

## Reading Homework

# Cowboys: the clothes they wore, the food they ate, and what they drank.

### Cowboy Hats

Cowboys wore all kind of hats, but the most practical ones were adapted to local conditions. Cowboys in the southwest preferred wider brims to protect their eyes from the sun and higher crowns for insulation. In the north, the brims were narrower and the crowns lower to keep hats from blowing off. John Batterson Stetson (1830 – 1906) invented the Stetson hat. The first real cowboy hat was named the "Boss of the Plains" and manufactured by Stetson in 1865. The Stetson was creased right down the center of the crown with a dent on each side making it easy to remove by grasping the hat by the crown rather than the brim.



## Cowboy Vests

The vests used by cowboys were a practical addition to his clothes. Riding on a horse made it difficult to reach into pants or trouser pockets. The vest was added with deep pockets that were easily accessible and prevented stuff from falling out.



## Bandanas



The bandana handkerchief made of cotton was tied around the neck in a hard knot at the front and could be lifted to cover mouth and nose from the dust. The bandana came in a variety of bright colors, but usually red, making the cowboy more visible in bad weather, they prevented sunburn and they were used to mop the sweat from the brow.

Additional uses of the bandana were as washcloths and tourniquets.

## Chaps

Chaps, or Chaparejos, were long leggings worn over pants for protection against thorns and cactus. Types of chaps varied according to the region they were worn. In the Southwest, chaps made of smooth leather whereas in the North they were made of wool or fur.



## Cowboy Boots:

The boots used by cowboys were highly practical riding boots. The boots feature two-inch high Cuban heels in order to rest the boots in the stirrups or to dig into the ground while roping a calf. Cowboy boots were not made for walking. The toe of the boot was pointed to make it easier to insert into the stirrup. Pants were generally worn tucked into the boot to avoid snagging from thorns and cactus spines. A pair of mule ear flaps at the top of some boots helped with pulling them on. The stylish decorations of the boot were reminiscent of the highly decorative Spanish boots worn by the Vaqueros.

Cowboys on a cattle drive worked long hours. They started the herd moving at dawn and usually stopped around sunset. Then they would take turns throughout the night guarding the herd from horseback. They



slept under the stars on “bedrolls” which were basically a couple of thick blankets. If it rained, they covered themselves with oiled rain ponchos. If they were lucky, they got five hours of sleep per night on the trail. Yet, as I am always telling my students, adults need an average of eight hours of sleep each night to be healthy and alert. How did they manage to stay awake? The answer was **coffee!** What Japanese refer to as “American coffee” is the type of coffee Americans soldiers drank during the occupation. It was weak because there was a coffee shortage during and after the war. Cowboy coffee is very different



### **Cowboy coffee**

According to one old cowboy, coffee should be “Black as midnight, thick as molasses and hot as Hell”. To make it that way they ground the coffee and put the grounds in cold water in a metal coffee pot directly on the fire. Sometimes they added empty egg shells to the pot. The eggshells made the coffee less bitter. Cowboys drank as many as ten cups of coffee per day. The caffeine in coffee is highly addictive and some people say that quitting a coffee addiction is as hard as quitting a drug addiction.





## **Cowboy chuck or chow**

The rancher owned the cattle and the trail boss was in charge of the cattle drive, but the one man every cowboy feared was the cook! The cook not only fed the men, he sewed their clothes and took care of them when they were sick. He (*a/ways* a he) was like a mother and a good cook was just about the most important thing to have on a cattle drive. Cowboys were often big, young, muscular men. They ate huge amounts of food. The food had to be simple and it had to be able to last for months in a wagon. There would be flour, corn meal, salt and sugar for baking bread, biscuits, cornbread, pancakes, and pies. There would be dried beans, salt pork and bacon, jerky. The only fresh food on the drive was likely to be beef from a freshly slaughtered animal. Animals were only slaughtered if they were lame (not sick). The meat was often dried and salted for later, but the liver, kidneys, intestines, and brains were used to make “son of a gun” stew...a classic cowboy recipe! Want to make it (or ask your mom to)?

### **Ingredients**

- 500 grams of beef tongue
- 200 grams beef tripe
- 200 grams beef kidney
- 200 grams beef liver
- 200 grams beef brain
- 200 grams beef sweetbreads
- 100 grams salt pork
- 3 onions
- 4 cups water
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp peeper
- 2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1 teaspoon marjoram
- 1 teaspoon thyme

## **Directions:**

1. First, prepare all the meats for the stew. Combine beef tongue and tripe in a kettle; add water to cover. Simmer for about 30 minutes, then lift out tripe. Let it cool slightly and cut into strips. Continue to cook tongue for another 30 to 40 minutes. Drain tongue and let it cool slightly, then pull off skin. Cut off fat and gristly portions and cut tongue into 1½-inch cubes.
2. Meanwhile, soak kidney in salted water for about 1 hour, then cut into cubes, cutting out all white veins and fat. Cut beef heart and liver into 1-inch cubes. Parboil brains and sweetbreads in lightly salted water for about 15 minutes. Drain them and cut brains into 1-inch cubes. Remove membrane from sweetbreads and cut or break into pieces.
3. Dice the salt pork. In a large heavy Dutch oven or kettle fry it until crisp and brown. Peel and slice onions and add to salt pork. Cook until brown. Add all pieces of meat except brains and sweetbreads. Cook meat in browned onions, turning and stirring frequently, for about 10 to 15 minutes. Add hot water, salt, pepper, and Worcestershire sauce. Crush marjoram and thyme and stir into stew. Cover and simmer for about 2 to 2 1/2 hours, or until meats are tender. Add brains and sweetbreads and continue simmering another 30 minutes or so. If desired for thickening, blend flour with cold water and stir into stew. When stew simmers again and is thickened, it is ready to serve. (You may not want to thicken the stew). Serve with whatever you wish—steamed rice, mashed potatoes, buttered noodles—or lots of crusty homemade bread. Make 8 to 10 servings.