HOKTI'S
Recipe Book of
Creek Indian
Foods
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written by a Creek Indian
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printed & illustrated by a Creek Indian
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HOKTI'S RECIPE BOOK
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Preface

Most recipes in this book refer to the preparation of corn. Discoveries through extensive studies made by anthropologists and archaeologists in the origin of the Indian in North America indicate that corn, or "maize", had its beginning when Indian botanists in the dim past became interested in a common wild grass, domesticated it, and over periods of thousands of years developed it into the most widely used source of food the world has known. The discovery in recent years of a method of toasting corn which has revolutionized breakfasts all over America attests to the versatility of the contribution the aborigines have made. Corn or "maize" gave the Indians in the wilds of Yucatan, Guatemala and surrounding areas security from hunger, therefore, from fear. This permitted the concentration on the building of an organized civilization; free from tyrannical governments; rich in cultural achievements, which would compare favorably with any civilization in the world's history. These aborigines were the Mayas. Legends of the Five Civilized Tribes -- The Cherokees, Choctaws, Chickasaws, Seminoles, and the Creeks, or the Muskogians -- indicate that they migrated from Maya country through the guidance of the "Great Spirit". When the white man first saw them, they were settled on the East Coast of America. The "Green Corn" dances, which were important tribal rituals, are still retained by those Creeks who have kept the customs of the old people. The coming of the white man and the imposing of the white man's religious concepts upon the Indian repressed the "Green Corn" dance and the "stomp dance" as a religious taboo for many years. The fact that the dances have survived in spite of these attempts to suppress
them strengthens the importance of these rituals based on the first eating of the green corn and the role this plays in the Creek Indian's way of life.

The recipes in this book were given to me by my mother and they are written as she gave them to me. With the modern kitchen conveniences of today, the methods of food preparation as described in this book are not practical for the average housewife in her modern kitchen. Therefore, this book is written for those hardy individuals who have the initiative, curiosity, and fortitude to try these recipes, through all the complicated processes of preparation. Although the utensils mentioned in this book are not especially essential, -- substitutes can easily be found -- that special person who harbors a nostalgic regret for the passing away of the old way of life may gain some satisfaction in the knowledge that between the covers of this little book, the old Creek Indian ways of cookery shall remain for the next generation to read, and we hope, to attempt.
DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to the new generation of Creek Indians who are approaching adulthood with too little knowledge of a proud heritage; a heritage which must not fade into a bleak oblivion.

This book could not have been written without the willing assistance and presence of my mother who gave these recipes to me as she remembers them. She is typical of the gentle little, Creek Indian mothers and grandmothers whose greatest concerns were the patient and loving preparation of food for generations of families. They will be remembered with much appreciation by all those who have feasted at church gatherings, stomp dances, family get-togethers, or just plain daily living.

It is sincerely hoped that this book will serve to inspire a revival of interest in the old methods of preparing food which sustained a past generation of the "Trail of Tears" as well as the years after. This, as well is to share these Creek Indian recipes with the interested non-Indian.

My thanks go too, to all those wonderful friends who urged and encouraged me to complete this book in order that these old recipes might not be forgotten.
EXPLANATION

Adaba – An adaba is a wooden paddle about the size of a small boat oar. The flared end of the paddle is used to stir the abuske as one would use a long-handled shovel or spoon, to keep the abuske from burning as it is browned.

Ebyevo or sylah wv – A sifter or sieve made of split cane or sometimes of stripped willow bark. It is woven into a basket and the holes in the bottom part of the basket are sized according to the size of the kernels of corn to be sifted so that the desired kernel size is retained in the basket and the rest is sifted through the holes in the bottom of the basket.

Sin wis kv – Some baskets were made with no holes and were used to separate the husks from the kernels. This was done by tossing the corn or beans into the air. The lighter husk was blown away by the wind and the heavier kernels retained in the basket.

Keco & Dece pe – (mortar & pestle) – These articles were standard equipment of the Creek Indian’s kitchen. There are those of us who still have fond memories of our long-skirted grandmother with hair neatly tied in black silk head scarf, pounding corn for the family meals, under a nearby shade tree. This work was often done in the cool of the early morning or late afternoon. Enough corn for several meals was prepared at this time so the process would not have to be repeated for several days.

A mortar is fashioned from the trunk of a tree which has been cut into a piece about four feet long. The bark is peeled from the tree with a hatchet. A hole in the top of the tree trunk is bored out and hot coals are placed in the hole. It is then alternately burned out and chisled out until it is hollowed out down to a depth of about a foot, leaving an outer rim of about four inches. The hollowed-out area is then smoothed out and all burned wood is removed.
In selecting the wood for the keco, a tree is selected which is rooted in rocky soil and has had to struggle to grow, therefore is crooked as a result; or one which has been twisted by the wind so that the grains of the wood do not run straight. A tree trunk with straight grains will split too easily when the hole is hewed out of the top of it.

The material to be pounded is placed in this portion and pounded with the pestle, or kecv pe.

The kecv pe is fashioned from a pole about two inches in diameter except for one end, which is at least twice the diameter for a length of about a foot. The purpose of this large end is to give the pole weight in pounding the material.
ABUSKE
(An Instant Corn Drink)

Ingredients

Flint corn (Vce Culvtwe) —— ½ gallon
(See recipe for Salke)
Wood ashes and smoldering coals — 2 gallons

Place the corn into a large iron kettle and place the kettle so that it is tilted to one side. From a wood fire, remove ashes and smoldering coals and place in the kettle with the corn. With an adaba (wooden paddle used for stirring corn), stir until the corn turns a toasted brown in color. Cool. Place in a sylvh’we (a sieve) and sift out the ashes. Wash the remaining ashes out of the corn in clear water and dry out the corn. You may now place the corn in a clean cloth bag for storage, or, Place the toasted corn in a kecho (mortar) and with a kecv’pe (pestle) pound the corn into a fine powder. Using a sylvh’we, sift the fine powder from the coarser grains (Abuske nerka or abuske wa pvk’scy).

TO SERVE

Use the powdered corn for an instant drink. Add 1 teaspoon of powdered corn to glass of cold water. Add sugar to taste as in a glass of iced tea. Very tasty with meat dishes. Very easy to mail to friends in distant parts of the country as a gift.
Place the corn into a large iron kettle and place the kettle so that it is tilted to one side. From a wood fire, remove ashes and smoldering coals and place in the kettle with the corn. With an adaba (wooden paddle used for stirring corn), stir until the corn turns a toasted brown in color.
WESO
(Sassafras)

The sassafras tree is a medium sized tree and may also grow as a shrub along the road side in the eastern United States from Maine west to Iowa and south to Texas and Florida. The bright green twigs, leaves, and bark give off a spicy taste and fragrance. In the fall of the year, its leaves turn gold and red. Its small flowers are yellow.

Gather and wash the root bark of the sassafras in the early spring before the sap rises. Cut into 3 or 4 inch pieces and tie together in bunches of 5 or 6 pieces and hang up to dry.

TO MAKE SASSAFRAS TEA:

Boil three or four of the pieces of roots in about three pints of water. When the liquid is bright red, the tea is ready to serve.

TO SERVE SASSAFRAS TEA:

Sweeten and drink as a tea. It may be served hot or cold.

The Creek Indians used Weso as a spring tonic to thin the blood in preparation for the hot days of summer-time. Therefore, it was a popular springtime drink.
TAFVM' POCE
(‘Wild Onions’)

Ingredients

Wild onions-------------4 bunches
Water------------------1/2 cup
Eggs------------------6 (beaten)
Bacon grease---------2 tablespoons
Salt------------------1 teaspoon

Wild onions can best be found in early spring time or even late winter, as soon as the winter snows have melted and the ground has thawed. The onions with long slender leaves and onion smell are found on creek banks or in shaded, wooded areas. Dig up sufficient quantities; about four hands full. Clean and wash thoroughly, making certain all the soil is washed out of the leaves. Cut into one inch lengths. Place the onions in a skillet with a small amount of water and simmer until the onions are tender. If the onions are old, simmer in salt water. Pour off the water and add the bacon grease and cook until the onions are wilted. Add salt and the eggs and stir until the eggs are completely cooked.

A Creek Indian has not fully prepared for the advent of summer until he has eaten his fill of wild onions in the spring, and it is even better if the meal has been shared with good friends.
SOME INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT WILD ONIONS:

The Aztecs chewed the bulbs of wild onions to relieve gastric distress.

California Indians ate the bulbs raw and also cooked them over hot coals.

The wild onion was used as an insect repellent by rubbing on the body.

The wild onion is said to be useful in treatments of kidney ailments. Used as a diuretic to increase urine flow.

The flowers of the wild onion are rose, reddish-purple and white in color.

The leaves of the wild onion are 2 to 4 inches or more high.

"Crow's Poison" looks very much like the wild onion but has flat leaves and does not have the onion smell.
(CV'TO HAKE
(Blue Dumplings)

Ingredients

Flint corn----------2 quarts
Bean hulls or
English pea hulls---About 2 cups
after burning
to ashes.

Kvpe cufke
(see recipe for
safke)----------3 or 4 drops

Soak corn in water until it is soft. Pound
in koco with koco'pe while the corn is
soft and wet. Sift in a swmwekv and sep-
erate the large kerkals from the fine powder.
Place dried green beans and green English
pea hulls in a container and burn to a
crisp. The hulls must be clean and free of
dirt or the bread will be gritty. Ground
the burned material into a fine powder. Mix
with the corn meal. Drop in a few drops of
kvpe cufke for flavor. Mix with boiling
water and form into biscuits and drop into
boiling water and boil until cooked. It
should boil about one hour.

Serve with fresh pork.

Beans or sweet potatoes may be mixed in before
making into biscuits.
PVR'KO AF'KE  
(Grape Dumplings: Using Possum Grapes)

Ingredients

Possum grapes---------Abt. 2 qts. after stemming.  
Flour---------------------2 cups  
Sugar---------------------2 cups  
Baking powder----------2 tps.  
Shortening-------------1 tbsp.

Possum grapes may be picked in the months of the Falling Leaves after the first frost. Remove grapes from the stems and wash thoroughly. Place the grapes in enough water to cover and boil about thirty minutes until the mixture comes to a good hard boil. Put into a clean cloth bag and strain the juice from the pulp. Make up the dough for the dumplings by mixing some of the grape juice with flour, baking powder and shortening. Roll out the dough and cut into strips and drop into the grape juice and boil until the dumplings are thoroughly cooked. Add sugar to taste.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY:

When crows get to the grapes first and you cannot obtain the genuine possum grapes, commercially canned grape juice in cans or bottles can be used in place of the wild grape juice. But--------you will not have the same flavor in commercial grape juice that you get from wild grapes from "Nature's Super Market!"

Grape juice thickened with flour and poured over sugar cookies makes a delicious dessert.
VUCE SUKV  
(Hominy)

Ingredients

Ashes----------1 gallon
White corn-------1 quart

From a wood fire, pull out 1 gallon of hot ashes and some small glowing embers. Put the corn and the ashes into a large iron kettle. Arrange the kettle so that it is tilted to one side. It is easier to stir this way. Stir the corn and ashes over a low fire until the corn turns light tan in color. In a swenwesky (see explanations) separate the corn in a colander or a can with holes punched in the bottom. Pour water through the corn until the corn turns white and all trace of the ashes has been removed. Dry the corn and store for later use.

TO PREPARE HOMINY:

Boil the desired amount of corn in water for approximately 1 hour until thoroughly cooked. Season with lard or pieces of pork for flavor (hogshead can be used for this).
SAPKE or O'SAPKE

Ingredients

Flint corn (Va'ce cult'we) or,
White corn (Vce hvt'ke)----About 3 lbs.*
Water (Uewv)--------------1 bucketful of
soft water is preferred.
Wood ash lye (Kupe cvfke)---Add to taste

TO PREPARE V'CE CULV'TWE FOR SAPKE:

Place the corn in a bucket of water and let
the mixture stand until the kernals are soft.
Place the corn, while still wet, in a mortar
(Kecj) and pound with a pestle (Kecv'pe) until
the grains of corn are in small kernals. Sep-
arate the finer grains (Vce enfulot'kv) from
the larger grains (Safke nerkv). You now have
your corn ready to be boiled into sapke.

*Safke nerkv may now be purchased in most all
supermarkets and may be called for as hominy
grits or sapke grits.

TO PREPARE KUPE GUFKE:

Ingredients

Black jack wood (Secv)-----Enough green wood
to burn down to enough ashes to fill a half
gallon can.
1 half gallon can with holes punched in the
bottom.
Hot Water

(continued)
Place the ashes in the half gallon can and place the can over another container so that the second container will catch the water that is strained through the ashes. A clean white cloth should be placed under the half-gallon can containing the ashes so that the water will be strained after passing through the ashes. Strain enough liquid to make at least 1 pint of voyageur. The liquid should be the color of strong tea.
(To prepare Kvpe Cufke, continued)

Place the ashes in the half gallon can and place the can over another container so that the second container will catch the water that is strained through the ashes. A clean white cloth should be placed under the half-gallon can containing the ashes so that the water will be strained after passing through the ashes. Strain enough liquid to make at least 1 pint of kvpe cufke. The liquid should be the color of strong tea.

TO MAKE SAFKE:

You now have your ingredients to make the safke. Place the safke nerkv in a large kettle of water, about 3 gallons of water to 3 lbs. of corn, and place the kettle over a low hot fire. It is better if cooked in an iron kettle over a wood fire out-of-doors. When the mixture comes to a hard boil, add kvpe cufke, a drop at a time until the corn turns a slight yellow. Continue to boil, stirring often so that the mixture will not burn, until the liquid thickens and the corn is soft.

TO SERVE:

Safke may be served while still hot, however, some prefer it cold. It is best served with meat dishes.

Safke may also be served with cream and sugar

(continued)
When permitted to set a few days, especially in warm weather, it becomes fermented and then it is known as Safke Tok’se and is preferred by some Creek Indians to fresh Safke. Safke Tok’se is not intoxicating, as some people believe.

NOTE: There is an odor to fermented Safke which may be repulsive to some people not familiar with the beverage, however, such foods as cheese, oysters, dried and pickled fishes, etc. may be just as repulsive to the Creek Indian.
TVKLKE TOKSE
(Sour Bread)

Ingredients

Flint corn (Uv'ce culv'twe) or
White corn (Vce hv'tke)--abt. 1 lb.
Rice Gruel------------------------2 cups
Sugar--------------------------2 tblspns.
Baking Powder------------------1 tblsp.

Soak the corn in water until soft. It may require overnight soaking. Pound in a kecowdith a kecv'pe (See explanations). Separate the courser grains of corn from the fine powder. The courser grains may be dried and stored for later use. Cook a thin gruel of rice and while the mixture is still hot, mix with the powdered corn. Put the mixture into an earthern ware crock which is large enough to allow for expansion and let set overnight in a warm room. When you are ready to bake the bread, add baking powder and sugar and mix thoroughly. Bake in oven as you would corn bread. The sugar which is added gives the bread added flavor.

Tvklke Tokse is served with meat dishes.
TVKLİK SVKMORKE
(Fried Bread or Squaw Bread)

Ingredients

Flour-------------------2 cups
Water or,
Buttermilk-------------1½ cup
Soda, if buttermilk is used---------1 tsp.
Baking Powder-----------1 tblsp.
Shortening or,
Vegetable oil--------Enough to deep fry.

Mix the dough as in making biscuits. Buttermilk may be used in place of water. If buttermilk is used, one teaspoon of soda must be used in place of baking powder. Make into biscuits and flatten out by working the dough with hands. Be sure the biscuits are not too thick so the bread will cook through. Drop into hot cooking oil or shortening and deep fry. The bread is cooked when it is golden brown.
TVK LIK GVMI'PE LUSTEE
(Molasses cake or Black Sweet Bread)

Ingredients

Sorgham-----------------1 cup (home made)
Soda----------------------1 tblsp.
Sugar----------------------¾ cup full
Grease or butter-----------¼ cup
Ginger----------------------1 tsp.
Flour------------------2½ cups (sifted)
Salt---------------------A pinch
Hot water------------------1 cup

Sift together all the dry ingredients. Cream the shortening and sugar together. Mix the molasses with the hot water. Add the dry ingredient mixture with the molasses. Stir until you have a smooth mixture. Pour into a greased and floured pan and bake in a hot oven for about 45 minutes at about 450° temp.
PUTVFEKCV TVKLIKE
(Ghost Bread)

Ingredients

Flint corn
(See Safke recipe)---------About 1 lb.
Corn shucks----------1 dozen large ones.
Flour-------------------Enough to hold corn
meal together.
Salt----------------------A pinch
water---------------------1 cup

PREPARE IN ADVANCE:

Gather the largest and cleanest dried corn
shucks you can find. Wash well and dry in
the sun.

Soak corn in water until soft, as in prepar-
ing corn for Safke. Using a keco and kecv'pe
as in making the Safke, separate the fine
corn meal from the larger kernals. Add salt
and mix the meal with a small amount of flour
and water. In the old days, flour was not
used. Roll out the dough in the clean corn
shucks as you would tamales. Drop into boil-
ing water and boil until the corn meal is
cooked. Serve as a bread.
TVIKLIKE KAPA'IKE
(Pan Bread)

Ingredients

Flour-------------2 cups
Baking powder-----1 tbsp.
Water or,
Milk-------------1 cup

Mix flour, water (or milk), and baking powder as in making biscuits. Stir and mix thoroughly, as in baking cake. With a spoon, drop mixture into a greased frying pan and fry over a low flame as in making pan cakes or pour the batter into a bake pan and bake in the oven until it has cooked through.

AHAVA CV'UPE TVIKLIKE
(Sweet Potatoe Bread)

Ingredients

Sweet potatoes------1 or 5 medium
Sugar-----------------2 tblsp.
Cinnamon-------------Add to taste
Flour-----------------Abt. 2 tblsp.
Butter or
Shortening-----------2 tblsp.

Select four or five medium sized potatoes. Wash and peel. Boil in water until soft. Mash as you would in making mashed potatoes. A small amount of flour may be added to hold the paddies together. Cinnamon may be added for extra flavor. Add shortening or butter, and sugar. Make into small paddies or biscuits. Bake as you would bake biscuits until cooked.
APTVVY
(Stove-top Bread)

Ingredients

Flour-------------2 cups
Baking Powder-----1 tblsp.
Water-------------1½ cups

The youngest cook will find this bread very simple and fun to make. It is especially enjoyable to make on an open camp-fire or fireplace grill.

Mix flour, baking powder and water as when making biscuits. Take enough dough for three biscuits and flatten the dough out with hands, or you may use a rolling pin. Place the dough on a grill over open flames in a fireplace, or, in a skillet over a camp fire. If you just happen to have a woodburning stove in your house, the bread can be cooked directly on top of the stove, without a skillet. Turn the bread frequently while it is cooking so it will not burn. However, don't worry if it burns a little. After all, this is a real pioneer bread. It goes well with pinto beans. If you were fortunate enough to have grown up on fare such as this, the taste of this simple bread should certainly stir up some happy memories.

For bread stick cooking, wrap dough around a green stick and place close to camp-fire. You may cook it this way, or, hold the sticks directly over the flames.
CYSE KVR'PE
(Dried Pumpkin)

Select ripe pumpkins and peel off the outer rind. Slice in strips of about one inch widths and the length of the pumpkin. Hang in the sun to dry, taking care that it is well protected from flies and other insects but placed in a place where there will be the most sunshine throughout the day. It may take three hot days to dry sufficiently. When dried thoroughly, store in a cool, dry, place until ready to use.

TO COOK DRIED PUMPKIN:

Ingredients

Dried Pumpkin----------Abt. 1 qt.
Shortening-------------2 Tblsp.
Sugar------------------2 Tblsp.
Water-----------------To cover pumpkin

Boil the pumpkin down in water. When simmered down, remove the pumpkin from the water and cook in shortening. Season with sugar. Serve as a vegetable.
WA EV PES KVR'PE
(Dried Beef or Jerked Beef)

TO DRY THE BEEF:

Take as much of the meaty portion of a beef as you wish to prepare. Slice into thin strips and place in layers in a deep pan, salting each layer of meat until you have placed it all in the container. On the following day, place the strips of meat on tin sheets or clean clothes. Aluminum foil is ideal for this purpose. Place the meat where there will be the most sunshine throughout the day. The roofs of houses are good for this. The meat should be covered with a net or cheesecloth to keep the flies off. It takes about three hot days to prepare the beef. When the meat has dried thoroughly, place in clean cotton bags and hang in a cool dry place for storage.

TO COOK THE BEEF:

Ingredients

Dried beef—As much as you wish to prepare

½ onion

Salt & Pepper

Water

The dried beef strips may be boiled and seasoned to taste as it is, or;
TO COOK DRIED BEEF (continued)

Boil the beef in a pan of water until it is soft; (about 30 minutes of hard boiling). Place, while still wet, in keco, with kecov'pe, pound until the beef is in shreds, or you may grind in a meat grinder. Season to taste with salt and pepper, add shredded onion and a small amount of grease. Simmer over low heat until the onions are cooked.

A FACT ABOUT DRIED BEEF:

Dried beef, or jerked beef, is an ideal 'hunting man's food', since there is no need to cook the meat after it has been sun dried and there is no danger of spoilage. A strip or two in the pocket of a hunting jacket makes an easily carried, nourishing lunch.
ERQ SA KVR'PE
(Stewed Squirrel)

Ingredients
1 young squirrel
Lard—About 1 tbsp.
Water—About 1 cup
Salt & Pepper—to taste

TO PREPARE SQUIRREL FOR COOKING:

Begin the cleaning of the Squirrel by
burning off all the hair over a direct
flame. Scrape all the singed hair off.
Dress, clean, and cut into smaller pieces
as you would a fryer.

TO COOK THE SQUIRREL:

If the squirrel is old, boil in salt water
until it is tender.

Place a small amount of lard in a frying
pan and pan fry the squirrel over a low
flame with the pan covered with a lid un-
til slightly cooked. Pour in about a cup
of water and simmer down until thoroughly
cooked. Salt and pepper to taste.

SOME FACTS ABOUT STEWED SQUIRREL:

Some Creek Tribal Towns traditionally
have stewed squirrel dinners before the
first "Stomp Dance" of the season and af-
ter the last "Stomp Dance" of the season.

Remove skin, dress, clean, and cut into
smaller pieces as you would a fryer.
Some Facts About Stewed Squirrel (cont.)

The squirrel is considered good medicine for "stick ball" games, therefore, squirrel skin is used to make the ball for the "stick ball" games. Care must be taken that the squirrel is caught before it falls to the ground (after it has been injured or killed in the tree with whatever weapon is used). A squirrel that falls to the ground is considered "bad medicine" for the ball players and should not be used to make the ball. Medicine prepared by the Tribal Town "medicine man" is usually placed in the ball before the squirrel skin covering is sewed up. It is said that a ball containing good medicine may even have powers to disappear from the sight of the opposing team so that they are not able to score in the game. A good medicine ball may also have the power to hide in the grass in the disguise of a snake or insect. All this is dependent on the powers of the medicine man employed by the Tribal Town and how strictly the players and officials of the stick ball game have followed their ceremonial rules.
CATV SVCVN'KE
(Blood Sausage)

Ingredients

Blood from hog
Sections of intestine
Rice
Boiling water

When butchering, catch the blood of freshly slaughtered pork in a bucket before it falls to the ground. Season with salt so that it will not congeal. Take a section of a small intestine of the hog and clean thoroughly by several washings, inside and out. It must be turned inside out and washed a number of times in as many changes of water, until you are certain every particle of foreign matter is removed from both sides. Cook rice, cool it and thoroughly season with salt and pepper. Mix rice with blood and stuff the mixture into the intestine. Tie ends off securely with string. Cook in boiling salt water two hours until thoroughly cooked.
EMBASA
(Tripe)

Ingredients

Pork Tripe
Boiling water
Salt & Pepper
Shortening

Clean pork tripe thoroughly, inside and out, in 9 or 10 changes of water, making certain that every particle of foreign matter is completely removed. Cut into small squares and wash again. Drop into boiling salt water and cook two hours. Remove from the water and roll in flour after seasoning with salt and pepper. Fry in deep fat.
A PRAYER
By Rev. Woodrow Haney

Purke Hvlwe likets kat,
(Our Father who lives on high,)
Hca tvklike pume te takocet
(This bread we prepare)
Tem homprvnes.
(We will eat together.)
Hvmpet, pv naabeswa esyek cvkvce yat
(We eat, and as our bodies we strengthen)
Etv pumen pvn pvyvfevyn
(The same our spirits)
Esvpscv fen cacet,
(Make well again,)
Puyekcv kocsvs.
(Make us strong.)

Amen