

Crediting Traditional Indigenous Foods in the CACFP

ROUND ROCK, TX, USA, February 22, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Child Nutrition Programs, including the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), strive to be inclusive of and adaptive to all cultures. An important aspect of this is making sure that culturally appropriate foods are being served. Indigenous groups eat certain foods that are not commonly consumed by other cultures, and those foods were not previously included in the Food Buying Guide (FBG) and were difficult to credit in CNPs.□□□



In response, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has included traditional foods in the FBG. Not only does this list make program participation easier for indigenous groups, but it is also a great resource for any programs that serve indigenous groups.

Below are examples of traditional Indigenous Foods and how they credit in the CACFP according to the Food Buying Guide. For more guidance please refer to the FBG and recent Technical Assistance [memo about serving and crediting Indigenous Foods in the CACFP](#). And for quick reference, [download this guide](#) that contains the crediting information for all 18 foods mentioned below.

Beaked hazelnuts are considered a nut that grow on small, wild shrubs across the United States and Canada. Harvested during the fall, these nuts are high in protein and fat. Typically, they are smaller than the European hazelnuts seen in grocery stores and have a slightly sweeter and milder flavor. One ounce of beaked hazelnuts credits for 1 oz eq. meat/meat alternate.

Bison are native to North America and Europe and have a protein-rich meat that is leaner than beef or chicken, with a slightly sweet taste. When looking bison up in the Food Buying Guide, they are grouped together with buffalo and have similar yields when cooked. One ounce of cooked lean bison meat (fresh or frozen) credits for 1 oz eq. meat/meat alternate.

Blue cornmeal is found in the southwestern and southeastern parts of the United States and in Mexico. It is blue corn that is dried and ground and used to make mush and piki bread in some tribal nations. Commercially, it is often used for tortilla chips, cornbread and pancake mix. One-quarter cup of cooked blue cornmeal credits for 1 oz eq. grain.

Chokecherries, also known as wild cherries or bitter-berries, are wild harvested from small trees or shrubs in North America. An important note is to remove the leaves, stems and seeds, as they are toxic to humans. One-quarter cup of chokecherries credits for ¼ cup fruit.

Indian squash is an ancient winter squash that dates back hundreds of years and has a delicate, mild flavor. Like most winter squashes, these need to be cooked before consuming. One-quarter cup cooked Indian squash credits for ¼ cup vegetable.

Lambsquarters, or white goosefoot leaves, is a common edible garden weed that has bluish-green leaves and stems that are tender when young. The taste is similar to spinach. One-half cup of raw lambsquarters or ¼ cup of cooked lambsquarters credit for ¼ cup vegetable.

Native white corn is a sweet corn with white kernels that can be eaten right off the cob or cooked into a favorite dish. When ripe, they are sweet and tender with a delicate flavor. One-quarter cup of cooked, fresh native white corn credits for ¼ cup vegetable.

Native whole blue corn kernel is similar to sweet native white corn and yellow corn, and it can be eaten off the cob or cooked as part of a meal or snack. Like yellow sweet corn, when blue corn is cooked, it will showcase its natural sweet flavors. One-quarter cup of cooked, fresh native whole blue corn kernel credits for ¼ cup vegetable.

Native whole blue corn kernel can also be dried and ground into a flour with sweet, earthy and nutty flavors. This flour can be used in many ways, such as tamales, pancakes or blue cornbread muffins. One-quarter cup cooked, fresh native blue corn kernel (ground) credits for ½ oz eq. grain.

Prairie turnips, also known as timsila, are a spindle-shaped tuber vegetable that mainly grows in North America. It can be eaten raw, boiled or roasted. Traditionally, it was dried and rehydrated in water when ready to be used in a recipe. One-quarter cup of cooked prairie turnips credits for ¼ cup vegetable.

Red salmon, or Sockeye salmon, is found in the Northern Pacific Ocean and adjoining rivers. This naturally red-colored salmon is firmer in texture and has a more intense flavor compared to pink salmon and is a rich source of omega-3 fatty acids. One ounce of red (Sockeye) salmon credits for 1 oz eq. meat/meat alternate.

Salmonberries, also known as thimbleberries or Alaskan berries, are like raspberries or blackberries. They are typically found in California, Alaska and Canada with colors ranging from

yellow to orange to red. They have a more subtle flavor than raspberries and are tart, similar to rhubarb. One-quarter cup of raw, whole salmonberries credits for ¼ cup fruit.

Tepary beans are native, annual legumes found in Arizona, New Mexico, Texas and Mexico. They come in a variety of black, brown and white beans and have a creamy texture that varies in flavor depending on their color. One-quarter cup of cooked tepary beans (similar to navy beans or peas) credits for ¼ cup vegetable or 1 oz eq. meat/meat alternate.

Whole cuts sheep is credited similar to lamb, as the labeling can vary. Lamb meat are sheep younger than one year and mutton meat are older sheep. Sheep has a gamey flavor, with lamb giving a milder flavor. One ounce of cooked, lean sheep meat credits for 1 oz eq. meat/meat alternate.

Whole cuts venison is credited similar to sitka and elk. Venison is a lean meat from native deer or elk and used in place of other types of red meat in recipes. It tastes somewhat like beef, but richer and earthier. One ounce of cooked, lean venison credits for 1 oz eq. meat/meat alternate.

Wild plums are grown on trees in North America and can come in different colors like red, yellow and orange. They have been known to be part of some Tribal Nation diets and have also been used to make red dye. One-quarter cup of quartered wild plums credits for ¼ cup fruit.

Wild raspberries can be picked from bushes found throughout eastern North America. This fruit can appear in a variety of colors, such as red, gold and purple. Once harvested, the raspberries do not continue to ripen, so it is best to choose those with darker or more vibrant colors. One-quarter cup of raw, whole wild raspberries credits for ¼ cup fruit.

Wild rice is an aquatic grass that naturally grows in the waterways in North America. It can be prepared like white or brown rice and has a nutty, earthy flavor. One-quarter cup of cooked wild rice credits for ½ oz eq. grains.

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