



9TH GRADE | CULINARY ARTS

# Exploring the Richness of Coquille Indian Tribe Cuisine

## Essential understandings

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Since time immemorial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Identity
<input type="checkbox"/> Tribal government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lifeways
<input type="checkbox"/> Language	<input type="checkbox"/> Treaties with the United States
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sovereignty	<input type="checkbox"/> Genocide, federal policy, and laws
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> History	

## Learning outcomes

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- By the end of the lesson, students will be able to recreate a traditional Coquille Indian Tribe clam dish by following a recipe and understanding the cultural significance of shellfish.

## Essential questions

How can food connect us to a culture and its history?

## Logistics

- Where does the activity take place? *Classroom*
- How are the students organized?  
☒ Whole class   ☒ Teams: 3-4   ☐ Pairs   ☐ Individually

## Time required

60-70 minutes

## Oregon standards

Oregon Social Studies Standards (2024):

- **HS.G.HE.11:** Identify and describe how the relationship to land, utilization of natural resources, displacement, and land ownership affects historically underrepresented identities, cultures, and communities. (Focus on sustainable harvesting practices and the connection to the environment)



### Materials

- Age-appropriate recipe for a traditional Coquille Indian Tribe dish (e.g., salmon with roasted camas bulbs, acorn mush)
- Ingredients for the chosen recipe
- Kitchen utensils and equipment (bowls, spoons, measuring cups, baking sheets, stovetop)
- Pictures or diagrams of traditional Coquille Indian Tribe foods
- Map showing the location of the Coquille Indian Tribe's traditional territory (optional)

### Vocabulary

- Clams: Bivalve shellfish commonly found in coastal waters.
- Coquille Indian Tribe: A federally recognized group of indigenous people who have lived on the southern Oregon Coast since time immemorial.
- Steaming: A cooking method that uses steam to cook food.
- Soaking (optional): Submerging clams in saltwater to remove sand.
- Cornmeal (optional): A coarse corn flour sometimes used to help expel grit from clams.
- Freshness: The importance of using recently harvested clams for cooking.
- Discard: To throw away something that is unfit for consumption.
- Shellfish: Aquatic animals with a hard outer shell, including clams.
- Seasoned (optional): Adding flavorings like herbs or seaweed to food during cooking.
- Traditional: Practices and customs passed down through generations.
- Cultural Connection: The link between a food source and the traditions of a particular group.
- Since time immemorial: refers to a period in the distant past that predates recorded history and even human memory. It signifies a timeframe so far back that there's no documented or cultural recollection of its beginning.

### Extension Activities

- For early finishers, provide a research project on the history and significance of a specific Coquille Indian Tribe dish not covered in class.

## Overview

- Students will be able to safely and traditionally cook steamer clams.
- Students will understand the importance of the Coquille Indian Tribe's relationship with sea otters and its impact on clam harvesting.

## Background for teachers

### SINCE TIME IMMEMORIAL

The contemporary Coquille Indian Tribe trace their ancestry back to Indigenous people who lived along the southwest Oregon coast and inland rivers. For generations, the Coquille Indian Tribe has been the custodians of this coastal land, diligently passing down their knowledge of the environment from time immemorial. The Tribe carefully harvested coastal resources, including a variety of foods from tidal pools, estuaries, and shores.

Mussels, clams, and other shellfish, as well as lamprey, were vital to all coastal Tribes. The shells also served as decorative items for clothing and were widely traded. Sea otters found along the Oregon Coast were hunted for their pelts, which provided warmth and waterproofing for the bottom of canoes. As Euro-Americans migrated westward in search of land and resources, the Coquille Indian Tribe experienced a series of tragedies, including forced relocation, epidemics, and the erosion of their traditional lifeways. In 1954, the U.S. Congress terminated its government-to-government relationship with many Tribes, including the Coquille Indian Tribe. However, the Tribe refused to accept this decision and worked tirelessly to gather the necessary information for Congress to consider their restoration. These efforts were finally rewarded in 1989 when the Coquille Indian Tribe were reinstated as a federally recognized Tribe, restoring their government-to-government relationship with the United States.

Today, the Coquille Indian Tribe has over 1,100 members and manages more than 10,000 acres of ancestral homelands, providing jobs for both Tribal members and non-Tribal residents of the region. Despite the obstacles they faced, the Coquille Indian Tribe has demonstrated its resilience and strength, serving as a powerful reminder of the perseverance of Indigenous communities.

Shellfish Using their intimate knowledge of the local tides and currents, the Coquille Indian Tribe skillfully harvest a wide range of shellfish (k'ni in the language of Nuu-wee-ya' and dluush in the Miluk language), including clams, mussels, oysters, and crabs. They have traditionally used specialized tools such as digging sticks for prying mussels off rocks and digging for clams and baskets for collecting and transporting the harvested shellfish. Shellfish are prepared using various methods that were passed down through generations. For instance, one cooking method involves removing shellfish meats from shells, pounding

them flat with a rock, and then steam boiling them on hot rocks topped with seaweed to ensure even cooking and to provide flavor. Other methods included smoking and drying.

## To prepare for this lesson teachers should

### Gather these Materials:

- Large pot with lid
- Stovetop
- Colander
- Spoons
- Bowls
- Saltwater solution (1/3 cup salt to 1 gallon water, optional)
- Cornmeal (optional)
- Fresh clams (littlenecks, manila clams, or steamers)
- Butter or olive oil for dipping (optional)
- Lemon wedges (optional)
- Chopped fresh herbs like parsley or dill (optional)
- Butcher knife (for experienced students with adult supervision)

## References

- SOCIAL SCIENCES Exploring Traditional Foods and Food Systems: The Coquille Indian Tribe's Cultural Resilience and Food Sovereignty

## Resources

To support this lesson, it is recommended that teachers familiarize themselves with the following materials:

- The Coquille Indian Tribe website (<https://www.coquilletribe.org/>), which will provide valuable insights into the history and geography of the Tribe's ancestral and modern homeland.
- "The Indians of Western Oregon: This land was theirs" by S. D. Beckham (1977) and "The First Oregonians" (2nd ed.) by L. Berg (2007), which offer historical and cultural information about the Coquille people.
- "The Bandon sandspit site: The archaeology of proto-historic Coquille Indian village" by M. A. Tveskov (2000), which can be found in the Proceedings of the 3rd Annual Coquille Cultural Preservation Conference, offers a fascinating look at the Coquille's archaeological past.

## Considerations for teachers

### Assessment

Students will be given an exit ticket at the end of the lesson.

Exit Ticket:

1. Match the word to its definition:
  - Seafood ( ) a. a hard outer shell that protects a clam
  - Tribe ( ) b. a group of people with a shared culture and history
  - Steam ( ) c. a way of cooking food using hot water vapor
  - Shell ( ) d. food from the sea
2. Match the traditional cooking method to its description:
  - Steaming ( ) a. cooking clams in saltwater seasoned with seaweed
  - Roasting ( ) b. cooking clams over an open fire
  - Boiling ( ) c. cooking clams with a small amount of water until they open

### Short Answer (6 points total, 2 points each)

1. How did the Coquille Indian Tribe use the ocean for their survival?
2. Besides steaming, name one other way clams can be traditionally cooked.
3. What happens to a clam's shell when it's cooked and ready to eat?

### Practices

- Small groups – Small group activities allow students to share and analyze ideas with three to five other people. This practice can be good for students who do not want to share their ideas with the whole class and/or who may be afraid of others' reactions. The teacher should monitor group Social Sciences Grade 9 Social Sciences | Exploring Traditional Foods and Food Systems 7 discussions to determine the degree to which students are understanding the concepts and contributing to the group.

- Classroom discussion – Large group, whole class discussion allows students to express their thoughts and hear the thoughts of others. For the instructor, this practice is a good way to take the pulse of the group and see what general themes are emerging. For students, large group discussion can be a way to express themselves or to hear differing perspectives from others.

## Learning targets

- Students will be able to safely and traditionally cook steamer clams.
- Students will understand the importance of clams in the Coquille Indian Tribe's diet and traditional cooking methods.

## Activities

- **Introduction:** The lesson begins by activating students' prior knowledge about clams and then introduces the Coquille Indian Tribe's coastal lifestyle.
- **Traditional Cooking Methods:** Through demonstrations, students learn about various cooking methods used by the Coquille Indian Tribe, focusing on steaming as a primary technique. Alternative methods like roasting and boiling are also introduced.
- **Safety First:** Throughout the lesson, the importance of safe food handling practices is emphasized, especially when dealing with fresh seafood.
- **Student Practice:** Students get hands-on experience by cleaning (optional), steaming, and enjoying their own cooked clams, working collaboratively in groups.
- **Wrap-Up and Discussion:** The lesson concludes with a discussion about the taste and texture of the clams, followed by a review of the Coquille Indian Tribe's connection to this food source and their traditional cooking methods.

## Appendix

Materials included in the electronic folder that support this lesson are:

- Slides\_Traditional\_Foods.ppt
- Article\_Traditional\_Foods\_of\_the\_Coquille\_People.pdf
- Materials\_PW\_Seasonal\_Round\_Calendar.pdf

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## Activity 1.

### Exploring the Richness of Coquille Indian Tribe Cuisine | 60-70 minutes

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Overview.

#### Lesson Procedure:

- **Introduction (10 minutes):**

*(Greet the class)*

**Teacher Says:** *Alright everyone, gather around! Today we're going on a delicious adventure to the Oregon Coast. We'll be learning how to cook clams, a traditional treat enjoyed by people here for centuries! But before we get started, let's see what you already know about clams.*

*(Write student responses on the board, e.g., seafood, shells, ocean).*

**Teacher Says:** *Great ideas! Clams come in many varieties and are a popular seafood choice. Here on the Oregon Coast, they have a special place in the history and culture of the Coquille Indian Tribe.*

*(Show a picture or map of the Oregon Coast)*

**Teacher Says:** *Since time immemorial, the Coquille Indian Tribe has thrived along this beautiful coastline. **Since time immemorial** refers to a period in the distant past that predates recorded history and even human memory. It signifies a timeframe so far back that there's no documented or cultural recollection of its beginning. They relied on the ocean's bounty for food, clothing, and shelter. And guess what was a delicious and important part of their diet? You guessed it – clams!*

*(Discuss background knowledge about the Coquille Tribe and clams, shellfish, and traditional foods – in the teacher background section)*

**Traditional Cooking Methods (15 minutes):**

***(Move to the cooking demonstration area)***

**Teacher Says:** *Safety first, everyone. Whenever we handle and cook seafood, it's important to be careful. We only want to use fresh clams, and any with open shells before cooking should be discarded.*

***(Demonstrate cleaning the clams, if using the soaking method)***

**Teacher Says:** *Some people like to soak their clams in saltwater for a few hours. This helps remove any sand they might have inside. You might also see cornmeal used in some traditions – it's believed to help expel any grit.*

***(Demonstrate steaming the clams)***

**Teacher Says:** *Now, let's talk about cooking methods! One traditional way the Coquille Indian Tribe prepared clams was by steaming. We'll fill the pot with just a little water, enough to cover the bottom, and bring it to a boil. Then, we add the clams, cover the pot, and let them steam for a few minutes, until their shells pop open. Those are the happy clams, ready to be enjoyed!*

***(Demonstrate alternative cooking methods, if desired)***

**Teacher Says:** *Clams were also roasted over open fires or boiled in saltwater seasoned with seaweed or other coastal herbs. There were many ways to prepare this delicious shellfish!*

***Student Practice (30 minutes):***

***(Divide students into groups and provide cooking supplies)***

**Teacher Says:** *Alright chefs, it's your turn to put your skills to the test! We'll be working in groups today. Each group has everything they need to clean (if using the soaking method), steam, and enjoy their very own clams. Remember, safety first, and feel free to ask for help if you need it.*

***Wrap-Up and Discussion (10 minutes):***

***(Gather students back together after cooking)***



**Teacher Says:** *So, how was your culinary adventure? What did you think of the taste and texture of the clams?*

**(Discuss student experiences)**

**Teacher Says:** *Today, we learned about the Coquille Indian Tribe's connection to clams and how they were a vital part of their diet. The cooking methods we explored, like steaming, are simple yet flavorful ways to enjoy this seafood treasure.*

*(Provide students with the exit ticket above for them to fill out prior to leaving class).*