

Watts for Dinner *with* THE MIAMI TRIBE OF OKLAHOMA

The Miami Indian Tribe first emerged as a distinct and different people in and around the area of present-day South Bend, Indiana. The word "Miami" comes from "Myaamia," which means "downstream people," or "allies," by other interpretations. Traditional homelands for the Miami tribe include the states of Indiana, Ohio, Illinois, and lower Michigan and lower Wisconsin. This was a shared landscape with many indigenous people—among those the Wyandot, Delaware, Shawnee, Potawatomi, Ojibwa and Kickapoo.

In the 1600s, the Miami, who numbered in the tens of thousands, began having frequent contact with Europeans. Over the next two centuries, Euro-American encroachment, war and disease took a high toll on the Miami.

Eventually, a series of treaties with the United States required the Miami to cede its traditional homelands. In 1840, the tribe signed a treaty calling for their removal beyond the Mississippi. In 1846, after many attempts to avoid the devastating move, the Miami, then numbering in the hundreds, were herded at gunpoint into canal boats to begin the long journey to a reservation in the Unorganized Territory to an area along the La Cygne River in Kansas. There the tribe remained until 1873, when it was once again forcibly relocated—this time to Oklahoma Indian Territory.

By the time the tribe reached Oklahoma Indian Territory, fewer than 100 adults remained. Allotment policy dealt yet another blow to the Miami people and eventually they were landless.

Today, the Miami Tribe is increasing its land base and revitalizing its heritage, language and cultural identity. The tribe has around 5,000 members scattered throughout the United States. Approximately 800 tribal members reside in Oklahoma.

The Miami operate an elders food program, library, historical archive, cultural and natural resources offices, environmental programs, housing program, social services programs and childcare program. Once a year the tribe hosts its National Gathering, which includes Family Day, the annual Miami Nation Pow Wow and the Annual Meeting of the General Council. An annual winter gathering is held the last Saturday of each January and includes an art market and stomp dance.

Miami Nation Enterprises is owned by the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma and oversees several businesses, including Miami Tribe Entertainment Casino, and Service World Computer Center. The latter enterprise offers a range of computer services such as network infrastructure and support, wide-area network security, video surveillance and wireless networking.

Another high-profile tribal business is the Cineplex movie theater, which opened in March of 2007 and is the only theater in Ottawa County. Four screens, state of the art sound, stadium seating and a full concession area are just a few of its amenities. A family friendly atmosphere, featuring a party room and arcade also adds to the fun and excitement. The construction of the Miami Cineplex is an example of the Miami tribe working together with the city of Miami to better the community.

The Miami Tribe operates the Trading Post, a gift shop located inside tribal headquarters that specializes in Native American jewelry. The Trading Post is a certified Pendleton retail store. The tribe, which employs around 140 people, also has a loan company in Kansas City.

Restoration of the historic Gordon House in Miami back to its original grandeur is a source of pride for the Miami tribe. The three-story structure was built in 1917 by Emma Gordon McBee and her husband Hiram at the cost of \$35,000. It was home to the McBees and their seven children. Emma was a Miami tribal member. The home is available for private events and corporate meetings.

The Miami tribe's vision is to eventually be 100 percent self-sufficient in funding tribal services, such as an elder benefit program that reimburses tribal elders 65 years and older up to \$250 per year for out-of-pocket medical expenses, disability reimbursement for tribal members who are between the ages of 18-64 and totally disabled, and a tribal member life insurance program.



**Miami Tribe Chief
Thomas Gamble**



MYAAMIA CORN SOUP

1 pound pork or ham
1 cup dried, cracked corn
1 medium onion, diced
Salt and pepper to taste



Soak corn overnight in at least four cups of water. Begin to cook in morning slowly on stove or in crock pot. When corn is nearly done, chop pork in half-inch cubes and fry in pan with onions. Add to corn. Finish cooking until corn is tender. Add salt and pepper to taste. Can substitute other meats, such as chicken or rabbit, or even use just a ham bone for flavor. It is also a good soup without the meat. Yields approximately eight one-cup servings.