

How can you starve
in a sushi bar?



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

How Can You Starve in a Sushi Bar?

The Lewis and Clark expedition had access to an abundance of fish. These fish would make many modern eaters envious. They also could see how the Native Americans survived and thrived on the diet of fish and roots.

However, they were not able to enjoy or benefit from this diet and complained about it. This was like starving in the middle of a grocery store. Their preference for familiar tastes and textures may have led them to ignore or not take advantage of a useful resource. They were able to catch fish almost everywhere, as many as, “ 318 of different kind” on the Missouri River. This was with a willow and bark drag[1], not even using their supply of fishing hooks. They even encountered salmon spawning runs at both their beginning and end. In what is today Idaho, they saw that, “ The number of dead salmon on the shores & floating in the water is incredible to say.

”[2] Later, on the Columbia River, they were there for the start of the salmon run, which caused, “ great joy with the natives”[3]. They had many opportunities to observe Native Americans preparation and serving of all this fish. The Native Americans were surviving everywhere. Some fish was dried, as in Idaho, or boiled in a basket while still somewhat fresh[4].

Somehow, this diet made the local women, “ corpulent”[5], or fat. Some of the fish bought from the Native Americans was pounded , as for example, their Christmas 1805 dinner, which, “ consisted of pore elk,...Some spoiled pounded fish and a few roots.”[6] They were around enough salmon to make a modern sushi chef happy, they complained of eating fish. On their way back through Idaho, they even turned down what seems to have been a gift

of dried salmon trout and roots. Lewis worried it could make the men sick[7]. However, the local Native Americans, the Nez Perce, obviously ate these things with no trouble. It seems likely that it was something other than the fish/roots themselves that caused trouble. For example, maybe they should have eaten the whole variety of things the locals ate.

[8] The Native American tribes lived successfully on fish/roots. Why couldn't the expedition do the same? The problem could have been the attitude of some of them[9]. Maybe it was what they did, or did not, eat along with these fish and roots. Either way, it is clear that they need not have gone hungry, since there was food all around them.

This may be similar to the way that an international student feels when there is nothing familiar to eat, hungry in the middle of the college cafeteria!

Jones, Landon Y. *The Essential Lewis and Clark*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 2000. Jones, Landon Y.

The Essential Lewis and Clark. HarperCollins Publishers. 2000. Page 7.

August 15, 1804 Jones, Page 116. October 17, 1805. Jones, Page 149, April 19, 1806.

Jones, Page 116, October 17, 1805. Ibid. Jones, Page 128. December 25, 1805 Jones, Page 154-155.

May 10, 1806 Jones, Page 92-93. August 16, 1805 One possibility is that they avoided the fatty organ meats the Native Americans enjoyed so much in the following quote from Montana: when they arrived where the deer was which was in view of me they dismounted and ran in tumbling over each other like

a parcel of famished dogs each seizing and tearing away a part of the intestines which had been previously thrown out by Drewyer who killed it; the scene was such when I arrived that had I not have had a pretty keen appetite myself I am confident I should not have tasted any part of the venison shortly. Each one had a piece of some description and all eating most ravenously.

Some were eating the kidneys the melt [1] and liver and the blood running from the corners of their mouths, others were in a similar situation with the paunch and guts but the exuding substance in this case from their lips was of a different description. One of the last who attracted my attention particularly had been fortunate in his allotment or rather active in the division, he had provided himself with about nine feet of the small guts one end of which he was chewing on while with his hands he was squeezing the contents out at the other. I really did not until now think that human nature ever presented itself in a shape so nearly allied to the brute creation. I viewed these poor starved devils with pity and compassion. I directed McNeal to skin the deer and reserved a quarter, the balance I gave the Chief to be divided among his people; they devoured the whole of it nearly without cooking. I now bore obliquely to the left in order to intercept the creek where there was some brush to make a fire, and arrived at this stream where Drewyer had killed a second deer; here nearly the same scene was enacted. A fire being kindled we cooked and eat and gave the balance of the two deer to the Indians who eat the whole of them even to the soft parts of the hoofs. Drewyer joined us at breakfast with a third deer.

Jones, Page 130-131. Lewis misses fat meat and salt more than bread. Clark does not miss salt. They clearly have strong preferences, even in the wilderness.