Indigenous NH Harvest Calendar

Spring Season

Zigwan
About fiddlehead ferns

A fiddlehead is the emerging Ostrich Fern frond that is harvested for use as a vegetable. They are often found in shady wooded areas next to streams and swamps and can sometimes be found in open fields.

European colonists first learned of fiddlehead ferns from Indigenous populations of Northern New England, and they were a common “starvation food” in the Spring. Today, they are widely eaten throughout the region as a local delicacy.

Fiddleheads are ready to be harvested during what is now considered spring, especially in April and May. Ideal picking time is during the morning and the season only lasts for two to three weeks. Fiddleheads are ripe when they have reached roughly six inches tall and the heads are tightly coiled. When fiddleheads begin to uncurl, they start to become unpalatable due to a buildup of silicon and should not be used. Over 880,000 pounds of fiddlehead ferns are harvested in New England each year!

*Fiddlehead ferns can be found at both Market Basket and Hannaford stores when they are in-season, if you don’t have the time to go foraging!*

Resources:
“Ostrich Fern Fiddleheads” by UMaine Cooperative Extension
“How to Harvest Fiddleheads” by Karen Stephenson

Fiddleheads get their fun name from the scroll-like shape at the end of a violin.
Fiddleheads traditionally

Today, usually only the Ostrich fern is used as a source for foraging fiddlehead fronds. The Abenaki traditionally harvested other species of local ferns including the Cinnamon Fern, Sensitive Fern, the Eagle Fern and the Horsetail Fern.

The Abenaki used fiddleheads as snacks, most often for warriors, as they held a lot of vitamins and minerals and were considered a filling vegetable. They are also easily dried for transportation. When not eaten as a snack, fiddlehead ferns were used for stocks and stews. This was one of the easiest and tastiest ways to cook fiddleheads.

Fiddleheads were harvested for two to three weeks during the peak season. Fiddleheads could be dried for preservation during the off season.

Nutritional benefits of fiddleheads

According to the USDA Food Composition Database, fiddleheads are very high in both phosphorous and potassium. They are high in fiber and contain a lot of Vitamin A and Vitamin C. Vitamin A is beneficial for the protection of teeth, tissues and bones. Fiddleheads are also high in iron, which helps boost the body's energy sources and keeps the organs oxygenated. Previous research also shows that they contain beneficial omega-3 fatty acids.
Simple Steamed Fiddleheads

*This recipe is pulled from the Cowasuck Cookbook and has been adapted from traditional cooking methods.

Instructions
1. Put a small amount of water into a pot and cover with a steaming screen.
2. Steam fiddleheads for 10-15 minutes until the fiddleheads are tender and a vibrant green.
3. Once steamed, strain the fiddleheads and put on a salad or serve as a side dish.

Sweet Pickled Fiddleheads

Ingredients (makes 6 pints)
- 3 pounds raw, cleaned and trimmed fiddleheads
- 1 quart cider or white vinegar (5% acidity)
- 5 cups sugar
- 2 teaspoons canning & pickling salt

Instructions
1. Mix vinegar, sugar and salt in a saucepan, bring to a boil and immediately pour over fiddleheads that are packed into clean pint jars.
2. Remove air bubbles, adjust the liquid to 1/2-inch headspace and wipe the jar rim. Apply two-piece dome lids and adjust lids to fingertip tight.
3. Process for 15 minutes in a boiling water bath canner, ensuring a rolling boil for the full 15 minutes and at least 1-inch of water is covering all jars in the water bath.

Recipe by UMaine Cooperative Extension

Fiddlehead & Blueberry Salad

Salad Ingredients
- 2 Cups Spring Salad Green Mix
- 1 Cup Mizuna and Fennel Frond Mix
- 25 - 30 Fiddlehead Ferns
- 6 Radishes, cut in half
- ¼ Cup Hazelnuts, chopped in half and toasted
- ¼ Cup Dried Wild Blueberries

Dressing Ingredients
- 1 Large Rhubarb Stalk
- 1 Teaspoon Maple Syrup
- 1 Tablespoon Dijon Mustard
- 1 Tablespoon Sherry Vinegar
- 2 Tablespoons Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- Pinch of Sea Salt
- ½ Teaspoon Fresh Ground Black Pepper
Salad Instructions
1. Brush off any dry or brown plant matter from the fiddlehead ferns. Also chop off the brown, oxidized cut ends of each fern frond. Immerse the fiddlehead ferns in a large bowl of cold water to rinse off any debris. Drain and rinse them several times.
2. Fill a large bowl with ice and water for an ice water bath.
3. Meanwhile, bring a large pot of water to a boil. Add half of a teaspoon of salt and gently boil the fiddlehead ferns for five or six minutes. Drain the water from the pot and transfer the ferns to the ice water bath to stop the cooking process. This will keep the ferns brightly green and crisp.
4. Arrange the greens on to one large or two smaller plates. Artfully arrange the remaining ingredients on the plate(s).

Dressing Instructions
1. Bring a small pot of water to a boil.
2. Cut the rhubarb across the grain into thin (¼ inch) pieces, and add them to the boiling water. Boil the rhubarb until it is very tender, about 10 minutes.
3. Add the rhubarb and the remaining dressing ingredients to a blender and puree until smooth.

Recipe created by Steve Heikkila at Slow Burning Passion

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Activities

This activity helps to develop literacy skills and sequential processing through reading, interpreting and following the recipe. Students practice observational skills through describing the taste of the vegetable. Finally, students are encouraged to think about how Abenaki would historically harvest fiddleheads and eat them in their daily routines.
This activity gets students out of the classroom to experience what foraging may have felt like for Indigenous communities. It allows students to understand the challenges that can happen while foraging. The activity will develop observational skills for the students by looking for the correct plant and by making observations if the plant is found. Additionally, it allows students to practice responsibility and respect of nature in a natural and authentic environment.

This activity requires walking field trip permission and access to trails.

Materials Needed:
- Hot plate/Stove
- Steaming Screen
- Pot
- Water
- Wooden Spoon
- Timer
- Fiddleheads (store bought or freshly harvested)

Prior to cooking the fiddleheads, discuss with the students what the fiddleheads look like and how to identify when they are ready to be harvested (coiled heads, height, etc…) Use the Abenaki 13 Moons calendar to identify what season the Abenaki would harvest fiddleheads.

Follow the steaming instructions in the “Recipe” section above with students (supervision necessary around the boiling water) and discuss the procedure to cook the fiddleheads. Once finished steaming, each student gets a fiddlehead to try and records their observations.

Questions to pose to student during taste testing:
- What is the texture like? (chewy, crunchy, soft, tender)
- Does it taste like another food you’ve had before?
- In one word, how would you describe its taste?
- What other foods do you think it would taste well with?

Have the students discuss this with each other and record in a food/gardener’s notebook. To wrap up the activity, discuss how this food was eaten by the Abenaki. Ask students why they think it was a good snack for warriors.
Materials Needed:
- Paper for observations
- Writing utensils
- Printed images of fiddlehead ferns
- Walking paths/trails
- Camera for picture taking as observations

Before starting the walk, have the students map out where fiddleheads are most often found. Talk about how to identify what a fiddlehead looks like and where it would be found in nature. Discuss the importance of foraging for foods in Indigenous communities. Define the word foraging (to search widely for food or provision).

After the discussion, go on your walk and try to find locations where fiddleheads would be (wooded areas by water, open fields). Ask your students the following questions for guidance:
- What landmarks will help us find our fiddleheads?
- What color are fiddleheads? Will they be low to the ground or high up?
- How tall will they be?
- What will they look like if they are ripe? What about if they are not ripe?

*It could be helpful to print out pictures of harvestable and unharvestable fiddleheads to provide a visual reference during the walk.

If fiddleheads are found (harvestable or not) ask students to make observations of what they see. Ask them to observe the environment around the fiddlehead, draw an image of what the fiddlehead looks like, and ask if it is ready to harvest. Once the observations have been made and discussion has occurred about the fiddleheads, the group can walk back to the classroom.
If fiddleheads are not found, have a discussion about why they may not have been found. Some guiding discussion questions could be:
- Is this a good environment for fiddlehead growth?
- Is it the season to grow fiddleheads? How could the weather affect growth?

Additional Resource:
“Fiddlehead Ferns” by Alan R. Pierce in Tapping the Green Market: Certification and Management of Non-Timber Forest Products
“Educational Resources” by the Indigenous NH Collaborative Collective
Maple Syrup
Zogalimelases (Zoh-gall-ee-mah-llass-iss)

About maple syrup

Maple Syrup is derived from the Sugar Maple tree. The tree is identifiable by its bark which is long and thin in appearance. The trees are also identified by the green leaves with 3-5 shallow lobes and course teeth. The sap of the sugar maple tree is used for making maple syrup.

In New Hampshire, we also have Norway maples, Red maples, and Silver maples that are very common. You can distinguish between maple trees using this handy identification guide by Waterford Citizens Association. It’s also important to note that Sugar maples, while the most commonly used, are not the only tree used for syrup production. Both Red and Black maples are tapped for maple syrup. Other types of tree syrups are also commercially made, like birch, hickory, and walnut syrups.

Maple syrup is usually harvested in the spring when the days are starting to get warmer and the trees are just beginning to bud. This is usually in what we now call March and was during the fourth moon of the 13 moons calender, known as Sogalikas or the Sugar Moon. Below freezing temperatures at night followed by warmer daytime temperatures in the 40’s are required for sap flow. Because the sugaring season is so dependent on weather, it can be hard for producers to know how long the season will last. Generally, harvesting will usually last between four and six weeks. The weather and time of harvest also determines what grade the syrup will be - sap harvested earlier in the season is lighter in color and flavor.
Nutritional benefits of maple syrup

The USDA Food Composition Database states that maple syrup has very high caloric and sugar content though it also has a significant amount of calcium. Additionally, maple syrup contains 24 different antioxidants (dark colored maple syrup has more than light syrup) and is also high in immune-boosting zinc and manganese. Maple syrup is also lower on the glycemic index than table sugar.

Resource: Impressive Benefits of Maple Syrup by Meenakshi Nagdevé

Maple syrup traditionally

Maple syrup has a very strong Indigenous significance. There is a story of maple syrup among the Abenaki that details the story of Gluskabe and the Alnôbak as they discover maple sap for the first time. It is said to have been a gift given by the Creator but as the Alnôbak grew too obsessed with the sugary taste, the Creator had to limit the supply to restore balance to the lives of the Indigenous community. This story attests to the appreciation that Abenaki have towards nature and what is gifted to them by the Creator. Maple syrup and its story serve as a reminder to utilize natural resources in a balanced way to best benefit health and spirit. You can use this story as a teaching method found in the “Activities” section.

*In Abenaki lore, Gluskabe is a cultural hero who was made by the Creator to serve as a caretaker and teacher to the Abenaki. Alnôbak is what the Abenaki refer to themselves as in their own language.

Maple syrup was usually gathered by the Abenaki in buckets made from tree bark, and then boiled in clay pots or birchbark buckets. Historically, maple sugar was also very popular and both the Abenaki and European colonists used maple sugar as a fast energy source that could be easily transported.

Resources:
“An Abenaki Spring Harvest” by Michael J. Caduto for Northern Woodlands
“History of Maple” by the University of Vermont Librarians
“Abenaki Legends, Myths, and Stories” by Native Languages of the Americas

It can take up to 40-45 gallons of sap just to produce one gallon of maple syrup!
Maple Syrup with Strawberries

*This recipe is pulled from the Cowasuck Cookbook and has been adapted from traditional cooking methods.

Ingredients (Serves 4-6)
- 1 quart of whole, fresh strawberries
- 1/4 cup of maple syrup
- 2/3 cup of water

Instructions
1. Wash, clean and remove stems from strawberries.
2. Heat the water and maple syrup (this can be done in microwave as substitute for 1-2 minutes) in sauce pan and bring to a boil.
3. After five minutes of boiling, reduce the heat. Add strawberries and let simmer for five minutes (if using microwave, drizzle the mixture on the strawberries and put back in microwave for 30 seconds to 1 minute).
4. Once done, remove the strawberries from the heat and let cool.

Resource: Indigenous Foods and Recipes by Indigenous NH Collaborative Collective

Maple Syrup Pie

*This recipe is an example of combined French Canadian and Indigenous cultures.

Ingredients (Serves 8)
- 3 eggs
- 1 cup maple syrup
- 1/2 cup brown sugar (packed)
- 2 tablespoon butter (melted)
- 2 tablespoon flour
- 1 teaspoon vanilla,
- 1/2 cup chopped butternuts, walnuts, or pecans
- Dash of salt
- One 9” un-baked pie crust

Instructions
1. Pre-heat the oven to 350 degrees F.
2. Beat the eggs slightly, then add eggs, butter, and mix in the maple syrup, brown sugar, flour, vanilla, and salt. Beat until smooth with an electric beater.
3. Chop the butternuts, walnuts, and or pecans, (your choice of nuts). Stir the chopped nuts into the mixture.
4. Prepare a 9” pie crust using pre-made or scratch. Fill the un-cooked pie shell with the filling mixture.
5. Bake pie about 40 minutes, then take out of oven and let cool until room temperature.
6. Chill in refrigerator to set before serving and serve cold.
Oral tradition is extremely important in the Indigenous community. Discuss how stories can be told through oral tradition with the students prior to this activity. It is important to share that oral stories are constantly adapted and change depending on the people who tell them, but the moral of the story remains.

Before beginning, ask pre-reading questions about oral tradition:
- What type of oral stories did your family tell you as a child?
- What type of lessons did these oral stories teach you?
- Did these stories ever change when they were told to you?

Next, tell the story of Gluskabe and Maple Syrup to your students. This is the guideline of the story - when telling it adaptations can be made and it should be presented without reading off the page.

There was a figure named Gluskabe who often visited the Alnôbak camps to see how everyday life was progressing for the community. It was during one of these visits that Gluskabe had found the camp totally barren. There weren’t any crops or plants in the fields, fires had gone cold and the wigwams had been destroyed. While he was walking around the village, he began to hear a sound. This was a strange sound that Gluskabe had not heard before, so he began to move towards the sound.

On his journey to find the source of the sound he discovered a grove of maple trees. It was here that he found the Alnôbak laying on their backs with their mouths towards the broken sticks that seeped the maple sap from the trees. The Alnôbak became so obsessed with the taste of the syrup that they had forgotten
all of their other duties necessary to take care of themselves. As a concerned caretaker, Gluskabe had gone to the Creator in search of a way to help the Alnôbak become balanced again.

Gluskabe and the Creator had come up with a plan. He walked back to the tree, and used a container to take water from the river and pour it into the maple trees forty times. This caused the syrup to become thinner and less sweet. Gluskabe and the Creator also decided to make the maple syrup only once a year so the Alnôbak could no longer take advantage of the gift. Gluskabe explained that the Alnôbak would need to take their syrup during this one time of year and put it into birch buckets, which were to be made by hand. This was the only way the Alnôbak could continue to have maple syrup. The Alnôbak agreed, and this is how they harvested maple sap.

After the story, have a discussion with the students about what happened and pose some discussion questions (suggestions below):

- Why did Gluskabe and the Creator have to help the Alnôbak?
- What can this tell us about Indigenous values?
- How can we relate this story back to our own lives?

This story is also available as a podcast to listen to by Paul Pouliot, the Sag8mo of the Cowasuck Pennacook Abenaki at the Indigenous NH podcast series here.
Making Sugar on Snow

This is a popular way in modern days to eat maple syrup. Prior to making the cones discuss with students the importance of moderation with food and how the way we eat food changes with the passage of time. A central question for this activity could be: how does time change the way we eat foods?

This activity allows kids to taste pure maple syrup on ice. This is a common way to eat maple syrup in Canada and it can help kids to practice following instructions while it is being made. It also helps to understand interactions of various food. What happens to the maple syrup when it mixes with the shaved ice? This is also a fun activity for taste testing!

Materials:
- Popsicle sticks
- Maple syrup
- Shaved ice
- Stove/Microwave
- Saucepan
- Bowls

Instructions
1. Heat maple syrup for 5-7 minutes while stirring occasionally, then lower heat to keep warm.
2. Divide “snow” (this can be shaved ice to simulate snow) between 6-8 bowls and pour maple syrup evenly over the snow.
3. Take a popsicle stick and roll it over the maple syrup so it sticks to the popsicle stick. Enjoy!

Tapping Maple Trees

This is a super fun activity if available. It allows kids to work on a long-term project that involves harvesting and measuring maple syrup collection.

This activity helps kids take responsibility for their learning and gets them to participate in a hands-on harvesting activity. It teaches the tangible harvesting process and allows for a long-term project that teaches patience and continuous observation. This allows students to practice gratitude and patience when collecting the sap, as it is not an instantaneous process. The aftermath of collecting also helps develop graphing and measuring skills as the total sap amount over the four-week time period must be calculated and recorded.

Resource:
“Maple Syrup Production Lesson Plan” by Penn State University Department of Ecosystem Science & Management
Materials:
- Taps/ spiles
- Tin buckets with lids
- Maple trees
- Drill
- Hammer
- Observation notebook
- Ruler

The students can begin by getting into groups of two or three and identifying which maple tree they would like to tap. After choosing, a teacher will drill a hole the same width of the spile or tap into the tree. After the hole has been drilled, hammer the tap into the hole and make sure it is secured. Hang the bucket on the tap once the tap is placed and cover the bucket.

Once the trees have been tapped, have the students check their maple sap supply each day for up to four weeks after. Each day, the sap can be measured and recorded in a daily sugar sap journal so the children can measure how much they have collected.

At the end of the season, collect the maple sap and have the students record their progress (this can be done by graphing progress using a line graph or by calculating the average amount collected each day). The sap can be sent to a company for boiling once collected to make maple syrup.

Additional Resources:
“Maple Syrup” by Penn State University Department of Ecosystem Science & Management
“Tapping into Maple Tradition” by NH Ag in the Classroom
“Maple Syrup” by NH Harvest of the Month
“Educational Resources” by the Indigenous NH Collaborative Collective

To find sugar shacks in New Hampshire, visit NH Maple Producers for a list of participating maple sugar producers.
About milkweed

Milkweed (named for its milky sap) is very common throughout New Hampshire. You probably have seen milkweed before with its large pods arranged around the tall stem. When mature, the milkweed pods turn brown and split open, releasing seeds attached to white silky strands into the air. There are different species of milkweed, but the Common Milkweed is the one that has edible shoots, leaves, buds and pods. Common Milkweed is frequently found in open fields and meadows or by roadsides.

Milkweed is at its peak during late spring after winter has gone and warm weather is coming. Milkweed pods must be one to two inches long, and green, when they are picked and cooked. Older pods should not be picked as they are too stringy to enjoy. The pods should be hard and should not have a pronounced split.

Resources:
“Milkweed Pods” by Forager Chef

Benefits of milkweed

While the USDA Food Composition Database has no nutritional information on milkweed pods, there are a number of naturopathic properties that milkweed is said to have. Milkweed is a very fibrous plant, and its sap resembles latex.
A number of Native groups used the sap to close wounds, as an eyewash, or as a wart treatment. Milkweed was also a historic treatment for pluerisy (inflammation around the lungs), and as an emetic by physicians to induce vomiting.

Monarch butterflies rely on the milkweed plant for their survival! The sap of the milkweed plant is the sole food source for monarch butterfly caterpillars. Planting native milkweed helps monarch butterflies repopulate, making it an excellent plant for any butterfly garden, too!

Milkweed sap has a special compound, cardiac glycosides, that give monarch caterpillars and other insects a toxic, bitter taste so that predators avoid eating them.

Resource:
“Milkweed Benefits” by Tammi Hartung

Milkweed was harvested by the Abenaki during what is now known as spring. These plants are one of the first growing spring plants, appearing after snow has melted and winter has passed. The milkweed plant was often used for its medicinal benefits as part of tonics or rubs to treat various conditions. The milkweed sap is thought to have been used to help treat warts and the roots of the plant can be either chewed or infused to help cure dysentery, cough suppression and typhus fever.

Milkweed would have been harvested during the Sugar Sap Moon (Moon #4) or the Bird and Fish Returning Moon (Moon #5).
Spicy Roasted Milkweed Pods

Ingredients
• 1 lb milkweed pods
• Oil for coating
• 1/4 cup sugar
• 1 clove garlic
• 1 tsp chopped fresh ginger
• 1/2 tsp hot chili sauce, or to taste
• 1/4 cup soya sauce
• 1/2 cup sunflower seeds

Instructions
1. Cook the pods in boiling water for three minutes, strain and cool under cold running water. Toss them in just enough oil to coat.
2. Lay them on a baking sheet and roast in a 425°F oven for about 25 minutes, until lightly browned.
3. Place the rest of the ingredients, except the sunflower seeds, in a saucepan and bring to a boil. Stir until all the sugar is dissolved, lower the heat and simmer for two minutes.
4. Toast the sunflower seeds in a pan for a few minutes until they begin to brown.
5. To serve, pour the sauce over the roasted buds and sprinkle with the sunflower seeds.

Recipe by Hilda Cowan from Along the Grapevine

Buffalo-Style Milkweed Pods

Ingredients (Serves 8)
• 1 and 1/2 cup Panko (Japanese bread crumbs, or any other bread crumbs)
• 1/4 cup flour
• 1 tbsp. garlic powder
• 1 tsp. of each: paprika, oregano, cayenne and turmeric
• 1 egg
• 1/2 cup almond milk
• 1/2 cup water
• Hot wing sauce of your choice

Instructions
1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Mix dry ingredients together. Mix egg, almond milk and water together then blend in dry ingredients. Mix well.
3. Dip milkweed pods into batter and place on a baking sheet covered with parchment paper. Place in oven and cook for 15-20 minutes.
4. When crisp take out and place in a bowl. Add in your favourite wing sauce (enough to evenly coat) and mix. Place milkweed pods back on the baking sheet and cook for an additional 10 minutes.

Recipe by Karen Stephenson from Edible Wild Food
**Activities**

This activity allows students to explore proper measurements, practice sequential processing and helps them begin to be comfortable working with food. Cooking is a wonderful way for kids to develop responsibility for their diet and promotes independence and positivity about food.

**Sauteing Milkweed**

Materials:
- Sauté pan
- Hot plate/stove
- Milkweed pods

Instructions:
1. Trim the stems from the pods. Season the flour with salt, pepper and cayenne, if using.
2. Heat a sauté pan over medium-high heat, and coat the bottom with oil.
3. Dredge the pods in the seasoned flour, then sauté with the garlic until pods are bright green and tender, approximately five minutes.
4. Serve immediately, adding salt and pepper to taste and a squeeze of lemon juice.

**Sauteed Milkweed Pods**

Ingredients (Serves 4-6)
- Small Milkweed pods, washed, approximately 10 per serving
- Flour for dredging
- Sea or kosher salt and freshly ground pepper
- Cayenne, optional
- Chopped garlic, optional
- Extra virgin olive oil
- Lemon wedges, optional

**Recipe created by Charlie Burke from The Heart of New England**

Give out the recipe above to each student and have them read over the whole recipe before beginning. Have students collect ingredients and work in groups to prepare the food. Once all the food is prepared, the teacher can help with the student groups using the pan and stove/hotplate to sauté the milk pods. Once each group has cooked, they can sit down and eat as a group, recording their thoughts.
This activity is great for developing understanding of plant structure. It will help form a foundational basis for understanding plant life. It also allows students to explore their creativity by drawing the milkweed plant and will help students become more comfortable with identifying edible versus inedible parts of plants.

Materials:
- Paper
- Colored pencils
- Milkweed plants

The students will begin this activity by picking naturally grown milkweed and exploring its texture, color and shape. After initial observation and exploration, the students are given a word bank of all of the names of the parts of a plant (flower, stem, roots, leaves, pods etc...). After being given the word bank, the students can redraw their own milkweed plant that they’ve selected and begin labeling the diagram using the reference given to them.

Once fully labeled with the parts, identify as a group what parts of milkweed are and are not edible (edible parts include flower heads, milkweed pods, & shoots). Once the edible parts have been identified, students will label these and color in their drawing!

Additional Resources:
“Common Milkweed: Uses and Natural Remedies” by George and Becky Lohmiller for The Old Farmers Almanac
“Common Milkweed: Edible, Wild, and Free” by Chris Martin for NHPR
“Throw Me in That Milkweed Patch!” by Holly Drake for Wild Blessings
“Educational Resources” by the Indigenous NH Collaborative Collective
Bison may be thought of more as a Western traditional meat, but the East was also populated with bison. Woodland bison were prevalent throughout the Eastern United States and were a different subspecies from the Plains bison of the West. Woodland bison were smaller than Plains bison and carved trails through eastern forests with their migration patterns. These trails were used by various Native American groups. Sadly, the woodland bison was over-hunted as colonists came to the East and quickly became eliminated by the 1840’s. Today, however, bison is increasingly popular as a farmed source of meat and efforts are underway to grow the Western population of the Plains bison.

White-Tailed Deer are the most likely to be found in woodlands and were the primary game caught and eaten by Indigenous populations. They are still an extremely common species easily found and hunted in New England today, and 100,000 deer are estimated to inhabit New Hampshire. Deer populations are often kept under careful management with hunting plans by Fish and Game. Hunting deer is a popular pastime for many in New England.

Both bison and deer are commonly hunted in the fall. During this period, the animals would be their fattest and provide the best meat. Additionally, it is important to hunt depending on season due to some parasites that are more common in the meat during some seasons.

Resources:
“Wood Bison History” by the Herald Dispatch
“White-tailed deer” by NH Fish & Game
Bison meat is one of the healthiest meats to consume. It is very lean and has a lot less fat than beef. It is a wonderful substitute for beef and has 98 grams of protein while only having 8 grams of fat per pound of meat. Venison has many of these same positive benefits - for every pound of venison, there are 102.7 grams of protein and 10.8 grams of fat.

Bison & deer traditionally

Although fish was the primary protein of the Abenaki, deer and bison were important and major parts of the diet as well. When the Abenaki hunted, they utilized the entire animal in addition to the meat they got. Both bison and deer skin served as clothing and the bone marrow of the animals was used to make stock as it provided a valuable fat source.

Abenaki hunters used a variety of methods to catch their game. Hunters used their knowledge of deer and bison movement patterns to lay trap lines, and used knives, bows and arrows, spears, snares, and pitfall traps to catch the animals. Game made for a delicious stew, and the Abenaki would dry the meat to ensure that it lasted throughout the cold winter months when other food was scarce. Meat was usually dried by cutting it into strips and draping it on poles or lines above the fire to be smoked.

Indigenous knowledge of the animals they hunted was strong, coming from carefully watching and tracking the animals. Hunting was done to maintain the breeding population so that the hunt would remain sustainable for next year. Archaeological evidence even suggests that some Abenaki groups avoided hunting female deer and preferred the males in order to keep the next population of deer strong.

There was an end-of-the-year tradition (Abenaki end of the year was in March or April of the Gregorian calendar) when there would be a stew pot constantly boiling with leftover bones and bits of left-over animal and of course rice, roots and vegetables. The deer and bison were most likely hunted during the Bird and Fish Returning Moon (Moon #5) as winter was coming to a close.

Resource:
“Hunting with the Abenaki” by Michael Caduto
Bison & Black-Bean Chili

Ingredients (Serves 6)
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil or canola oil
- 1 pound ground buffalo
- 1 large onion, diced
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 large red bell peppers, chopped (about 3 cups)
- ½ cup bulgur
- 2 tablespoons ancho chile powder
- 2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- 1 teaspoon instant coffee
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- ¾ teaspoon salt
- 2 15-ounce cans black beans, rinsed
- 1 14-ounce can diced tomatoes
- 4 cups reduced-sodium beef broth

Instructions
1. Heat oil in a Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add ground buffalo, onion and garlic. Cook, stirring and breaking up the meat with a wooden spoon, until the meat is no longer pink, 3 to 5 minutes.
2. Add bell peppers, reduce the heat to medium and cook, stirring frequently, until the vegetables are starting to soften, 5 to 7 minutes.
3. Add bulgur, ancho chile powder, cocoa powder, chili powder, instant espresso (or instant coffee), cayenne and salt and cook, stirring, until aromatic. Stir in beans and tomatoes.
4. Add broth and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to a simmer, partially cover the pot and cook, stirring occasionally, until the liquid is reduced and thickened and the bulgur is tender, about 50 minutes.

Recipe by Eating Well Magazine
Venison Stew

Ingredients (Serves 6-12)
- 3 lbs. of venison
- 2 large yellow onions, coarsely chopped
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 pound of mushrooms
- 2 tablespoons of flour
- 1 ½ cups of chicken, beef, or vegetable broth
- Pinch of allspice or spicebush
- Taste of salt and pepper

Instructions
1. Cut the venison into small bite size pieces and put in an extra-large frying pan with vegetable oil over medium heat.
2. Once the venison has browned, add the onion.
3. Add 1 cup of broth and reduce heat.
4. Add salt and pepper to taste, and cook until the meat is tender.
5. Strain the liquid in the frying pan into a pot, keeping the venison in the frying pan.
6. In the pot add the remaining broth, remaining onions and mushrooms. Cook over medium heat.
7. In the first pan with the venison, sprinkle flour and allspice over the meat and stir gently to coat.
8. Add the flour-coated venison to the pot, and boil until slightly thickened. Serve hot.
This activity will help students understanding of the perspective of the Abenaki on food waste and hunting. It allows students to work collaboratively to decide what goes into the stew and will develop group work skills. Additionally, serving a group lunch is a great way to foster classroom community that supports healthy foods.

Materials:
- Ingredients for the stew
- Pot
- Stove/Cooktop
- Bowls and Spoons for serving

This activity simulates what the end-of-year stew would have been like and helps illustrate the importance of not being wasteful in the Abenaki community. Students will discuss what may go into the stew and will help to create the recipe (using the recipe provided by the Cowasuck Cookbook as a guide).

Once the recipe has been decided upon, students will begin the process of making the stew and while making it, students will discuss the value of food resources and what the end-of-year stew symbolizes to the Abenaki.

Some guided questions for this discussion:
- What types of food would the Abenaki put into their pot at the end of the year?
- Why do you think this cook together happens at the end of the year?
- How did the Abenaki feel about wasting food?

Finish the recipe and cooking of the stew, then sit down and have a classroom lunch with the stew!

Additional Resources:
“Educational Resources” by the Indigenous NH Collaborative Collective