

# Watts for Dinner *with*

## THE MODOC TRIBE OF OKLAHOMA

Native to the upper Pacific coast, the Modoc Tribe of Oklahoma once occupied lands in present day California and Oregon.

Modoc were skilled hunters, surviving on fish and game. They also lived off the native fauna of seeds, roots and berries. By expertly weaving together tule reeds, Modoc crafted a variety of items important to their existence such as rafts, baskets, moccasins and summer huts. In harsh winter months they made their homes in earthen dug-out lodges.

Many Modoc were removed to Indian Territory in 1873, following a six-month fight against government armed forces. Leading up to the conflict was a treaty signed in October of 1864 requiring Modoc removal from ancestral lands to a small area in Oregon's southern cascades. The treaty area was then "opened by right of way for public roads and railroads across the reservation by and for citizens of the United States," resulting in incursion and conflict.



Chief Bill G. Follis

Over 150 men, women and children were designated as prisoners of war and loaded into four railroad boxcars designed to transport cattle. These cars were coupled between two other cars filled with soldiers. Modoc men and boys thought capable of bearing arms were shackled. The Modoc were the only Indians in American history to be tried by a military commission for war crimes. Modoc Chief Kintpuash, better known as "Captain Jack," was hanged for his part in the resistance.

A 2,000-mile trip brought the Modoc to the railroad terminal in Baxter Springs, Kansas. They were then relocated to land purchased from the Eastern Shawnee in Oklahoma Indian Territory. Sixty-eight Modoc eventually accepted allotments there. The remainder of the tribe either eluded capture or did not participate in the fight against government troops and were allowed to remain on Oregon's Klamath Reservation.

In 1909, the Oklahoma Modoc were permitted to return to Oregon if they desired. Federal relations with the Modoc ceased prior to 1924 and recognition was terminated in 1954. The Modoc reorganized and created an informal tribal government in 1967. They were again federally recognized in 1978. The tribe's constitution was adopted in 1991.



Modoc Chief Kintpuash

With a current enrollment of 243 members, the Modoc today is the smallest of the recognized tribes in Oklahoma. Tribal headquarters are located in Miami. Leadership of the tribe is under the direction of Chief Bill G. Follis. The tribe is governed by an elected council that consists of Chief Follis, Second Chief Judy Cobb, Secretary-Treasurer Ramona M. Rosiere and council members Phil W. Follis and Theodore O. McCullum, all enrolled members of the Modoc Tribe of Oklahoma.

The Modoc tribe has several economic projects at the current time. These include: Red Cedar Recycling (opened in 1996); The Stables Casino; Red Cedar Enterprises, LLC; and a smoke shop. In addition, the tribe has reintroduced the bison and maintains a herd of approximately 100 head.

Services available to Modoc members include: housing, homeowner assistance, child care assistance, child support enforcement and educational assistance. The tribe also administers numerous federal and state programs that benefit tribal members as well as other Native Americans in the area. An annual meeting is held each May at the tribal administration office.

For more information about the Modoc Tribe of Oklahoma, visit online at [www.modoctribe.net](http://www.modoctribe.net).

### BISON (BUFFALO) BURGERS

- 1 pound ground bison (buffalo)
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce



Mix ingredients and allow meat to "marinate" 5-10 minutes before forming into patties. In a large frying pan, cook patties on medium heat until thoroughly cooked (about 10 minutes), flipping occasionally. Serve as you would any beef burger (on a bun with cheese, tomato, lettuce and onion).

### FRY BREAD

- 5 cups flour
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 5 teaspoons baking powder
- 3 ½ cups milk
- Oil for frying



Mix first four ingredients to form soft dough. Roll ¼-inch thick and cut into four-inch squares. Fry in oil until golden brown, turning once.

*This recipe is from the collection of Modoc tribal member Wilma Walker (deceased).*

*The American bison, also known as buffalo, has always held great meaning for American Indian people. To Indian people, buffalo represent their spirit and remind them of how their lives were once lived—free and in harmony with nature.*