

# Indigenous Food Hubs

## 2026 Harvest of the Month



### MONTH: BUFFALO/BISON

#### CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

For thousands of years, buffalo (bison) were central to the lives of many tribes, especially Plains tribes, such as the Lakota, Cheyenne, Blackfeet, and Comanche. They provided food, clothing, shelter, tools, and spiritual connection. Every part was used — meat for food, hides for clothing and tipis, bones for tools, sinew for thread, horns for ceremonies. The near extinction of buffalo in the 1800s devastated tribal communities, but today, many tribes are restoring herds and traditions. The buffalo symbolizes resilience, renewal, abundance, life, and the enduring bond between tribal communities and the land.

#### AT-HOME ACTIVITIES

- Watch a documentary on buffalo and their role in tribal communities.
- Research tribal-led buffalo restoration efforts.
- Visit a buffalo ranch or wildlife.
- Explore the principle of using every part of an animal and avoiding waste, even with store-bought food.

#### A LAKOTA SAYING

**"When the buffalo returned,  
the people lived again."**

#### NUTRITION AND FUN FACTS

- Buffalo is a lean protein source with about 2.4 g fat per 4 oz, compared to beef's 9 g.
- Nearly twice the iron of beef, aiding oxygen transport and preventing fatigue.
- High in B vitamins, especially B12 for brain function and energy.
- Provides zinc, selenium (immune support) and omega-3s (heart health).
- Can run 40 mph and jump 6+ ft.
- Bulls weigh up to 2,000 lbs, cows about 1,000 lbs — North America's largest land animal.
- Known as "Tatanka" (Lakota); scientific term is bison, though "buffalo" is widely used.
- Have Reddish-orange fur as calves.
- Once tens of millions roamed North America; numbers fell below 1,000 in the 1800s (as low as 325 in the U.S.). Today, the population is about 500k.



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### RECIPE FOR BISON TACOS



#### COOK TIME

20 Minutes



#### SERVINGS

4-6

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound ground buffalo
- 1 tablespoon oil
- 1 small onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1/2 cup water or broth
- 2 teaspoons chili powder
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon paprika
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Tortillas (corn or flour, hard or soft)
- Toppings: lettuce, tomatoes, cheese, salsa, sour cream, cilantro

### DIRECTIONS

1. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium heat.
2. Add ground buffalo and cook for 6-8 minutes, breaking it up with a spoon, until browned.
3. Add onion and garlic, cook for 2 more minutes.
4. Stir in tomato paste and spices, cook for 1 minute.
5. Add water or broth and simmer for 3-5 minutes.
6. Warm your tortillas and fill with buffalo meat.
7. Add your favorite toppings and enjoy!

Cooking Tip: Buffalo is leaner than beef, so it cooks faster! Keep an eye on it so it doesn't overcook.

### NOTES

Buffalo tacos are a delicious and healthy way to try buffalo meat! Many grocery stores now carry buffalo/bison meat. Substitute ground buffalo for ground beef in recipes like tacos, chili, or meatballs and compare the taste and texture!



### DIFFICULTY:

☒ EASY ☐ MEDIUM ☐ HARD





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### **MONTH: FOOD**

