

CATTAIL COOKING

POLLEN: The green bloom spikes turn a bright yellow as they become covered with pollen. Put a large plastic bag over the head (or tail) and shake.

BUD SPIKES: Gather the new bloom spikes while still tender and green, before the yellow pollen begins to show on the outside of the spikes. Remove the husk as you would sweet corn.

SHOOTS: Harvest cattail shoots after some dry weather, when the ground is solid, in the least muddy locations. Select the largest shoots that haven't begun to flower, and use both hands to separate the outer leaves from the core, all the way to the base of the plant. Now grab the inner core with both hands, as close to the base as possible, and pull it out. Peel and discard the outermost layers of leaves from the top down, until you reach the edible part, which is soft enough to pinch through with your thumbnail (the rule-of-thumb). There are more layers to discard toward the top, so you must do more peeling there. Cut off completely tough upper parts with a pocketknife. *Note: Collecting shoots will cover your hands with a sticky, mucilaginous jelly.*

FLOUR: Scrape and clean several cattail roots. Place on lightly greased cookie sheet in a 200F oven to dry overnight. Skin roots and remove fibers. Pound roots until fine. Let stand overnight to dry.

Curried Cattail Soup

3 tablespoons butter	1 onion, minced
1 tablespoons curry powder	3 tablespoons flour
2 1/2 cups chicken stock	salt and pepper
12 cattail shoots, minced	

In a saucepan, melt butter and cook onion over medium heat until soft. Sprinkle with curry powder and flour and cook 2 minutes, stirring. Add chicken stock and cattails. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer 15 minutes. Add salt and pepper to taste. Serve hot.

Cattail Pastries

2 cup cattail flour	1 teaspoon salt
2 cup water	vegetable oil
honey	

In a saucepan, bring salted water to a boil. Remove from heat and fold in flour. Beat until mixture forms a thick paste. Cool to room temperature. In a deep fryer, heat about 3 inches of oil to a temperature of 400F or until oil smokes. Spoon out dough onto a floured cookie sheet to form a cake 1/4 inch thick. Cut ribbons 1/2 inch wide and about 5 inches long. Carefully lift ribbons into the hot oil. Deep fry for 5 minutes or until golden brown, turning at least once. Lift out and set on a paper towel to drain off grease. Serve hot with honey spread on top.

Cattails with Peanut Butter

Cut tender part of the base of the cattail leaves lengthwise and spread with peanut butter like celery.

Cattail Pollen Cake

2 c Cattail pollen	2 c All-purpose flour
4 ts Baking powder	1 ts Salt
2 Eggs	1/2 c Evaporated milk
1 1/2 c Water	1 tb Honey

Combine the pollen, flour, baking powder and salt. Beat eggs lightly, combine with milk, water and honey. Beat dry and wet ingredients together very gently. Pour into well greased baking pans, bake in a preheated 400-degree oven 15 to 20 minutes.

Cattail Pollen Pancakes

1/2 cup cattail pollen	1/2 cup flour
2 tablespoons baking powder	1 teaspoon salt
1 egg	1 scant cup milk
3 tablespoons bacon drippings	

Combine ingredients and pour into a hot skillet or griddle in dollar, 4-inch pancake amounts. They are good when topped with an elderberry syrup or when a few dried elderberries are added.

Cattail "Sweet Corn"

24 cattail bud spikes
lots of butter and margarine
salt and pepper to taste

Boil and douse with butter or margarine to overcome the slight dryness, and salt and pepper to taste. Eat the granules off the hard, wiry stem and discard as you would a corncob.

Cattail Pollen Biscuits

¼ to ½ cup cattail pollen 1 ¾ cups flour
3 teaspoons baking powder 1 teaspoon salt
4 tablespoons shortening ¾ cup milk

Mix all ingredients together. Roll out dough and cut out biscuits. Place on a nonstick cooking sheets and bake in a 425-degree oven for 20 minutes.

Scalloped Cattails

2 cups cattail flowers 2 beaten eggs
½ cup melted butter ½ teaspoon sugar
½ teaspoon nutmeg ½ teaspoon pepper
1 cup milk ½ cup grated Swiss
dab of butter

Combine first six ingredients in a bowl. Scald the milk and slowly add it to the cattail mixture. Pour into a greased casserole dish and top with cheese and butter. Bake 275 degrees for 30 minutes.

Cattail Shortcake

1 cup of all-purpose flour 1 cup cattail pollen
4 teaspoons baking powder 1 egg
1/2 cup milk 2 tablespoons sugar
3 tablespoons margarine sweetened fruit
whipped cream

Preheat oven to 350F. Mix margarine and sugar together; add egg & milk. Sift together dry ingredients and add to creamed mixture. Bake in 2 round cake pans for 30 minutes, cool. Spoon sweetened fruit over one layer, top with second layer, and crown with whipped cream.

Cattail Flower Refrigerator Pickles

Enough cattail flowerheads to tightly fill a quart jar, about 30 or 40
4 garlic cloves, peeled
1 tsp whole black peppercorns
4 to 6 bay leaves
¾ cup apple cider vinegar
1½ cups olive oil
3 Tbsp salt
1¼ cups water

Boil the cattails in water for 5 to 10 minutes, and drain thoroughly. Stuff flowerheads, garlic, peppercorns, and bay leaves into clean, sterile quart jar. Combine vinegar, oil, water and salt in a saucepan. Bring to a boil, remove from heat and pour over the cattail heads. Add a little more oil, vinegar and water if the liquid does not reach to the top of the jar. Cover and let marinate in the refrigerator overnight.

Cattail Corn Bread

1 tablespoon honey 1 tablespoon margarine
1 cup milk 1 egg
1/4 teaspoon salt 1/2 cup cattail pollen
1/2 cup all purpose flour 3/4 cup yellow corn meal
2 teaspoons baking powder

Mix honey & margarine together and add remaining ingredients in order. Pour into well-greased pan. Bake at 425 F for 25 min.

Seshelt Chowder

4 big cattail roots, roasted and dried
5 cups water
2 teaspoons salt
1 ½ pounds roughly cut, fresh salmon
¼ teaspoon fresh pepper

Simmer the cattail roots in water for 40 minutes. Add remaining ingredients and simmer 10 minutes.

Cattail-Wild Rice Pilaf

1 cup dry wild rice (4 cups cooked)
2 Tbsp sesame oil
½ cup chopped green onion
2 cups cattail shoots, sliced (about 30 cattails)
2 tsp salt
½ cup slivered almonds

Cook the wild rice until tender. Saute onion and cattail shoots in sesame oil until tender and translucent. Mix the rice and the sautéed cattail shoots and onion together. Add salt and slivered almonds. Serve hot.

Cattail Casserole

3 cups cattail flowerbuds, scraped off the "cobs" (about 40 flowerheads)
1 egg
¼ tsp nutmeg
½ tsp salt
¼ tsp black pepper
½ cup milk
1 cup soft breadcrumbs
1 cup grated cheese

Cook cattail flowerheads in boiling water for 5-10 minutes. Scrape the flowerbuds off the cob to make 3 cups. Beat egg together with spices, milk and breadcrumbs. Combine cattail flowers with the egg mixture. In a greased bread pan or small casserole dish, spread half of cattail mixture on the bottom. Add half of the grated cheese, spread the rest of the cattail mixture over, and top with the rest of the grated cheese. Bake at 350° until lightly browned, about 30 minutes.