

**Native American:** Chicago was named for a food. The Miami and Illinois nations, who lived in the Chicago area at the time of first European contact, called the Des Plaines River *šikaakwa siipiwi* 'Ramp River' for the abundance of *allium tricoccum* found along its banks. The French explorer La Salle recorded an approximation of the river name as *Checagou*; the designation was later transferred to the Chicago River and then extended to the settlement founded at the river's mouth.

The traditional foods of the Miami, Illinois, and other local nations (Potawatomi, Ojibwa, Meskwaki, Sauk, Kickapoo, Mascouten) included not only ramps but also venison, rabbit, buffalo, raccoon, squirrel, turkey, duck, goose, fresh water fish and eels, turtles, corn and hominy, beans, squash, gosefoot, purslane, milkweed, Jerusalem artichokes, prairie turnips, sunflower seeds, black walnuts, pawpaws, persimmons, prickly pear cactus, and many sorts of berries. Maple syrup was harvested as a sweetener; medicinal teas were made from cedar, sage, and other plants. An emblematic Native American dish of the postcontact era is frybread, made from a simple dough of flour, salt, baking powder, and water or milk; some cooks add a bit of sugar as well. The dough is formed into flat disks 4 inches or more in diameter, often with a small hole in the center, and fried in oil, shortening, or lard. Frybread may be eaten plain or topped with powdered sugar or honey, or with savory toppings.

In the 2010 census approximately 27,000 Chicagoans reported full or partial Native American ethnicity, about 1% of the city's population. A significant part of Chicago's Native American population arrived in the city during the 1950s, when Chicago was one of the original four destination cities designated by the federal relocation program, intended to remove Native Americans from reservations. Members of more than 50 tribes moved to Chicago, especially from the Algonquian and Siouan groups of the upper Midwest. The American Indian Center of Chicago was established in Uptown in 1953 by newly arrived Native Americans and has played a crucial role in establishing a pan-Indian identity among Chicago Native Americans.

Powwows sponsored by the American Indian Center or other organizations are the most accessible occasions for outsiders to sample Native American dishes. Frybread and Indian tacos (ground beef, shredded cheese, lettuce, tomato, and salsa on frybread) are always offered by vendors; buffalo burgers, corn soup, or wild rice soup may be available as well. The St. Kateri Center, a Catholic ministry in North Center named for the first Native American saint, hosts an Indian taco sale a few times during the year. Though elsewhere in North America it is possible to find high end Native American restaurants, such as chef Nephi Craig's Summit in Sunrise Park, AZ, no comparable establishment presently exists in Chicago.

The American Indian Center and other midwestern Native groups have been active in the food sovereignty movement: planting communal gardens, teaching young people about traditional foodways, and reviving heirloom varieties of produce. Beyond the Native American community an increased interest in local products has resulted in greater availability of indigenous foods such as ramps, black walnuts, native persimmons, and pawpaws at Chicago's farmers markets.

-- Amy Dahlstrom

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