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The Plains People

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From the Rocky Mountains to the woodlands of Southeastern Manitoba, the native people of the plains spanned the Southern provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

Food

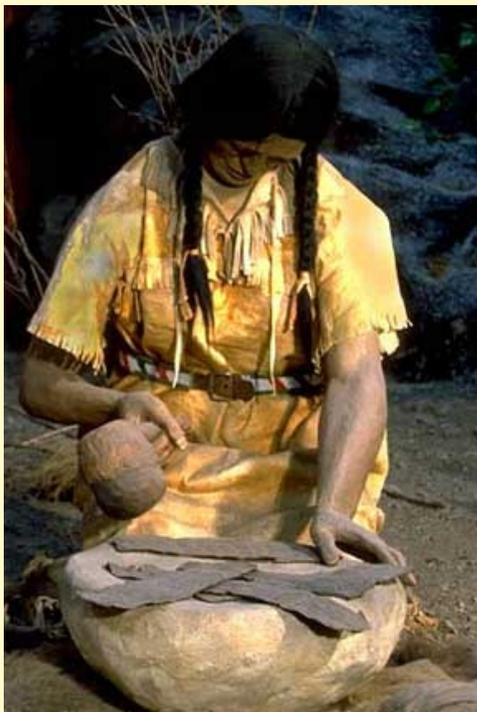
- Buffalo was by and far, the main source of food.
- Buffalo meat was dried or cooked and made into soups and Pemmican.
- Women collected berries that were eaten dried and fresh.
- The Plains Cree and Plains Ojibwa fished.
- Deer, moose and elk, along with wolves, coyotes, lynx, rabbits, gophers, and prairie chickens were hunted for food.
- Bannock was a bread cooked over the fire.
- The Indian Turnip was a common vegetable and diet staple.



Drying Saskatoon Berries

Making Pemmican

Buffalo meat was cut into strips, hung to dry, then the meat was pounded into shreds with a stone, mixed with hot buffalo fat and berries, and poured into a bag, and then left to cool and harden.



Pounding Pemmican



Pounding Pemmican



Drying Meat

Drying Rack

The bark of dried willow branches was scraped off and the branches seared. The branches were tied together then meat was hung over them and dried.

Hunting

- Bows and Arrows and spears were used to hunt.
- Because the Buffalo were so plentiful, they were hunted most often.
- Nomadic bands followed the migration of the Buffalo, so that they always had food.
- Moose and Elk were hunted occasionally.
- Wolves, lynx, coyotes, and rabbits were caught with traps.
- Catching an eagle and obtaining the feathers was a great reward.



Hunters disguise themselves and creep up on Buffalo

Ways the Buffalo were Hunted

- The Buffalo was driven into a corral or compound and speared or shot with an arrow.
- A "Buffalo Jump" - Bands united in the summer to stampede an entire herd of Buffalo off a high cliff, providing food for a year or more. At Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump, you can still see the place where thousands of buffalo were stampeded over the cliff each year. This site has many pictures and exhibits to take you back in time.



Band member attempts to shoot Buffalo with bow and arrow



Plains hunters try to stampede the Buffalo



Stampeding Buffalo over a cliff

Tools

Weapons used by the Plains People for war or peace

Warrior Shield

Made out of toughened hide and painted with a personal symbol; a warrior's sacred possession.



Warrior Shield

Tomahawk

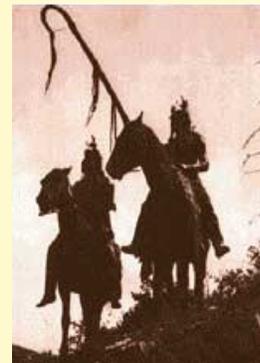
A warrior hatchet that could be used ceremonially as a peace offering.



Man with a Tomahawk

Coup Stick

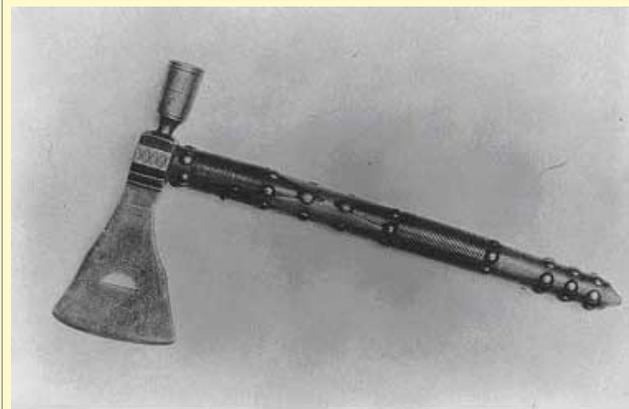
Proving his bravery, a warrior would use this long slender stick to touch an enemy in battle .



Man with Coup Stick

Pipe Tomahawk

Used for a weapon and for smoking tobacco. Known as the peace pipe.



Pipe Tomahawk

Arrows

Points smaller than spears, penetrated skin more when fired by a bow. Longer range, greater accuracy, possibility of rapid fire shots. Great strength needed for arrow use.



Arrowheads

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