



Manoomin / Wild Rice

The Anishinabek were given Seven Prophecies, the first of which instructed the Anishinabek to leave their home on the Northeast Coast of North America and follow the direction of the setting sun. The First Prophecy says that the Anishinabek would find their new home “where food grows on the water”. When our ancestors came to the Great Lakes region they found manoomin (wild rice) growing on inland lakes. Manoomin was the food that grows on water and has ever since been very sacred to our people. It became one of our most important food sources because it could be stored for a very long time and it had a very high nutritional value.

The story of Nanaboozhoo and how he was introduced to manoomin:
“...One evening Nanaboozhoo returned from hunting, but he had no game...As he came towards his fire, there was a duck sitting on the edge of his kettle of boiling water. After the duck flew away, Nanaboozhoo looked into the kettle and found wild rice floating upon the water, but he did not know what it was. He ate his supper from the kettle, and it was the best soup he had ever tasted. Later, he followed in the direction the duck had taken, and came to a lake full of manoomin: wild rice. He saw all kinds of ducks and geese and mud hens, and all the other water birds eating the grain. After that, when Nanaboozhoo did not kill a deer, he knew where to find food to eat...”

Harvest

The kernels are collected by beating the ripening heads with sticks so that the seeds fall into a canoe. Back at the shore, the wild rice is first dried in the sun. Traditionally the rice is then dried by smoke and in more recent times is heated in large metal kettles. The husk is removed and separated in large birch bark trays.

Nutrition

High in fibre	Gut health, blood sugars
Higher protein than other rice	Muscle building
Thiamine and riboflavin	Energy, eyesight
Niacin	Digestion
Iron	Blood health
Calcium and phosphorus	Bone health