

When buffalo were scarce and people were on the point of starving, we ate dogs; (38) that is, puppies in the prime of life. When their bodies are too heavy for their small legs, dogs seem to be running side-wise; well, that's when they are in the prime of life. Dog meat is gotten this way: A stick is laid across the dog's neck and someone steps on this until the dog dies. Then, a bonfire is built and all his hair singed off. Next the skin is well washed and scraped, then the head cut off, wrapped up and laid aside: — We consider the head something very special and it is usually served to distinguished visitors. — The body is then cut up into small pieces and boiled like buffalo meat. It was a custom among the Sioux to eat dog meat at certain ceremonies like the Clown Dance, it was not part of the regular diet; it was eaten only when people were starving and there were no buffalo. Since most families had faced such a time, every family kept a female dog and consider her valuable. Puppies would then in all probability be on hand should it happen that children were hungry and people starving.

The Sioux like fish and ate every variety whenever any were caught, even though buffalo were plentiful. Fish were caught by means of lines made by twisting hairs of a horse's tail between index fingers and thumbs. When a cord was of the desired length, one end was tied to a pole, made of the branch of a tree or of willow. To the other end, we tied the leg or breast muscles of a bird. No hooks were used. After the fish swallowed the meat we pulled it out of the water. I caught my first fish when I was about ten years old in the river (Boxelder Creek)

(38) Beckwith notes that dog meat cannot be called a domestic dish; that "it is not eaten, except in case of dire necessity, as it is considered too delicate for ordinary consumption; but is usually eaten at a special feast in honor of warriors of renown, to whom, as the highest mark of courtesy, the head is given. (Loc.cit., p. 255.) Catlin in speaking of a feast at which dog meat was served writes; "This feast was unquestionably given to us, as the most undoubted evidence they could give us of their friendship; and we, who knew the spirit and feeling in which it was given, could not but treat it respectfully, and receive it as a very high and marked compliment." (Loc. cit., 1913, 1:258-260.) For Dakota menu in general see Parkman, Francis, The Oregon trail, Boston, 1930, pp. 186-7, Hayden F. V., Contributions to the ethnography and philology of the Indian tribes of the Missouri valley, in Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, 1862, pp. 369-71; Beckwith, loc. cit., p. 254.)