



# North Island Métis

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## Newsletter #4

COVID-19 Food Hampers



Thank you to Canadian Red Cross for the funding and to Quality Foods for supplying us with the food orders and donations for the four food and two meat hampers. Hamper #4 is the last food hamper of this grant. Thank you to our community for the kind words. We are glad that we can support our families in this way. **Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.**



Canadian  
Red Cross

Canada

Quality  
FOODS

### Métis Hunting and Fishing

Métis hunted and trapped for meat and for fur. Animals used for food included but were not limited to buffalo, moose, elk, rabbit, prairie chicken, duck and muskrat.

Fresh meat would be stored in a cool place, burying it in the ground, placed down a well or in the snow. To keep meats longer, they were dried, pickled, smoked or canned. Dried and smoked meat could be pounded into fine pieces and used for soup or pemmican.

Traditionally, Métis ate many different types of freshwater fish. One of the most important fish was the burbot. Not only was it eaten as a meal, but it has medicinal purposes. The oil from the liver was used to prevent sickness in the same way as cod liver oil. The liver was also fried and used as a spread on bannock. Additionally, the skins could be used to make moccasins.

Métis dried fish in the sun and wind over a low fire. They also built smokehouses and smoked several different types of fish. The type of fish would determine whether the fish



was smoked whole, were gutted or cut open in a specific way. Fish that were smoked include tullibee, pike, catfish, sturgeon, white fish, goldeye and perch. Oak was used for the slow burning fire and it would take a full day to complete the smoking.

## Pemmican

Pemmican was a key source of nutrition for fur traders while they were traveling and was also used as a trade item. Pemmican is high in protein and stay edible for a very long time. Pemmican was usually made with dried buffalo meat. Other meats used were sturgeon or moose. Strips of meat were dried by fire or sun. The meat was then pounded into small flakes and mixed with fat or lard in a ratio of 5 lbs of meat to 4 lbs of fat. The mix was made into a hard block and cut into small pieces. Berries such as choke cherries or saskatoons were added to sweeten the mix, or even fruit like pears. Other variations to pemmican include raisins and oatmeal.

## Métis Soups and Stews

Rubaboo is a Métis stew and was the basic food of the fur traders while they were travelling. To make the stew, one brings a pot of water to a boil and then adds some pemmican to create the broth. Whatever meats (such as rabbit or chicken), grease (bear or pork) and vegetables (such as peas, bull-rush root, mushrooms, wild rice or onions) are available are added to the stew. The mixture was thickened with bread or flour, spiced and served.



Bullet soup is another traditional Métis soup. Les boulettes are meatballs made of lean ground meat (moose, elk etc.), flour and spices. The meat is rolled into small balls and simmered in boiling water for one hour. Once the meat is cooked, cool the pot and skim off the fat on top. Reheat the meat and water, adding vegetables and simmer until cooked. If you like, you can add pasta to the soup at the end to include a modern twist.

Bullet soup is usually served with fried bannock, together called “Bullets and Bangs”. Bullet soup was usually served for dinner on New Year’s Day.

**This information and more can be found in the booklet *Métis Foods: Cultural Traditions & Family Recipes* created for NIMA. Copies are available.**