Ooligan grease is still an important trade food for all the native people of the Interior British Columbia and North West Coast.

In the spring the river people catch several tonnes of the ooligans, a small river fish, on their way to spawn. Ooligans are caught in the seine nets now, but in the past they used cone-shaped nets made from spinning nettles, a rake similar to the Heiltsuk rake for herring, and in split-root, cone-shaped basket traps.

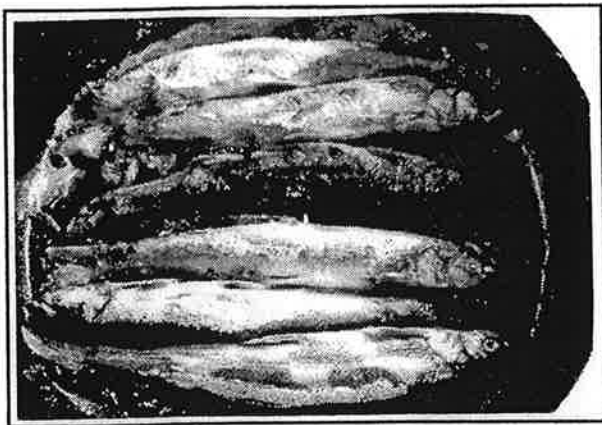
After they are caught, the fish are left to decay in a large wooden bin called a "stink box."

While waiting for the decomposition of the fish, the people set up the fire pit and a steel-bottomed cooking box which is placed over the fire.

After a week of warm weather, the first batch of fish are ready to go into the cooking box, where they gently boil for five hours and are left to settle for another two hours. The grease rises to the top and is skimmed off the open kettles.

Large stones are heated in the bonfire and wooden tongs are used to drop them into the kettles of grease. This causes the grease to come quickly to a boil and all impurities, such as fish scales and dirt, can be scooped off the top.

Ooligan grease is very rich in vitamin A and also contains vitamins E and K.

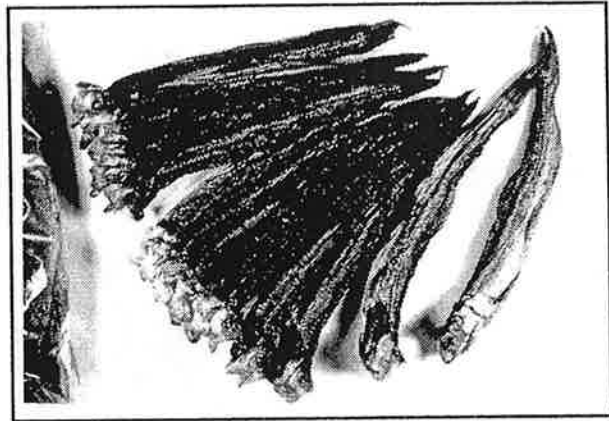


## SMOKED OOLIGANS

1. Fresh ooligans are threaded onto a kindling-size red cedar stick.

2. They are left in the smoke house 2 or 3 days.
3. After smoking, toast on open fire while you are barbecuing

Note: Ooligans when threaded must all face the same way.



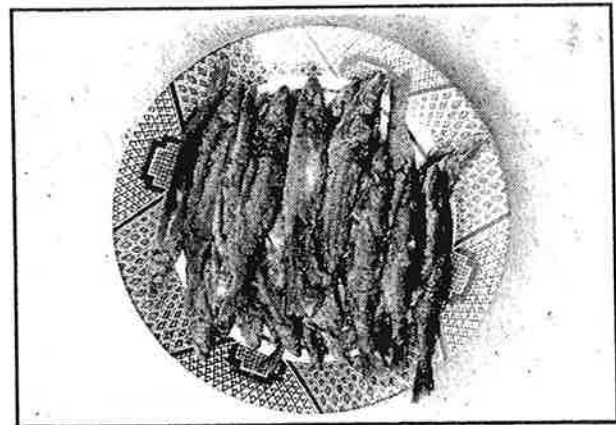
## FRIED OOLIGANS

1. Coat the fresh ooligans in flour.
2. Fry until golden brown.

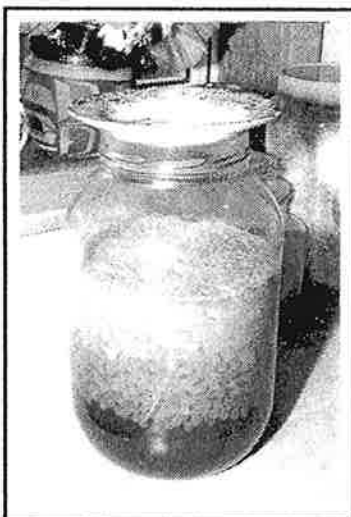
Some traditional ways of preserving the ooligans, before we had electricity, were to smoke or dry them for future use.

Smoked ooligans were placed on skunk cabbage leaves or on sticks to toast on the edge of the fire.

Dried ooligans could be put into gently boiling water for approximately 5 minutes. However, it was important not to stir, as the fish are delicate and would become mushy.



Dog salmon eggs are used to make our own form of caviar; we call them "stink eggs." Stink eggs were traditionally made by extracting the eggs from fish caught in the river. These fish were ready to spawn and the eggs were extracted by squeezing the stomach of the fish.



This method of extracting is still carried out at the salmon hatchery. It is important to pick out only perfect eggs, removing all discoloured, bloody, or bluish eggs. The eggs are then put into horse clam shells and left for 2 or 3 days before they are eaten. To quicken the process of maturing the eggs they are left by an open fire.

**STINK EGGS**

1. Extract the eggs from fish.
2. Wash very clean, remove all membrane, and wash in salt water.
3. Remove all discoloured, bloody, or bluish eggs.
4. Cover in water, let ripen 3 or 4 days.
5. Serve with ooligan grease and boiled potatoes.



**INDIAN CHEESE**

1. Eggs are left intact with membrane and washed in salt water.
2. They are hung in the smoke house for 2 days.
3. Then they are put into cedar boxes—4 layers of eggs with a board on top.

4. Rocks are put on top of the board and the eggs are left to ripen.
5. 4 days later they are ready to eat.

*Maggie Hall*



## HERRING HISTORY

Herring is another small fish that is a very important food source to many other species of fish as well as for people.

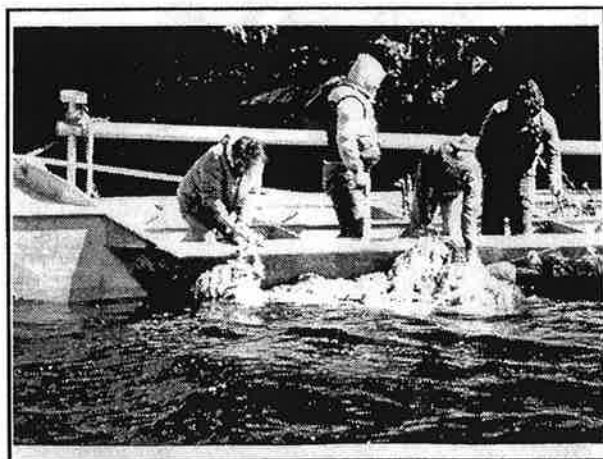
The roe from the herring is very high in protein and many other vitamins that are growth-promoting, like the vitamins we get in liver and milk.

The herring live in the ocean like the ooligan, but when the herring are going to spawn, they don't go up the same rivers as the ooligan. They come into the island bays along the coast line, from as far south as the Baja Peninsula in Mexico, all the way along the United States and British Columbia into Alaska.

The natives of BC have always harvested the herring, both for the fish and the roe. Traditionally the fish were harvested in the shallows with a wooden rake. The spawn is still harvested on hemlock branches and two types of kelp.

The herring are a major food source for many other species of life in the sea, and for this reason, when the non-natives opened the commercial herring fishery, a West Coast Elder, Moses Smith, asked our native fishermen not to participate.

*Sources: Eli Wallace, Beatrice Brown, Maggie Hall, Cecil Reid, Robert and Shirl Hall*



## MARINATED HERRING EGGS

In a large bowl, cover herring eggs with 1/2 cup soya sauce and 1/2 cup vinegar together. Refrigerate overnight. Ready to eat the next day.

*Evelyn Windsor*

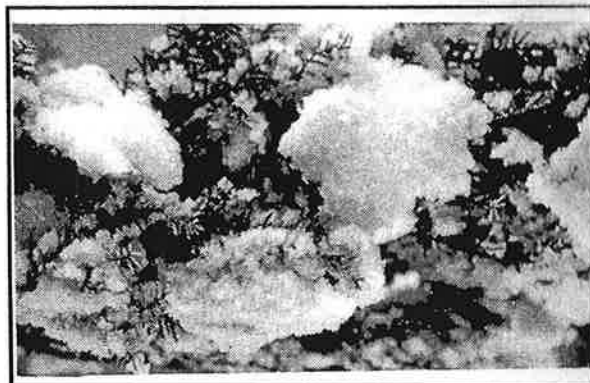
## HERRING EGGS

One whole branch or a pot full of raw herring eggs.

1/2 cup melted butter  
Add water to herring eggs  
Cook herring eggs until warm  
Remove from heat and enjoy.

May be eaten with boiled or mashed potatoes.

*Doris Hill*



## FRIED HERRING EGGS

1 big spoon of butter  
1 tsp. of garlic powder  
1 bag of herring eggs

Heat frying pan on medium heat and cook each side until herring becomes white (approx. 1 minute).

*Evelyn Windsor*



## DRIED HERRING EGGS

When drying herring eggs, they must be left on the branch and hung in the sun for several days. After this time, peel eggs off the branch and place in freezer bags. They can then be frozen over the winter

*Evelyn Windsor*

### SALTED HERRING EGGS

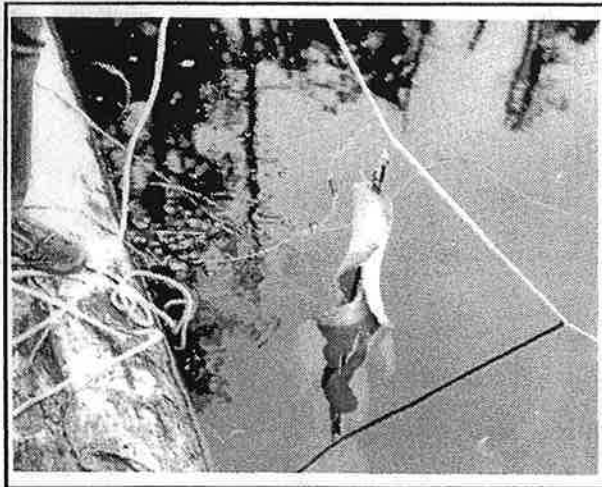
You can salt the herring eggs down for about three months, then you have to change the salt.

To salt roe on branch:

1. Peel roe off the branch into a container.
2. Completely cover each layer with salt.
3. Fill with water.
4. Store in a cool area.

For roe on kelp, leave on kelp and prepare the same way.

*Evelyn Windsor & Shirl Hall*



### FREEZING HERRING EGGS

When you freeze herring eggs, peel them off the branch, put them in freezer bags, and store in freezer for the winter.

*Evelyn Windsor*



### HERRING ROE

Fresh or fresh frozen herring eggs can be:

1. Peeled off the branches and put into a pot of scalded water. (Boiling water will cause them to become rubbery.)
2. Add a little ooligan grease or butter to the water to enhance the flavour.  
May be eaten with boiled or baked potatoes.

Alternate recipe:

Start with fresh herring left on the branch or the kelp.

1. Bring large pot of water to boil.
2. Add a little ooligan grease to the water.
3. Dunk the branches or kelp into the water just to scald them. The clear herring will turn white in minutes. It's then ready to eat.

*Shirl Hall & Doris Hill*



While the herring eggs are now salted or frozen to preserve them for winter use, the traditional method of drying them hung on branches or kelp, out in the sun and wind, is still carried out.

The late Beatrice Brown showed us how to prepare this Heiltsuk baby food using dried herring roe on hemlock branch.

1. The dried herring eggs are soaked overnight.
2. Wash and rewash to be certain all the hemlock needles are washed out.
3. The reconstituted herring is then formed into a ball for the children to chew on.

A ball, much like a popcorn ball, was formed for the children's food, which is a favoured food for babies as well. Of course this can be done with fresh herring as well, and the babies love it.

*Beatrice Brown*

## SOUPS

### CLAM CHOWDER

- 1 pint or quart jar of clams (with juice)
- 4 to 5 potatoes, peeled & chopped
- 2 to 3 carrots, sliced
- 1 large onion, diced
- 1/2 to 1 package chopped sautéed bacon

Combine the above ingredients in a medium pot of water (ingredients should be covered), bring to boiling point, lower heat, and simmer for 45 minutes to an hour.

*Y. Kathy Brown*

### CLAM CHOWDER

- 1 quart clams or 2 to 3 lbs. of fresh clean clams
- 5 to 6 potatoes, peeled & chopped
- 1 medium to large onion, chopped

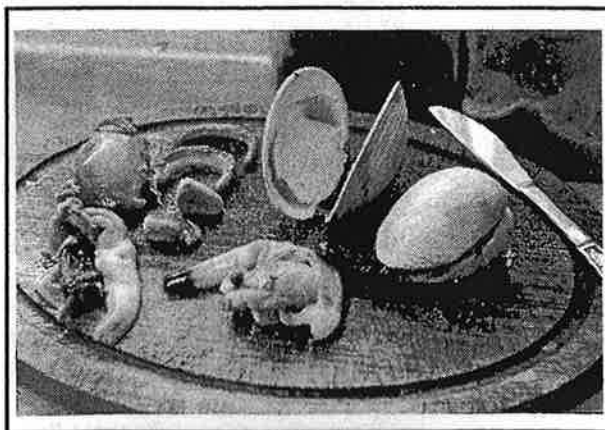
Combine the above ingredients, in a medium-size pot, with 2 to 3 cups water. Bring to a boil, lower heat, and simmer 30 minutes. Enjoy! (This is a faster method.)

see Note on page 28 on how to clean clams.

### POTATO SOUP

1. Peel & cut potatoes into thin slices.
2. In a large pot, combine potato slices with cut pieces of side bacon and onions.
3. Add water to cover.
4. Add salt and pepper to taste.
5. Bring to boil & simmer (about 2 to 4 hours) until the potatoes are mushy pulp.
6. Some people prefer more water.

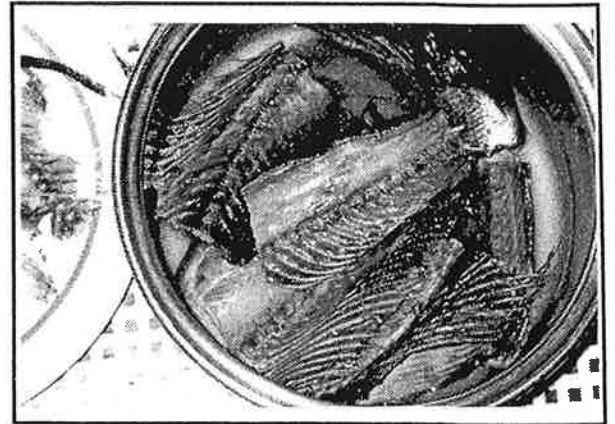
*Clarence Martin*



## FISH HEADS & TAILS

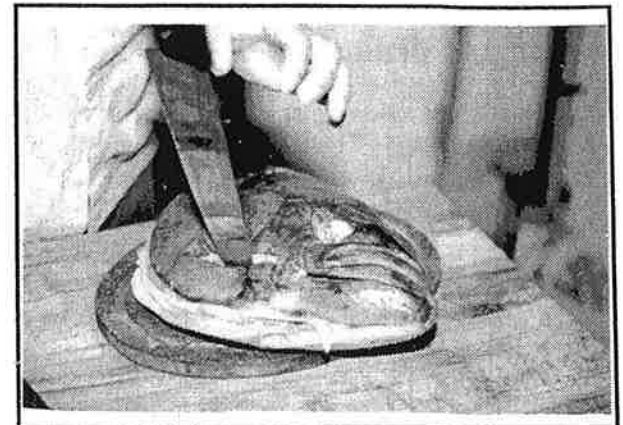
1. From heads, cut off lower jaw and gills.
2. Place cleaned heads & tails in water.
3. Add onions and boil for 15 minutes.
4. OR bake heads in oven for 30 minutes at 350°F.
5. Serve with potatoes.

*Shirl Hall*



## HALIBUT & SALMON BACKBONES

1. Hang to dry or smoke.
2. Boil until tender; about 5 minutes.
3. Serve with potatoes and grease.



## HALIBUT HEAD SOUP

1. Cut off jaw & gills, and remove eyeballs.
2. Boil with onions & backbones until fish is tender.

*Shirl Hall*

# Wild Birds

Ducks:

- |              |                                  |
|--------------|----------------------------------|
| surf scooter | (freeze, bake, broil, boil, jar) |
| mallard      | (freeze, bake, broil, boil, jar) |
| pintail      | (freeze, bake, broil, boil, jar) |
| canvas backs | (freeze, bake, broil, boil, jar) |
| widgeon      | (freeze, bake, broil, boil, jar) |

Merganser

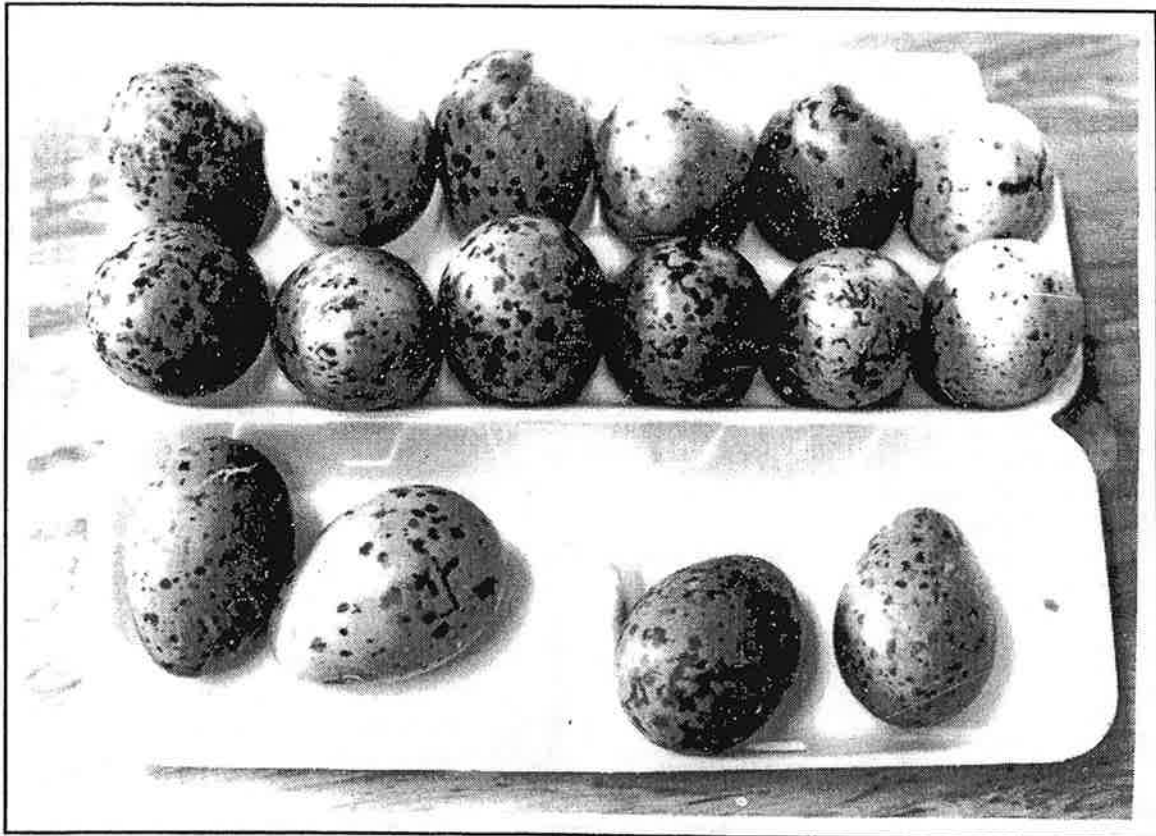
(freeze, bake, broil, boil, jar)

Canada Goose

(freeze, bake, broil, boil, jar)

Grouse

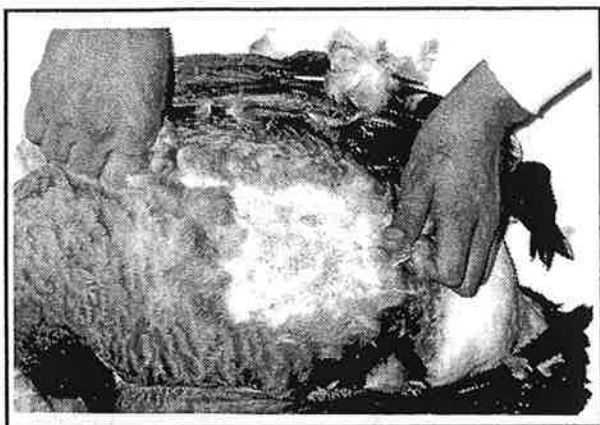
(freeze, bake, broil, boil, jar)



Seagull eggs

## HOW TO CLEAN DUCKS

1. Pluck 2 or 3 ducks (remove feathers from ducks).
2. Singe off down feathers.
3. Scrape off singed down feathers with sharp knife.
4. Chop wings off both sides of body.
5. Cut off legs from body.
6. Make a "V" cut between neck & body.
7. Break off breast bone from body.
8. Remove meat from breast bone.
9. Dice the meat into bite-size cubes for cooking.
10. Rinse blood from meat.



## DUCK SOUP

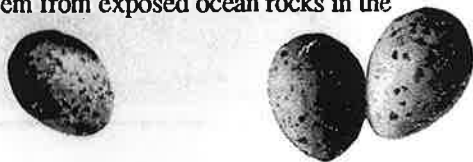
1. Put diced duck into pot with one quart of water.
2. Boil for 2 hours, add more water later.
3. Add the following ingredients:  
4 potatoes, peeled & diced  
1 onion diced  
3 celery stalks, diced  
3 carrots, diced  
1 cup cabbage, diced
4. To 1 cup of water add 3 to 4 tbsp. of flour. Add soya sauce and Tabasco sauce (for flavour).
5. Season with salt.
6. Mix with vegetables in the pot. Add gravy, and let it cook until vegetables are soft.

This is great when served with fried bread.

*Joe Hall*

## SEAGULL EGGS

Seagull eggs are very rich, make excellent cakes, and one with your morning toast is very filling. The Heiltsuk gather them from exposed ocean rocks in the spring time.



## BARBECUED WILD FOWL

Wild ducks, chicken, grouse, and other small birds are occasionally barbecued over an open fire using the following method:

1. Pluck the large feathers, then singe the smaller feathers.
2. Scrape off the singed down and scorched skin with a sharp knife.
3. Draw the bird and place small sticks inside the stomach to hold it open.
4. Barbecue the bird over an open bonfire.



*"Doctor Evelyn"*

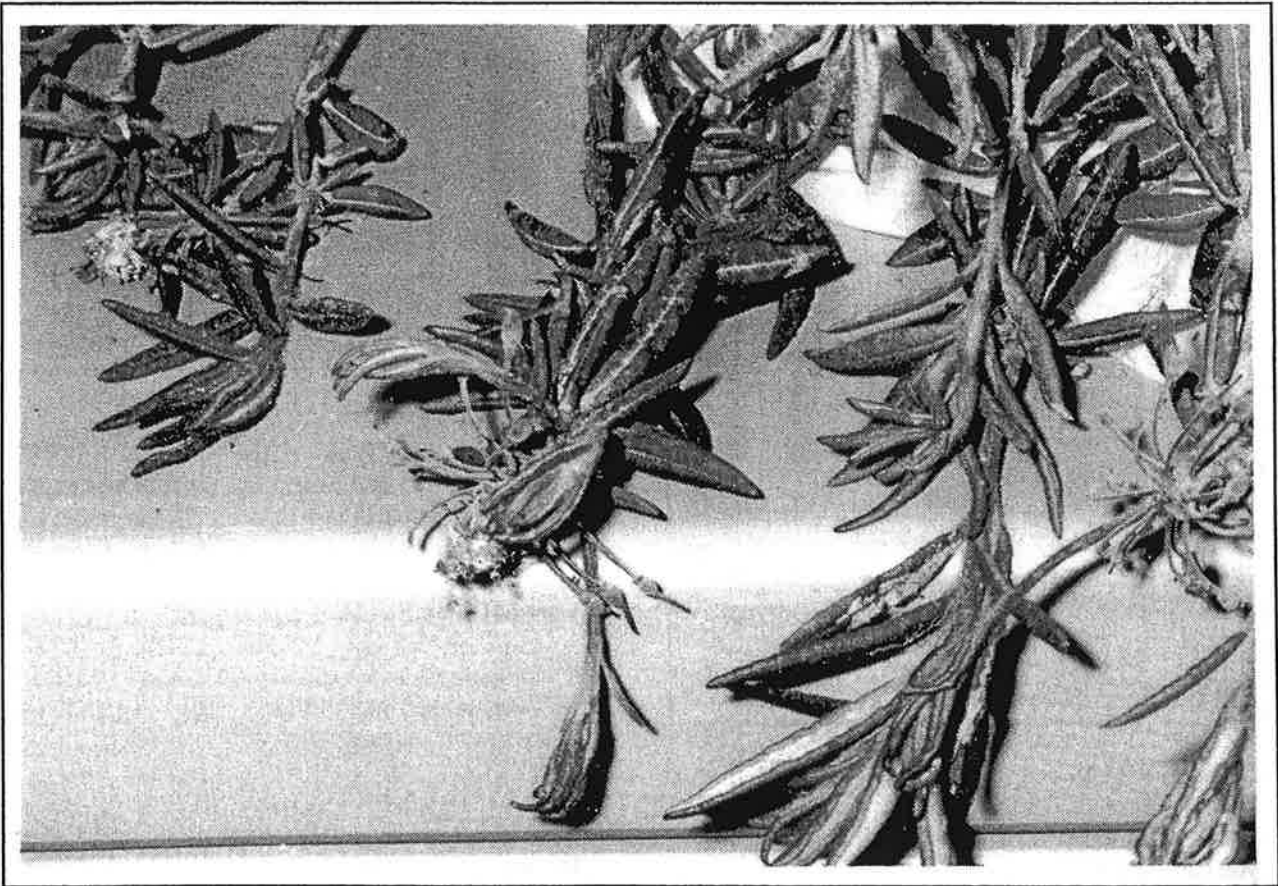
## STUFFING FOR BIRDS

1. Toast 1-1/2 loaves of bread.
2. Put it in a pan of water, then mash.
3. Add the following ingredients:  
1 onion, diced  
2 or 3 carrots, diced  
1 package of sausage, fried or baked  
1/2 to 1 lb. of melted butter  
Poultry seasoning for flavour  
1 pinch of salt for flavour
4. Mix together until a soft moist consistency.

*Ed Martin*

## Wild Edible Plants

Cow parsnip or Indian rhubarb	[fresh or dried]
Chocolate lily root or wild rice	[fresh or dried]
Clover tea	[fresh or dried]
Salmonberry shoots	[fresh or dried]
Thimbleberry shoots or sprouts	[fresh or dried]
Fern roots	[fresh or dried]
Labrador tea	[fresh or dried]
Mint tea	[fresh or dried]
Nettles	[fresh or dried]
Seaweed	[fresh or dried]



Labrador tea

**WILD RICE**

Wild rice (chocolate lily plant) grows in May/June. The rice is in the root section which is boiled until the rice comes off. This is eaten with a preparation made from the inner bark of the hemlock tree.

**LABRADOR TEA**

This tea is brewed like store-bought tea. It stimulates the appetite before meals, is a relaxant, and can be safely given to children. This tea has its own Heiltsuk name and there are many other plants that are used for vegetables and teas. These can be found listed in the Heiltsuk glossary on page 37.

**INDIAN RHUBARB**

In the spring this plant is picked and eaten as is, or you can dip it in sugar.

**HEILTSUK CANDY**

Luaq is a natural sweet made from the inner hemlock bark scrapings when the sap begins to run.

1. A taste-test patch is taken from the hemlock tree.
2. The sweetest tree is selected.
3. The inner bark is scraped off.
4. This bark is boiled with water until it thickens.

**FERN ROOT**

Fern root (4 or 5 in a pineapple), the root was cooked by the fire, the outer bark peeled off—the edible part is orange.

**CHAMOMILE TEA**

Chamomile tea is brewed like store bought tea. For the best flavour, pick this little ground-hugging plant in the heat of the day.

Most plants are eaten fresh in spring, or stored dried for winter use. Some teas are medicinal.

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# *Your Own Traditional Recipes*

# *Your Own Traditional Recipes*



# Wild Berries

## Berries

blueberries—several species	(fresh, freeze, jam/jelly)
huckleberries—several species	(fresh, freeze, jam/jelly)
blackberries	(fresh, freeze, jam/jelly)
salmonberries	(fresh, freeze, jam/jelly)
gooseberries	(fresh, freeze, jam/jelly)
high-bush cranberries	(fresh, freeze, jam/jelly)
greyberries	(fresh, freeze, jam/jelly)
salalberries	(freeze, jam/jelly)
thimbleberries	(jam/jelly)
elderberries	(jam/jelly)
crab apples	(jam/jelly, jar)
soapberries	(jam/jelly, jar)



## WILD BERRIES

Berries were picked beginning with the salmonberry in May. Blueberries, huckleberries, and salalberries were also picked.

These berries, preserved in a combination or individually, were put into a cedar box and left until the juice was extracted. The pulp, which floated to the top, was skimmed off and put on boards to form square sheets to dry in the sun.

### *Berries as dye for the cedar baskets.*

Berries were put into a box and were pounded and left overnight. They were then dried. These would turn into a sort of powder. Cedar strips were pulled through this powder on one side, then the next. This is how cedar baskets were dyed.

*Beatrice Brown*

### *Salmonberries:*

Pick and wash them in late June and in July. Squash the berries, add water, add sugar to taste, and freeze them.

To make dessert jam, add ooligan grease to taste, later in winter.

### *Huckleberries/blackberries:*

Can be made as above, but additionally you can make pancakes, muffins, pies, jam, and preserve with them as well.

### *Salalberries:*

Can be used for jam and preserving. You can mix them with red berries, sugar, and ooligan grease for dessert jam.

### *Soapberries:*

The juice from these berries is good for arthritis.

*Liz Brown*



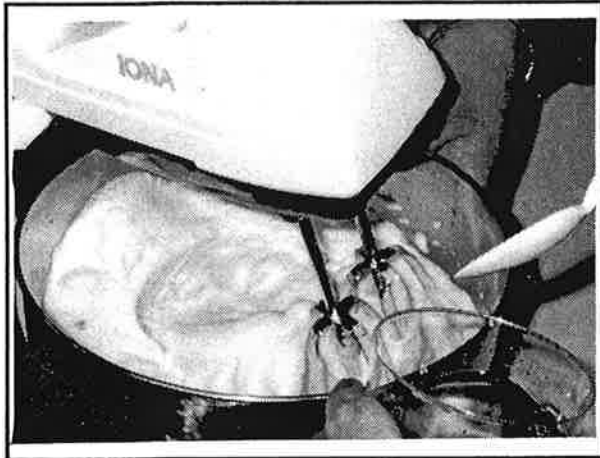
**SOAPBERRIES**

Soapberries grow on the mainland of BC in dry, open forests. Because soapberries do not grow naturally in Bella Bella or on the Haida Gwaii islands, they are one of the foods we trade with the mainland, interior people. We trade herring roe with the interior people for the soapberries and ooligan grease.

We do not eat the berries, we use them to make "Indian Ice Cream", a favorite desert for the native people all over BC.

In the days before eggbeaters, soapberries were whipped with a wooden spoon and salalberry branches. A sweet berry, like saskatoon, would be used instead of sugar.

They were preserved by drying individually or in cakes, but now we jar or freeze them.



**JAR SOAPBERRIES**

1. Wash and drain the berries.
2. Add a small amount of water but no sugar.
3. Boil the berries until they break and juice forms.
4. Pack hot into jars leaving 1/2 inch head space.
5. Adjust caps.
6. Process pints 10 minutes, and quarts 15 minutes.



**INDIAN ICE CREAM**

Make sure there is no grease on the bowl and beater. Even a trace of grease and the berries will not foam up.

Take one or two tablespoons of soapberries to an equal amount of water. Whip, adding sugar, just as you would for whipping cream. To eat, everyone gets a spoonful, and blows several bubbles with it before swallowing.

**Note:** the bowl must not be plastic.

*Shirl Hall*

**BERRY DESSERT JAM**

You will need:

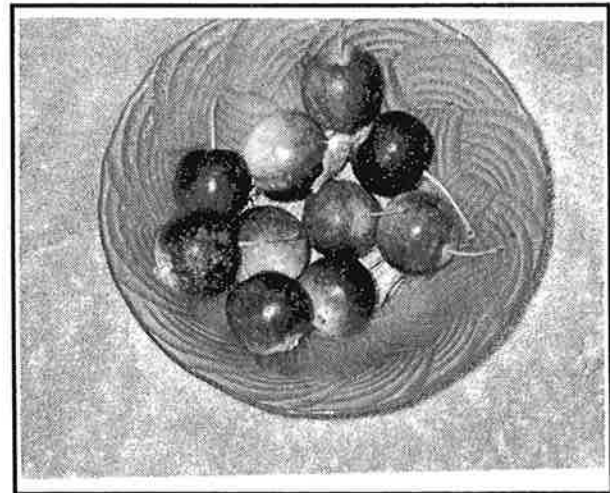
- fresh picked OR frozen blackberries
- water
- sugar
- ooligan grease (optional)

In a large bowl, mash berries. Add water and enough sugar to taste. Add ooligan grease if you like. Chill in refrigerator.

*Peggy Housty*

**BERRIES:** Freeze berries with 1/3 cup sugar; save to make berry jam.

*Peggy Housty*



**CRAB APPLES**

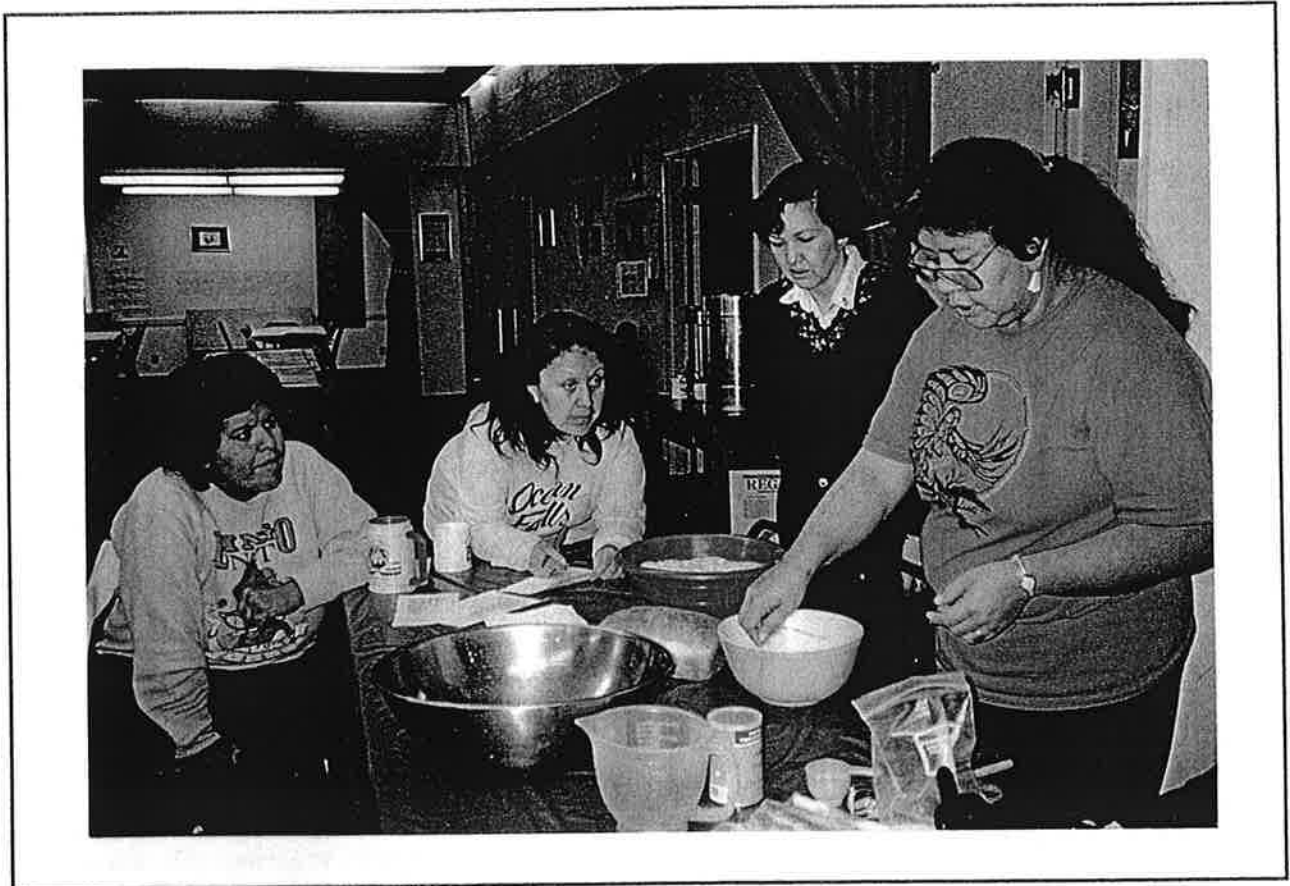
Crab apples are a delicacy that grow inland and our people had to travel far to get them. These were boiled with water and ooligan grease. They also kept well.

# Bread

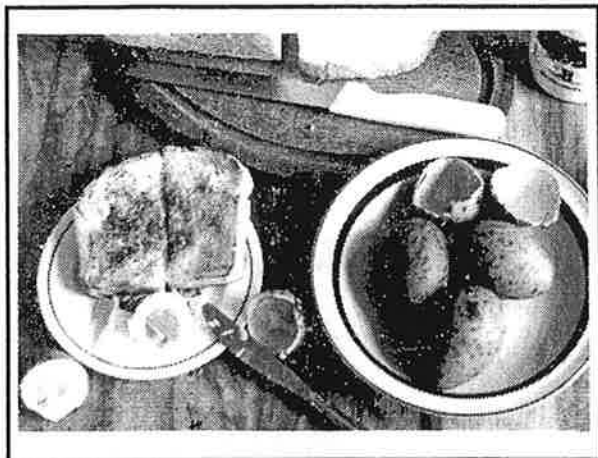
Bread made with yeast  
Fried bread made with baking powder  
Bannock or moon bread  
Pilot bread

“From all time our fathers have taken salmon from the rivers near our home,  
for dry salmon is to us what bread is to white people.”

*Bella Bella headman, 1916*



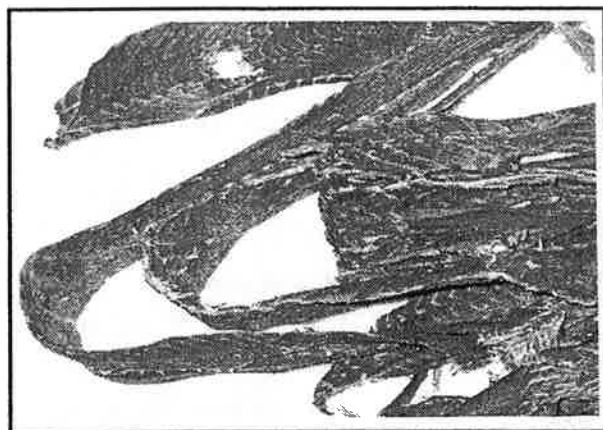
Bread has been a staple in the Heiltsuk diet for perhaps 100 years.



'Seagull eggs and toast'

### TÁLÚS

Traditionally the thin strips of dried salmon and halibut, which we call tálús, were to the Heiltsuk what bread is to other people.



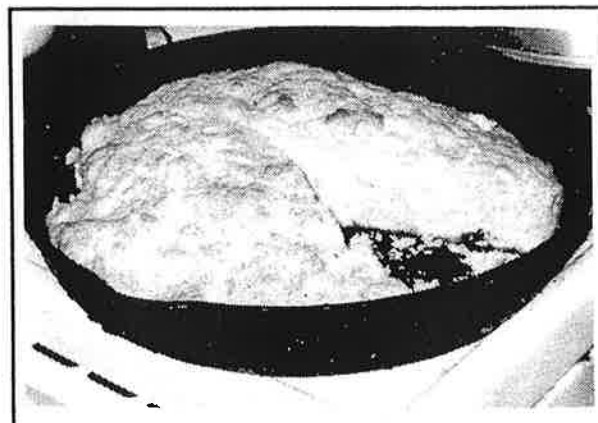
### BANNOCK

1. Make some hot coals in your open camp fire.
2. Make a well in your bag of flour, and add 1 tsp. baking powder for each cup of flour.
3. If you have a chunk of lard or bacon fat, add it to the flour. (Optional)
4. Sprinkle with salt, and mix well. Make another well and pour in a small amount of water, just enough to hold the dough together. If it's sticky, add more flour.
5. Form your dough into a full moon shape.
6. If you have a cast-iron frying pan, place your moon bread in it, and pile hot coals behind and

around the pan. If you have no pan, place the moon bread on some rocks to bake. Brown both sides slowly to allow the centre of the dough to cook and rise slightly.

*Shirl Hall*

Bannock or moon bread can be baked in an oven or cooked standing beside an open fire.



The ingredients are the same as for non-yeast fried bread.

### FRIED BREAD (non yeast)

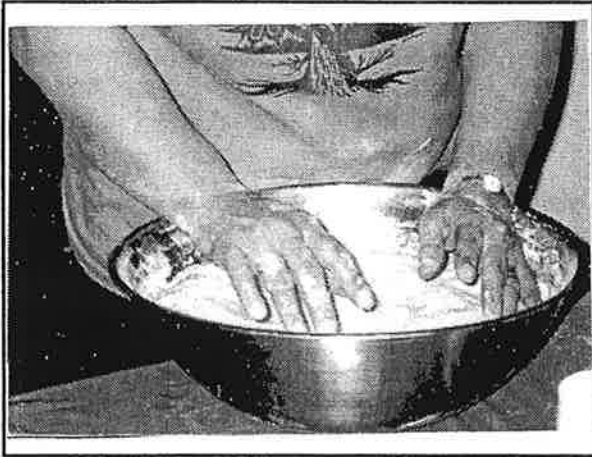
- 4 heaping cups of flour
- 1 tsp. salt
- 4 heaping tsp. of baking powder
- 2 cups COLD milk or water
- 1 tbsp. sugar (optional)
- About 1/2 to 1 cup of oil

Mix the dry ingredients together. Add milk or water only until all ingredients stick together. Mix only ONCE. Optional: may knead dough on a floured board and then use cookie cutter to cut into shapes.

Warm oil (about 1/4" deep) in frying pan (cast iron or electric) until a drop of water bubbles. Drop sticky dough by the tablespoonful into the hot oil, spreading dough as you place it in the pan.

Fry on medium heat. (Do not cook on low heat, for the dough absorbs oil and gets heavy.) Fry one side until golden, then turn and fry other side until golden (approx. 3 minutes per side). Remove from frying pan and place on paper towel or brown bag. Enjoy plain or with homemade jam or syrup.

*Kathy Brown*



### BREAD DOUGH RECIPE

#### Equipment needed:

4-cup measuring cup	Wooden spoon
Egg beater (optional)	Measuring spoon
Small bowl	Large bowl

1. In a small bowl, mix 1 cup warm water, 1 tsp. sugar, and 3 tbsp. yeast. Stir until dissolved.
2. Let sit for 10 minutes, free from draft.
3. Into a large bowl, pour 4 cups milk, 4 cups warm water, 1/2 cup sugar, and 1/2 cup oil. Add yeast mix.
4. Using an egg beater, mix in 5—8 cups flour.
5. Add 3 tps. salt.
6. Add 12 or 15 more cups of flour gradually. (You need 20 cups flour altogether.) Stir with a wooden spoon.
7. Knead 10 minutes, then let rise for 1 hour.\*
8. Punch down.
9. Put into greased pans, and let rise 1 hour.
10. Preheat oven to 350°.
11. Bake bread for 30 minutes. Remove from pan and cool on rack. Yields 8 loaves.

\* At this point you may use the dough for fried bread.

You can make fried bread with 1/2 the batter, and make only 4 loaves of bread. Shape dough into doughnut shapes with a hole in the centre. Fry in HOT deep oil and cook until golden brown on both sides. (Will rise like a doughnut.) Eat plain, with syrup, or jam.

*Judy Hall*



### FISH CAKES

1 quart or pint jar of canned salmon  
1 fried bread recipe  
Sautéed onions, celery, and carrots  
(garlic optional)

Fold the jarred salmon and sautéed vegetables into the prepared fried bread recipe. Roll into balls, then press into patties.

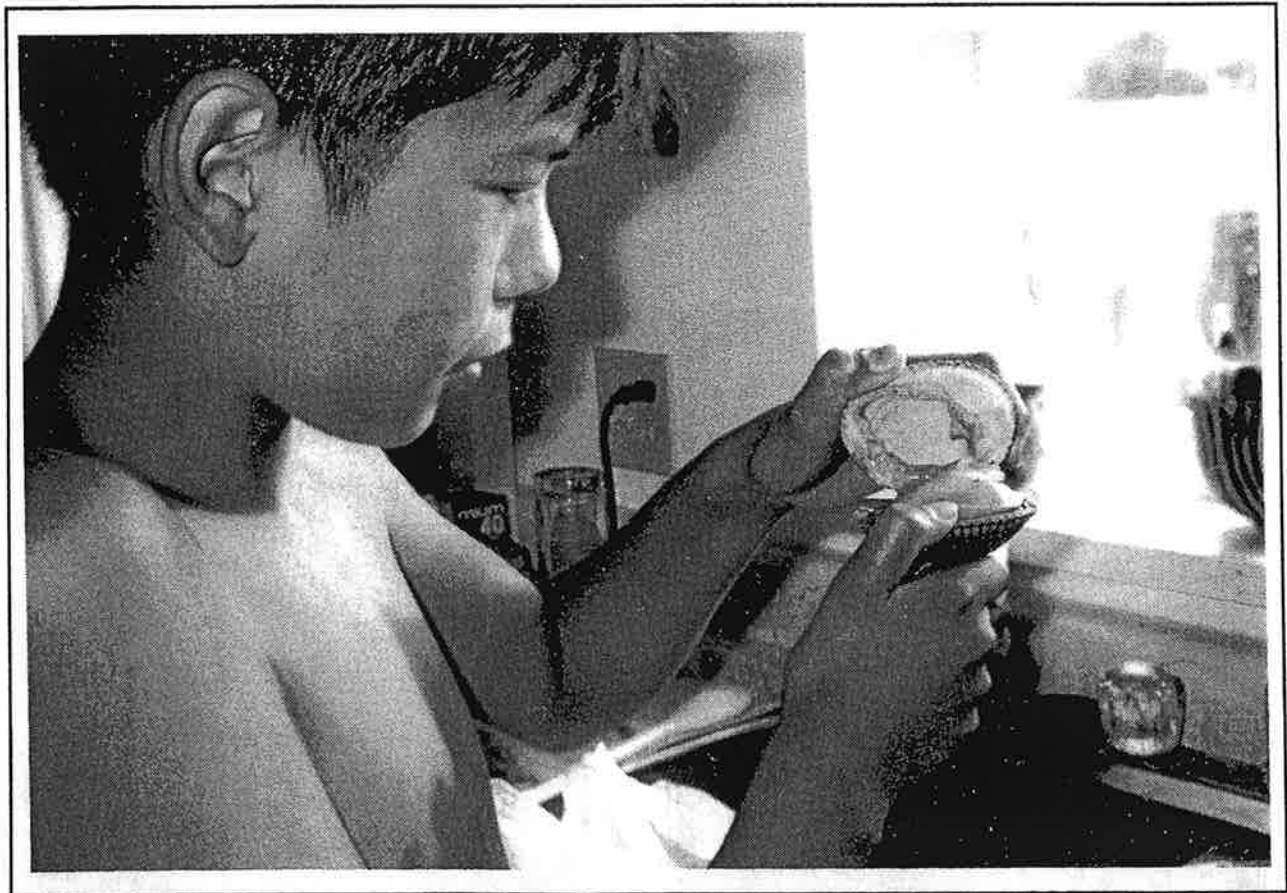
Warm frying pan on medium heat. You may use a non-stick pan with no oil, or little oil in a frying pan, or spray pan with Pam.

Fry for about 4 to 5 minutes per side.

*Kathy Brown*

# Shellfish

Abalone	(freeze, jar, pickle, fry, steam)
Clams	(freeze, jar, dry, fry, steam)
Cockles	(freeze, jar, dry, fry, steam, raw)
Crabs	(steam, freeze)
Prawns	(steam, freeze)
Chinese slippers—large Chitons	(steam, boil, raw)
Chitons—sea prunes	(boil, raw)
Oysters	(steam, bake, boil)
Mussels	(steam)
Sea Urchins	(raw, fry, boil)
Sea Cucumbers	(boil, fry)
Barnacles	(bake, steam)
Scallops	(bake, steam, raw)

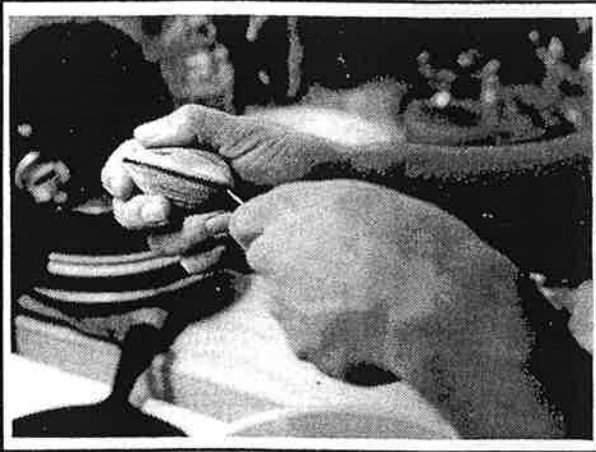


Rod Hunt with cockle

## SHELLFISH

### TO CLEAN CLAMS:

1. Slide a knife between the two shells. Cut the two abductor muscles that hold the clam closed.
2. Pull the clam meat out of the shell, and peel off the tough outer skin if horse clams are used.
3. Rinse meat and cut into half inch pieces.
4. Save the juices.

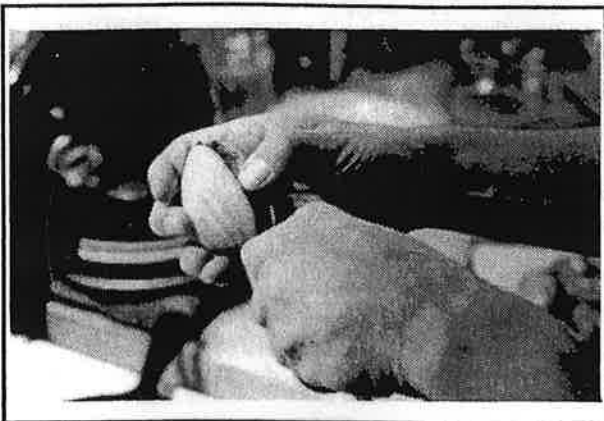


### FRITTER BATTER

1 1/2 cups of flour	3/4 tsp. salt
2 tsps. baking powder	pinch of pepper
3/4 cup milk	2 eggs

Combine dry ingredients together. Add milk, eggs, and beat until smooth. For clam fritters, add clams, juice from clams, grated carrots, potatoes, and minced onions. Mix together. Drop fritter batter by level tablespoons into hot, deep fat. As soon as they rise to the top, turn them over; turn frequently. When fritters are of a nice rich brown colour, lift them from the fat and drain on absorbent paper.

*Pat Housty*



### CLAM FRITTERS

2 cups flour	2 tsps. salt
3 tsps. baking powder	1 1/3 cups diluted milk
pepper to taste	4 eggs, well beaten
4 cups cleaned, diced clams	

Sift dry ingredients together. Add beaten eggs to milk. Pour egg mixture into flour and mix well. Add clams, mix well.

Drop into hot oil (350°). Then turn heat down low (250°), and cook slowly, browning both sides. Let drain on paper towel. Serve with rice.

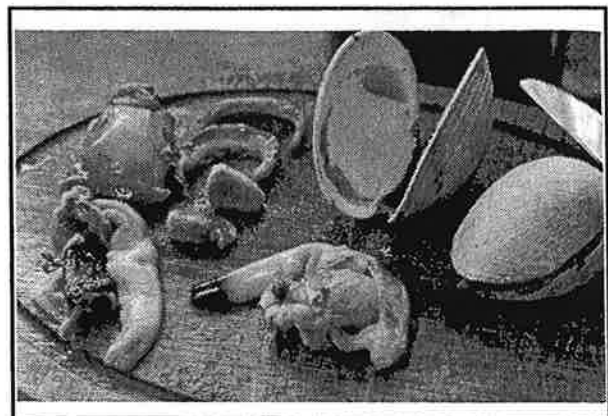
*Marie Johnson*

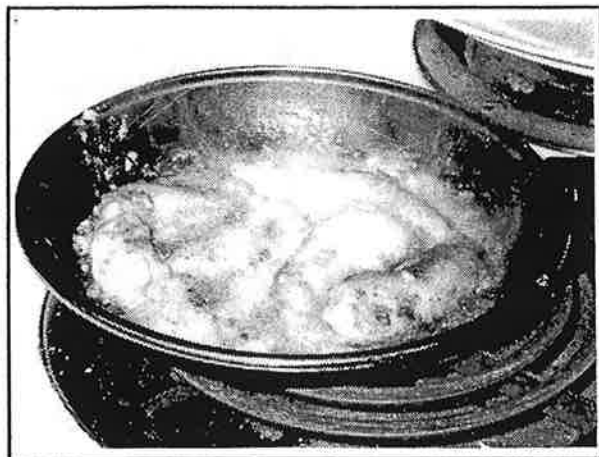
### CLAM PATTIES

Butter clams or cockles may be used to prepare clam patties. Clean the clams.

1. In a large bowl combine:
  - 1 dozen large clams, with juice
  - 1 cup chopped onion
  - 1/2 cup finely chopped cabbage
  - 1/2 cup finely chopped celery
2. Then add the following to the clam-vegetable mixture:
  - 1 cup of flour
  - 1 tsp. baking powder
  - 1 tsp. salt
3. Stir only enough to blend. The consistency should resemble pancake batter; if too thick add milk; if too thin add flour. An egg may be added if desired.
4. Drop mixture by spoonfuls into hot, well-greased fry pan. Flatten each spoonful and brown on each side.
5. Serve with potatoes and vegetables.

*Beatrice Brown*





**CLAMS IN GRAVY**

1. Drain juice from clams, and set aside to add to the thickened gravy.
2. Cut clams into small pieces.
3. Prepare the flour and water for the gravy (see below).
4. Into a large fry pan add a small amount of oil or bacon drippings.
5. Stir-fry chopped onions and the clams.
6. Add water and flour mix. Keep stirring so it won't stick to the pan.
7. Add clam juice. This will likely make the gravy salty enough.
8. Add salt and pepper to taste (optional); add curry powder to taste.

Can be served over a bed of rice with colourful vegetables like peas or carrots.

**\*Gravy mix**

Into a 1/3 cup of flour, mix water to fill cup, then stir out all the lumps.

*Maggie Hall*



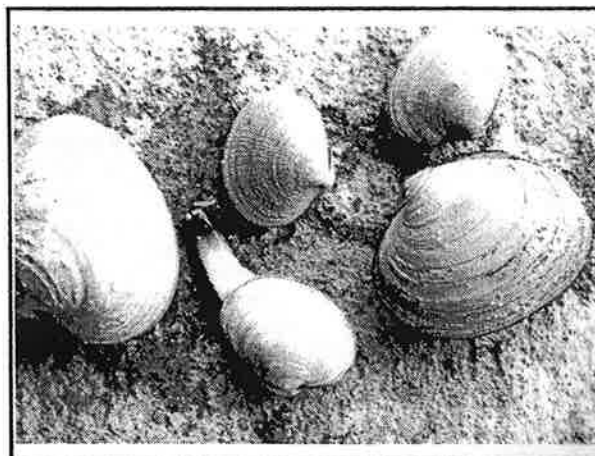
**FRIED CLAMS or COCKLES**

1. Put 1-1/2 cups flour in a small bowl. Season with 1/2 tsp. salt, 1/2 tsp. pepper, and garlic salt (optional).
2. Mix together.
3. Put burner on high. Use cast iron or steel frying pan with about 1/4 to 1/3 cup of Crisco.
4. Take washed clams, dip in flour.
5. Lower heat to medium.
6. Sprinkle flour or a drop of water in frying pan to test if hot enough.
7. Fry clams. (Stay away from the frying pan; it's hot! Use a screen if available.)
8. Cook on one side for about 2 to 3 minutes (until golden in colour).
9. Turn, cook till golden on the other side.

*Basil Windsor*



Clam juice, extracted from the boiled clams, was traditionally used as a drink for babies as fruit juice is used today.



## SMOKED CLAMS

1. Rinse off freshly gathered clams.
2. Steam clams in pot until they open.
3. Remove clams from shell and place in a bowl.
4. Take juice from the steamed clams and strain to remove the sand. For every 2 cups of clam juice, add 2 cups of fresh water. (Taste to make sure the juice is not too strong.)
5. Pour this juice over the cleaned clams and stir.
6. Strain clams. (You may also drink this juice.)
7. Lace the flavoured clams on thin cedar sticks, 12 to 15 inches in length, making sure the clams are spaced so they do not stick together.
8. Hang sticks in the smoke house, in the formation of a square, at least 6 feet or more above the fire.
9. Smoke the clams one full day for 1/2 smoked, 2 full days for fully smoked. (3 days at the very most if you want it very dry. When it is this dry you can store it in your kitchen, or bag it and freeze it. Test after 2 days; may be dry enough to store.)

The duration of smoking time depends on the quality of the smoke house; if it is airtight; and the time of year you are smoking. For if it is in the winter months it is harder to keep the smoke house fire going. This same method may be used for smoking horse clams and cockles.

Eat fresh, or jar, or freeze.

Mary says they used to take this delicacy out on the boat or on hunting trips, for it is very filling. One may make their sticks a year ahead of time so the odour will not be so strong. Mary also makes her tálús sticks ahead of time, or saves them to use again the following year(s).

*Mary Hunt*

### Note:

To clean fresh clams of sand, soak the clams in a bucket or tub full of salt water and pour corn meal on top of the water. The clams eat the corn meal, and this is what is left in their stomachs instead of sand.

*Shirl Hall*



### SEA URCHIN—large purple variety

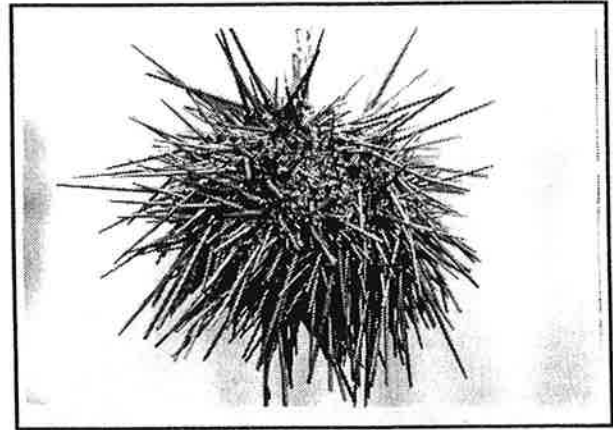
1. These are picked at the lowest tide.
2. The shell is chopped in half.
3. The edible parts are orange.
4. They are best eaten raw, but they can be quick-fried.

### SEA URCHINS

Quick-fried method:

Fry like an egg in garlic butter, black-bean sauce, oyster sauce, or soya sauce. It will firm like an egg. Delicious with rice.

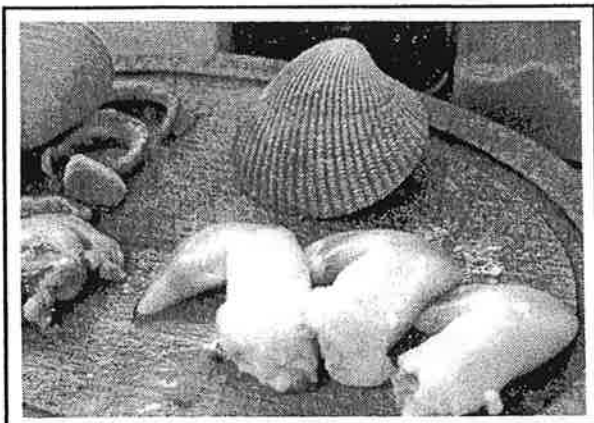
*Frank Brown*



### SEA URCHINS—small green variety

1. Pick at lowest tide.
2. Steam in the shell, or eat raw.

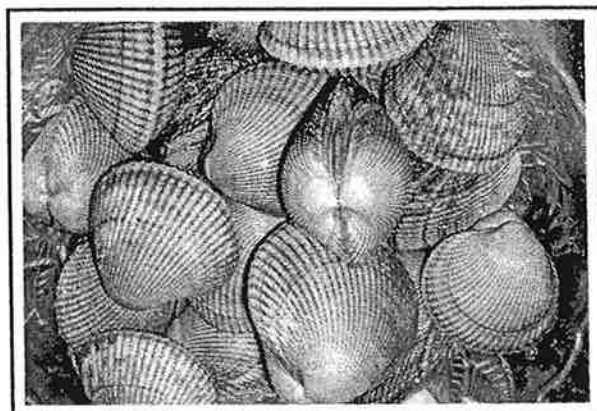




**COCKLES**

Use the same flour recipe and cook cockles the same as the clams. [page 27]

*Basil Windsor*



**COCKLES**

- 1 clove of garlic or garlic ginger oil
- 1/4 cup butter or margarine (cover pan)
- 6 whole or butterfly cockles



**FRIED COCKLES IN SHELL**

1. Wash and open cockle.
2. Leave cockle on half shell.
3. Into a frying pan with butter and garlic.
4. Place cockle under its shell.
5. Heat should be medium high.
6. Be sure to cover pan; I didn't once-the cockle jumped right out of the pan!
7. In a few minutes they are ready to eat.

*Rod Hunt*



1. Warm frying pan, melt butter, sauté chopped fresh garlic clove.
2. Add cockles, flour coated or without.
3. Cockles can be left whole or butterfly cut.
3. Cook until golden brown.

**Note:** garlic powder may be added to flour, or garlic oil used instead of fresh garlic.

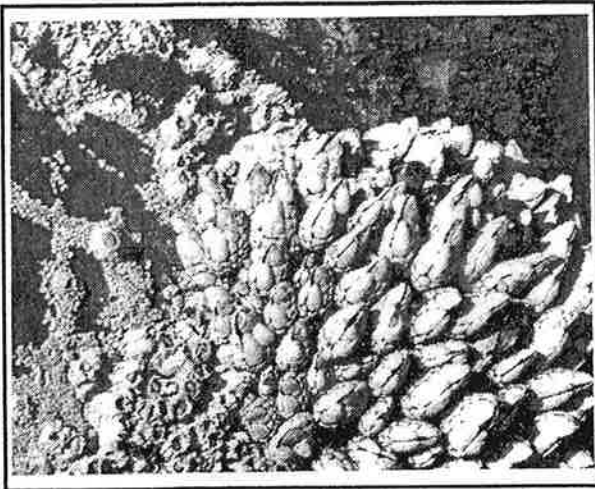
*Basil Windsor*



## BARNACLES

Although not commonly used now, barnacles used to be eaten often. Barnacles are found in clusters firmly attached to rocks. They are enclosed in hard, white shells that may become an inch long. Three ways to cook barnacles are:

- A)
1. Build a fire close to a rock with barnacles on it.
  2. When the rock gets hot the barnacles are loosened.
  3. Often salt water was sprinkled on the rock so that the steam would help loosen the shells.



4. When the barnacles are cooked, they are removed from the rock. The meat inside is pushed out of the large end of the shell with a pointed stick.
5. The cooked meat is eaten immediately.

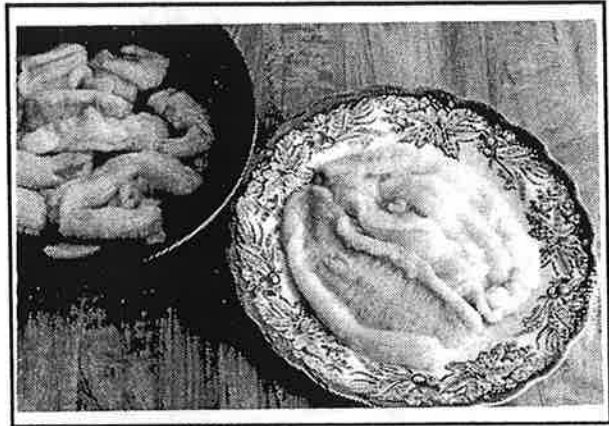
- B)
1. Use a sharp knife and cut the barnacles off the rock.
  2. Cook on a hot rock near the fire; sprinkle with salt water.
  3. The heat of the rock and the fire will cook the barnacles.

- C)
1. Take home and steam in salted water for 5 to 10 minutes.

*Beatrice Brown*

## SEA CUCUMBERS

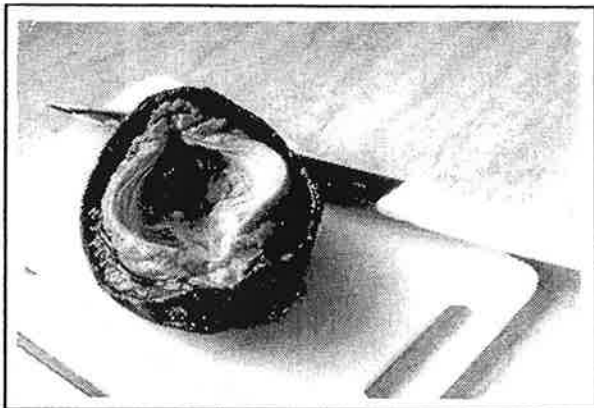
Sea cucumbers are found below the low tide in deep water. They may be buried in sand or hidden under rock ledges. These soft sea animals are approximately nine inches in length and resemble a garden cucumber. Sea cucumbers should be prepared soon after gathering as they begin to bloat after being removed from the ocean.



1. String a few cucumbers on a thin, cedar stick by pushing the stick through their heads.
2. Push the cucumbers to one end of the stick and, holding the other end, rub the cucumbers over the barnacles to scrape off their outer skin.
3. Cut off the heads beneath the "flower" where the sea cucumbers are smallest.
4. Squeeze out the viscera.
5. Boil the cucumbers until they are tender, approx. one hour in a large saucepan.
6. Slit the body lengthwise and rinse the meat in cold water.

Some of the Bella Bella people said they ate the whole cucumbers; others preferred only the white noodle-like tissue running lengthwise inside the body.

*Beatrice Brown*

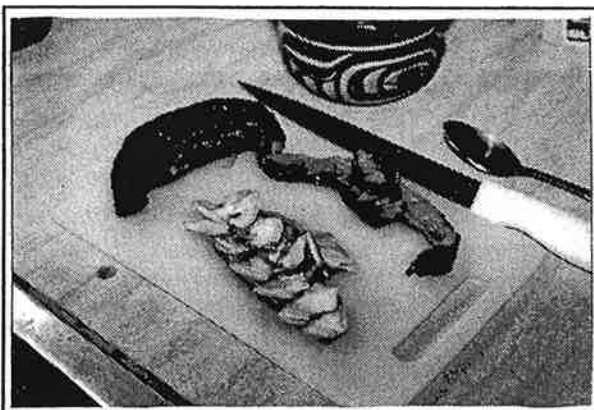


**CHINESE SLIPPERS (large chitons)**

1. Cut open and remove guts.
2. Drop in boiling water, cook about 5 minutes and drain.
3. Break open and remove shell spine. The rest is ready to eat.

They may also be eaten raw by removing the butterfly shell and beating meat until soft.

*Shirl Hall*



**PRAWNS**

Prawns are sea animals that occasionally are part of the First Nations diet.

**TO PREPARE:**

1. Slip off the heads.
2. Steam for 5 to 10 minutes.
3. When cool enough to hold, pull the shell from the meat.
4. Serve a bowl of steamed prawns with a bowl of ooligan grease. Dip meat in the grease before eating.

If desired, the prawn meat may be dipped in pancake batter and deep-fried in vegetable oil.

*Maggie Robinson*

**PEPPERED PRAWNS**

- 1/2 cup olive oil (or vegetable)
- 1/2 cup butter or margarine
- 1/4 cup lemon juice
- 3 to 4 large garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tbsp. rosemary (not powder)
- 1 tsp. thyme
- 1 to 3 tbsps. black pepper

Put all ingredients in cooking pot, and simmer for 5 minutes. Add prawns, stirring occasionally. Cook until prawns are bright pink. The sauce is excellent on rice.

*Eddie Wilson*

**FRESH-CAUGHT CRABS**

Live crabs are covered in salted water and brought to a boil. After boiling for 13 minutes, drain and serve.

*Shirl Hall*



**CRAB (OPTIONAL)**

If you have red cod meat, you can mix it with your crab meat. It will turn all the cod into crab meat. Makes nice meat for open-faced sandwiches.

*Shirl Hall*

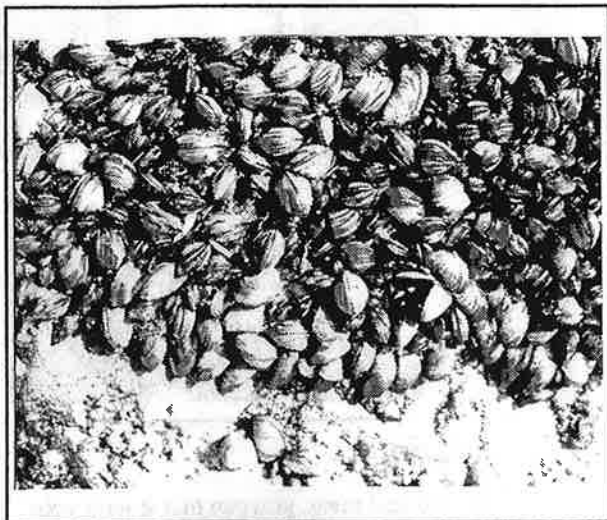


### STEAMED MUSSELS

Clams, cockles, and mussels are steamed in the same way:

1. Wash any sand off the outer shell.
2. Boil water in the bottom of a covered pot.
3. The steam will open the shells.
4. The juice from the bottom is a tasty drink.
5. Dip the meat into butter.
6. Eat straight from the shell.

*Shirl Hall*



### FRESH HORSE CLAMS

Freshly harvested horse clams:

1. Build a pit-fire on the beach to create hot coals.
2. Pile the horse clams onto the hot coals.
3. Cover horse clams with non-edible seaweed found all over the beach— the Indian Fire Cracker type.\*
4. Allow the horse clams to steam.
5. Invite everyone down to the beach to eat.
6. Dip in ooligan grease.

\* It has little lobed sacks that pop when you step on them; called "Sea Wrack" in Nancy Turner's book *Plants In British Columbia Indian Technology*. We call them Indian fire crackers.

*Maggie Hall*



## ABALONE

The abalone, a highly prized Heiltsuk food, was pried from the exposed ocean rocks at the biggest tides of the year. In June, the largest of the abalone would come up for a sun tan. Only the largest of the abalone were picked. In the early 1970's the Heiltsuk still brought home wash-tubs full.

By 1975 the Heiltsuk people were seeing their abalone food stocks endangered. The commercial harvesters, who did not wait for the tides, were dropping divers from helicopters for the same day delivery to their markets. Heiltsuk band members petitioned the Dept. of Fisheries to place a moratorium on the abalone harvesting in Heiltsuk tribal territory, or at least limit the size that could be taken. The size was limited, but soon the commercial harvesters were finding the supply depleted. In 1979 the moratorium was put in place and is still in effect, but poaching continues where some are found.

### TO CLEAN ABALONE

1. Only the large foot muscle of the abalone is eaten. Cut the muscle from the shell or pull it out.
2. The insides usually will remain attached to the shell when the meat is removed. If any of the entrails remain on the meat, wash them off under cool running water. Also cut off siphon and any green matter left on the meat.
3. Scrub off the black outer skin attached to the rim of meat. Soaking the abalone in salted water will make removal of the black outer skin easier, but soaking is not essential for cleaning.

### ABALONE CHOP SUEY

1 pint of abalone, thinly sliced  
 reserve the juice from the abalone\*\*  
 1 carrot, 1 stalk celery, thinly sliced  
 1/2 onion, quartered  
 1 red pepper, coarsely chopped  
 1 cup each of broccoli & cauliflower, cut into small fleurettes

\*\* mix together reserved juice, 1 tsp. soya sauce, and 3 tbsp. cornstarch. Set aside.

In a large fry-pan, heat 2 tbsp. oil. Sauté carrots and cauliflower until crispy. Add remaining vegetables along with 2 tsp. soya sauce, and 2 tsp. ginger. Add abalone, but do not stir. Make a well in the centre and add reserved liquid. Boil until thickened, toss everything together, and cover. Turn off heat and let sit for 5 minutes. Serve with rice.

*Pat Housty*

## STEAMED ABALONE

1. Put fresh abalone, shell attached, in a large sauce pan.
2. Cover bottom of pan with 1/2 inch fresh water.
3. Cover & cook the abalone slowly for 15 minutes.
4. Clean according to preceding instructions.
5. Cut meat into small cubes. Cook with vegetables in a small amount of fat as follows:  
 1/4 cabbage, chopped; 2 carrots, grated;  
 1 medium onion chopped.

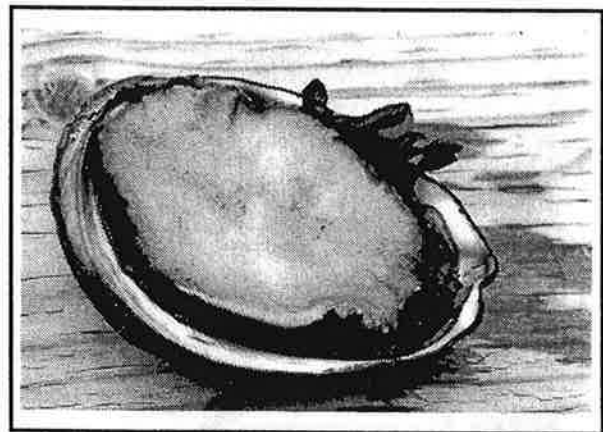
When half cooked, add the diced abalone and continue cooking until the vegetables are ready and the abalone is hot. Serve with rice.

*Ed Hunt*

## ABALONE STEAKS

1. Place cleaned abalone between 2 layers of towelling to keep from slipping.
2. Pound vigorously with rolling pin to tenderize the meat.
3. Dip the steaks in bread crumbs or pancake mix.
4. Fry in oil 1 or 2 minutes on each side. Do not overcook as this will toughen the steaks.

*Ed Hunt*



## PICKLED ABALONE

1. Steam abalone.
2. Cut meat into 1/4 inch strips.
3. Fill quart jar with meat, then add 1 cup soya sauce, and 1 cup white vinegar.
4. Cover the jar loosely & refrigerate overnight.

Abalone prepared in this manner & kept in the fridge makes delicious snacks for the next few days. When abalone has been eaten, more can be pickled in this same manner.

*Gertie White*

# Wild Game

Beaver	(freeze, bake, fry, boil)
Deer	(freeze, bake, broil, boil, smoke, jar)
Black bear	(freeze, bake, boil)
Mountain goat	(freeze, bake, broil, boil, smoke, jar)

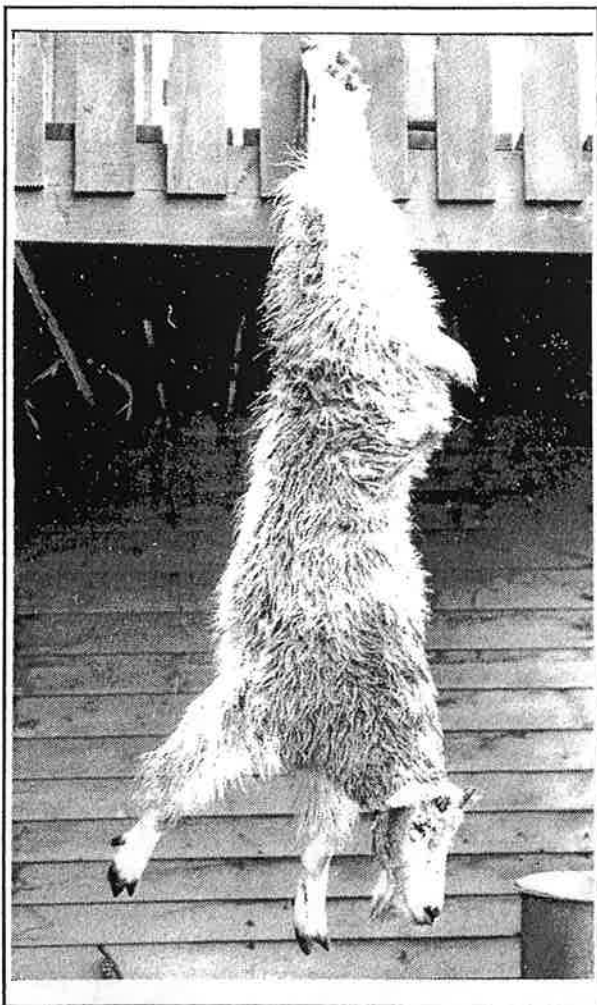


Dorothy Walkus and Madeline Hall prepare deer meat

## MOUNTAIN GOAT AND DEER

Mountain goat and deer were sought after in November—said to be the best month for these because they were "fat".

To preserve the goat meat, boil for about 10 minutes, then smoke it in chunks along with the ribs. Deer was prepared in the same manner. It could also be thinly sliced and smoked. It was smoked for 3 or 4 days.



### DEER FAT

Deer fat is a solid white fat which may be used in cooking and baking. Fat may be rendered from deer or other animals.

*Beatrice Brown*



### ROASTED DEER

The hind quarter of a young deer is often oven-roasted. The method is as follows:

1. Season the meat with salt.
2. Rub the top of the roast with shortening or oil and place in a tightly covered roaster. Cook the meat 20–25 minutes per pound in a 350°F oven.
3. Potatoes, onions, and carrots may be added one hour before the end of the cooking time.
4. Pour the juices over the meat (no thickening added) and serve with the cooked vegetables.

*Maggie Robinson*

### WILD MEAT STEW

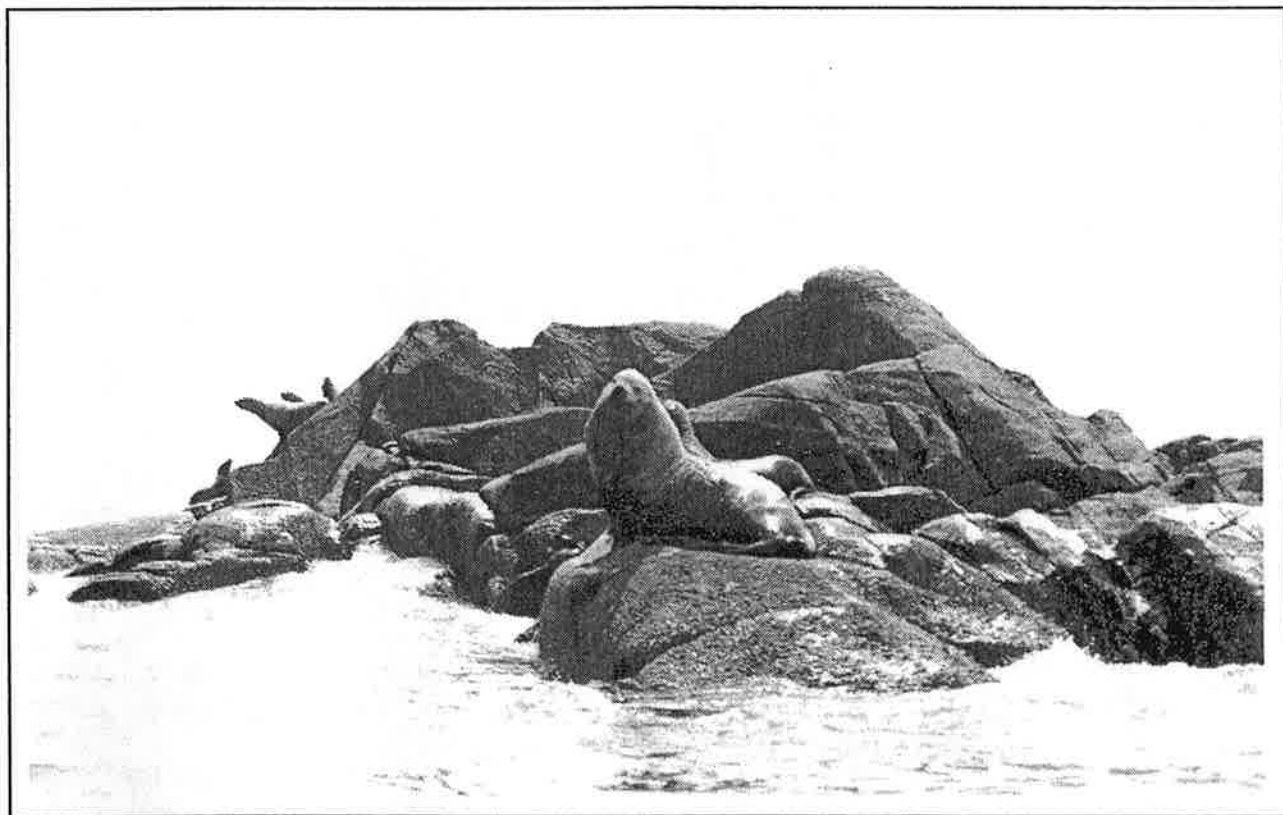
Fresh deer, bear, rabbit, or porcupine may be stewed with vegetables to make a delicious main dish. This stew can also be canned.

1. Cut meat into 1 inch cubes (rabbit & porcupine are cut into pieces like chicken or a duck), and brown in 1 or 2 tbsp. of deer, bear, or moose fat.
2. Add 1/4 cup water and salt to taste. Simmer until meat is nearly cooked.
3. Add diced carrots, onions, celery, & potatoes. Continue cooking until the vegetables are tender.

*Maggie Robinson & Gertie White*

## *Sea Mammals*

Seal	(freeze, bake, boil-esp. flippers)
Sea lion	(freeze, bake, boil-esp. flippers, fry)
Octopus	(freeze, bake, boil, pickle, fry)



**SEALS**

Seals are often fairly close to the coastal communities throughout the year. Because seal is so readily available, it is not usually preserved but is shared throughout the community. Small amounts of seal meat may be smoked or half smoked. Some of the elders still render the seal oil as they prefer it to vegetable shortenings used by younger people.

**TO RENDER:**

1. Skin the seal.
2. Remove the entrails.
3. Cut the blubber or fat from the animal. All meat pieces should be separated from fat to prevent discoloration of the fat.
4. Soak the fat in cold water until all of the fat has been removed from the animal.
5. Cut the fat into two-inch chunks.
6. In a heavy, covered kettle, heat the fat very slowly. This prevents cooking the fat before the oil is removed.
7. Scoop the oil, as it collects on the surface, into another pot.
8. To sterilize the oil, bring it to a boil and simmer for 10 minutes. Pour the oil into sterilized jars. Seal and store the jars in a dark cool place.
9. Seal oil may be used in cooking, or as a dip for fried fish.

*Beatrice Brown*

**CURRIED SEAL MEAT**

1. Cut seal meat into small pieces with a strip of fat left on.
2. In a large fry pan, stir-fry seal meat and onions.
3. Add flour, then water, to pan to make gravy; OR add gravy mix\*.
4. Add salt, pepper, and curry powder to taste.
5. Serve with rice.

**\*Gravy mix:**

In a 1/3 cup of flour  
mix with water to fill cup  
stir out the lumps

*Clarence Martin & Shirl Hall*

**TO COOK SEAL MEAT PLAIN**

1. Soak seal meat in brine one or two days prior to cooking.
2. Cut into small pieces as you would for stew meat.
3. Boil, with onions, for about an hour.
4. Seal meat is tender and will not need to simmer for as long as beef does.
5. Serve with rice or potatoes.

**SMOKED SEAL & SEAL OIL**

Seal meat was cut into squares and hung with the ribs to smoke for 2 or 3 days. This kept well for the winter.

Seal fat was rendered for the same purposes as the ooligan oil.

1. To cook the smoked seal meat, boil it for about 1 hour.
2. Cut fat into 1-1/2 inch cubes.
3. Boil and skim off oil.



**SOME OF THE SEASONAL FOOD GATHERING OF THE HEILTSUK NATION**

*Chart designed by Lynne Davis and Cameron Brown, with assistance of Beverly E. Brown, Cyril Carpenter reproduced by Heiltsuk Cultural Education Centre ~ Copper Logo © Heiltsuk Tribal Council, by permission all rights reserved Davis Brown Consulting*

HEILTSUK FOOD GATHERING CHART

prepared by Clarence Martin of the Heiltsuk Cultural Education Centre © 1992.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Mink and Otter												
Fur Seal												
Herring, herring roe												
Seaweed												
Abalone												
Halibut												
Spring salmon												
Sockeye salmon												
Coho and pink salmon												
Dog salmon (Chum)												
Clams—butter, little neck, horse												
Cockles												
Sea eggs, Mussels												
Sea cucumber												
Cod—red, ling, rock, black												
Seal and Sealion												
Crabs												
Goat and Deer												
Goose and Sawbill duck												
Black ducks												
Cedar—bark, branch, root												
Plants—wild edible												
Medicinal plants												
Ooligans (Bella Coola and Rivers Inlet)												

According to information gathered from Mary Hunt, Ena Bell, and Granny Maggie Hall: There was no limit on the amount of food gathered up until 1940. The Heiltsuk started to jar food in 1945; before this time everything was preserved by drying. Before the 1900s there was no plastic, string, or rope, so everything was stored in cedar root cellars or bent boxes lined with cedar branches. There was so much snow in the 1920s that the people used snow to store their food. In 1979, there was a moratorium placed on abalone which is still in effect today, 1996. After the opening of Alcan the Haisla were unable to get ooligans for grease. Kinimaat (Haisla) grease was a favourite of the Heiltsuk. Today, the Heiltsuk continue to trade with the Nuxalk, Nisga'a, and Haisla (they moved to the Kemano river) for their grease.

### HEILTSUK PROTOCOL and FOLKLORE

*Excerpt from Heiltsuk Elders Meeting, March 3, 1995*

*Mary Hunt*

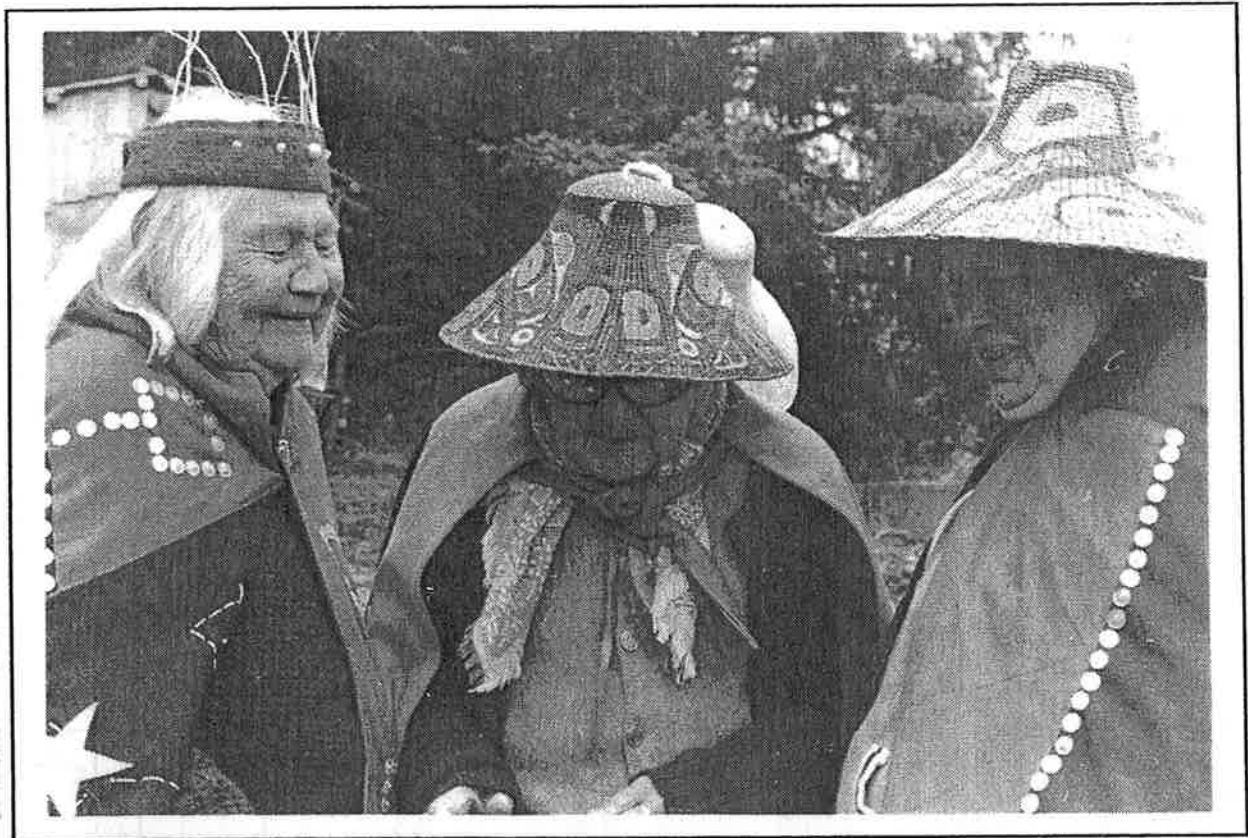
Never make fun of anything—not even a little bug, or a little bird.  
Some children mistreated a little frog; throwing it; they told the little frog not to come back. When they were sleeping, the frogs came in large number to attack.

Never make fun of anything . . . there is a mother and frog story about this belief.

\*\*\*\*\*

- Do not step on the harmless sea life that live on the rocks, it will make it rain.
- If you think about porpoises or whale it will draw them near.
- Plan to share the products of your labour, otherwise it will turn sour in your body.
- Share your supplies with poorer relatives and visitors, you will be repaid if and when you need it.
- Widows, widowers, and menstruating women are not to travel to the resource gathering areas, if they do it will cause the resource to fail.
- Do not kill what you cannot eat, it will bring bad luck.
- Be thankful to the Creator for the resources you are harvesting.
- Listen to the elders, they know the easiest and proper way to do things.
- Work hard, the tides and seasonal cycles do not wait.
- In spring the waters are milky with new life, the bottom fish cannot see your jigger.
- Good luck incantations are in order, like “hit em on the head” etc.

*Collected by David Gladstone, Bella Bella Community School Curriculum Project, 1982.*



Eva Starr

Hannah Hall

Nancy Wilson

\*\*\*\*\*

If the red salmon berries are most plentiful it means the sockeye salmon will be plentiful also.  
If the orange salmon berries are most plentiful it means the pinks and dog salmon will be plentiful.  
Lots of robins around means there will be lots of pink salmon.

*Source: Cyril Carpenter, Bella Bella*



Pauline Waterfall and Beatrice Brown.

© Shirl Hall, April 1982

**A Special Acknowledgment:**

The Bella Bella students and educators owe a debt of gratitude to the legacy of the late Beatrice Brown, "Hilistis." She has left us an extensive body of knowledge in all areas of Heiltsuk life. In 1982, Pauline Waterfall (who now carries the name "Hilistis") recorded, for her grandmother Beatrice Brown, information and recipes at a "Traditional Food Workshop". Beatrice Brown's "Bella Bella Food Cycle", which Shirl Hall photo-documented, has been an invaluable resource to the creation of this booklet.

Pauline has for the last eighteen years been the director of the Heiltsuk College and has carried on the traditions of her grandmother through the medium of education. We, the community of Waglisla, and the student body of the Heiltsuk College, wish to thank Pauline for her dedication and commitment in administering funds and resources in order for us all to continue to pursue our dreams and goals. Giaxsixa Pauline!