

Seaweed and Kelp

Indigenous Harvest of the Month

Eat More Alaska Seaweed and Kelp

Seaweed and kelp is available along the Southeast Alaska coast, the Gulf of Alaska, and the Aleutian Islands. Green in color, some turns black when dried. Seaweed can be eaten raw, dried, boiled, or pickled. It makes a great snack eaten like popcorn! It keeps indefinitely if dried well, and is best dried in the sun. It may be added to salads, fish stews, and soups for flavor.

Why Eat More Seaweed and Kelp?

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size	100 g
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Amount Per Serving	
Calories 43	
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	% Daily Value
Total Fat 0.6g	1%
Saturated Fat 0.2g	1%
Sodium 233mg	10%
Total Carbohydrate 9.6g	3%
Dietary Fiber 1.3g	5%
Sugar 0.6g	
Protein 1.7g	3%
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Vitamin A 2%	Vitamin C 5%
Calcium 17%	Iron 16%

A 100g serving of seaweed provides:

- Various minerals, vitamins, carbohydrates, and sometimes proteins.
- A heart friendly, fat-free food.
- An excellent source of vitamin A.
- A good source of fiber.
- And seaweed is approximately 80-90% water!
- Traditionally, fresh or dried seaweed was used as a natural laxative, and to draw out infections. The salt and iodine in seaweed was and still is used to soothe a sore throat.

How Was Seaweed and Kelp Used Traditionally?

Several seaweeds are important to the Haida, Tlingit, Tsimshian, Eyak, and Alutiiq people. In the Bristol Bay region, popweed-laden with herring eggs is a treasured spring food. Dried seaweed tastes different from one Southeast community to another as each has a distinct taste due to the environment in which it grows.

Bull kelp was important in pre-European technology, used by the West Coast Native peoples. Rope was made from the long slender portion of the stipe, which is found near the holdfast. This rope was used only in marine situations such as to anchor something out. In addition the hollow bulb portion was used to store foods in, such as oil from the eulachon, a small herring-like fish.

How to Choose, Store and Prepare Seaweed and Kelp

Choose: The seaweed should be 8 to 15 inches long, elastic, and stretchy when it is ready to be harvested.

Store: Most seaweeds can be dried and used throughout the year. Popweed is an exception in that it loses its taste once dried. Bull kelp bladelets (leaf-like growths) concentrate their sugar when dried and taste sweet.

Prepare: To dry, hang the seaweeds from a clothesline in the sun and breeze or inside with a fan (it will smell like the ocean in your house if you dry it this way!!) Once dried, they can be stored in an airtight container or sealable bag kept in a cool, dark area.

Harvesting Seaweed and Kelp

When you are collecting, do not take all the seaweeds in one area. Selectively cut, or "thin" seaweeds. Rock should not be left bare of seaweeds or you will be destroying important habitat. Few seaweeds will regenerate, or grow back, from the stem-like structure. Leave the lower portion of the frond and holdfast to provide continued habitat for small animals.

Refrigerator Bullwhip Kelp Pickle Recipe

- 2 lbs - Kelp stipes cut into rings
- 2 cups - Apple cider vinegar
- 2 cups - Water
- 4 cloves - Garlic (peeled and smashed)
- 3 Tbsp - Dried dill
- 1/4 cup - Mustard seeds
- 2 Tbsp - Pickling or Kosher salt

Place all ingredients into sealable container. Mix together and seal lid. Place in refrigerator and let sit for at least 1 week before eating.

Native Names for Seaweed and Kelp

Yup'ik name: Elquaq

Unangam Tunuu name:
Qahnguâ
(seaweed - kelp in general)

Tlingit name: Laak'âsk

Sugt'stun names:
Caqallqaq (seaweed)
Qahnguq (kelp)

Learning Activity

Plan a meal that includes seaweed. The meal should be low in calories, fat, and sodium and provide at least 20% of the recommended Daily Value for iron, fiber, and calcium.

- How would you use seaweed in your meal?
- What other foods (grains, fruits, vegetables, meat/beans, dairy products) would you include to make a complete, balanced meal?
- Which vitamins are included in your meal?



For more information, visit the Alaska Farm to School website at:

<https://www.farmtoschoolalaska.org/harvestofthemonth/>