

Bannock (gallete):

Baked or fried bannock is a staple food of the Metis. Because bannock could be quickly prepared from readily available ingredients, and because these ingredients lasted a long time without spoiling, bannock became a staple of the voyageurs and European fur traders. The traditional way to prepare bannock was to mix the ingredients into a large round biscuit and bake in a frying pan or propped up against sticks by the campfire. The frying pan usually was tilted against a rock so that it slanted towards the fire for part of the baking.

Bannock comes from the Gaelic or Celtic word for unleavened bread.¹ This bread is made from flour, water and fat or lard. Frequently, it is leavened with a small amount of baking powder. It is cooked on a griddle, over an open fire on a stick, or in a frying pan tilted on edge beside the coals of the fire. Another variation was called “li beignes” or fried bread.

“Makaminas” is bannock made with raisins (souminis-sak), currants (souminisis-sak) and wild berries. Bannock is always tilted on its side when taken out of the oven. This allows the moisture to get out as it cools.



Compiled by Lawrence Barkwell
Coordinator of Metis Heritage and History Research
Louis Riel Institute

¹ Bannock is a round flat unsweetened cake originating in Scotland, made from oatmeal or barley and baked on a griddle.