

The background of the page is a composite image. The top right and middle right sections show a close-up of blueberries on a branch, with some berries in sharp focus and others blurred. The bottom left section features a dark blue background with black silhouettes of cattails. A large, white, rounded rectangular box is positioned in the upper left, containing the main title and a paragraph of text.

# TEND, GATHER AND GROW

# WILD FOOD TRADITIONS

## CAREER-CONNECTED LEARNING

*Edible wild plants grow around us in fields, forests, wetlands, beaches, and urban landscapes. These foods are often more nutritious than store-bought foods and they connect us to the land, the seasons, and cultural traditions. Many native foods have been honored and cared for by Indigenous Peoples for millennia, and the rich cultural traditions that surround them remain strong. Some non-native “weedy” plants are also nutrient-rich and delicious. There are many pathways toward using wild foods for nutrition and connection including foraging, cooking, eating together, growing plants, practicing health care, teaching, building community health, and advocating for equitable food access.*

# WILD FOOD TRADITIONS

## Explore Career Connections

**Cook/Chef:** Do you like experimenting in the kitchen? Hooked on cooking shows? Transforming the bounty of the land into delicious and nutritious meals to feed the community can be a rewarding career.

**Dietitian:** Through research, education, and community work, dietitians aim to keep people healthy through food. A dietitian's career training involves extensive work in clinical settings and allows them to work in clinics, hospitals, and research settings.

**Ethnobotanist:** Interested in how people of a particular region interact with and utilize the plants around them? Ethnobotanists can be educators, consultants, writers, and/or researchers.

**Farmer/Grower:** Are you happier outside with your hands in the soil? Growing food can be done as an individual entrepreneur or working with others in a community farm or garden.

**Forager:** Foraging means searching for, harvesting, and processing wild foods while practicing ethical harvesting and ensuring that plant communities continue to thrive. Foragers spend most of their time outside and develop a deep understanding of, and connection to, seasonal changes and the land.

**Holistic Healthcare Worker (nurse, doctor, counselor):** Some health care workers study and practice conventional medicine while incorporating holistic food practices and traditions. This may include mindful eating, making dietary recommendations, and helping people access healthy foods.

**Nursery Worker:** You can help people to establish gardens and edible landscapes through growing and selling plants, shrubs, and trees. This is a great opportunity to build skills in plant identification, propagation, and raising healthy plants.





# WILD FOOD TRADITIONS

## Explore Career Connections

**Nutritionist:** Do you love working with people, food, a variety of cultures, and science? Nutritionists work with people to assess the health needs a person or community may have and develop ways for people to meet their nutritional goals.

**Organic Farmer/Urban Farmer:** Do you have a green thumb and a love of plants? Farmers can grow all sorts of nutritionally dense, flavorful, and local foods for both big and small communities while also nurturing the soil, honoring the natural ecosystem, and cultivating food in an ecological manner. Many “weeds” on farms are also nutritious wild foods.

**Public Health Worker:** Not only is access to healthy food imperative for communities, but also access to clean water and nourishing soil to grow food in. Public health workers aid in creating policies and providing resources to address these needs.

**Teacher:** Do you enjoy working with people and seeing the spark in someone’s eyes when they understand a new idea or concept? Wild foods can be woven into subjects like science, social studies, history, health, and art.

**Traditional Foods Educator:** Are you passionate about food and culture? Tribal communities are reviving the cultivation and eating of Native foods and need educators to support the important movement toward food sovereignty.

**Wild Foods Writer/Blogger:** Some wild foods enthusiasts share their passion and knowledge with others through writing blogs, magazine articles, and books. You can also write and host podcasts.



# CAREER HIGHLIGHT

## DIETITIAN

### WHAT EXACTLY ARE DIETITIANS?

Food is Medicine! Eating is something we do multiple times a day to nourish and fuel our bodies. Over the generations many more packaged and refined foods that are high in fats, sugars, and salts have become available, and with this, some diseases including diabetes and heart disease. Many health problems can be prevented or healed through food. Dietitians assess the health needs of a person or community and develop ways for people to meet their nutritional goals.

### WHAT CAN DIETITIANS DO?

- Community food needs assessments and develop collaborative food programs
- Food security and food sovereignty programs
- School nutrition programs
- Evaluate a client's nutritional needs
- Educate clients about their health issues and the ways nutrients can support them
- Create individualized meal plans
- Empower clients and communities to make changes for building health
- Educate themselves on the always-evolving food and nutrition research

Dietitians might be focused on specialties such as working with youth, pregnant and nursing mothers, or elders. They may work in public health settings or a private practice. They can teach others about nutrition at conferences, universities, or public health-focused organizations, and may also share nutritional wisdom by writing books, freelance writing, podcast hosting, or health blogging!

### CAREER PATHWAY

In the State of Washington Registered Dietitians (RDs) have a masters or an undergraduate degree and pass an exam plus do a year long internship. This license is needed to work in hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, and research.

### WHAT MAKES A DIETITIAN SUCCESSFUL?

Some strengths and qualities that may guide dietitians include being both patient and motivating for others, building working relationships, collaboration, practicing listening without judgement, remaining open-minded and adapting to people's personal health goals, being studious and inquisitive, and enjoying planning and organizing schedules and resources.

*I grew up in Alaska (Inupiaq/Scandinavian), on the traditional homeland of the Dena'ina Athabascans, where eating, harvesting, and enjoying wild foods from the land is quite common. What a gift! That innate love drew me to this work. Although becoming a Dietitian was a rigorous process, it has opened up so many doors to incredible opportunities, from working in remote parts of Alaska on Diabetes to a tribal clinic in the Puget Sound region.*

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# MEET AZURE BOURE

Suquamish Tribal Member

## Traditional Plants and Foods Educator



*I live in, and work for, my community. Our biggest goal is educating our community members on traditional foods and medicines. There was a big disconnect between my great grandmother's generation and my Mom's generation. My great grandma was a healer and weaver but she was afraid to teach because it was ingrained in the kids that they would get in trouble (due to colonization and boarding schools). It has been a struggle to relearn our cultural traditions and I have taken it as a personal mission to bring that knowledge back. We all have work to do and I am one of those parts filling that need.*

### JOB RESPONSIBILITIES

- Harvest and make medicine for the community
- Food harvesting, preservation, and distribution
- Develop educational resources
- Teach community workshops
- Lead youth workshops in schools and afterschool programs

### EDUCATIONAL PATHWAY

In 2008 I took my first traditional foods class and I ate a salal berry. I had been around that berry all my life and could not believe that I could eat it. That was a spark that set me on the path I am on now. I took a lot of community classes as a hobby, then became a traditional foods and medicines apprentice, and eventually took over the program. I got my Associates of Arts and Bachelors of Native American Science at Northwest Indian College.

### WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PART OF YOUR JOB?

I really enjoy working with youth. At first, they can be apprehensive about trying something new. I ask them to be courageous and at least try it. I love seeing the change in them building knowledge and confidence. I always tell people, "Once you notice something, you will see it everywhere." Sometimes people send me pictures and Elders share stories—the community engagement is fulfilling. I get a lot back and it keeps my passion going to know people are hungry for the knowledge and are engaged with it.

### WHAT HELPS YOU TO BE SUCCESSFUL?

We offer classes that are really hands-on and people have an opportunity to share stories and knowledge. For me, it is about making a space where people can learn through doing—the information sticks better.

Skills that I am looking for in an apprentice include willingness and enthusiasm to learn new things, being self-directed, some writing skills, and a passion for community health and the land.





# WILD FOOD TRADITIONS RESOURCES

## COURSES, PROGRAMS, AND ORGANIZATIONS

- Bastyr Nutrition Courses – including nutrition and counseling, nutrition and exercise science, culinary arts, and so much more
- Evergreen State College - Food, Health, and Sustainability
- Foods Still Matter: The Muckleshoot Food Sovereignty Project
- GRuB: Wild Foods and Medicines Program
- University of Washington - Nutritional Sciences Program
- Washington State University - Master Gardener Program
- Becoming a Certified Intuitive Eating Counselor

## HERBALISM WEBSITES

- Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium: Store Outside Your Door
- Center for World Indigenous Studies
- GRuB Wild Foods and Medicines Program
- Fat of the Land Blog
- Flower Hill Institute
- First Nations Development Institute
- Northwest Portland Indian Health Board
- Wild Foods and Medicines blog – Elise Krohn
- Wild Harvests blog – Abe Lloyd
- Conference on Native American Nutrition

## BOOKS

- *The Boreal Herbal* by Beverly Gray
- *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Wall Kimmerer
- *The Deerholme Foraging Book* by Bill Jones
- *Food Plants of Coastal First Peoples* and *The Earth's Blanket* by Nancy Turner
- *Discovering Wild Plants* by Janice Schofield
- *Edible Wild Plants: From Dirt to Plate* by John Kallas
- *Forager's Harvest, Nature's Garden, and Incredible Wild Edibles* by Sam Thayer
- *Indigenous Home Cooking* by Indigenous Food Lab and Valerie Segrest
- *Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems and Well-Being: Interventions and Policies for Healthy Communities* by Harriet V. Kuhnlein
- *Pacific Feast* by Jennifer Hahn
- *Pacific Northwest Foraging* by Douglas Deur
- *The People of Cascadia- Pacific Northwest Native American History* by Heidi Bohan
- *Renewing Salmon Nation's Food Traditions* edited by Gary Paul Nabhan
- *Salish Country Cookbook* by Rudy Ryser
- *Stalking the Blue-Eyed Scallop and Stalking the Wild Asparagus* by Euell Gibbons
- *Traditional Food Guide* by Alaska Native Health Consortium

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*Tend, Gather and Grow* is a K-12 curriculum on native and wild plants of the Pacific Northwest. For more information visit <https://www.goodgrub.org/tend-gather-grow>