

# Chahta Imillimpa (Choctaw Traditional Food)



By Dr. Ian Thompson, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Historic Preservation Dept.

# Chahta Yakni (*Choctaw Lands*)



# Chahta Yakni Nan Ishtytta (*Choctaw Land Management*)

**When in Choctaw control, the Homeland had old growth forests with an open understory, that gave them a park-like appearance. Cane break stretched for miles, as did patches of tallgrass prairie. Animals such as bear, wolf, and panther were common. Due to colonization, these ecosystems have been severely degraded. Animals dependant upon them, such as the Carolina Parakeet have gone extinct.**



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# Chahta Imillimpa Puta

*(The Choctaw Diet)*

- **Wild Plant Foods**
- **Animals / Fish / Shellfish**
- **Agricultural Products (after 500 A.D.)**



# **Chahta Ihvshi**

## ***(The Choctaw Months)***

- |                                     |                  |                                |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| • <b>Koichush Hvshi</b>             | <b>January</b>   | <b>Wildcat Month</b>           |
| • <b>Watonlak Hvshi</b>             | <b>February</b>  | <b>Crane Month</b>             |
| • <b>Mahli Hvshi</b>                | <b>March</b>     | <b>Windy Month</b>             |
| • <b>Tek <u>I</u>hvshi</b>          | <b>April</b>     | <b>Women's Month</b>           |
| • <b>Bihi Hvshi</b>                 | <b>May</b>       | <b>Mulberry Month</b>          |
| • <b>Bissa Hvshi</b>                | <b>June</b>      | <b>Blackberry Month</b>        |
| • <b>Kafi Hvshi</b>                 | <b>July</b>      | <b>Sassafras Month</b>         |
| • <b>Takkon Hvshi</b>               | <b>August</b>    | <b>Peach Month</b>             |
| • <b>Hoponi Hvshi</b>               | <b>September</b> | <b>Cooking Month</b>           |
| • <b>Hochafo Iskitini<br/>Hvshi</b> | <b>October</b>   | <b>Little Hunger<br/>Month</b> |
| • <b>Hochafo Chito Hvshi</b>        | <b>November</b>  | <b>Big Hunger Month</b>        |
| • <b>Koichito Hvsh</b>              | <b>December</b>  | <b>Panther Month</b>           |

# **Toffahpi**

## *(Spring)*

### **The Months:**

**Windy Month**

**Women's Month**

**Mulberry Month**



### **The Activities:**

**Gathering wild edibles**

**Field-clearing and garden-planting**

### **The Foods:**

**Fresh wild plant shoots and leaves**

**Foods preserved through the winter**

# Nanoffo Nukshopa Aiowa

*(Gathering Wild Spring Edibles)*



# Koshiha

*(Poke Salad)*

Pick small poke leaves and stems in the spring when they are tender. Put young leaves in water and boil for a short time. Pour off water and boil again, with fat meat if desired. The same process may also be followed to prepare dock, nettles, and lambs quarter greens. The last of these plants does not require par boiling and can be eaten all summer.



# Nanoffo Hokchi Vmmona

*(The First Agriculture)*



Gourmet Sleuth 2011



Illinois State Museum 2008



Wagoner and Civitello 2000

# Afymmi 1500 Nanoffo Hokchi

*(Agriculture in 1500)*



# Chahta Osapa Aihokchi

(Choctaw *Crop-Planting*)



# **Toffahpi Ilimpa Inla Alheha**

## ***(Other Spring Dishes)***

### **Fresh Food**

**Oski Api (cane shoots)**

**Foi Imushi (yellowjacket larva)**



### **Stored Food**

**Nipi Shila (jerkey)**

**Tanchi Lakchi (corn grits)**

**Pvska Oti Ibalhto (corn/chestnut bread)**

**Tanchi Pvlvska (cornbread)**

**Pvlvska Hawushko (sour bread)**

**Pvskalwasha (hot water bread)**

**Nusi Pvlvska (acorn bread)**

**Okshvsh (acorn pudding)**

**Hvshi Bahpo (sunflower seed pudding)**

**Bvla Hobbi (boiled beans)**

**Isito (pumpkin)**

**Hichi (wild turnip)**

**Bota Kapvssa (cold cornmeal)**

# **Toffa**

*(Summer)*

- **The Months:**

**Blackberry Month**

**Sassafras Month**

**Peach Month**

- **The Activities:**

**Berry-gathering**

**Communal Field-planting**

**Fishing, small-game hunting**



- **The Foods:**

**Fresh meat / fish**

**Green corn**

# Toffa Vpawaya Itahobli

## Collecting Summer Fruits



Hammer 2005



# Nan Vlhpoa Ossi Owvttta

## Fishing / Small Game Hunting



# Walakshi

*(Desert Dumplings)*

Remove pits and skins from plums and boil. Place boiled plums in a mortar and beat with corn meal. Make the dough into dumplings and boil until done.



# Toffa Ilimpa Inla Alheha

## *(Other Summer Dishes)*

### Fresh Food

**Nipi** (fresh meat)

**Nvni** (fish)  
(shellfish)

**Panki** (grapes)

**Taklushi** (plums)

**Bissa** (berries)

**Tanchushi** (green corn)

**Ampi Holbi** (corn on the cob)

**Bvla Hobbi** (beans in the pod)



### Stored Food

**Nipi Shila** (jerkey)

**Tanchi Lakchi** (corn grits)

**Hvshi Bahpo** (sunflower seed pudding)

**Bvla Hobbi** (boiled beans)

**Bota Kapvssa** (cold cornmeal)



# Onafapi

*(Fall)*

- **The Months:**

**Cooking Month**

**Little Hunger Month**

**Big Hunger Month**

- **The Activities:**

**Gathering wild fruit / nuts / seeds**

**Fall harvest, preserving food for winter**

**Begin Winter Hunt**

- **The Foods:**

**Agricultural produce**

**Acorn / nut dishes**



# Onafapi Illimpawaya Itahobli

*(Fall Collecting)*



# Onafapi Nan Illimpawaya Ahoyo (The *Fall Harvest*)



De Bry 1591



Bushnell 1915



De Bry 1591

# Illimpa Ilatomba (*Preserving Food*)



Bushnell 1915

# Oksak Atahap

## *(Hickory Nut Bvnaaha Bread)*

Mix parched corn with hickory nut meats. Pound together in a mortar until a fine consistency is reached. Add water to form dough. Form dough into masses small enough to wrap them in a green or soaked corn husk. Tie each corn husk-covered mass around the middle with a thin strip of cornhusk to form a package. Fill a deep pot with water, add husk-covered packages, and boil in water until the corn is cooked.



# Onafapi Ilimpa Inla Alheha

## *(Other Fall Dishes)*

**Tafula (broken hominy)**  
**Tafulo Hawushko (sour hominy)**  
**Tafula toni Ibalhto (hominy and beans)**  
**Tanchi Labonna (whole hominy)**  
**Tanchi Lakchi (corn grits)**  
**Tanchi Alwasha (fried corn)**  
**Ampi Holbi (corn on the cob)**  
**Pvska Oti Ibalhto (corn/chestnut bread)**  
**Tanchi Hiloha (roasted corn)**  
**Pvlvska Mihlofa (grated bread)**  
**Tanchi Pvlvska (cornbread)**  
**Pvlvska Hawushko (sour bread)**  
**Uksak Ahlanta (hickory porridge)**  
**Hvshi Bahpo (sunflower seed pudding)**  
**Bvla Hobbi (boiled beans)**  
**Isito (pumpkin)**

**Pvskalwasha (hot water bread) Pvlvska**  
**Holbi (bread in the shucks)**  
**Nusi Pvlvska (acorn bread)**  
**Okshvsh (acorn pudding)**  
**Oksak Bahpo (hickory nut pudding)**



# Hvshstula

(*Winter*)

- **The Months:**

  - **Big Panther Month**

  - **Wildcat Month**

  - **Crane Month**

- **The Activities:**

  - **Big Game Hunt**

  - **Gathering persimmons / tubers**

- **The Foods:**

  - **Stored food**

  - **Fresh meat**



# Chashpo Napoa Chinto Awatta

*(Ancient Big-Game Hunting)*



# Owatta Chito (*Winter Hunt*)



De Bry 1591



# Haiyukpulo Hakshish Ilimpa (Edible *Roots*)



# Ukof (*Persimmons*)



# Ukof Honni

## *(Persimmon Stew)*

Gather persimmons in winter after a frost. If they are gathered too soon, they will be full of tannic acid and inedible. Some trees produce very sweet fruit, while others can have a more bitter taste. Remove the skins and seeds from the fruit. Leave them as chunks or mash into a pulp. Cut the meat from deer, bison, or bear into bite-sized pieces and throw into boiling water. Add persimmon pulp or chunks. The resultant stew may be thickened with cornmeal, hickory milk, or acorn flour.

# Hvshstula Illimpa Inla

## *(Other Winter Dishes)*

### Fresh Food

**Nipi** (fresh meat)  
**Ukof Honni** (persimmon stew)  
**Ukof Pvlvska** (persimmon bread)  
**Nipi Shila** (jerkey)  
**Iskuna** (chitlins)  
**Foi Imushi** (yellowjacket larva)  
**Walakshi** (deser dumplings)  
**Kantak Pvlvska** (greenbrier root bread)  
**Ahelusa** (black potato)  
**Luckchuk ahe** (mud potatoes)



### Stored Food

**Tafula** (broken hominy)  
**Tanchi Labonna** (whole hominy)  
**Tanchi Lakchi** (corn grits)  
**Ampi Holbi** (corn on the cob)  
**Pvska Oti Ibalhto** (corn/chestnut bread)  
**Tanchi Pvlvska** (cornbread)  
**Pvlvska Hawushko** (sour bread)  
**Pvskalwasha** (hot water bread)  
**Nusi Pvlvska** (acorn bread)  
**Okshvsh** (acorn pudding)  
**Uksak Ahlanta** (hickory porridge)  
**Hvshi Bahpo** (sunflower seed pudding)  
**Kantak Pvlvska** (greenbrier root bread)  
**Bvla Hobbi** (boiled beans)  
**Isito** (pumpkin)  
**Hichi** (wild turnip)  
**Bota Kapvssa**(cold cornmeal)

# **Chahta Imlimpa-yvt Okla Moyoma Imachukmali World-Wide Benefits of Choctaw Foods**

**Corn - World's 2nd largest crop , 800 billion MT (FAO Stat 2010)**

**Beans - 4,342,300 MT (FAO 2006)**

**Squash - 327,437 MT (NASS 20010)**

**Sunflowers - 32,164 MT (National Sunflower Association 2010)**

**Increased World Food Supply - European Population Explosion**

**Agricultural Knowledge - Sustainable Strategies**

# Reproduced Images

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