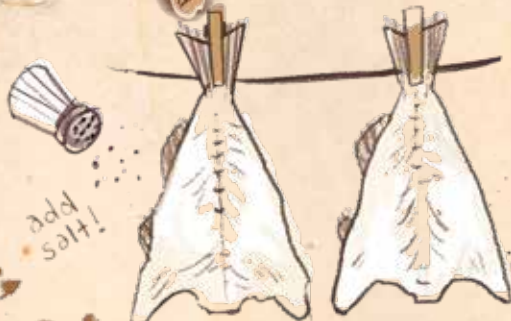


THE 9 FOODS (AND ONE DRINK) THAT BUILT CANADA



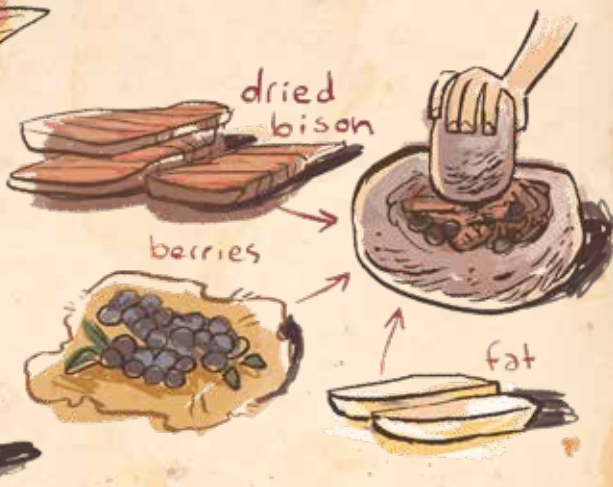
Fish

In the 1500s, long before Europeans even thought of trying to live in what would become Canada, fishermen from Spain, England, Portugal and France were hauling in cod near the island of Newfoundland. Salmon was very important to First Nations for food and for spiritual reasons, and catching and canning it were some of the earliest businesses in British Columbia. In the Far North, Arctic char is still eaten raw, dried, cooked or frozen by many Inuit, whose ancestors used the fish's skins to make waterproof coats and its bones to make sewing needles.



Pemmican

No pemmican, no Canada. Wait, what? Indigenous women made pemmican, which was essential to the fur trade. It's dried bison meat pounded into a powder and mixed with melted animal fat and maybe some dried berries. It could be stored for years, had lots of fat to give the voyageurs energy to paddle 75 kilometres a day, and was easy to eat right in the canoe.



Bannock

When First Nations cooking met Scottish recipes, bannock, sometimes called frybread, was born. Indigenous cooks used to make a dough of ground nuts and seeds, wrap it around a stick and cook it over a fire. Scottish fur traders showed them how to make a biscuit-like mixture from flour, lard, salt, water and sometimes baking powder instead. Bannock is popular all over Canada, especially at powwows and other celebrations.



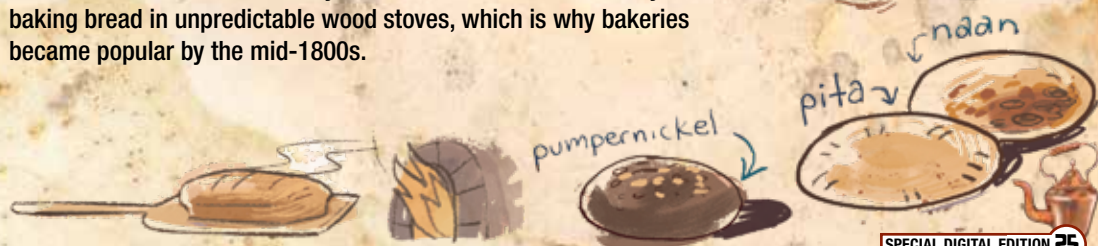
Maple Syrup

A Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) legend says that a chief left his hatchet in a maple tree late one winter. When he pulled it out and left, his wife filled a bowl with what she thought was water running down the tree. When she boiled it, it became sweet and syrupy. In parts of Ontario, Quebec and the Maritimes, Europeans learned how to turn sap into maple syrup and maple sugar from their First Nations neighbours. In 1913, the Pure Maple Syrup Co-Operative and Agricultural Association formed to protect against cheap imitations.



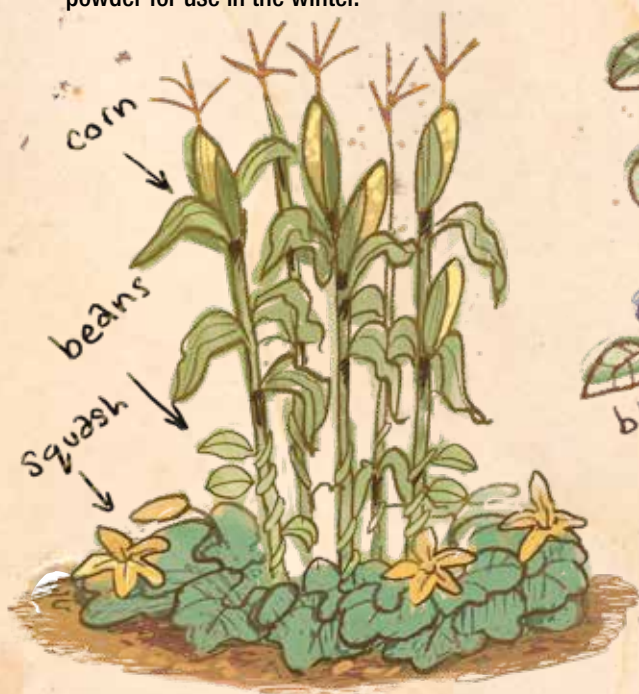
Bread

European settlers brought wheat to Canada. Without some other familiar ingredients, though, such as yeast, the bread rarely rose into the kind of loaves they were used to. It was also tricky baking bread in unpredictable wood stoves, which is why bakeries became popular by the mid-1800s.



Berries

They're free, they're delicious and they're everywhere. From coast to coast to coast, we have (deep breath) raspberries, blueberries, strawberries, blackberries, saskatoons, partridgeberries, cloudberry or bakeapples, bearberries, mulberries, gooseberries, currants, foxberries, cranberries, bunchberries, crowberries, huckleberries and more. Some grow here naturally, while settlers brought others. The explorer Jacques Cartier noticed huge patches of wild strawberries along the St. Lawrence River in 1534, and in 1618 Champlain described how natives dried and pounded blueberries into a powder for use in the winter.



Corn

First Nations who grew crops, such as the Huron-Wendat of what is now Ontario and Quebec, planted corn, beans and squash, known as the Three Sisters, together. The beans could climb up the corn stalks, and the spreading squash kept animals away. Corn was dried and pounded into cornmeal that could be made into porridge or corn bread. Some Indigenous peoples made a kind of corn coffee by boiling dried, ground kernels with water and adding maple syrup for sweetness.

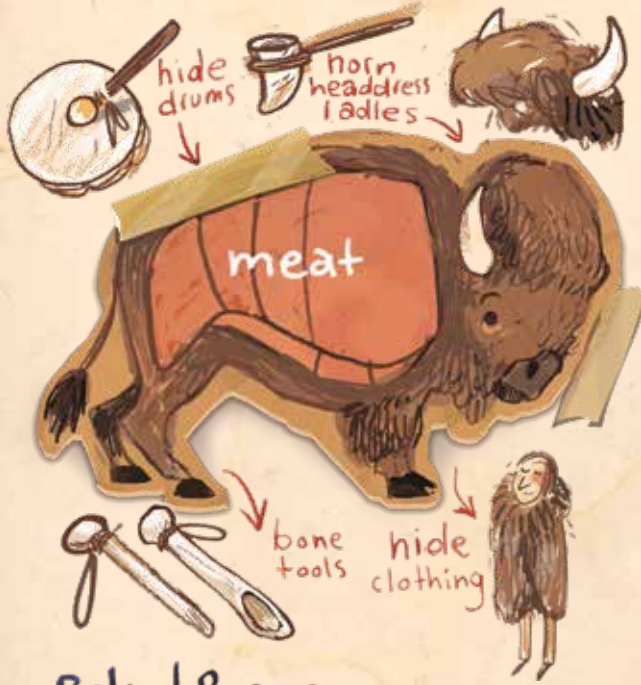


(corn bread)



(corn porridge)





Bison

This also includes deer, moose, elk and caribou — big, hoofed mammals used for food. They were extremely important for First Nations peoples, especially in the Prairies and the Arctic. They provided fresh and dried meat — one male bison meant as much as 700 kilograms of food — material for clothes and blankets, sinews for sewing and bone for tools.

Baked Beans

Cheap, filling and nutritious, baked beans in sauce kept fur traders, settlers, farm families, explorers, gold rush-ers and others well-fed. Dried uncooked beans lasted pretty much forever and could be simmered slowly over a fire with little fuss. They were (and still are) especially popular in Atlantic Canada and Quebec, where they're known as *fèves au lard* and usually made with maple syrup.



Tea

The Hudson's Bay Company first brought tea to Canada in 1716. It was brewed using loose leaves or bits shaved off a brick of powdered tea. Whether served in thick mugs to working men or in fine china cups by ladies holding an afternoon social event, tea was everywhere. The New Brunswick-based Red Rose Tea company (ask your parents about its famous slogan) introduced tea bags in 1929.

