

“Through all this country game was in abundance, buffalo, elk and bear, and beaver also plenty. In mountain phrase ‘times were good on this hunt’” [(2) p. 85] Osborne Russell mentions their camp keeper preparing an elegant supper of grizzly bear and mutton [(5) p.65] In his journal Captain Lewis wrote “killed 2 elk, we made a comfortable meal of the Elk and left the balance of the meat on the bank of the river for the party with Captain Clark.” [(6) p.174]

Many different kinds of smaller game also supplied food. Turkey, geese, ducks, badger, grouse, pheasant, squirrel, porcupine, rabbit, dog, prairie dog, skunk, opossum, hawk, raven, small birds and even buzzard. James Clyman reports “the men went out gunning and that night came back with plenty of game eggs, Fowls, Turkeys and what not. Having a fire on shore they dressed cooked and eat until midnight.” [(4) p.10] In Russell’s journal he relates “The Canadian killed a couple of small ducks which served us for breakfast. Later we encamped at some hot springs and killed a couple of geese.” [(5) p.105] James Clyman “chased down and killed two Badger using some bones he found lying around.” [(4) p.34] James O. Pattie tells how he “placed a spit with a turkey I had killed upon it before the fire to roast.” [(3) p. 33] In his account of his travels, Stephen Long tells how “That evening the men killed a skunk which they threw eagerly into the soup pot.” [(1) p.155] He also writes “In the morning each man got a half pound of biscuit, their ration of food for the day, so when someone later shot two prairie dogs, the explorers ate them with gusto.” [(1) p.128] He also tells how “two days later they celebrated national independence day by dining on roast opossum and a few glasses of wine.” [(1) p. 92]

When times were hard, the mountain men often had to use extraordinary means to get food. Joe Meek shares this story of obtaining food. “While the men were starving, a young negro boy, belonging to Jedediah Smith by some means was so fortunate as to have caught a porcupine, which he was roasting before the fire. Happening to turn his back for a moment to observe something in camp, Meek and Reese snatched the tempting viand and made off with it before the darky discovered his loss.” [(2) p.27] and another time “A similar joke was played on a man named Craig, had caught