

COMMUNITY

Acorn mania!!!

The fruits of labor: sorting the acorn nuts

By Don Decker,
YAN News
10/25/18

Acorn is the mighty power food of the Apaches. It is pulverized from its nut state into a powder and sprinkled into beef soup, dumplings, corn and squash. Now served during special occasions such as ceremonies and traditional family gatherings.

In one particular place in a church parking lot in Payson, large groves of acorn trees drop thousands of acorns on the concrete parking lot during the season and the acorn pickers bring a large broom sweeper to sweep up pounds and pounds of acorn for one easy gathering foray using a dust pan!

Emory Oak (acorn) is indigenous only to certain parts of Arizona from east central Arizona (north east of San Carlos (Ash Creek) into mountainous Globe-Miami (Pinto Creek and Oak Flats), Payson (city), Oak Creek canyon and Prescott area.

The acorns began to fall to the ground in late

August, If the summer monsoons are especially heavy, the acorn harvest can be exceptional.

Acorn is a commodity as well. It generates cash value sold by a coffee can container full (shelled and ground) for \$50 or unshelled usually filled in Blue Bird flour sacks that will fetch \$125 dollars. To shell the acorn, a grinding stone with the grinder is required. Throwing just a hand full into the scoop of the stone grinder, the acorn is smashed in the forward motion of the grinding stone and slowly cracked. The cracked remains are then thrashed in the air in a wide pan where the shells are separated from the acorn nuts for easy sorting.

Going on picking forays can take all day or overnight stays (but not staying in comfy motels with color TV but sleeping in the wilderness under threatening thunderstorms from a hot August night).

One story is told by a YAN young lady who works for the Nation whereby her mother goes under an acorn

tree in Oak Creek Canyon to pick acorns. It was at the end of summer and as she sat down to pick acorns, she did not see a rattle snake lurking in the pile of acorns that she reached for. The lady got bit by the rattler which required immediate medical attention at a nearby hospital. The lady lived and returned to pick acorns. That is the type of dedication which goes into acorn picking!

It all depends how much time a person wants to put into picking acorns. When you pick the acorns off of the ground one must be fully seated on the ground-side ways. By the time the second hour approaches while picking, your arms and legs can get numb. Finally, paralysis of the neck sets in after 3 hours. It takes dedication to pick acorns and that is why acorn is very expensive.

In unusual wet season when the acorn grows in abundance, one can pick a sack full of acorn a day. It is labor intensive. In Payson, some of the larger trees



Prepping the acorn-Apache Culture Dept. photo by Chasen Ross

are located right in town on people's private property. Each year, local Payson residents greet the acorn pickers and some give their permission for the pickers to pick acorns on their property.

Recipe for acorn stew:
Make some dumplings using recipe for dumplings. Layout dumplings on wax paper temporarily (hold).

Cut up small pieces of natural beef (bite size) and beef soup bones.

Pre-brown the meat in frying pan. Empty grease.

Cut up some squash into slices of half dollar pieces (3-4 squash). Not too thick.

Break corn ears into halves. A dozen ears.

2 gal. of water, bring to a boil in large pot.

Bring water to boil and dumped beef and bones into pot after browning beef bits.

Let it boil for 30 mins and simmer. Add squash and corn. After that, add the dumplings right before serving.

About 10 minutes before

serving, add about a 2 cups of acorn to the soup and mix well into the mixture. Don't overdue the acorn mixture as slurpy acorn soup is not tasteful and may be too strong. DO NOT EVER ADD POTATOES/CARROTS/ONIONS/or other exotic spices TO ACORN SOUP!! (you may think that will help the soup)

Do not add salt to the soup.

Serve with torts.

Photo by Chasen Ross, Manager of Preservation/Tech. Center-YAN.

Yavapai-Apache share cultures

Montezuma Castle event creates better understanding of the Yavapai and Apache

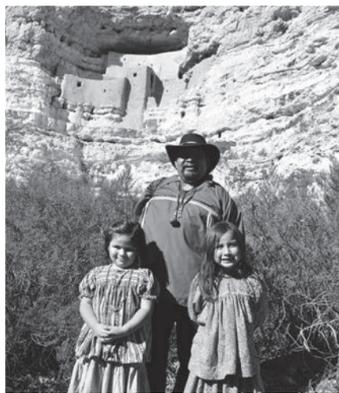
By Don Decker,
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Members of the Yavapai-Apache Nation set up tables and chairs to demonstrate arts and crafts of its people on Saturday November 3.

Singers from Ft. McDowell with leader Albert Nelson, sang traditional Yavapai songs using water drums as the Warriorettes from the Nation danced for the visitors.



Linda Russell beading belts.



Troy Kaska, Yavapai cultural specialist with youth. (photo by K Isaac, Montezuma Castle National Park)



Rachel Beauty, Dawn Rocha with grandmother Elizabeth Rocha making mesquite flour cookies.

OREM DAM DAYS

From page 6

Save Ft. McDowell' of Phoenix (a non-Indian interested party) who petitioned the developers of the Orme Dam beginning in 1976 with public demonstrations.

It was with the successful battle involving the Indian political forces of Arizona which prevented a take-over of the traditional lands of the Yavapai.

The dam would have submerged 24,000 acres that the Yavapai were living on and the relocation of cemeteries.

Like the story of David meeting Goliath, the Ft. McDowell Yavapai people won and kept their land.

It is this annual celebration that brings feelings of victory for the Yavapai people.

Photos by Yavapai-Apache Nation News



YAN Royalty



Miss Princes Alice Mae Kinsey waves to the crowd.



Orme Day Celebration with Chairwoman Jane Russell-Winiecki and Miss Teen YAN Taylor Lewis-Moore.



Noelani Victor, Lil' Missy at the Ft. McDowell Orme Days Parade on Nov. 17.