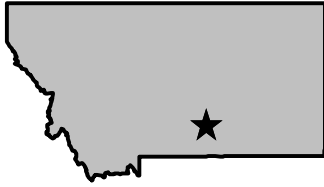


## CHAPTER 2 — Crow Reservation, Crow Tribe



Southeast of  
Billings, Montana  
(Area: 2.5 million acres)

### Recipe: Piñon Puree

1 lb. piñon nuts (also known  
as pine nuts)  
4 shallots, sliced  
1/4 tsp. pepper  
1 quart milk  
4 mint leaves  
Minced chives  
1-1/2 cups chicken broth  
1/4 tsp. Coriander

Combine all ingredients  
except the chives.  
Simmer the ingredients for 3  
minutes. Puree the mixture  
in a blender, pour into a  
serving dish, and garnish  
with chives. Piñon puree can  
be combined with roasted  
vegetables and used as  
stuffing for chicken breasts  
or steak or with grilled  
eggplant or as an ingredient  
in sauce for pasta. It also  
can be heated and served as  
a soup.

Chief Plenty Coups (*Alek-Chea-Ahoosh*) of the Crow was given a place of honor in a historic national ceremony. In 1921, he was the Indian chosen to represent all other Indians at the dedication of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Washington, D.C. To close the national ceremony, Plenty Coups placed his war bonnet and coup stick on the grave.

Chief Plenty Coups was one of the most important Native American leaders of the transitional period. This period was when the Indian Nations were moved onto their reservations. He was an ambassador and negotiator for the Crow. He advocated that the Crow adopt aspects of American culture necessary to succeed but maintain traditional Crow religious beliefs and cultural values.

Chief Plenty Coups died in 1932 ending a political career of more than 50 years.



### History

In the early 1600s, the Crow (*Absaroka* [bird people] or *Apsaalooka* [children of the large-beaked bird]) divided into two bands and split from the Hidatsa. Both tribes lived near the upper Missouri and were in dispute over buffalo. The Crow bands migrated to the Yellowstone River. Some Crow settled north of the Yellowstone toward the Musselshell River and became known as the Mountain Crow. Their language belongs to the Siouan language.

The Crow were hunters and were regarded as the premier horse thieves of the plains. In July 1806, William Clark took a small expedition to explore the Yellowstone River region and, under cover of darkness, the Crow succeeded in snatching half of the Americans' horses.

Partially because they were surrounded by stronger enemies like the Sioux, Blackfoot, Cheyenne, and Arapaho, the Crow were willing to cooperate with the white men to help preserve their own way of life. The Crow believed that cooperation would protect them from the worst of what was happening to the other nations.

The Crow earned a reputation as allies of the U.S. Army in the wars for the West. Six Crow warriors were scouts for Custer's Seventh Cavalry. On June 25, 1876, the day known to other Americans as "Custer's Last Stand," all six Crow scouts survived the battle at the Little Bighorn, but Custer and more than 250 troopers did not.

By the middle of the 1880s, the Crow Indians had moved to their reservation along the Yellowstone Valley of Montana.



**Culture**

The Crow chose the life of the high plains. Both bands abandoned the village lifestyle of the Hidatsa. They no longer farmed for food, growing only tobacco crops for pleasure and religious purposes; they no longer constructed earth lodges; and they stopped making pottery.

Instead, they lived in buffalo-hide tipis in small camps and moved often, typically following the buffalo herds. Horses were acquired in the 1700s, changing the hunting and warfare of the tribe, allowing them to travel farther and faster.

They participated in religious ceremonies such as Sun Dance and Vision Quest. They had special societies, such as the Crow Tobacco Society, with rituals surrounding their one crop. The Crow produced beautiful blankets, pouches, saddles, and bridles with quillwork and beadwork.

The Crow were deeply religious and believed they received spiritual instruction through their dreams. Like other Native Americans, they visited sweathouses for purification and other religious motives and fasted in hopes of experiencing visions.



**Government**

The Crow Tribe adopted its constitution in 1948. The tribe has a general council form of government, and all males 21 and over and females 18 and over are members of the Tribal Council. The entire council meets quarterly with 199 members constituting a quorum. In addition to the council, four officers are elected for two-year terms.

Southeast of Billings, Montana, Crow Agency is the capital of the Crow reservation, which covers 2.5 million acres.

## CHAPTER 2 — Flathead Reservation, Flathead Tribe



Dixon, Montana  
(Area: 1,243, 968 acres)

### Recipe: Venison Curry

3 tablespoons fat  
2 cloves minced garlic  
1 large onion, sliced  
1 cup canned tomatoes  
1/2 cup raisins  
1 tablespoon curry powder  
1 pound of venison, cut into small pieces  
2 tablespoons of cooking oil  
Salt to taste

Heat fat in a pan and cook onion and garlic until slightly browned. Add tomatoes, raisins, and curry powder and simmer for 15 minutes. Sear meat in another pan with hot oil. Add the meat to the curry mixture. Season the meat and curry mixture with salt to taste. Simmer for at least 1 hour, adding water if needed, until the meat is tender.

Chief Victor or “Plenty-of-Horses” (died c. 1865) of the Flathead Indians was among the first of his people to welcome the Catholic missionary Pierre de Smet. In 1841, de Smet established St. Mary’s Mission in Bitterroot Valley, Montana. While reporting in Rome on the progress of Jesuit Indian missions, Father de Smet personally delivered a message from Victor to Pope Gregory XVI. Victor encouraged further work among the mountain tribes.

Victor opposed government efforts to relocate his people onto reservations. In the 1850s, he risked his life to give sanctuary to other Indian leaders that the U.S. Army considered to be hostile.



### History

The Salish are the Indians that explorers called the Flathead. The Salish and Kootenai occupied western Montana, eastern Washington, southern British Columbia, and northern Idaho when Europeans first reached North America.

Starting with the visit of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, white men had high regard for the Salish. The tribe was known for its bravery and honesty and a friendly attitude toward white men. The Salish were also friendly with most other tribes except the Blackfeet, with whom they had long been enemies.

The Flathead moved in groups to other areas for visits and usually maintained friendly relations with the tribes to the north, south, and west. They crossed the Continental Divide to hunt buffalo in cooperation with other tribes. However, American’s westward expansion disrupted the Plains tribes’ nomadic patterns. This disruption led to conflicts between the Salish and Kootenai and the neighboring Blackfeet.

In 1855, although the Flatheads ceded most of their territory to the U.S. government, they retained a reservation south of Flathead Lake.



### Culture

The traditional tribes hunted buffalo, deer, elk, and other game on the Great Plains. They gathered and preserved plants like bitterroot, camas, moss, wild onions, and berries. Many skills and ways of preparing food have been preserved and are practiced by present-day members of the tribe.

Everything in their daily lives was made from natural materials—from the tipis and lodges built with wood and covered with buffalo hides or mats to children’s toys. Their clothing was

made of elk and deer hides that were tanned, sewn, and then decorated with porcupine quills colored with natural dyes.

The native religion included the belief that inanimate objects had spirits. The Flathead performed many ceremonial dances. These dances included the Sun Dance that the Arapaho also performed. The Salish voluntarily adopted the Catholic religion. In 1831, they sent a delegation to St. Louis to ask that missionaries be sent to them. Pierre de Smet went, and set up a mission at Bitter Root River.

The Salish bands speak the Kalispel or Flathead Language, although each band speaks a slightly different dialect. The language of the Kootenai is entirely different. Most Indians living on the reservations, however, speak English and must attend classes to study their original language. Perhaps only 80 fluent speakers of the Kootenai or Salish language are living today.



#### Government

In 1936, the Indians organized the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Indian Reservation. The tribal government has a 10-person council elected from five districts. Five members are elected to 4-year terms in biennial elections. Following the election, a chairman, vice chairman, secretary, and treasurer are chosen by the council.

The Flathead Indian Reservation has 1,250,000 acres of mountains and valleys in Montana, near the Continental Divide.