

After food was found, what was not eaten was either first preserved in some way and then stored. James Pattie says "We killed four deer and some turkies. The venison we dried and cased the skin of one of the deer in which to carry our bear oil." [(3) p. 45] Lewis and Clark also talk about storing oil, "We killed a bear, divided him among the party and made them boil the oil (bear) and put it in a cask for future use (use)" [(6) p. 105] Osbourne Russell talks about storing excess meat in his journal, "We found Buffalo bulls, approached and killed 5 of them and took out the tongues and buried the meat about 3 feet deep in a snow drift, laid some stones on the snow over it and burned gunpowder upon them to keep away the wolves." [(5) p.110] and he also writes "I shot a large Grizzley bear, I butchered him, and left the meat. The next day I took the meat to camp where we salted and smoked it ready for winters use." [(5) p. 124] and Lewis and Clark spoke of eating that preserved meat. Lewis mentions how they "made a small fire and boiled some of our jerked meat on which we dined [(6) p. 365] and Clark tells how "we divided the last of our dried meat at dinner." [(6) p.370] They also reported eating much dried fish [(6) p. 242]

While game of all kinds was sometimes plentiful and living off the land was easy, there were other times that were very hard and food of any kind was scarce. Some referenced to these tough times tell us how hard just staying alive was for both the men and their animals. One bad time described by Meek tells, "owing to the arid and barren nature of the plains, the largest game to be found was the beaver, whose flesh proved to be poisonous from the creature having eaten of the wild parsnip in the absence of its favorite food. The men were made ill by eating of beaver flesh, and the horses were greatly reduced from the scarcity of grass and the entire absence of cottonwood." [(2) p. 119] And in other even harder times "I have says Joe Meek, held my hands in an ant hill until they were covered with the ants, then greedily licked them off. I have taken the soles off my moccasins, crisped them in the fire, and eaten them. In our extremity, the large black crickets which are found in this country were considered game. We used to take a kettle of hot water, catch the crickets and throw them in and when they stopped kicking, eat them. That was not what we called good meat, but it kept us alive." [(2) p.120] Pattie's group also had their share of hard time.