Charlotte J. Frisbie (with recipes by Tall Woman and assistance from Augusta Sandoval). *Food Sovereignty the Navajo Way: Cooking with Tall Woman*. University of New Mexico Press, 2018. 398 pp. ISBN: 978-0-8263-5887-5.

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Food Sovereignty the Navajo Way: Cooking with Tall Woman is a detailed account of Navajo foodways in the twentieth and twenty first centuries. It is based on the experiences and narratives of Tall Woman (Asdzáán Nééz, a.k.a. Rose Mitchell), a Diné Elder from Chinle, Arizona, whose long life spanned over a century (1874-1977) and with whom the author, Charlotte Frisbie, worked from 1963 to 1977.

As a result of their collaboration, in 2001, Tall Woman's life story was published in the form of a monograph (Mitchell 2001). However, because of the limitations concerning the length of the publication, Frisbie decided not to include Tall Woman's recipes in it. *Food Sovereignty the Navajo Way* is thus meant to complete their previous work. Frisbie states that because too much time had passed since the previous publication, she asked Tall Woman's two surviving daughters, Augusta Sandoval and Isabelle Deschine, for assistance with the current book. Moreover, the author decided against publishing information on the medicinal use of plants that were shared with her by Tall Woman at the request of the Cultural Resources Compliance Section of the Navajo Nation Historic Preservation Department (NNHPD), who considered it to be traditional cultural knowledge in need of protection.

Chapter One, titled "An Overview of the Navajo Diet and Navajo Dietary Research", starts with a description of Navajo foods in Navajo Emergence stories which, according to different sources, credit different beings with bringing seeds (e.g., corn, beans, and squash) from the Lower Worlds and with creating different animals, such as goats, sheep, and horses. Next, anthropological interpretations of Navajo foodways are presented. Frisbie briefly mentions the foodways present during the beginning of Spanish colonization in the 1500s and describes the dietary adaptations forced upon the Navajos by the Long Walk and their incarceration at Fort Sumner (1863-1868). This is also the period when the Navajos started to become dependent on the US government for food. The following subchapter, "The Twentieth Century", provides a detailed description of the Navajo diet during particular decades and largely draws on previous anthropological studies, especially those by Wendy Wolfe. It outlines the adaptations brought about by historical events, as well as environmental, technological, cultural, and socio-economic changes, such as the World Wars, the ongoing desertification of the reservation, the introduction of indoor stoves, or an increasing participation in a cash-based economy. Frisbie concludes that these changes have resulted in a decline in the use of traditional foods, including wild foods, as well as traditional ways of acquiring and preparing them. At the same time, she asserts that corn and sheep have retained a "special place in Navajo culture" and that home-prepared, traditional foods are preferred for special occasions, such as the Girls' Puberty Ceremony or weddings (29). Furthermore, she quotes surveys which show how, with the current diet, the Navajos consume too many calories and too much fat while, at the same time, they are undernourished when it comes to particular microelements. In this sub-chapter, Frisbie also refers readers to Appendix A of the book, which is a description of the Commodity Food Program on the reservation. The following sub-chapter, "The Twenty-First Century", briefly mentions current food sovereignty trends on the Navajo reservation. It also focuses on the rise of the food sovereignty movement in

an international context: providing readers with a history of the development of the term coined by La Via Campesina (*The International Peasant Movement)*, explaining the struggles of various peoples affected by the current food system globally, citing definitions of the term as used by the US Food Sovereignty Alliance and Pedal and Plow (pedalandplow.com), and mentioning which countries have recognized the principle in their national constitutions and other laws. Lastly, Frisbie talks about the Diné Policy Institute's Food Sovereignty Initiative, funded by the First Nations Development Institute and W.K. Kellog Foundation, whose aim is to "examine the effects of modern food production on the environment, the economy, health, and Navajo culture; to determine where the Navajo originally obtained their food and how that differs from today; and what role colonization and food play in current health, social, and economic issues" (37). Frisbie learnt about the project from a presentation by Dana Eldridge (2012), a DPI research assistant at the time, and through later conversations with her. According to Eldridge, there is a growing interest in relearning food traditions on the reservation, as confirmed by articles in the tribal newspapers, the *Navajo Times* and *Leading the Way.* Eldridge also describes the ultimately successful attempt (although not without resistance from the Navajo Nation Council) on the part of the Diné Community Advocacy Alliance to introduce a two percent junk-food tax on the reservation.

However, it is only by relying heavily on information obtained from Eldrige that Frisbie manages to frame the issue of Navajo foodways in the context of past and present colonial policies towards the Navajo Nation and the decolonizing practices of the Navajo people, especially grass roots organizations and the Diné Food Sovereignty Initiative itself. Moreover, apart from tangentially mentioning some of its actors, the author fails to adequately present Navajo food sovereignty in the context of the larger Native American food sovereignty movement. What is also noticeable is the very scarce referencing of scholarly work on Indigenous food sovereignty. Frisbie simply refers to a few authors, instead of substantively discussing their work; moreover, the references only appear in the context of Eldridge's presentation: "[Eldridge] mentioned the work of Milburn (2004) on indigenous nutrition and the fact that today one in three Navajos on the reservation has diabetes" (39). Including more information on the Native American food sovereignty movement and discussing scholarly literature on the subject would give the reader a fuller understanding of food sovereignty on the Navajo reservation.

Chapter Two, titled "Subsistence Practices in Tall Woman's Family", offers a detailed ethnographic description, based on Tall Woman's narratives, of what the Navajos ate, the equipment they used to find, grow, and process food, and the methods they employed to prepare and store foods. It describes the meaning of different plants, animals, and cooking tools to the Navajos, ideas about sharing food with family and community, the division of gender roles – in particular foraging and farming tasks, and the various culinary and non-culinary uses of particular parts of animals, among others. It also provides extremely detailed, instruction-like descriptions of the butchering of particular farm animals. The chapter starts with foraging practices, yet it focuses largely on the farming and raising of animals and crops. It provides an interesting account of the changes in farming technology that were visible on the reservation in the 1960s and of the traditional farming techniques that were still practiced in Tall Woman's family. Moreover, it contains a number of photos of Tall Woman and of cooking and farming

equipment, such as outdoor mud ovens, which neatly illustrate the detailed descriptions provided. As a whole, it underscores Tall Woman's role as a provider of food in her family.

Chapter Three, "Defeating Hunger by Making Something from the Earth: Cooking with Tall Woman", is a lengthy (approx. 130 pages) account of Tall Woman's recipes, which were divided into seven sections by her remaining children in 2014-2015: "Wild Foods"; "Possible Additives"; "Cultivated Crops"; "Cake, Breads, Dumplings and Marbles (…)"; "Meat (*'Atsį'*)"; "Stews, Soups, and Mushes (*'Atoo'*)"; and "Drinkable Substances (*Dajidlá)*". In the beginning of the chapter, Frisbie once again refers to the Navajo Origin narratives and explains how it is the responsibility of Navajo women to keep Hunger – one of the monsters that was allowed to live among the people to remind them "that it was up to them to be actively involved in their own well-being" – at bay (113). The author explains that the recipes to follow are not like those readers may find in an Anglo cookbook. One of the reasons is that Tall Woman cooked most of her food outside over a fire, in pits, or in an earthen oven. Laudably, wanting to be as truthful to Tall Woman's narrative as possible, Frisbie retained the style in which Tall Woman recounted the recipes to her in the book. This means that some of them are in recipe format, with item-by-item descriptions, while others contain descriptions of what Navajos would do with the foods, or where and when they would find them, and some of them are a mixture of both. Furthermore, in some cases, several recipes can be found for one item. This chapter makes the overall text a great resource for anyone interested in learning about and cooking Navajo foods, both foods that are considered more traditional and those influenced by American foodways, such as the popular frybread. The chapter also includes some photos of the dishes for which recipes are provided.

In the last chapter "Reflections", the author reminisces on what she learned from Tall Woman and what she considers of interest for future research by other scholars. She suggests a botanical study of the plants used by Tall Woman (now that the descriptions of the plants are provided in the text) as well as a linguistic study of the names of the plants. She also proposes a comparison with other recipes published for the same foods. Moreover, Frisbie suggests further inquiry into the food sovereignty movement on the reservation. In this context, she mentions the recent rise in popularity of Native chefs and their restaurants, such as Loretta Barrett Oden (Potawatomi) and Navajo Chef Freddie Bitsoie. She also remarks on the rising interest in food sovereignty and precolonial foods on the Navajo reservation, mentioning the work of Native Seeds/SEARCH, which offers packets of heirloom seeds to those interested, workshops for community members on how to build earth ovens, as well as other agricultural and garden projects.

The text also contains another appendix, Appendix B, which provides a history of restaurants in Chinle, Arizona. Frisbie states in its beginning that those not interested in the subject can feel free to skip it. As such, it does not add a great deal to the understanding of Navajo foodways. Furthermore, the book also contains a glossary of Navajo words which the author uses throughout the book and which constitutes one of its major assets.

In summary, the book is a useful and engaging resource for anyone interested in Navajo foodways, Navajo language pertaining to food, and Navajo recipes. It is also a testimony to Tall Woman's expansive knowledge of traditional foodways. Moreover, it offers a brief overview of how Navajo foodways have changed (especially in the twentieth century), an introduction to the legal and cultural definitions of food sovereignty, and current food sovereignty policies and practices on the Navajo reservation (up to 2016). However, it neither engages in the wider

discussion on Indigenous food sovereignty, nor adds to the theoretical discourse on the subject. The chapters describing the foodways and food sovereignty practices in Tall Woman's family are not sufficiently contextualized within the little background on (Indigenous) food sovereignty provided. Therefore, the book might not be of great interest to academics who are working with the broader critical considerations of the issue, as opposed to an ethnographic study of Navajo foodways.

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