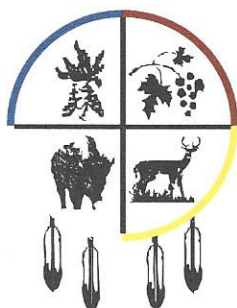


# *A Traditional Food Book* *recipés from the REZ*





# *American Indian Talking Circles Wellness Cookbook of Recipes from the REZ*



Produced by Lakota Express for American Indian Talking Circles. A Joint Project of Center for American Indian Research and Education, and the Native American Diabetes Project of SEVA Foundation© 2001.

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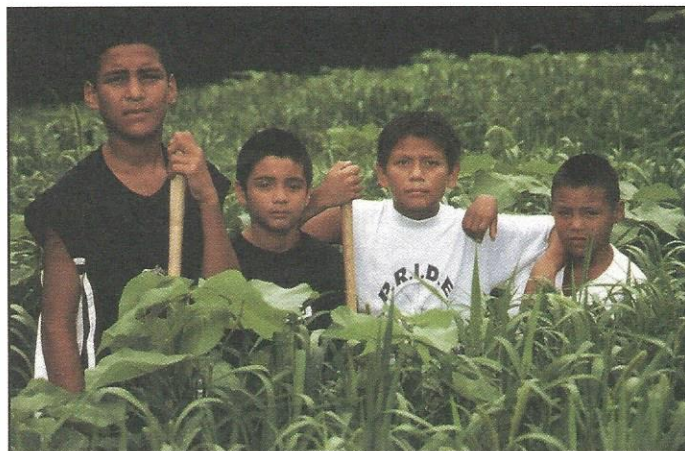


## *Diabetes wellness through traditional foods*

American Indian Talking Circles is a joint project of the Center for American Indian Research and Education (CAIRE) of the University of Minnesota and the SEVA Foundation's Native American Diabetes Project. Funded by the National Institute of Health, National Institute of Nursing Research (RO1 NR04722), the four year research and educational intervention project targets American Indian adults across four Northern Plains reservations: Winnebago, Nebraska and the Yankton, Rosebud and Pine Ridge reservations of South Dakota. Talking Circles are being tested as a tool to increase knowledge of diabetes and how it is treated, nutrition, and activity/exercise. Additionally, whether the new knowledge leads to behavior change toward wellness is being measured.

Each tribal nation carries the name as they are listed in their tribal constitution, by the United States govern-

ment. They still carry the names for themselves as recognized by the Creator. The Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska refer to themselves as the *Ho Chunk*, or *The People of the Parent Speech*. The Yankton Sioux Tribe call themselves *Ihanktunwan Nakota*, or *End Dwellers*.



*Winnebago youth taking a break from weeding their corn.*

The Rosebud Sioux Tribe call themselves, *Sicangu Lakota*, or *Burnt Thigh*. The Oglala Sioux Tribe of the Pine Ridge reservation call themselves *Oglala Lakota*, or *To Scatter One's Own*.

In this Traditional Food Book, we respectfully offer individual perspectives about traditional food and its relationship to the people, traditional food recipes, modern day recipes using traditional foods such as buffalo, and healthy choice food recipes used in the Diabetes Talking Circle meals. All of these can help restore balance, from across the four reservation project sites. ENJOY!



*Winnebago youth ready for the harvest in his corn picking clothes.*

Traditional American Indians, regardless of the Tribe or Nation, all believed that food was a gift from the Creator and a spiritual medicine to be eaten respectfully and in balance. Food would keep Indians well as a people. In contemporary American Indian ceremonies and special events, food is still treated with the highest respect. Before people partake of the meal, a prayer and an offering is made to the four directions. Good thoughts in the minds of those preparing the food bring wellness to all sharing the meals.

Traditional food included wild game, fish, wild fruit and vegetables, and herbs. Corn, beans and squash were planted, harvested and dried by American Indian nations with horticultural traditions. Thanks were given to the Creator for these gifts of food. Thanks could be given through a Green Corn Dance or a Thanksgiving Celebration for a successful buffalo hunt.



Today, a diabetes (Type 2) epidemic is raging across American Indian communities. Therefore, it makes sense to begin nutrition education in relationship to diabetes, with this traditional concept of food. It is hoped that American Indian families will renew their traditional relationship to food beyond ceremonial or special events and bring it back to everyday meals in the home. Balance can be further restored to their diet and lives when accessible traditional foods are reintroduced for everyday family meals whenever possible.

Hunting, fishing, gathering, planting and drying or smoking of traditional foods is a very labor-intensive task. It is an ideal activity to increase physical movement and a recommended exercise for wellness in today's world.

Fortunately, buffalo is available for American Indians who had traditionally hunted and lived in balance with the buffalo. Some initiatives that bring the buffalo to Indians include organizations like the Inter-Tribal Bison Cooperative (ITBC), a national organization of 25-30 tribes with 51 bison

herds across 16 states, provides such accessibility. Learn more about the ITBC at their website: [intertribalbison.com](http://intertribalbison.com).

There is a growing initiative to restore gardens and renew traditional horticultural methods among American Indian communities. One such effort in Winnebago, Nebraska has gained enormous momentum in recent years. Planting, harvesting and drying corn was a traditional way of life for the Ho Chunk. Fortunately, the elders still carried the knowledge and the seeds to carry on the tradition. The Winnebago project renews traditional planting, seed gathering, harvesting and drying corn for tribal use. ■



## *From a healer's point of view*

BY RICHARD TWO DOGS, TRADITIONAL HEALER  
*Oglala Lakota, Pine Ridge Reservation, Porcupine, SD*

*On this day I would like to talk from a healer's point of view. It involves our relationship with our environment and the two-legged and four-legged domain...*

Long ago, our people lived with respect for all of creation. For example, they never took more than they needed from the land. They knew the two-legged must never cause an imbalance in our environment. All of life around us had to be sustained in order for the two-legged to survive. Through this way of thinking, we as a people respected all of life, including ourselves. We lived by gathering roots and berries. We sustained our life through the four-legged: the deer, antelope and especially the buffalo. The buffalo provided all of our needs as far as survival - our food, the clothes for our

bodies, bones for tools and weapons, hides for our teepee covers. The buffalo provided survival for us. We looked at them as our brothers. We respected their life. Before we went on a hunt we made a prayer. After a kill was made, we would apologize to the spirit of the buffalo. We made an offering to his spirit.

We needed the balance between the two-legged and four-legged. The Sun Dance tree was forked. On one side of the fork was the figure of a buffalo cutout of a buffalo hide and on the other side of the fork was the figure of a man, also cutout of a buffalo hide. The Sun Dance tree is the tree of life. Because this tree represents life, it represents the good and the bad in the world. It also represents the two-legged and the four-legged and the plant life. So we have come along way, in the sense that we still believe this way as a people of this earth.





*Richard Two Dogs*

The white man came and polluted. He's killing everything. But yet we still have this thought: When we raise that sun dance tree we want our brothers, the two legged, the four legged, the wind and the plants, to have life. Long ago and today, we believe that it is important to keep our bodies healthy. Our grandfathers and grandmothers knew that we had to respect our health. There are a lot of things that we take for granted. We can turn on the faucet and get water. We can turn on the thermostat and get heat. But our grandfathers had to work for all of these basic things. I think what hurts us now is that life is too easy. They would go out and hunt for a living. Gather their wood and their water so that they could live.

I would like to remember my grandfather. He was 97 years old. He could still walk from our house to town, which was close to a mile. Every morning he would walk and go downtown and visit with the other old men on the street corners. Then he would get home in the after-



noon. My mother would feed him. I always noticed that he would only eat certain food. He wouldn't eat pies or anything like that. I noticed he always cut the fat off the meat that he ate. He refused to eat pork. He said pork was bad - it was like poison to your body. Our grandfathers knew. They were the first dietitians. They knew what food was good and what food was bad. In speaking to people nowadays diabetes is really rampant on the reservations, because of our diet and the fact that we are no longer hunters.

We don't walk and move around like we use to. We no longer exercise. Long ago our grandfathers were always on the move. They were always trying to find ways to keep themselves busy. I noticed my grandfather was also this way. I would like to say it is important how we view nature and how we view ourselves.

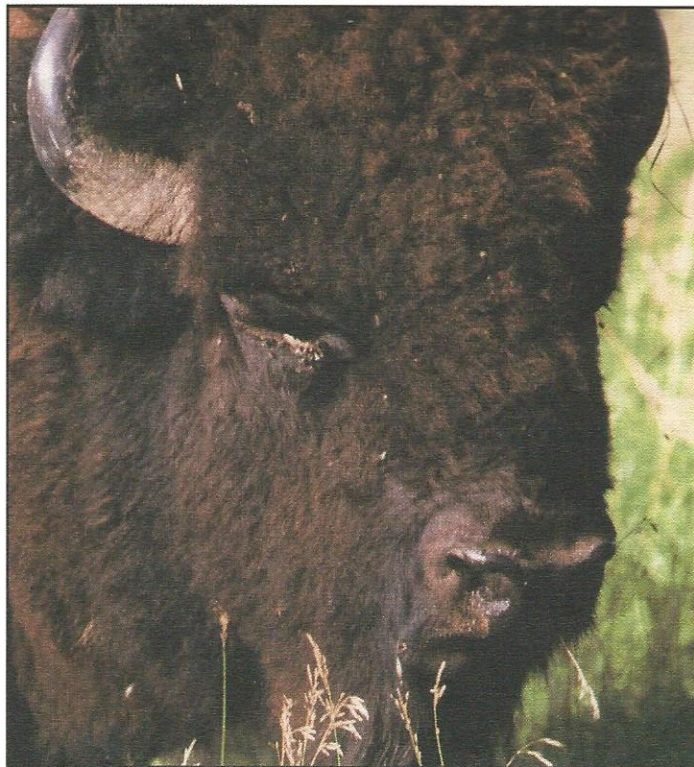
As a two-legged, we are not superior to our four-legged brothers. If anything, we are probably weaker than most of our four-legged brothers. In a sense, we have to be

ourselves. Not superior over the animals. I know that this type of thinking gets us in trouble, that we can do anything that we want. We picked this up from the white man. We must respect all of nature and respect ourselves.

We must always remember the Lakota virtues. The virtues of respect for ourselves, respect for nature, respect for fortitude, and respect for our language. We need to have a strong mind. When we are diabetic and we have to change our diet, it takes a strong mind to have the ability to change our diet. It takes a lot of fortitude to live by a healthy diet so we can live a long time.

We need to be generous and to try to pity all of our people, our relatives around us who are suffering with this diabetes. We need to try to help each other. If we see people walking and exercising, we should encourage them. We need to be generous with our encouragement. Encourage them to be healthy people.

Next we must have courage. We need courage to face this new enemy of our people. Diabetes is the enemy and it is hurting our people. Long ago when a warrior threatened our people, the warriors would go out and fight this enemy - to defeat this enemy. But nowadays I think every one of us have to be a warrior to have courage and fight this enemy. We need to have this generosity, this fortitude and bravery to fight this, because diabetes is going to wipe us out if we aren't careful. I feel that we have to face it as the enemy that it is. I go around and see the people that have to go on dialysis or are amputees. Long ago when our warriors returned from battle, they lost their leg or were injured. Nowadays it's diabetes causing it. We all have to be warriors and we all have to be brave. I encourage all people to face this new enemy and be brave. ■





# *The ways of the elders*

VIOLA LAPOINTE, HO CHUNK ELDER

*Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska*

## HUNTING FOR FRUIT AND VEGETABLES

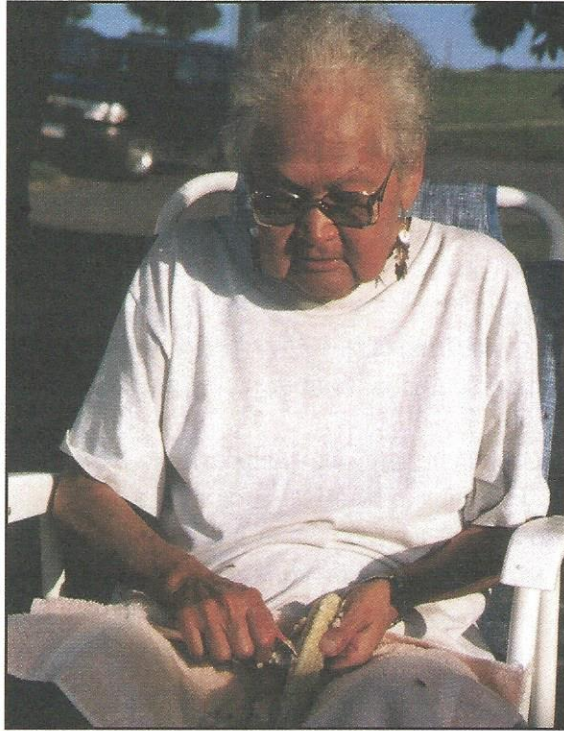
I believe that the link between our people and the land now is totally different from what I remember as a little girl. I remember going out with my mother, my brothers and sisters, hunting for food. We had to find the right kind of plants before we could dig. We couldn't just go anywhere and dig. My mother had to find the right plants, the plants that she knew. We would dig up potatoes in the fields. They were just little, like the size of a golf ball. Once we found one plant all you had to do was pull on the root and you would find a whole row that followed it. It was always the supply that we needed. We used to find wild beans, too.

My mother used to plant corn. The wild beans that we found - she would mix them with the corn. We never just had corn soup, there was always beans added. It made the corn last longer.

So during the time that these plants were in harvest we would pick as much as we needed to make it through the winter. My mother would harvest and then would dry them.

Our lives with my mother and father were mostly working. We got to play some. But we would always go pick berries, vegetables, and even nuts. We would walk miles and that would take most of our day. It was walking in the timber. This happened a few times a week and the rest of the week was spent at home helping my mother. It was all work to keep our family alive. But it was fun because we did it together as a family. Us kids would play while we walked, so it was always fun being with my family.

I remember the first fruit in the spring that we would pick chokecherries, then blackberries, raspberries, and the last would be wild strawberries. As the months went by, different berries would be ready to pick. We always went out and picked whatever berries were in season. In the late summer



*Winnebago Elder showing the kids the proper way to spoon corn and prepare for drying.*

is when we would find grapes and plums. Once in a while we found an apple tree. Then my mother would have all of us kids sit and string our findings on a string and she would hang them up to dry. They would look like prunes or raisins; you know how they're all shriveled up. We even dried our squash and whatever my mother could plant in our garden this same way. Then in the winter, she would cook all the fruit and vegetables we harvested.

Everything we picked was dried for storage until later on in the 1930's. That was the year they opened a canning center out in our agency. They taught all the women how to can. So the women would bring their fruit and vegetables to this center and can it. They had cans there that the women could use. And then you could seal them. They were just like the cans in the stores nowadays. But I remember my mom would use salt and add sugar to the fruit. That canning was brought to us by, I suppose it was the BIA, trying to help us out (laughter) - showing us how to use sugar and salt.



## WATER

I remember we lived in a ciporoke or chee-po-ddo-kay (a traditional Ho Chunk lodge) with a dirt floor. That's where we lived when I was a very small girl. Then my father built us a two room wood house. That was the first time I lived in a "today home." We didn't have running water. My father and some of the other men built a spring right off the side of the creek that went by our home. It was down the hill a ways. We had to walk down the hill and haul our water up to our house.

Later on I remember the BIA building water pumps. There was a pump that everyone, within a half-mile radius, had to come to get their water.

But we would still go to the spring to get our water, because it was the good stuff - fresh and clean. That's what we always drank. Sometimes my mom would make tea with mint leaves and other leaves of plants that she would find in the woods. But most of the time we drank water. The teas were usually used when we were sick.

## BEAR CLAN CHANGE OF SEASON FEAST

I'm a member of the Bear Clan. The Bear Clan always put on a change of season feast for the whole tribe. We would have one in the spring and one in the fall.

The feast in the fall was to offer prayers to the creator so that our people would make it through the coming winter. The feast in the spring was to offer prayers of thanks to the creator for letting us survive another winter.

At the change of season feasts we used to all get together and cook the meal. The men went out and hunted the game. The women brought their harvest of the summer or their dried goods left from the winter. The women would clean and cook the game that the men had hunted. They even took care of the fire themselves. The men would sit and visit.

At the meal we always had deer, rabbits and squirrels. But at the spring feast we would sometimes have muskrat and raccoon. In the spring, it's mating season so they would always have to be sure that they didn't kill an expecting mother. They

didn't kill any animal that was bearing young. Everything that was killed and picked was used. Nothing went to waste. We only took as much as we needed to survive. It was plentiful then.

### HUNTING

There was always prayers offered for the meal that we ate. We were thankful to have what we had. It might not have been much, but it was all we needed. My father always prayed to the creator before he went out on a hunt, so that he could get enough to feed his family.

He always prayed after he killed an animal, giving thanks to the creator for supplying meat and also that this animal gave its life to feed his family. He thanked that animal and told it why he had to take its life, so that it would bring life to his body and that of his children and wife.

I remember when we worked for the farmers in Minnesota, they would go out and shoot rabbits and squirrels for fun. They knew that we ate them so they would bring them to us. My mom would make our lunch for the next day with those animals. We would carry it to the fields with us the next day.

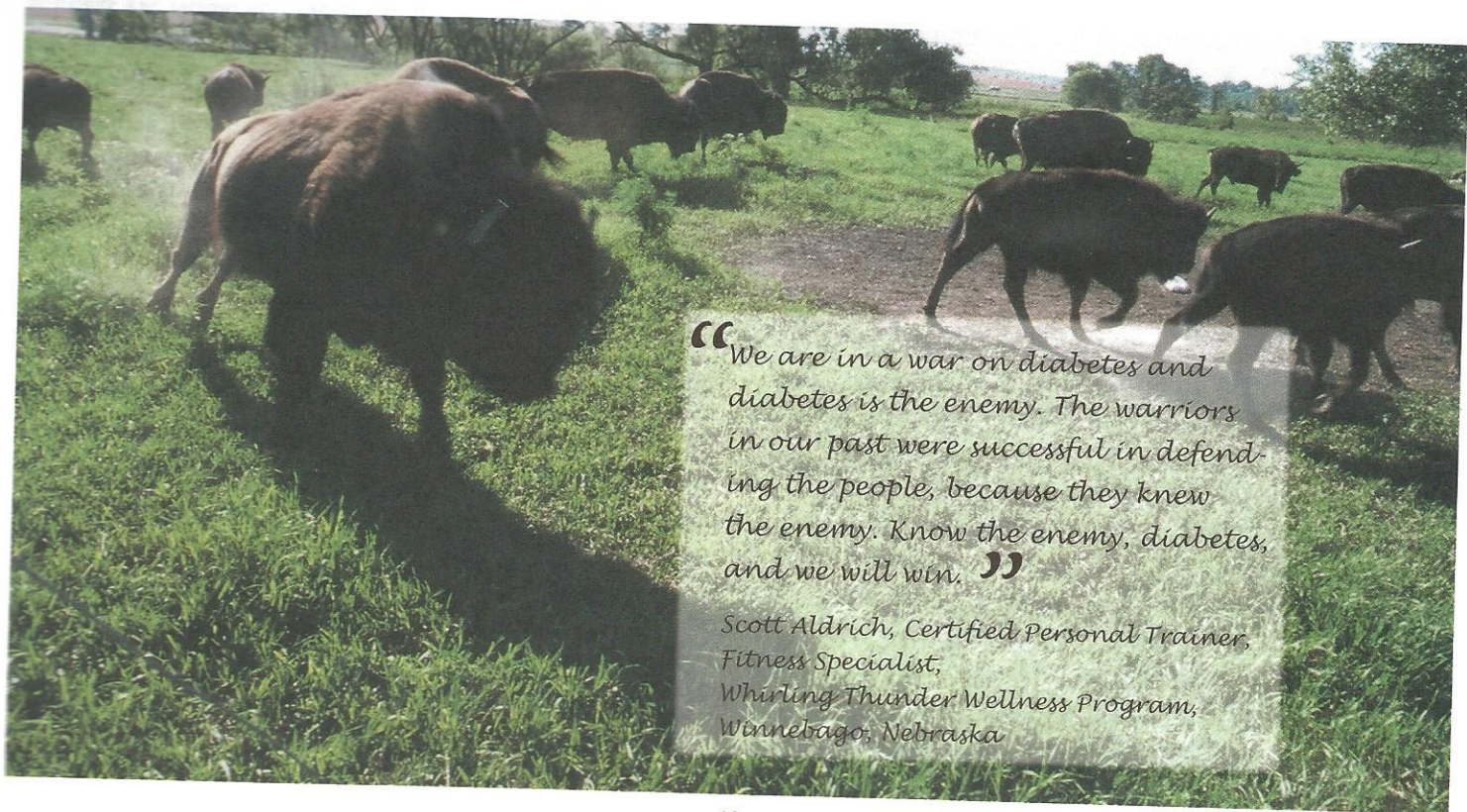
### MODERN FOODS

I don't ever remember having frybread when I was young. My mom used to make biscuits in the wood stove. Before that she made what she called cowboy bread. She would lean it against the coals and rocks to cook it.

I don't ever remember eating frybread until we went to Minnesota to work in the fields. When we got into the white man's world, that's when we started to eat their food. It was a lot of fried food. We didn't have all the wild game we had on the reservation. I know wild game and the nature given food are good for us. But how do we get our kids to eat it, when all they have to do is jump into a car and go to the store to get chips, pop and pizza?

I noticed when we came back to the reservation that you hardly ever saw rabbits and squirrels anymore. It was like that for quite a number of years. But now I can look in my backyard and see them running all over. They're back, so why don't we use them? ■





*“We are in a war on diabetes and diabetes is the enemy. The warriors in our past were successful in defending the people, because they knew the enemy. Know the enemy, diabetes, and we will win. ”*

*Scott Aldrich, Certified Personal Trainer,  
Fitness Specialist,  
Whirling Thunder Wellness Program,  
Winnebago, Nebraska*

# Buffalo & Rice Soup

CHERIE LAPOINTE, WINNEBAGO

Served at Talking Circles in Winnebago, NE

3 lbs. ground buffalo

2 cups rice (any type)

1 tsp. low sodium beef base

Bring 5 cups of water to a boil. Add 1 teaspoon low sodium beef base, add 2 cups of rice, place lid on the pot. While rice is cooking brown the 3 lbs. of buffalo in a pan with water. Drain buffalo of all moisture. Add to the boiling rice. Cook until rice is split open.

Serves 10

*Diabetes has reached epidemic proportions among Americans Indians throughout North America. In 1991-1993, the age-adjusted diabetes mortality rate for American Indians and Alaska Natives in the Indian Health Service (IHS) was 31.7 per 100,000.*

*When the three IHS areas with problems in under-reporting of Indian race on death certificates are excluded, the diabetes mortality rate rises to 41.4 per 100,000.*

*This is 248 percent higher than the U.S. All Races Rate of 11.9.*



# Buffalo Pockets

CHERIE LAPOINTE, WINNEBAGO

*Served at Talking Circles in Winnebago, NE*

*1 large onion*

*1 large red bell pepper*

*1 large green bell pepper*

*1 baby yellow zucchini*

*1 baby green zucchini*

*3 lbs. buffalo roast*

*Fat Free cooking spray*

*Aluminum foil or*

*aluminum foil pockets*

Slice all vegetables into bite size pieces. (Remember to always wash your vegetables.) Slice buffalo roast into bite size pieces. Make sure all vegetables and meat are sliced thin. Using a skillet, very lightly sprayed with fat free cooking spray, brown the slices of buffalo meat.

Mix all vegetables and meat into a large bowl. Sprinkle with black pepper. Lightly spray foil or foil pockets with fat free cooking spray. Fill pockets to your desire with the vegetable and meat mix.

Preheat oven to 275°. Place pockets on a cookie sheet and place in oven. Cook for 20-30 minutes. Serve with plain rice.

*Serves 10*

# Buffalo Roast and Veggies

CHERIE LAPOINTE, WINNEBAGO

*Served at Talking Circles in Winnebago, NE*

*4 lbs. buffalo roast*

*1 medium onion*

*1 bag baby carrots*

*5 medium red potatoes*

*6 sticks of celery*

Preheat oven to 325°

Place buffalo roast in roaster with a lid with 1 inch of water. Sprinkle with black pepper and place sliced onions in water and on top of the roast. Cover and place in oven.

While roast is cooking peel potatoes and dice. Dice celery. Leave baby carrots at their size.

(Remember to always wash your vegetables.)

After roast has cooked for an hour to an hour and a half place other vegetables in the water and cook for an additional hour.

*Serves 10*





# Jon Bellanger Soup

*(It seems to be just enough for everyone)*

CHERIE LAPOINTE, WINNEBAGO

*Served at Talking Circles in Winnebago, NE*

*3 lbs. buffalo (ground or  
cubed stewing)*

*1 baby yellow zucchini*

*4 sticks celery*

*1 baby green zucchini*

*3 carrots*

*1 can whole kernel corn*

*1 clove garlic*

*2 cups California rice*

Put 5 cups water, diced garlic, California rice and buffalo into a soup pot, with a lid. Cook at a rapid boil. Slice zucchini, celery and carrots. (Remember to always wash your vegetables.) Drain can of corn and rinse with cold water.

After garlic, rice and buffalo have boiled for 20-25 minutes, add the vegetables and cook for an additional 20 minutes.

*Drinking alcoholic beverages raises  
blood sugars. Abstinence from alcohol  
intake is best for wellness.*