



Harvest of the Month: Bison

Video Transcript

Video Available At:

<https://youtu.be/V6VpMcqFHYS>

This month's Montana harvest of the month is bison. The American bison is also called buffalo and has many names that are older than our state.

[Ojibwe language spoken.] My name is Jill Falcon MacKin and I am Turtle Mountain Ojibwe (Annishinabe). Our word for buffalo is bizhiki.

[Crow language spoken.] Hello, my name is Bayleigh Bird Hat. I am a member of the Crow (Apsaalooke) Nation and the word for buffalo is bishée.

[Salish language spoken.] Hi everyone, my name is Rose Bear Don't Walk and I am Bitterroot Salish. The Salish word for buffalo is q^weyq^way, which kind of loosely translates to "a bunch of little blacks." So, when you look up on the mountain side and you see bison, you'll see a bunch of little black dots up there and that's how we call them.

[Gros Ventre language spoken.] Hello, my name is Wozek Chandler. I come from the White Clay People in Fort Belknap and our word for Buffalo is eneeče.

[Cheyenne language spoken.] Hello, my name is Brave Woman in my tribe from the Northern Cheyenne and I am from Lame Deer, Montana. In English, it translates to Black Lodge. Our word for buffalo is hotoa'e. We have two different words to mean buffalo.

[Assiniboine language spoken.] My name is Sweeney Windchief and I am a member of the Assiniboine tribe. The word for buffalo in Assiniboine is tatanga.

[Blackfeet language spoken.] Hello. I am called Danielle Antelope. I'm from Browning and I am Blackfeet (Niitsitapi). Our traditional word for Buffalo is inii.

[Sioux (Dakota) language spoken.] Hello, my name is Ethan Three Stars. I'm a member of the Fort Peck tribes. We're known in our language as the Buffalo People. Here at Fort Peck we have the Dakota Nation made up of the Cut Heads. We call our Buffalo Tatanka.

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[Kootenai language spoken.] Good day, my name is Vernon Finley. I'm with the Kootenai Culture Committee and I'm bringing you, today, the word for bison. In Kootenai (Ktunaxa) the word is Kamquq'uku᠎

Prior to the settler's arrival in the area, there were over 20 million bison that roamed the prairies and woodlands. Bison have been an essential part of life for indigenous civilizations for thousands of years. Not only are they used as a food, but every part of the animal is used to make clothing, utensils, homes, instruments, and tools.

Unfortunately, bison were hunted nearly to extinction, in part to meet demand for their durable leather and also in an effort to destroy a primary food source for Native people. By the time Montana became a state in 1889, there were fewer than 1,000 bison remaining in North America. Thanks to recovery efforts by conservationists, private ranchers, and tribal nations, bison populations are now on the rise. Today, Montana and Yellowstone National Park are home to over 23,000 buffalo.

The grazing practices of these animals make them an important keystone species on the prairie. Because of the way bison naturally roam on the prairies, they help aerate and fertilize the soil, spread seeds of important plants, and even help the plants germinate. The way they graze can also diversify bird species inhabiting the prairies. Because these animals can weigh over 2,000 pounds and run up to 35 miles per hour, they can also be incredibly dangerous.

Bison meat has around 22 grams of protein per serving, a nutrient which is important for building and repairing tissues, as well as making hormones and enzymes. The meat also contains omega-6 and omega-3 fatty acids. Omega-3 fatty acids are especially important for preventing heart disease and reducing inflammation. A single serving can satisfy one quarter of our daily iron needs - about 3.5 grams per serving. An important mineral that promotes growth and development by way of proteins that are made by the body to deliver oxygen to our muscles.

Bison meat can be purchased at stores around Montana or bought directly from ranchers. It is easiest to find ground bison which can be cooked similar to ground beef. However, bison meat has a much lower fat content which can affect cooking times. Make sure to cook ground bison to an internal temperature of 160 degrees Fahrenheit and roasts and steaks to 145 degrees Fahrenheit.

Now let's make a recipe together.

Enjoy Montana bison all month long. The Montana Harvest of the Month program showcases a different Montana grown food each month in Montana communities. We hope you'll join us in tasting Montana this month.



The Montana Harvest of the Month program showcases Montana grown foods in Montana communities. This program is a collaboration between Montana Farm to School, Office of Public Instruction, Montana Team Nutrition Program, National Center for Appropriate Technology, Montana State University Extension, Gallatin Valley Farm to School, FoodCorps Montana, and Montana Department of Agriculture. More information and resources are available at: mtharvestofthemonth.org.

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