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National Museum of the American Indian

Mitsitam Native Foods Cafe and Museum Store Fact Sheet

The Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian offers Native foods representing several geographic regions in its Mitsitam Native Foods Cafe. The Roanoke Museum Store sells Native arts and crafts, fine art, souvenirs, books, recordings and other merchandise. The Zagat-rated Mitsitam Cafe is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and the full menu is available from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. The museum stores operate from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Mitsitam Native Foods Cafe

The name Mitsitam (mit-seh-TOM), meaning, "let's eat," is taken from the Piscataway and Delaware languages. Located on the museum's first level across from the Rasmuson Theater, the cafe offers authentic entrees, side dishes, snacks, desserts and beverages based on the varied Native culinary traditions of the Americas.

The cafe offers a menu that changes quarterly for each of the five geographic regions covering the entire Western Hemisphere: Northern Woodlands, South America, Northwest Coast, Meso America and Great Plains. The menus include items such as maple brined turkey with cranberry relish (Northern Woodlands), chicken tamale in a corn husk with peanut sauce (South America), cedar planked fire-roasted juniper salmon platter (Northwest Coast), yellow corn or soft flour tortilla tacos with carne (Meso America) and the crowd-pleasing Indian taco—buffalo chili on fry bread topped with onions, lettuce, tomato and cheese (Great Plains). The menus feature traditionally prepared dishes along with conventional items infused with Native ingredients, often bought directly from tribal companies or co-ops.

A specially built fire pit in the kitchen of the cafe allows visitors to watch occasional cooking demonstrations of menu items like the cedar-planked juniper salmon. Mitsitam Native Foods Cafe is the first museum dining facility to cover such a broad spectrum of Native foods and cultures. Visitors dine in the cafe's brightly colored interior with traditional Native patterns and

wooden furnishing that create the feel of a Native marketplace. The tables overlook a water feature that runs along the base of the museum on the National Mall side.

All of the buffalo meat served in the Mitsitam Cafe comes from the InterTribal Bison Council, a non-profit organization composed of 57 different American Indian tribes with a collective herd of more than 15,000 bison in South Dakota. The Cafe orders approximately 250,000 pounds of buffalo meat each year and offers 7 different cuts. The wild salmon served in the Cafe comes from Quinault Pride Seafood, a Native-owned fishery in Washington state.

A signature element of the Cafe extended seating area is the 20-foot totem pole carved by Tlingit artist Nathan Jackson of Ketchikan, Alaska. The pole connects the first floor Cafe with the second floor Roanoke Museum Store. The totem pole represents the story of Kats, the Bear Clan Hunter, a traditional figure in stories of the Cape Fox region Bear Clan.

About the Coffee Bar

The Mitsitam Cafe recently expanded with the addition of the Mitsitam Espresso Coffee Bar, which serves pastries and casual fare from the cafe's repertoire along with Tribal Grounds Coffee—organic, fair-trade coffee grown by indigenous farmers and imported, roasted and provided to the museum by members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee of North Carolina. Specialty drinks include the "Trail South," a cappuccino flavored with roasted chestnuts and cocoa powder, and "The Sequoyah," a cappuccino with sweetened milk, cocoa and cayenne. The coffee bar's menu will include Cherokee translations for each drink as part of the Western Carolina University Cherokee Language Program, which began in 2006 to boost the dwindling number of Cherokee speakers. For more information on Tribal Grounds Coffee, visit www.coffeewithculture.com.

Tables in the coffee bar are adjacent to the Potomac Atrium, the heart of the museum and the site of many cultural presentations and festivals. A lending rack of tribal newspapers is available for visitors who want to catch up on news from Indian Country. The tribal newsstand is located near the museum's 20-foot totem pole carved by Nathan Jackson (Tlingit).

About the Newsstand

The museum's new tribal newsstand allows visitors to browse Native-owned publications from across the U.S. and learn about local and national issues from an indigenous perspective. Publications include Indian Country Today, The Seminole Tribune, The Navajo Times, The Lakota

Country Times, Osage News, The Southern Ute Drum, The Chickasaw Times, The Comanche Nation News, among others, as well as the museum's own quarterly magazine, American Indian.

The Roanoke Museum Store

The Roanoke Museum Store on the second floor offers a wide variety of crafts, books, music recordings, souvenirs and toys. From the southern Algonquian language, "Roanoke" refers to the white shell beads that some East Coast tribes used for exchange and formal communication. Store merchandise includes items such as Navajo alabaster sculptures, Peruvian pottery, original Pendleton items (blankets and tote bags), Inuit sculptures, textile weavings made by the Mapuche of Chile and Zuni fetishes. The store also features Yup'ik ivory carvings from Alaska, Navajo rugs, Northwest Coast carvings and textiles, Lakota dolls, Cheyenne beaded necklaces, and silver and turquoise jewelry.

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