Dairy-limited Bison Stroganoff Transcript

**Thomas Moore (host):**

Hi and welcome back to another episode of our podcast, Elders - Words of Wisdom, brought to you by the UAA National Resource Center for Alaska Native Elders. Today, we continue our series on traditional foods and bring back our guest and Alaska Native traditional food chef, Flora Deacon to speak with us about Wood Bison. From what I learned from Flora, Wood Bison used to lived in the Innoko River area, near Shageluk where she’s from. At some point, around the 1900’s by her estimate, they disappeared.

**Flora Deacon:**

As more people were coming into the state for gold mining and [other reasons] they decimated a lot of the wild game and the bison was probably one of them. There was a 93 year old Elder from Shageluk and he could not remember ever seeing bison there and he just turned 93. So they might’ve disappeared before his time even.

**Thomas Moore (host):**

In 2015, Wood Bison from the Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center, originally brought over from Canada, were relocated to Shageluk in an attempt to reintroduce them to the environment. The hope is to allow people to hunt them once their population has increased a bit.

**Flora Deacon:**

They like people. So, they seem to gravitate more towards villages. They haven't really caused any trouble other than right at the beginning, they missed people so much they would actually go by the houses and scare everybody, because they’re huge. Anywhere they would go they would make changes because of their size. They would trample the ground, get into peoples garden, but they’d never hurt anybody. They do care about them though. Everytime I see a post about what’s going on with the bison, everybody professes their love for them, wanting to make sure they’re okay and all that.

**Thomas Moore (host):**

Flora didn’t know the exact plan, but she told me that once the bison population is large enough for hunting to begin, sustainable practices will be in place to ensure the population continues to grow and thrive. I also talked with Flora about some of the differences between beef and bison and why it’s a healthier option.

**Flora Deacon:**

Bison is different than beef in that beef has marbled meat which means the meat is in the meat itself, whereas in bison it is on the outside of the meat, same as moose. Bison is definitely less fat and it is easier to digest, because it’s our traditional food. It’s just easier for us to process it versus beef and bison eats the natural foods out there, it’s not fed corn or a corn based diet like beef is.

**Thomas Moore (host):**

As a substitute it can be used in pretty much any meal you might use beef in, but Flora said there are some meals where it works particularly well, like stews and meatloafs. She hasn’t yet tried making a burger with it, but imagines it would be pretty tasty. As for the taste of bison, Flora said she likes it a lot.

**Flora Deacon:**

It does remind me of moose, you know, it’s very dense. I just like the texture, because I grew up with moose meat and all the wild game and I think it’s really going to be a good addition to our diet.

**Thomas Moore (host):**

To close us out, Flora shared with me the reason she chose bison stroganoff as one of the meals for our traditional food series. I hope you enjoyed listening and learned something about bison. If you’d like to try Flora’s stroganoff recipe for yourself, head to our website to download a copy of the recipe or view a video of Flora instructing how to prepare it, step by step. I’m Thomas Moore and this has been Elders - Words of Wisdom from the National Resource Center for Alaska Native Elders at UAA.

**Flora Deacon:**

I chose traditional decisions because more people know about that sort’ve traditional food than if I introduced a totally different recipe and you didn’t know it at all. I think using a traditional dish, brings me people in that want to try it out, because they probably already know what a stroganoff should taste like and so that’s why I chose a stroganoff.