

Traditionally Harvested Plants



Gathering plants, herbs, berries, mushrooms, hazelnuts, and other forms of produce has always been a vital harvesting practice of the Ojibwe. Like any other food, traditionally harvested plants & produce can harbor unsafe bacteria, molds, and chemicals. Following the steps below can help increase the safety of harvested traditional plants & produce.

Before Harvest:

Know Your Produce. Edible plants and fungi can be hard to distinguish from inedible look-a-likes. Only harvest what you can 100% safely identify.

Select Safe Harvest Areas. Some studies suggest that berries picked in previous mining areas contain elevated amounts of zinc, copper, and other metals. Check with tribal or state natural resources departments to find out if your harvest site was previously mined or otherwise contaminated.



During Harvest:



Inspect as You Go. Produce with signs of animal droppings (i.e. feces, urine, etc.) should be avoided. Animal droppings are a source of bacteria, viruses, and parasites which can make people sick. Leave damaged or moldy produce behind.

Keep it Cool. Cooling your harvest immediately will help to slow the growth of bacteria and help the produce remain fresh longer. Aim for refrigerator temperature (40°F or lower).

After Harvest:

Clean, Separate, and Cool. Soon after harvest, remove extra debris you may have picked up (i.e. twigs) and if appropriate, clean your harvest. Some produce will rot quicker if cleaned too far in advance of eating (i.e. berries). Keep uncleaned produce separated from cleaned produce. As always, keep produce cool.

