

BIRD IN CLAY

Cooking in clay has long been a tradition for the Native tribes of Central Oregon. The red clay that is found around Kah-Nee-Ta was perfectly suited to cooking, forming pots by mixing water with the red clay.

The campfire was the only means of cooking available. Wild game birds, such as pheasant, turkey and grouse were covered with the clay and put under the campfire's smoldering embers to cook. They then were cooked and the clay pot was cracked, the feathers came off with the clay and the bird was ready to eat.

Kah-Nee-Ta's version of the "Bird in Clay" is a Cornish game hen, stuffed with cranberry dressing. The bird is wrapped in foil and our version of the clay pot, which is a mixture of flour, salt, eggs and water. The game hen is then baked in a slow oven for three hours, simmering in its own natural juices.

The Bird in Clay is served with a hot huckleberry sauce of our own creation. The berries are picked on the reservation by Tribal members. Special blessings are said before the berries are picked to make our sauce.

The stamp you see on the clay is an Indian teepee. The three lodge posts represent the three tribes on the reservation; the Wasco, Warm Springs and Paiute. There were brought together to form The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs by the treaty of 1855.

The two weaving lines in the stamp represent the two rivers of life; the Deschutes, which is both a reservation boundary line and also the major source of tribal fishing as it flows into the Columbia River and on to the ocean. The Warm Springs River runs through Kah-Nee-Ta and flows into the Deschutes River.

The mallet with which you crack your bird is also very special and is yours to keep as a memento of your visit with us. The head is made from juniper wood. Juniper trees are the most abundant tree on the reservation, and range from 75-150 plus years old. Because of the lack of rainfall, the rings are close together, making it a very hard wood.

The handle is made from the young willow tree. Bonded together with the head, it represents the elders' link to the children. Passing the heritage and culture on from one generation to another through prayer, song and stories.

Please note:

The Bird in Clay dinner is served in both the Chinook Room and Juniper Room. The dinner takes three hours to prepare so advance reservations are recommended. The dinner is \$26.