

# uses for ELK!

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Imagine living as a Native American 200 years ago. Bison and deer would have been essential to the survival of your tribe. But at times elk would have been important, too. And forget the rifle or that bow with wheels on it. You might have shot an elk with your longbow, but more likely you and your fellow hunters would have chased elk off cliffs or into pens, or set snares and nooses along game trails to snag bulls by their antlers, then finished them off with spears and arrows.

## UM...YUM?

Once the elk was dead, you would set to work gutting, skinning and boning it, perhaps using a knife with a handle fashioned from an elk antler. As you worked, you probably feasted on the warm, raw brains, eyeballs, tongue, heart, liver and intestines, and even drank the animal's blood. The meat would be packed home for cooking and drying. These days we think grilled backstrap steaks are the tastiest part of an elk. Back then, you would have considered leg bone marrow a delicacy.

## PARTS IS PARTS

You would leave only the skull and backbone behind: every other part of the elk would be taken back to camp. Your mom might have used an elk-bone scraper to remove the hair, and a flesher to remove leftover meat and fat from the hide before tanning and curing it to make a pair of moccasins, a shield or rope. You'd likely dry the tendons to make thread and bowstring—and perhaps fashion a spear handle, chisel or spoon from an antler. An elk's bladder would make the perfect pouch for your dad to store his pipe tobacco for his elkhorn pipe.

## IVORY GOLD

Like today, elk would have been the subject of myth and legend around nighttime campfires. Your tribe likely thought that bull elk represented courage, virtue, beauty, strength and persistence. As a newborn, you might have been given an elk tooth as a token of good luck. Elk ivories, or canine teeth, symbolized wealth. If your mother or sister had a dress decorated with many elk ivories, your father probably was rich, or simply a good hunter and provider.

## CAN YOU MATCH THESE TO THE PARTS OF THE ELK THEY CAME FROM?

(BE SURE TO CROSS OUT THE BOGUS ONES.)

MOCCASINS

ELK HIDE

BADMINTON RACKET

SINW THREAD

ELK-HOOF EARRINGS

ELK-ANTLER PIPE

SPOON

VIKING HELMET

BONE SCRAPER

ELK-TOOTH DRESS

DENTURES

RUMP ROAST

