# Hall of Eastern Woodlands Indians

## Activities for Grades 3-5

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Activity Overview

This activity sequence allows teachers and students to learn about some of the beliefs and food traditions of Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) people through investigations of the Thanksgiving Address and Haudenosaunee White Corn. The Educator’s Guide offers a Haudenosaunee 101 overview, as well as general background about the Hall and the approach that informed the creation of this lesson. There is a list of recommended resources at the end of this document to provide both teachers and students with more background information.

This unit has three components:

1. **Before the Visit:** The teacher will begin this unit by telling students that they will be studying aspects of Haudenosaunee culture to prepare them for a trip to the Hall of Eastern Woodlands Indians at the American Museum of Natural History. This pre-trip lesson will introduce students to an important part of Haudenosaunee worldview through the Thanksgiving Address, a speech offering gratitude for important elements within nature. The teacher will do a read-aloud of the Thanksgiving Address and display eight of the elements on the board. Students will make connections between the elements acknowledged in the address and four images: 1) a painting by Robert Griffing that shows a 17th-century scene with a family cooking in a longhouse 2) two photos of the longhouse model they will see in the Hall of Eastern Woodlands Indians and 3) an image of a contemporary Seneca family preparing a meal. The connections students make can be part of an oral exercise or can be made into an interactive classroom display that they build on with subsequent work. Students will then watch a slideshow that shows the steps of cornbread making that will explain the connecting thread for all the objects they will be looking for at the museum and read a brief article “Corn Connections” to develop more context for the significance of cornbread in Haudenosaunee culture.

2. **At the Museum:** A self-guided tour in the Educator’s Guide (downloadable at amnh.org/ewi-educators), organized around the themes of Haudenosaunee agriculture and food, will help teachers facilitate their class visit to the Hall of Eastern Woodlands Indians. While in the Hall, students will fill out worksheets that support a more detailed investigation of seven objects of Haudenosaunee origin related to the harvesting and preparation of corn for cornbread.

3. **Back in the Classroom:** After the Museum visit, the teacher will share three texts from the contemporary Haudenosaunee Voices series; students will then read and share the worksheets they completed at the Museum, making connections between the historic objects and the contemporary practices. Students can look back to the Thanksgiving Address exercise to think about all the elements needed for cornbread to exist. Students will then respond to the final prompt: “How have the skills, tools, and elements in nature needed to create Haudenosaunee-style cornbread changed over time and how have they stayed the same? What is the value of eating these foods today for Haudenosaunee people?” They will draw on their learning from all prior activities to inform their answer.
Correlation to Standards

This activity supports the following New York State Social Studies Framework Key Ideas and Practices, the National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies, and the National Museum of the American Indian Native Knowledge 360° Essential Understandings about American Indians.

New York State Social Studies Framework Key Ideas:

4.2: Native American Groups and the Environment

Native American groups, chiefly the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) and Algonquian-speaking groups, inhabited the region that became New York. Native American Indians interacted with the environment and developed unique cultures.

- **4.2a:** Geographic factors often influenced locations of early settlements. People made use of the resources and the lands around them to meet their basic needs of food, clothing, and shelter.
- **4.2b:** Native American groups developed specific patterns of organization and governance to manage their societies.
- **4.2c:** Each Native American group developed a unique way of life with a shared set of customs, beliefs, and values.

7.1: Native Americans

The physical environment and natural resources of North America influenced the development of the first human settlements and the culture of Native Americans. Native American societies varied across North America. (Standards 1, 2)

National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies:

Theme 2: Time, Continuity and Change

- Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the past and its legacy.
- Studying the past makes it possible for us to understand the human story across time.
- Knowledge and understanding of the past enable us to analyze the causes and consequences of events and developments, and to place these in the context of the institutions, values and beliefs of the periods in which they took place.

National Museum of the American Indian Native Knowledge 360°:

Essential Understanding 2: Time, Continuity, and Change

- American Indian history is not singular or timeless. American Indian cultures have always adapted and changed in response to environmental, economic, social, and other factors. American Indian cultures and people are fully engaged in the modern world.
- Hearing and understanding American Indian history from Indian perspectives provides an important point of view to the discussion of history and cultures in the Americas. Indian perspectives expand the social, political, and economic dialogue.
Summary of the Thanksgiving Address

The Ganö:nyök or Thanksgiving Address is a Haudenosaunee offering of gratitude for the elements in nature that support human life and collectively make up the surrounding natural world. Also known as “The words that come before all else,” it is spoken in one of the six Native languages of the Haudenosaunee at the opening and closing of all important gatherings, especially those of political, ceremonial, or social significance. It is an enduring example of an oral tradition that has been passed down through countless generations. Though the main elements acknowledged and the order in which they are spoken are fairly consistent, each speaker can offer a slightly different version of the ganö:nyök. For example, certain communities typically acknowledge maple trees or fish, while others do not. The Thanksgiving Address is not a prayer; it is an expression of gratitude and as such is something that Haudenosaunee people allow non-Native people to hear and learn from, with the understanding that everyone can benefit from developing a frame of mind that is appreciative of the natural world.

All sections of the Thanksgiving Address close with the expression that loosely translates as “And now our minds are one.” Some see this as a way to assure that all participants carry a “good mind” in the forthcoming activity, that they will have a point upon which they can all agree before proceeding to an area of potential conflict or debate. Fundamentally, the Thanksgiving Address teaches good values. It reminds us that humans are one element in a larger web that they are dependent upon for their existence. It acts as a reminder that humans should be reverential and appreciative of all that nature provides.

The Thanksgiving Address mentions elements of the ecosystem from the Haudenosaunee homelands, and so can serve as an introduction to familiarize students with some of the flora and fauna of the region. Feel free to use this lesson as a jumping-off point to incorporate the study of indigenous plants and animals that are significant to Haudenosaunee people. The following table has some examples of natural materials needed to create traditional Haudenosaunee items.
Natural Materials from Haudenosaunee Homelands

Below is a short list of natural materials from Haudenosaunee homelands that were used to create the objects that are displayed in the Hall of Eastern Woodlands Indians.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TREES</th>
<th>PLANTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maple</strong></td>
<td><strong>Corn</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides sap to make into maple syrup; the wood is used to make the base, or pestle, of corn pounders.</td>
<td>Used as food for people; husks used to make dolls, corn husk bottles, and many other things.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>American Elm</strong></td>
<td><strong>Dogbane</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used to make folded bark baskets and shingles on longhouses.</td>
<td>Fiber used to make nets for fishing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Basswood</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The inner bark can be made into fiber that is then twisted and woven into straps called burden straps (also known as tumplines) or lashings, for carrying large items; the fiber is also used to sew the edges of bark baskets.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Birch</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used to make folded containers for seeds.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Black Oak</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used to make wooden mortars for pounding corn.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Black Ash</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The main tree traditionally used to make splint baskets; it is still in wide use among Haudenosaunee basket makers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hickory</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used to make lacrosse sticks and other durable tools such as pestles.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANIMALS</th>
<th>EARTH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>White-Tailed Deer</strong></td>
<td><strong>Clay</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A staple meat source; sinew used for sewing, skins used to make clothes and moccasins, bones used to make tools.</td>
<td>Used to make pots.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dogbane</strong></td>
<td><strong>Flint</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiber used to make nets for fishing.</td>
<td>(and other stones): Used to make tools.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Before the Visit

In these pre-trip lessons, students will be introduced to two important Haudenosaunee cultural practices: The recitation of the Thanksgiving Address, and making cornbread. The activity that introduces the Thanksgiving Address emphasizes a fundamental aspect of Haudenosaunee worldview that is both ancient and contemporary by connecting its concepts to historical and contemporary images of Haudenusaunee homes. Next, students will learn about the centuries-old practice of making boiled cornbread through images and text in preparation for further exploration in the Museum visit.

**TIME**  Two 45 minute-class periods

**PREPARATION**  For the first lesson, teacher will:

- Print or project the full text of the Thanksgiving Address for the read-aloud (pp. 12–14; also available as a slideshow, downloadable at amnh.org/ewi-educators)
- Print, select, cut out, and display the eight Thanksgiving Address elements found on pp 12-14 that students will be focusing on (The People, The Earth Mother, The Waters, The Plants, The Food Plants, The Animals, The Trees, and The Sun)
- Print or project the images of Haudenosaunee homes for students to observe (downloadable at amnh.org/ewi-educators)

For the second lesson, teacher will:

- Print, project, or distribute a link to the “Contemporary Cornbread Making” slideshow (downloadable at amnh.org/ewi-educators)
- Print, project, or distribute a link to the “Haudenosaunee Voices: Cornbread Connections” text (downloadable at amnh.org/ewi-educators)

**PROCEDURE**

**Lesson 1**

1. Teacher introduces the topic

The teacher will tell students that they will be learning about some of the food traditions of the Haudenosaunee, a group of six Native Nations from New York State that includes the Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, Mohawk, and Tuscarora Nations. For background information about Haudenosaunee culture and history, see:

- The Hall of Eastern Woodlands Educator’s Guide
- Haudenosaunee Guide for Educators
2. Teacher explains the Thanksgiving Address and shares it as a read-aloud

The teacher will explain the significance of the Thanksgiving Address, a speech made regularly by Haudenosaunee people at the opening and closing of all important gatherings to offer thanks for all the elements in nature. It may be necessary to explain that the address has no connection to the Thanksgiving holiday; it is an expression of gratitude for all that allows humans to live. For a background understanding of the significance of the Thanksgiving Address from a Haudenosaunee perspective, show:

- **Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address** (video)
- **Skä•noñh - Great Law of Peace Center - Thanksgiving Address** (video)
- **Giving Thanks: A Native American Good Morning Message** (book) This can also serve as a read-aloud to open the lesson

The teacher will explain that students will focus on just eight elements of the Thanksgiving Address for the duration of the unit: (The People, The Earth Mother, The Waters, The Plants, The Food Plants, The Animals, The Trees, and The Sun) They will also make connections between those elements and everything that they will learn about at the Museum.

The teacher will share the full text of the Thanksgiving address as a read-aloud. At the end, the teacher will paste the eight elements onto a chalkboard or bulletin board, stating that these will be the ones that the students will focus on for the remainder of the activity.

NOTE: You can download a PDF of the Thanksgiving Address translated in both English and Mohawk at [amnh.org/ewi-educators](http://amnh.org/ewi-educators) or for a smaller version, print the one on page 15 of this document

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3. Students observe images and make connections to the Thanksgiving Address

The teacher will introduce three images of Haudenosaunee homes from three different time periods, ideally projected so everyone can see the details in them. All images are related to the preparation and serving of food.

The teacher will explain that the longhouse model represents life in the 15th century, before Haudenosaunee people had contact with Europeans and shows items that were constructed from materials available in the surrounding environment. The painting depicts people in a longhouse in the 17th century, when items could be acquired through trade with Europeans. The photograph shows a contemporary Seneca family preparing food in their kitchen on the Allegany reservation.

Students will make connections between the things they see in the images and the elements in the Thanksgiving address that one might be thankful for. This can be done
orally, with the teacher taking notes, or each student can write observations on a sticky note and post it on the images displayed.

NOTES:

- For reference, see the “Sample Classroom Set Up” and “Sample Student Observations” on the next page.
- The teacher should save the board display and materials for the post-visit activity (pp. 10–11).

### PROCEDURE

**Lesson 2**

1. **Explore contemporary Haudenosaunee cornbread making**

   The Teacher will present the slide show “Contemporary Cornbread Making,” a series of photos that show the steps of making cornbread to their students from beginning to end, reading the captions aloud.

2. **Read about the cultural importance of cornbread**

   To develop more context for the significance of cornbread in Haudenosaunee culture, the teacher will conduct a read-aloud of “Haudenosaunee Voices: Growing Our Cornbread Connections,” or give the text to students as an independent reading assignment.

3. **Prepare for the Museum visit**

   The teacher will tell students that during the Museum visit, they will be using worksheets to explore how Haudenosaunee people in the 15th century processed Haudenosaunee White Corn and used it to make cornbread. The teacher will remind students that they just learned how cornbread is made by Haudenosaunee people today, so they should keep that process in mind as they explore how it was done hundreds of years ago.
Sample Classroom Set Up

Eight elements of the Thanksgiving Address are cut into strips and displayed on a chalkboard, bulletin board, or white board. The teacher then prints the longhouse images and posts them onto the board. Students will use chalk or markers to draw lines connecting elements of the address to objects that they see in the images and will write out the connections they see on sticky notes.

Sample Student Observations

Students might observe any of the following reasons to be grateful for these eight elements of the Thanksgiving Address, and will likely make other connections as well:

**The People**  the people gathered together in both images are alive, seemingly in good health, and at peace

**The Trees**  the trees provide fuel for the fire and materials for building the longhouse—its beams and internal benches made of wood, and its covering made of bark—as well as for baskets, bowls, spoons, and the ladder inside the longhouse (large notched wood piece)

**The Food Plants**  the food plants are the ingredients that become the meal the family is eating, as well as the stored food in the form of hanging corn that we see

**The Animals**  the animals are a food source, and are used for the leather clothing, moccasins, and skins that people are sitting on

**The Earth, The Sun, and The Water**  all three of these elements are necessary for the growth of all the trees and food plants; can also acknowledge the Earth for providing the clay that made the pot in the longhouse model photo and the metal that was used to make the pots in the painting

**The Water**  water is necessary for all living beings to survive; it connects those in the longhouse to waterways that allow them to travel, hunt, and trade in areas far from their homes

**The Plants**  cotton, linen, and hemp are used to make the shirts that the people are wearing; these imported materials were all acquired through trade with Europeans
At the Museum

In the Hall of Eastern Woodlands Indians, teachers will use the “Teaching in the Hall” section of the Educator’s Guide to lead students through a Haudenosaunee agriculture-themed tour that starts at the longhouse model. When the tour is complete, students will use worksheets to investigate a few objects more thoroughly. This work will extend their prior classroom learning and inform their culminating writing piece.

TIME 45 to 60 minutes

PREPARATION Teacher will:
- Read the entire Educator’s Guide for the background information needed to lead students in the hall, as well as to review any procedural details
- Review the four two-page worksheets and answer keys that cover seven different objects in the hall (downloadable at amnh.org/ewi-educators)
- Divide the class into four groups; assign each group to one of the four worksheets
- Print one set of worksheets per student

PROCEDURE 1. Teacher leads students on a curated tour in the hall

Using the “Teaching in the Hall” section of the Educator’s guide, teachers will lead students on a tour of Haudenosaunee agriculture and food, which will take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

2. Students explore objects in the hall using worksheets

Each student will use one of the four sets of worksheets to investigate specific objects in the hall. Students can explore on their own, in pairs, or in small groups.

NOTES:
- Students must complete the first page of the worksheets in the hall; they can complete the second page as homework or classroom work.
- Teachers, chaperones, and students can use the map to help find the objects.
Back in the Classroom

Students will find evidence from both the information and the physical displays they started during their pre-trip lesson and their Museum visit to answer the questions “How have the skills, tools, and elements in nature needed to create Haudenosaunee-style cornbread changed over time and how have they stayed the same? What is the value for Haudenosaunee people eating these foods today?” Students will read three new texts from contemporary Haudenosaunee men and women talking about the significance of corn, beans, and squash for Haudenosaunee people today.

TIME 45 minutes

PREPARATION Teacher will:
- Print or project “Haudenosaunee Voices: Growing Our Traditional Foods” text
- Provide students with lined paper for observations and expository writing

PROCEDURE 1. Reading Haudenosaunee perspectives on growing traditional foods

The teacher will conduct a read-aloud of “Haudenosaunee Voices: Growing Our Traditional Foods” or give the text to students as an independent reading assignment. The teacher will then ask students to think about the question “What is the value for Haudenosaunee people of eating these foods today?” in relationship to the larger ideas shared within the texts about the value of corn, beans, and squash to Haudenosaunee people today.

The teacher will then have students share the worksheets they did at the Museum and students can either take notes or the teacher can document on the board all the examples of tools that connect to the making of corn bread and how they have changed over time.

The texts from pages 6, 7, and 8 of the Educators Guide can serve as information to support their writing, as well as the additional resources listed on page 22.

Using the framework from The Thanksgiving Address web activity can help students to think through what natural elements are connected to cornbread making.
2. Culminating Writing Activity

Drawing from all of the above activities and resources, including the Thanksgiving Address text, the image comparison activity, the “Haudenosaunee Voices: Cornbread Connections” text, worksheets from the Museum visit, and the “Haudenosaunee Voices: Growing Our Traditional Foods” texts, students will respond to the following prompts:

How have the skills, tools, and elements in nature needed to create Haudenosaunee-style cornbread changed over time and how have they stayed the same? What is the value of eating these foods today for Haudenosaunee people? In your response, be sure to include examples from:

- At least two elements of the Thanksgiving Address
- The readings “Haudenosaunee Voices: Cornbread Connections” and “Haudenosaunee Voices: Growing Our Traditional Foods”
- The Museum visit
Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address
Greetings to the Natural World

Instructions for Educators: Read the following text aloud to the class or make copies and have students take turns reading each of the passages in order. Take one copy of the text and cut the elements into strips to stick up on a board. You can include as many as you like, but the following eight elements work effectively for this exercise: (1) the people, (2) the Earth, (3) the waters, (6) the food plants, (8) the animals, (9) the trees, (10) the birds, (13) the Sun.

NOTE: You can also download a slideshow of the Thanksgiving Address, as well as a PDF of it translated in both English and Mohawk, at amnh.org/ewi-educators.

The People
Today we have gathered and we see that the cycles of life continue. We have been given the duty to live in balance and harmony with each other and all living things. So now, we bring our minds together as one as we give greetings and thanks to each other as People.
Now our minds are one.

The Earth Mother
We are all thankful to our Mother, the Earth, for she gives us all that we need for life. She supports our feet as we walk about upon her. It gives us joy that she continues to care for us as she has from the beginning of time. To our Mother, we send greetings and thanks.
Now our minds are one.

The Waters
We give thanks to all the Waters of the world for quenching our thirst and providing us with strength. Water is life. We know its power in many forms—waterfalls and rain, mists and streams, rivers and oceans. With one mind, we send greetings and thanks to the spirit of Water.
Now our minds are one.

The Fish
We turn our minds to all the Fish life in the water. They were instructed to cleanse and purify the water. They also give themselves to us as food. We are grateful that we can still find pure water. So, we turn now to the Fish and send our greetings and thanks.
Now our minds are one.

The Plants
Now we turn toward the vast fields of Plant life. As far as the eye can see, the Plants grow, working many wonders. They sustain many life forms. With our minds gathered together, we give thanks and look forward to seeing Plant life for many generations to come.
Now our minds are one.
The Food Plants
With one mind, we turn to honor and thank all the Food Plants we harvest from the garden. Since the beginning of time, the grains, vegetables, beans and berries have helped the people survive. Many other living things draw strength from them too. We gather all the Plant Foods together as one and send them a greeting and thanks.
Now our minds are one.

The Medicine Herbs
Now we turn to all the Medicine Herbs of the world. From the beginning, they were instructed to take away sickness. They are always waiting and ready to heal us. We are happy there are still among us those special few who remember how to use these plants for healing. With one mind, we send greetings and thanks to the Medicines and to the keepers of the Medicines.
Now our minds are one.

The Animals
We gather our minds together to send greetings and thanks to all the Animal life in the world. They have many things to teach us as people. We see them near our homes and in the deep forests. We are glad they are still here and we hope that it will always be so.
Now our minds are one.

The Trees
We now turn our thoughts to the Trees. The Earth has many families of Trees who have their own instructions and uses. Some provide us with shelter and shade, others with fruit, beauty and other useful things. Many peoples of the world use a Tree as a symbol of peace and strength. With one mind, we greet and thank the Tree life.
Now our minds are one.

The Birds
We put our minds together as one and thank all the Birds who move and fly about over our heads. The Creator gave them beautiful songs. Each day they remind us to enjoy and appreciate life. The Eagle was chosen to be their leader. To all the Birds—from the smallest to the largest—we send our joyful greetings and thanks.
Now our minds are one.

The Four Winds
We are all thankful to the powers we know as the Four Winds. We hear their voices in the moving air as they refresh us and purify the air we breathe. They help to bring the change of seasons. From the four directions they come, bringing us messages and giving us strength. With one mind, we send our greetings and thanks to the Four Winds.
Now our minds are one.
The Thunderers

Now we turn to the west where our Grandfathers, the Thunder Beings, live. With lightning and thundering voices, they bring with them the water that renews life. We bring our minds together as one to send greetings and thanks to our Grandfathers, the Thunderers.

Now our minds are one.

The Sun

We now send greetings and thanks to our eldest Brother, the Sun. Each day without fail he travels the sky from east to west, bringing the light of a new day. He is the source of all the fires of life. With one mind, we send greetings and thanks to our Brother, the Sun.

Now our minds are one.

Grandmother Moon

We put our minds together and give thanks to our oldest Grandmother, the Moon, who lights the nighttime sky. She is the leader of women all over the world, and she governs the movement of the ocean tides. By her changing face we measure time, and it is the Moon who watches over the arrival of children here on Earth. With one mind, we send greetings and thanks to our Grandmother, the Moon.

Now our minds are one.

The Stars

We give thanks to the Stars who are spread across the sky like jewelry. We see them in the night, helping the Moon to light the darkness and bringing dew to the gardens and growing things. When we travel at night, they guide us home. With our minds gathered together as one, we send greetings and thanks to all the Stars.

Now our minds are one.

The Enlightened Teachers

We gather our minds to greet and thank the Enlightened Teachers who have come to help throughout the ages. When we forget how to live in harmony, they remind us of the way we were instructed to live as people. With one mind, we send greetings and thanks to these caring Teachers.

Now our minds are one.

The Creator

Now we turn our thoughts to the Creator, or Great Spirit, and send greetings and thanks for all the gifts of Creation. Everything we need to live a good life is here on this Mother Earth. For all the love that is still around us, we gather our minds together as one and send our choicest words of greetings and thanks to the Creator.

Now our minds are one.

Closing Words

We have now arrived at the place where we end our words. Of all the things we have named, it was not our intention to leave anything out. If something was forgotten, we leave it to each individual to send such greetings and thanks in their own way.

And now our minds are one.
Contemporary Cornbread Making

Steps for Making Boiled Cornbread

Haudenosaunee White Corn

Throughout this activity, one of the main subjects is referred to as Haudenosaunee White Corn. This is a flour corn that has been grown by Haudenosaunee people for thousands of years, and which they continue to grow today. Its original names are still used within their respective communities: for example, onëögë:n in Seneca and onnenhstakén:ra in Mohawk. There are also other, similar flour corns like Tuscarora White corn, which Tuscarora people primarily grow, that are processed and cooked the same way. Haudenosaunee White corn has been known for several decades as Iroquois White Corn, but as we shift from using the word Iroquois towards Haudenosaunee, the name that people from the six Native Nations that make up this confederacy call themselves, it seemed fitting to update what we call the corn that bears its name as well.

Haudenosaunee White Corn is known as a flour corn because each kernel is filled with a powdery corn flour that is protected by a hard outer shell. Through a variety of processing techniques, from cooking in wood ash to pounding or grinding the kernels, this corn type can be turned into a myriad of dishes, from corn soup to corn puddings. Instead of rotting, as sweet corn does when left out, Haudenosaunee White Corn naturally dries at the end of the growing season. When Haudenosaunee White Corn was braided and hung from the rafters of a longhouse until the 18th century—or today, when it is hung in a barn or garage—this corn can last up to a decade. It has sustained Haudenosaunee communities for thousands of years and remains a central part of the culture today.

Photo Slideshow

Downloadable at amnh.org/ewi-educators, this slideshow of 18 contemporary photographs illustrates the process of making a Haudenosaunee style of cornbread, also known in some communities as corn wheels. This bread bears little resemblance to the baked cornbread non-Native people may be familiar with. It is a round, boiled bread that is dense and moist, and which emits a distinct white-corn smell. There is no wheat flour nor leavener used in this recipe, only corn, water, and beans as ingredients and wood ash that is used for processing the corn. Other cooks will choose to add nuts, berries, maple syrup, and a variety of other bean types to their cornbread. This cornbread is considered a delicacy because of the many hours of preparation needed to create it. You can use this slideshow to show students the steps Haudenosaunee people use to make cornbread from Haudenosaunee White Corn. On the next page are thumbnails of images in the slideshow.
At a Glance: Steps for Making Boiled Cornbread

1. Gather materials
2. Wash corn
3. Boil corn
4. Drain corn
5. Crush corn
6. Add spices
7. Mix ingredients
8. Form dough
9. Cook cornbread
10. Serve cornbread
Additional Resources

Articles

- “Tuscarora White Corn Nourishes the Body, Mind and Spirit” from Buffalo News

Videos

- Jake Swamp’s version of the Thanksgiving Address
- Frieda Jacques (Turtle Clan Mother) describing the meaning of the Thanksgiving Address
- Skanoh center video of the meaning of the Thanksgiving address

Books

- Iroquois Corn in a Culture-Based Curriculum by Carol Cornelius
- Traditional Iroquois Corn: its History, Cultivation, and Use by Jane Mt Pleasant
- Giving Thanks by Jake Swamp