

The Three Sisters, (corn, beans, and squash) were often grown, harvested and used in many traditional recipes by Native Americans. Here is a modern take on using these ingredients in a casserole to enjoy with your family!

Three Sisters Casserole

Serves: 12

Ingredients:

- 2 T. olive oil
- 1 tsp. cumin
- 2 large onions, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 carrots, scraped and chopped
- 1 jalapeno pepper, seeded and finely chopped
- 1 (28 oz.) can tomatoes, undrained
- 1 ½ cups frozen corn
- 3 medium zucchini, diced
- 8 oz. penne, cooked al dente
- 1 (16 oz.) can red kidney beans, rinsed and drained
- 4 oz. sharp cheddar cheese, shredded

Directions:

1. In a large non-stick skillet, heat olive oil. Add cumin, onion, and garlic and sauté until the onion is soft and translucent. Add the carrots, jalapeno, and tomatoes with juice and heat to boiling.
2. Reduce heat and simmer uncovered for 15 minutes.
3. Add the corn and zucchini and simmer 5 more minutes.
4. Add the cooked pasta and beans and mix well.
5. Pour the mixture into a 4 quart casserole, add cheese on top and place in a 350 degrees F oven for about 5 minutes, or until the cheese is melted.

Cooking methods have changed drastically over the past couple hundred years with new innovations and technology. Many years ago, there were no blenders, toasters, microwaves, and all the other small appliances you would see in the modern kitchen today. Back then, Native Americans were very resourceful with a variety of materials for making cooking utensils and tools for various cooking methods. Native Americans traditionally made the majority of their cooking tools from stone, clay, bone, wood and animal hide. They used every part of the animals that they hunted. Native American methods of cooking are unique in that the heat source was often enclosed within the cookware. They made boiling sacks by forging the tanned hides or bladders of animals into sacks. After filling them with water they hung the boiling sack above a fire but far enough away to prevent damage to the sack. They placed extremely hot rocks into the water to bring it to a boiling point, added food and boiled it. Celts were cooking tools used for pounding food and made of stone that resembled arrowheads, but they were blunter, bigger and chunkier. Native American cooking pots were commonly made from clay, and were hung on tripods made from stone. Sticks burned underneath to create heat for food to cook inside the pots. Cooking baskets were made of woven material often coated with clay for insulation for heating food. Wood coals would be placed in the cooking basket to roast meat and hot stones were used to cook other types of food such as soups. As the food cooked, the clay covering the basket would harden

and eventually separate from the basket, thus becoming useful as a separate clay roasting pan. Grinding stones were pairs of rocks, one small and the other larger and flatter. This was used like a mortar and pestle, and the food would go on the larger rock and be grinded by the smaller rock. This was often used for cracking nuts and pulverizing roots. Gourds were hollowed out and dried and used as spoons, bowls, and storage containers. Often times various vegetables, fruits, and meats were dried and stored for the winter months. Native American cuisine uses many different types of cooking methods, some of which have been passed on from generation to generation. Today, modern cooking methods have been adapted into Native American cuisine, but food may still be cooked following traditional methods and using recipes with only indigenous ingredients.