

Delicious • Nutritious • Manoomin



MANOOMIN~WILD RICE
The Good Berry

Manoomin ~ The Good Berry

An Historic Staple in the Ojibwe Diet

Known as manoomin, which translates into *'the good berry'* in Ojibwe, wild rice has played a major role in the lives of Ojibwe people. According to Ojibwe oral tradition, centuries ago the Ojibwe were instructed to find the place where "the food grows on the water" during their long migration from the East coast. This ultimately led them to the shores of Lake Superior and the northern inland lakes of the Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota where flowing fields of manoomin were found in abundance.

Seen as a special gift from the Creator, manoomin became a healthy staple in the Ojibwe diet. When finished correctly, wild rice could be stored for long periods of time to be available when other foods were not. Besides being basic to the traditional diet,



Ripening manoomin (wild rice).

Poling through a wild rice bed.



Hand-harvested, true wild rice ready for market.

manoomin also developed importance culturally and spiritually and remains an important element in many feasts and ceremonies today.

Low Fat, Low Calorie Nutrition

Manoomin is an aquatic grain, or a cereal. A truly healthy natural food, uncooked wild rice contains more than 12 percent protein and is richer in protein than white rice and most other grains. Gluten free, low in fat, manoomin is also a good source of minerals, such as iron, potassium and phosphorus, as well as vitamins like thiamine, riboflavin and niacin. Wild rice contains more niacin, also known as vitamin B, than brown rice. In fact, manoomin has more overall nutrition than any other food once available to the native diet. (See nutritional information on the back of this brochure.)

Delicious, Unique Taste Treat

Known for its unique nutty taste, manoomin offers a touch of excitement to menus with its unusual flavor and texture. As a dish, it can easily stand alone or be served in combination with a variety of other foods. Manoomin adds texture and piques the taste buds with its wild, nutlike flavor.

Because of its relative scarcity and the labor intensive harvesting procedures, it is more costly than white or brown rice and is frequently classified with "gourmet" food items. While somewhat expensive per pound, a little manoomin goes a long ways – tripling or quadrupling in bulk when cooked.

Taste of the wild

Real Wild Rice vs. Paddy Wild Rice

Many consumers confuse paddy-grown wild rice with the true wild rice, hand-harvested from northern lakes and rivers. Frequently, the wild rice offered for sale in local grocery stores or at roadside markets is paddy-grown rice – a different product than the true wild rice taken from naturally growing stands of manoomin. Paddy grown rice has larger, darker (almost black) kernels, takes longer to cook and lacks the distinguishing nutty flavor and fragrance found in native wild rice. Paddy rice is farmed in large rice paddies and mechanically harvested. Commercially grown, paddy wild rice comes mostly from large paddy fields in Minnesota and California.



Paddy wild rice and true wild rice differ in flavor, color, texture, and cooking time. Paddy rice is darker in color, usually black or almost black, and requires more cooking time.

Carefully hand-harvested, true wild rice is lighter in color, has a softer kernel and generally cooks more quickly than its paddy-grown counterpart.

Wild Rice Retailers and Rice Finishers

Some of the best sources of real wild rice are small tribal retailers. Some retailers will also "finish" wild rice for private harvesters for a fee or in-kind payment. Listings of wild rice retailers and finishers are provided on an insert at the back of this brochure.

For information about harvesting your own wild rice, contact the Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC) or your tribal or state department of natural resources.

Nutrient	Units	1.00 X 1 cup ----- 164g
Proximates		
Water	g	121.25
Energy	kcal	166
Energy	kJ	694
Protein	g	6.54
Total lipid (fat)	g	0.56
Ash	g	0.66
Carbohydrate, by difference	g	35.00
Fiber, total dietary	g	3.0
Sugars, total	g	1.20
Sucrose	g	0.54
Glucose (dextrose)	g	0.33
Fructose	g	0.33
Minerals		
Calcium, Ca	mg	5
Iron, Fe	mg	0.98
Magnesium, Mg	mg	52
Phosphorus, P	mg	134
Potassium, K	mg	166
Sodium, Na	mg	5
Zinc, Zn	mg	2.20
Copper, Cu	mg	0.198
Manganese, Mn	mg	0.462
Selenium, Se	mcg	1.3
Vitamins		
Vitamin C, total ascorbic acid	mg	0.0
Thiamin	mg	0.085
Riboflavin	mg	0.143
Niacin	mg	2.111
Pantothenic acid	mg	0.253
Vitamin B-6	mg	0.221
Folate, total	mcg	43
Folic acid	mcg	0
Folate, food	mcg	43
Folate, DFE	mcg_DFE	43
Vitamin B-12	mcg	0.00
Vitamin B-12, added	mcg	0.00
Vitamin A, IU	IU	5
Vitamin A, RAE	mcg_RAE	0
Retinol	mcg	0
Vitamin E (alpha-tocopherol)	mg	0.39
Vitamin E, added	mg	0.00
Vitamin K (phylloquinone)	mcg	0.8

Easy to Prepare, Versatile

True wild rice does not require pre-soaking or extended cooking times like its paddy-grown counterpart. It needs to be rinsed and then cooked, normally adding about four cups water or liquid per cup of rice. Cooking until tender may take about 20 to 45 minutes, depending on the desired texture of the final product.

Wild rice can be used either as a side dish or a main course; it can be served straight or as an ingredient in many possible combinations. Meat and manoomin mixtures make delicious casseroles. It is also a tasty component in many soup recipes and can be served cold with a selection of meats, veggies and/or fruits to compose sumptuous salads. Used in breads, pancakes, muffins and popular as a dressing for the Thanksgiving turkey, leftover wild rice is rarely wasted because it's a marvelous addition with so many culinary possibilities.

Restored rice beds on Lac Vieux Desert in Upper Michigan.



Unfinished wild rice is used to reseed select waters, including Lac Vieux Desert's Rice Bay.

Management:

While Native Americans have traditionally respected and protected the important wild rice fields in northern lakes and rivers, development following European immigration to the Great Lakes region has taken its toll on wild rice stands. Some historic rice fields no longer exist, and others are far less abundant. The valued plant has suffered from environmental changes such as water level fluctuations from dams, the use of motorized boats tearing up the fragile stalks and the introduction of exotic plants. Consequently, GLIFWC, an intertribal organization representing eleven Ojibwe bands in Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin, has pursued the protection and enhancement of wild rice beds since 1984. GLIFWC works with a wide coalition of other natural resource interest groups to restore historic wild rice beds, protect existing beds, and establish new rice beds. Besides being an important food source for the people, many species of wildlife, especially ducks and geese, also depend on it for food and habitat. Protection of native manoomin translates into sound habitat and watershed management.

GLIFWC performs annual surveys of important rice beds to measure abundance and provides public information on proper harvesting techniques and management practices.

Harvesting and Processing Manoomin

Traditional methods used by the Ojibwe people to harvest manoomin are still used today. The same is true for finishing the harvested rice, although some have mechanized aspects of finishing and will even finish rice for others for a charge. (See insert card for a list of finishers.)

The description of the traditional Ojibwe harvest of wild rice that follows is based on an account written by Lac du Flambeau high school students, Jeff Allen, Raelle Allen, Gabrielle Poupert, and Bill Eckerstorfer, regarding the gathering of manoomin.

Knocking rice into the bottom of a canoe.



Ricing sticks are made of lightweight wood, often cedar. The long poles used to propel the canoe have a forked prong to minimize damage to plant roots as the canoe is poled through wild rice beds.

The technique used for knocking was simple: the sticks were held in each hand, and the harvester reached to the side and pulled in as many stalks as he or she could over the edge of the canoe and knocked the kernels into the bottom of the canoe. Special care was taken to clean the canoe and wear clean clothing prior to and while harvesting manoomin. The same method and implements are used today.

Manoominike ~ Wild Ricing

Manoomin, called "wild rice" outside the Ojibwe culture, has played a central role in tribal life. It has spiritual attributes, and its discovery is recorded in legends. It is used in ceremonies and as a major food source. Traditionally, its harvest promoted social interaction in late summer each year. In August our people moved to their manoomin camps for harvest. Once manoomin ripened most energy was focused on harvesting. Manoomin was our main food source.

Manoominikewin (Making Rice)

Harvesting wild rice is also called knocking the rice. Canoes are the best watercraft to use because their shape and smoothness causes the least harm to the rice plant. The only tools needed for harvesting manoomin are those required to move the canoe through the plants and ricing sticks to thresh the kernels into the canoe.

Drying

Freshly harvested rice must be dried almost as soon as it comes off the lake. If not, it tends to mold quickly. Rice was carried to the campsites in bark trays where it was to be spread out to dry. Freshly harvested rice continues to ripen, but must have air, sun, and sometimes heat to rid it of moisture before roasting. Rice was dried on woven mats, animal skins, layers of grass or sheets of birch bark sewn together called apakwaan. While spread out, the rice was picked over to remove



Drying rice is cleaned of stalks, leaves and insects prior to parching.

pieces of stalks, leaves, and insects. If all the rice could not be dried immediately, it was preserved in its green state by keeping it in water for up to a week. Holes were dug in the soil by lakes, and rice stored this way in earlier times.

Parching

Parching or roasting the kernel was an important step in preserving this food for later use. This process served several functions: it reduced the amount of moisture in the grain so it could be preserved; it destroyed the germ so it would not re-sprout, and it loosened the hull from the grain. The grain can be left unparched for a while, although our ancestors preferred it parched as soon as possible after harvest.

Our ancestors originally parched rice using woven rush mats and scaffolds. A stick scaffolding that spanned the fireplace supported the mats. The rice was turned

constantly until roasted brown. The mats were woven tightly, making it difficult for the rice to fall through. It is said that these mats would glow red in this process. As the kernels separate from the seed shells in parching, the grain takes on a golden, then brownish yellow hue, and then changes to a glossy, dark brown to black color.

After European contact, large cast iron kettles acquired through trade were used for parching. The kettle was placed over a kindling wood fire, and the rice added to the kettle. Once over the fire, it was stirred constantly so it would not scorch. The rice would pop like popcorn if it was not stirred.

Hulling

After parching, the manoomin was hulled to remove the tight fitting chaff from the rice kernel. The traditional method for this involved hard labor. A small pit was dug in the earth, and the manoomin was "danced" with special moccasins. An average treading pit measured about 18 inches in depth and two to three feet in diameter. The sides were lined with wooden slats, and a block of wood was placed at the bottom. In Ojibwe the pit is called a bootaagan. After European contact, wooden and then



Parching manoomin.



Dancing parched rice to remove the kernel from the shell.

forming a V-shaped railing were erected for the huller to hold onto while he or she danced on the rice, preventing too much weight from being placed on the rice.

Winnowing

Hulled manoomin was cleaned of its chaff before being stored or cooked. Traditionally, the rice would be taken to high ground or a rock outcropping near a lake so the wind could aid in this process. For winnowing our people used a birch bark tray called nooshkaachinaagan. The birch bark was heated, cut, folded, shaped then sewn with basswood fiber. The rim was made of ash and lashed to the edge of the tray.



Winnowing wild rice.

metal buckets were used in this process. The pit was lined with deer hide. The moccasins had no beadwork on them. The bottom of the moccasins could not touch the ground because they were involved in processing this food. The moccasins were knee high to protect the huller's legs from the sharp barbs that are on the hulls. Proper treading required great strength and was difficult. To assist in this process, two poles

forming a V-shaped railing were erected for the huller to hold onto while he or she danced on the rice, preventing too much weight from being placed on the rice.

A covering was placed on the ground, and the rice gently tossed in the air. With the action of the tosser and the aid of the wind, the chaff was blown away and the rice kernels fell back in the winnowing basket. This method also helped grade the rice. The chaff blew away, the broken rice fell on the covering on the ground, and the full kernels remain on the tray. Once cleaned the rice was ready for storage.

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 cup 164g (164 g)

Amount Per Serving

Calories 166 Calories from Fat 5

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 1g 1%

Saturated Fat 0g 0%

Trans Fat

Cholesterol 0mg 0%

Sodium 5mg 0%

Total Carbohydrate 35g 12%

Dietary Fiber 3g 12%

Sugars 1g

Protein 7g

Vitamin A 0% • Vitamin C 0%

Calcium 0% • Iron 5%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.
Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on
your calorie needs.

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For current regulations contact:
State or tribal natural resources departments or the
Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission

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