



Time Travel Quest 1: Savoring Survival Foods!

Monthly Quest: Exploring Foodways in Colonial Florida

Just like our virtual time travelers, everyone in the past had to eat. Food is not only necessary, but it is also at the heart of every community, past or present! The people who lived in Florida in the 17th century ate many types of foods. Sometimes they made foods based on what ingredients were available or what activities they needed to do.

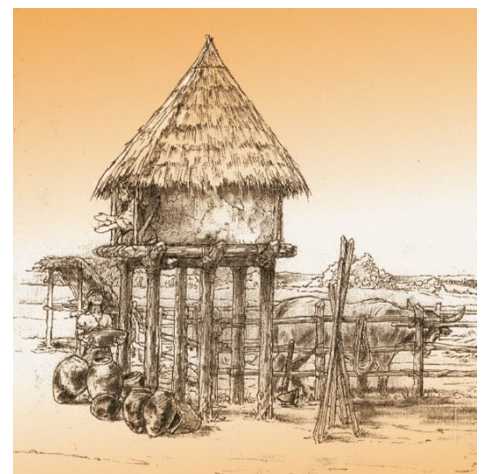
Not all food is fancy. Not all food tastes very good, either! But if the food keeps you nourished and satisfies your hunger, it is doing its job. That is the role of *survival foods*: foods that you either gather in the wild, take with you on long journeys, or eat when other foods are *scarce* (limited or hard to get). Survival foods include meats and plants that are *preserved* (prepared to last a long time for later use). Three hundred years ago, people in Florida were masters at making and using survival foods!

Traveling Back to the 17th Century

Everyone made and used survival foods in 17th Century Florida, from the native Florida Indians to European explorers and settlers. They needed food to eat for survival in the North Florida terrain.

Survival foods were needed to get through the winter. While Florida does not have the extreme cold and snow of northern climates, there is still less food available in the winter than during other seasons. Because of this, people in the 17th century needed to save or preserve some of their harvested food to have something to eat during the cold season. They needed to plan ahead!

It was also important to have survival food when traveling across Florida by land or sea. It could take days or even weeks to get to a distant location by foot or on a boat/canoe. Some routes had villages and towns where you could stop along the way to get more food, but others did not. Travelers may also not always have had the opportunity to hunt for or gather more food during the trip. Because it was difficult to know where the next meal might come from, people would take food



An artist's representation of a Florida Native American storage building for storing lots of dried corn, beans, squash, and other foods off the ground for future use: known as a "garita."
(Illustration by John LoCastro)

with them that could last for a long time. A dinner of roasted chicken and warm bread might be great for dinner in a town, but that same chicken would go bad after only a few days of traveling. That is why the native people and European settlers in Florida used these survival foods to get through the rough times. But they did not have refrigerators or freezers to keep food fresh! So how did they save their food?

The Apalachee of north Florida - along with many other Florida Indians - had a number of survival foods available to them. One food that they stored would have been corn. Corn was one of the major crops that some Florida Indians grew. If it is properly dried and stored, it will keep for months without going bad. It could then be soaked in water and eaten or ground up into corn meal. The corn meal was often formed into cakes using hickory nut oil or the fat from hunted animals, and then cooked using a fire.

Florida Indians also ate dried or smoked meat and fish. Drying or smoking strips of meat and fish removes the water from the meat, making it last for many months instead of a few days like raw meat. Deer were one of the most important animals that the native people hunted in Florida, as these large animals had a lot of meat and other parts that could be used for everyday items. Deer meat (also known as venison) could be cut into thin strips and smoked over a fire or even laid out to dry on a particularly hot day. These practices made the meat last much longer than fresh venison, allowing the natives to take it on journeys and hunting trips without it going bad.

Another food that was preserved by the Florida Indians was fruit. Fruits - such as berries - were dried until the water in them was gone. These dried fruits still contained a lot of good nutrients. When they were added to the other survival foods - like corn porridge - they provided an excellent source of vitamins for weary travelers.

When the Spanish came to Florida in the 16th and 17th centuries, they brought their own survival foods with them. Some of the methods for preparing these foods were the same as the Florida Indians used, such as drying and smoking food. However, the Spanish also introduced new ways of preserving food, such as pickling in vinegar and salting meat and fish.

One of the more well-known Spanish survival foods was *galletas*, or hardtack. These biscuits were made from a mixture of flour, water, and salt. This mixture was baked until all the water was removed. If the biscuits were properly stored, they could last up to a year without going bad. But there was a reason it was called hardtack: the biscuits were as hard as a rock! They had to be soaked in soup or water before being eaten. If hardtack was not properly soaked, a Spaniard might break a tooth on it!

The Spanish also dried and smoked meats to eat for survival, but they often used beef or pork instead of venison. Another way the Spanish preserved meats was with salt. Salt, when rubbed on the meat, removed moisture from the food. This process required a lot of work to get enough salt to properly preserve the meat. But once it was done, the meat could last just as long - if not longer - than the drying or smoking process.

While the Spanish would have also made use of the dried corn that the Florida Indians prepared, they also brought from Spain their own version of dried plants. One of these plants was dried garbanzo beans, also known as chickpeas. These little *legumes* (peas or beans) were a very popular food in the Spanish diet and if properly dried, they could keep for up to three years!

Time Portal: Villagers through Video

We are going to use virtual time travel to talk with one of the villagers of Mission San Luis! A great way to learn about survival foods of the past is to ask the people who made and used them. Let's learn about survival foods from a soldier at Mission San Luis! Ask your parent or guardian to help you travel back in time using the link below:

j **Video Link:** youtube.com/watch?v=aTXqJuWKG-E&t=4s

Quest Questions

Questions can help you focus your journey into the past! Here are some questions to think about that will help guide you in your exploration:

- Why is food important to every culture?
- Who made and used survival foods in 17th century Florida? The Spanish? The Florida Indians?
- What are three survival foods that were eaten in 17th century Florida?
- When did the Spanish and Native Americans eat survival foods?
- What were some methods of preserving foods over 300 years ago?
- Did people need survival foods at certain times of the year? When and why?
- What is more important for survival during a battle or a long siege, food and water or weapons? Why?

Adventure Activity:

Pretend you are going on a journey in 17th century Florida. You may be gone for a while! One important supply that you will need to take with you is food. You must decide what food items you will take with you on the journey.

Think about some of your favorite foods. Would you be able to take them on a long journey? Would they last for days or even weeks? **List several of your favorite foods below, and why you think you would or would not be able to take them on a long journey!** (Remember, you will have to carefully choose the food items you take, as you must also take the tools/equipment necessary to prepare the food to eat during the journey.)

Food 1: _____ Is this a good food for the journey? _____

Why or why not? _____

Food 2: _____ Is this a good food for the journey? _____

Why or why not? _____

Food 3: _____ Is this a good food for the journey? _____

Why or why not? _____

Food 4: _____ Is this a good food for the journey? _____

Why or why not? _____

Food 5: _____ Is this a good food for the journey? _____

Why or why not? _____

Now that you have listed some of the food items you would take on your journey, draw a picture showing what foods you would take with you on your journey!

Quest Creativity: Craft

What does **hardtack** taste like? What does it smell like? Let's find out! After seeing our villager making his travel rations, ask your parent or guardian to help you use the recipe below to make hardtack like Spanish soldiers did.

(Recipe slightly modified from a Smithsonian Museum of American History Lesson Plan:

https://amhistory.si.edu/ourstory/pdf/water/water_munchies.pdf



Recipe:

- Ingredients:
 - 4 cups flour (white, whole wheat, or mixed; can also substitute different flours for wheat/gluten allergies – almond flour is one option, but ingredient proportions may need to be altered)
 - 2 cups water
 - 4 teaspoons salt
- Equipment/Tools:
 - Oven
 - Knife or Pizza Cutter
 - Cookie sheet
 - Spatula
 - Spoon
 - Toothpick or fork
 - Measuring Cups

(Please note, Mission San Luis will not be providing the supplies for the craft this week)

- Directions:
 - Preheat oven to 375 °F.
 - Mix flour and salt together in a bowl.
 - Add just enough water (less than two cups) to make the mixture stick together. It should not be sticky at this point.
 - Use your hands to roll the dough until it is ½-inch thick and shape it into a rough rectangle.
 - Cut the dough into squares about 3 inches by 3 inches to form individual crackers.
 - Use a toothpick or one point of a fork to press (but don't punch through) 4 rows of 4 holes on each cracker. (A total of 16 holes per square)
 - Place crackers on an ungreased cookie sheet.
 - Bake crackers for 30 minutes.
 - Turn each cracker over and bake for another 30 minutes. The crackers should be slightly brown on each side.

Additional Exploration Resources

Your time travel adventure doesn't stop here! If you want to learn more about this subject, here are some suggested resources:

- *Mission San Luis de Apalachee: A Teacher's Guide* - https://www.missionsanluis.org/media/1099/01-teachers_guide.pdf
- *America's Real First Thanksgiving: St. Augustine, Florida – September 8, 1565* (Robyn Gioia) - <https://www.amazon.com/Americas-Real-First-Thanksgiving-Augustine/dp/1561643890>
- *Colonial Florida's Spanish Bluecoats 1720's -1760's* (National Park Service) - <https://www.nps.gov/casa/learn/education/classrooms/upload/Colonial-Florida-s-Spanish-Bluecoats.pdf>
- *Fort Mose: And the Story of the Man Who Built the First Free Black Settlement in Colonial America* (Glennette Tilley Turner) - https://www.amazon.com/Fort-Mose-Settlement-Colonial-America/dp/0810940566/ref=sr_1_11?dchild=1&keywords=childrens+books+colonial+florida&qid=1585932819&s=books&sr=1-11
- *St. Augustine: America's Ancient City* (Florida Museum of Natural History) - <https://www.floridamuseum.ufl.edu/staugustine/>
Also includes an educator's guide and lessons - <https://www.floridamuseum.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2017/03/First-Colony-exhibit-Educator-Guide.pdf>

Virtual Time Traveler Checklist

Prizes await your journey's end! For all virtual time travelers who complete **four** of the weekly summer camp *Time Travel Quests*, your family will receive free admission passes to Mission San Luis Living History Museum for a future visit! Steps to getting your prize are:

- Complete at least four of the twelve *Time Travel Quests* that will be provided between June 15 and August 31, 2020
- Fill out the *Virtual Time Traveler Checklist* (blank checklists can be found at: http://www.missionsanluis.org/media/1742/virtual-time-traveler-checklist-2020_2ue.pdf)
- Email it to Rebecca.Woofter@dos.myflorida.com or print and mail it to:

Mission San Luis (c/o Rebecca Woofter)
2100 West Tennessee Street
Tallahassee, FL 32304

The deadline for completing and sending in your 2020 *Virtual Time Traveler Checklist* for the prize is **September 14, 2020**.