

Lesson 2: Native Knowledge

Importance of the Buffalo



The American Bison, also known as buffalo, has always held great meaning for American Indian people. To them, buffalo represent their spirit and remind them of how their lives were once lived – free and in harmony with nature.

Bison thrived in abundance on the plains of the U.S. for centuries before they were hunted to near extinction in the 1800s. Bison were critical to the survival of Native Americans. The animals provided food, coverings and liners for tipis, material for clothing, and essential tools like shovels made from bones. In addition, many cultural ceremonies included the bison.

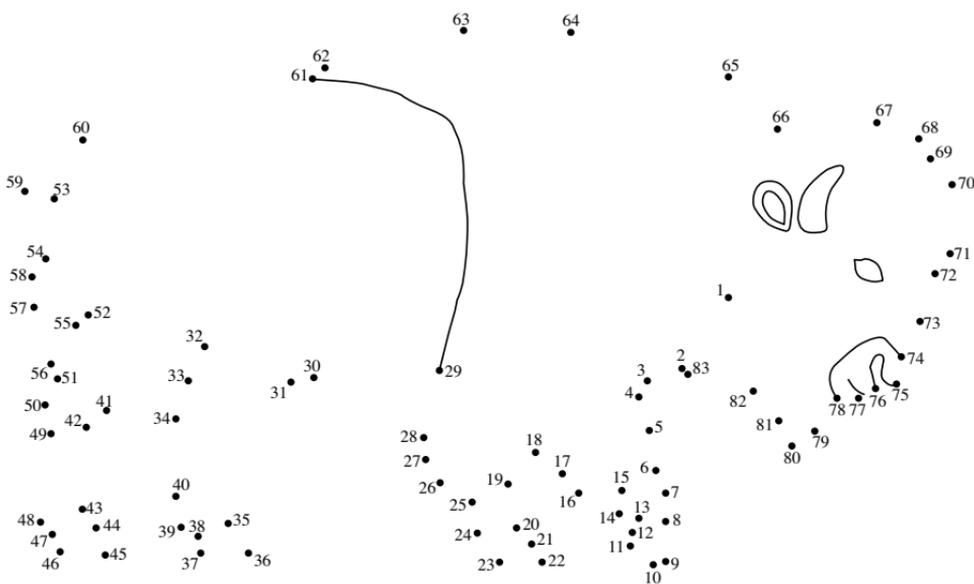
Buffalo meat is low in fat and cholesterol. It is enriched with Omega 3, which can help prevent disease and prolong good health. Buffalo meat traditionally was used both immediately and dried into jerky. Here are other traditional uses of buffalo, courtesy of the Intertribal Bison Cooperative and Administration for Native Americans.

Tanned Hide	Horns	Bones	Bladder	Tendons and Muscles
Beds	Cups	Eating utensils	Food Pouches	Arrow tips
Bags	Headdresses	Game dice	Medicine Bags	Bowstrings
Blankets	Ladles	Jewelry	Water	
Bridles	Toys	Sleds	Container	
Clothing				

Today, Native peoples' strong spiritual and cultural respect for the bison has not diminished. Many tribes in Oklahoma have brought the buffalo back to their communities and are utilizing the buffalo to help restore spiritual and physical health to their tribal members.

Activity:

Complete this dot-to-dot while thinking of other ways to utilize all parts of the buffalo.



 THE OKLAHOMAN

AMERICAN INDIAN
CULTURAL CENTER & MUSEUM

A project of the Native American Cultural & Educational Authority

Newspapers for this educational program provided by:



the
Chickasaw
Nation