

After I became a privileged character in the Sioux village-- that is, permitted to run around as I pleased--I went out with a scouting party, ~~that was going to Fort Buford~~, north of the Yellowstone. A rumor had reached the Indian village that a large body of soldiers was camped on one of the tributaries of the Yellowstone near Fort Buford. It was said to be the intention of these troops to move upon and attack Sitting Bull's camp. The Indian scouting party was sent out to discover whether or not there was any truth in these reports. Little Assiniboine, Sitting Bull's adopted brother, asked me to go along, and I accepted the invitation. I had never been away from the village before, and supposing that the Indians supplied themselves with food for a trip before starting out, I asked if I should take some meat with me (straight meat, minus seasoning, being the only food we had); I was told no; that we would kill plenty of buffaloes on the road.

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The second day out we discovered a big herd of these animals some distance in advance of us. Some of the best hunters in our party were sent out to head the * buffaloes off, and we succeeded in killing eight or ten of them. After they had been dressed and quartered, the Indians informed me they were going to cook the meat and carry it along with them. I did not understand how they could do any cooking without some sort of utensils, and asked Little Assiniboine to explain. He told me if I would wait and watch I could see better than he could explain. The Indians began making preparations to cook. They were eating the raw buffalo meat while they did so, one of the choice morsels being the kidneys. It was my first experience of that sort, and the sight sickened me; but I saw so much of it afterward, that I soon got over feelings of qualmsness. Some of the bucks took their blankets and went off in search of buffalo chips, while others gathered a number of rocks.

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After making a big fire with the buffalo chips, the Indians put the rocks in the fire. Next they took the paunch out of a buffalo, and after emptying it of its contents, turned it inside out and filled it about two-thirds full of water--it must have held fifteen or twenty gallons. Then they took four bows, stuck them in the ground and fastened them together at the top, and suspended the paunch filled with water between the bows. As the stones were heated they were put into the water-filled paunch, and the same result was obtained as if the latter put on the top of a stove or hung over the fire. The stones were constantly changed, those coming direct from the fire being put into the water as fast as the others were taken out. The meat was put into this boiling water and cooked, * then taken out and packed up to make room for more. In this manner all the fresh meat was cooked, and I had taken my first lesson in Indian cookery. The redmen only cut off the choice parts of the animals killed, but we had meat enough to last us throughout our trip.

Another custom I learned on this trip was that of shooting life into the sun. There was a total eclipse of the sun one day, and as soon as the Indians observed the shadow on the face of Old Sol, they threw down their packs, drew their guns and kept up a continuous fire until the eclipse had passed away. They were under great excitement all this time and I could not understand what they were doing. When it was over, I asked Little Assiniboine the cause of the shooting, and he told me they had been shooting the life and light back into the sun. They really believed their action had prevented the light of the sun from disappearing forever.

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