

ACORNS AND EAT 'EM

by

Suellen Ocean



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SUELLEN OCEAN is a native Californian, residing in Mendocino County, who has spent many “seasons” harvesting and cooking acorns. She has a Communications degree from Sonoma State, with concentrations in writing, public speaking and “nature.” A former radio personality, and mother of two grown boys, she lives happily on twenty-three oak-studded acres, with her husband Jon.

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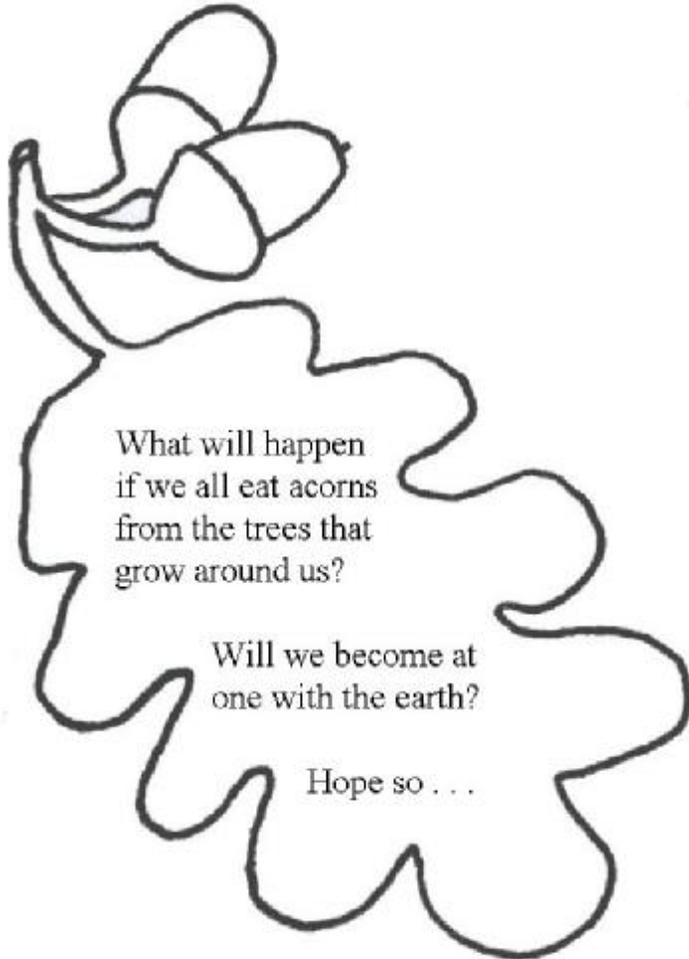
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COF note: Always seek and receive permission to gather acorns from agencies and/or private property owners.

I don't know why more people don't eat acorns. Perhaps myths about them exist, and they've never been dispelled. I absolutely love them.

Through the process of writing this book, I cooked a lot of acorns. Friends and family loved the recipes. The majority of "first-time-tasters" were surprised at how delicious they are.

Unfortunately, in California the Oaks are falling to the hands of developers and agriculture. It is a great loss. Besides producing tons of food, there's always the charming silhouette of your favorite oak against the horizon. Acorns are everywhere! In the parks, on school grounds, along the roads, maybe right outside your door.

I use Tan Oak acorns a lot because there is such abundance where I live. Sometimes, if you don't gather your acorns right away, the wildlife will gather them for you! If you have access to more than one variety, watch their cycles. When you see a "good" acorn, you'll often see it ready to bust out of its shell. While hiking, I see acorns in different micro-ecosystems. In the Fall you may pass healthy acorns on a southern slope, in the Spring, you may see tasty-looking acorns nestled in the leaves of a northern slope, kept moist without a lot of sun.

There are many variables to finding choice acorns. Climate, topography, animal communities, birds and insects will affect your acorn supply. You will eventually become “in tune” with the process. You’ll be able to look at the leaves of the tree and determine what kind of Oak you have access to. You’ll start to make mental notes of where you saw them, and how they disappeared or rotted when you waited too long to pick them up. You’ll notice a difference in texture and possibly taste and tannic acid color and content with the different kinds of acorns. You’ll also find a difference within each species after they sprout. You don’t want to wait until that acorn has turned green and about to become a tree before you eat it, but sprouted acorns are fine to eat. I prefer the Tan Oak acorns sprouted.

It’s fun to sit down on the earth surrounded with acorns. The big Tan Oaks near my house drop acorns, and come February or March, after winter freezes and lots of rain, they begin to sprout and turn pink inside. (In the Fall is when I gather Black Oak acorns, I never find any left if I wait until Spring.) I like to gather sprouted acorns because the sprouting increases the acorn’s nutritional value. It is no longer in a “starch” stage, but has changed to a “sugar” stage. The sprouting also helps split them from the shell. It is beneficial because if it has sprouted, it’s a good acorn, and I haven’t wasted time gathering wormy ones.

I’ve found that an acorn with a two-inch long sprout is fine, as long as the acorn nut meat hasn’t turned green. I break off the sprout and continue. Remember, many acorns get eaten up by wildlife before they sprout. You can always gather them and sprout them in a bucket of water.

Acorns provide a complete vegetable protein, up to seven percent by weight in some varieties. In some species, more than half of the acorn’s weight is carbohydrates, which provide a good source of energy. Black Oak acorns contain 31.4% water, 3.44% protein, 13.55% fats, 8.60% fiber, and 41.8 1% carbohydrates. According to *Edible and Useful Plants of California*, by Charlotte Clark, “people who use acorns today agree that they resemble other nuts in oiliness and flavor. They contain significant quantities of calcium, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, sulfur, fat and protein. They are especially good in cookies, breads and pies.

After gathering the acorns, the fruit is removed and ground. The methods I choose are not the traditional mortar and pestle grinding the Native Americans used. If you’re interested in an account of traditional Native American methods of preparing acorns and stories from the memories of a true Native American woman, Julia F. Parker, I suggest you prop yourself

up under a big Oak and read, *It Will Live Forever*, by Bev Ortiz (see bibliography).

I put them in the blender with water (3 cups water per 1 cup acorns) and “liquefy” them. Make sure that you blend them until they are “finely” ground. **YOU MUST GRIND THE ACORNS AND YOU MUST LEACH THEM.** You’ll use this same water to leach them. I keep acorns leaching in large mouthed quart-size canning jars in the refrigerator. The blended meal will settle to the bottom. Everyday for about a week, I pour the darkened water off and add fresh. The water will get clearer everyday. This leaching process is done to remove tannic acid. Be careful that you don’t pour out your acorn meal.

Acorns can be leached in a shorter period by other methods, like constant water running through them, but I like to leach them in the refrigerator for at least a week. Leaching large quantities in big bowls or buckets is fine too, but difficult to keep refrigerated. I put a little note on the refrigerator that reminds me what day I leached the acorns.

In a way, acorns remind me of tofu. They’re a vegetable protein and they need to be ground and prepared using lots of water. The mass of ground acorns looks similar to raw blended soy beans, but I found preparing acorns much easier than making tofu.

I usually shell the acorns soon after I’ve gathered them, and fill plastic sandwich bags and put them in the freezer, to leach later. I have two ways of using leached acorns. I strain them and either add them to a recipe that needs cooking, or I simmer the thoroughly leached acorns in water for about fifteen minutes over medium heat, stirring constantly, (they can stick to the pan and burn). After they cool, I freeze this water and meal. The freezing separates the mush from the water. Freezing in two cup size portions, after thawing, (don’t thaw out in the microwave or using heat, you’ll get porridge), I like to turn them into a kitchen strainer. You can also just squeeze the water out of the thawed acorns, and you now have a fabulous gourmet food to cook with.

Leached acorns can also be dried and stored. During the drying process, be sure to stir them daily, to keep the grains of acorns from sticking together, otherwise, it forms little “acorn rocks.”

Once thawed and strained, the pre-cooked, pre-frozen acorn meal is excellent to make sandwiches with, use in dips or whatever your imagination can dream up. Sometimes it’s hard to find new cooking ideas, but acorn dishes never fail to delight guests. A bowl of acorn dip brings smiles, and a lot of interesting conversation.

Acorns make so many recipes better. I'm a vegetarian and I'm pleased to have the extra protein and nutrition. It often takes the place of cheese, probably because acorns are satiating.

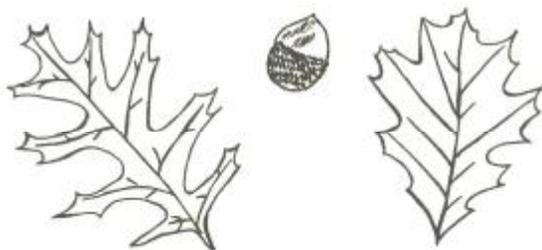
I've read instructions for leaching acorns by pouring hot water over them. When I poured hot water over fresh ground, unleached Black Oak or Tan Oak acorns, I needed three to four times more water than acorns, and I got a thick mucilaginous mush, that I thought was a real mess. I abandoned this method. Thanks to friend and cookbook author, Robin Jeavons, I have found that you can speed up the leaching with hot water but make sure the water flows through the strainer readily.

Please remember that acorns are an important part of the wildlife food chain. With due respect for nature, only take what you can eat. Acorns are the principal food for forest animals, from bears and raccoons to birds and mice. Having a cache of acorns might sound "squirrelly" but after you try them in your favorite recipes, you'll love them.

For most of us, acorns are a "wild" food. Eat them in moderation until you're sure you're not allergic to them, but don't be afraid of them.

This *asterisk is to remind you that acorns must be thoroughly leached, and most of the recipes call for acorns* leached, strained, cooked in water and strained again. **IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU LEACH THE ACORNS.** The tannic acid is very bitter and could cause digestive upset.

If you live in an area like mine, everyone knows we're surrounded by Tanbark Oak trees. There are many and we know they are Tan Oak. But I am surrounded by several other varieties of Oak that aren't as easily identified. To help you, I have provided information to identify the Oaks you have access to. If you live near a college, I'm sure you could take a leaf and an acorn, possibly a drawing or photo of the tree, and the botanist in the Agriculture department will help you identify it. High school biology teachers probably know, and of course the library will have books on identification. The ancient Latin name for Oak is "Quercus," possibly of Celtic origin, meaning, "beautiful tree." "Quer" means fine and "cuez" means tree in Latin. Some of the Oaks will have Native American names for the tree, or for the acorn, thanks to research done almost a century ago by V.K. Chesnut and printed in the book, *Plants Used by the Indians of Mendocino County California*.



BLACK OAK or
SMOOTH-BARK OAK or
QUERCITRON or
YELLOW OAK or
YELLOW BARK OAK

Quercus veluntia

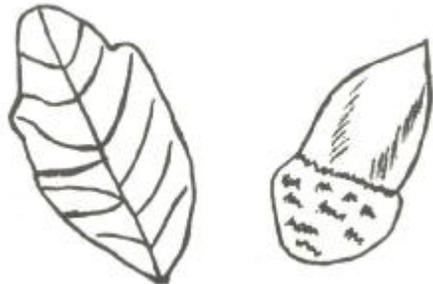
It seems that many Oaks have "nick names." Don't get this mixed up with the other "Black Oaks." This Oak grows from Southern Maine and Northern Vermont westward through Southern Ontario, Southern Michigan to Southeastern Minnesota, and south to Northern Florida and Eastern Texas, Eastern Oklahoma, Eastern Kansas, Southeastern Nebraska and Iowa. This is a large and common eastern Oak. This tree can reach a hundred and fifty feet in height but usually grows sixty to eighty feet high, with a trunk diameter of two to three feet. Sometimes the limbs grow close to the ground. The leaves are "velvety" when young. Although Black Oak leaves vary, they usually have five to seven lobes. The leaves are five to six inches long, three to four inches wide, and bristle-tipped. The mature leaf is thick, tough, smooth, dark green and very shiny above, paler and possibly "hairy" underneath. Ripening from October to November of the second season, the acorns are either stemless or on short stalks. The acorns are one-half to three-fourths of an inch long and held by deep, thin-scaled cups.

BLUE OAK or ROCK OAK

Quercus douglasii

- “Me’-le” -- Yuki Indian name for this acorn
Ka-ba’-ta -- Little Lake Indian name for this acorn
Ka-kul’ -- Yokio Indian name for these acorns

Growing on low, dry foothills, this Oak tree is deciduous. The Blue Oak is the dominant oak of the California hardwood range from Shasta County to Kern County. The Blue Oak shares its range with the Valley oak, but occupies the more shallow soils, steeper slopes and upland sites. The leaves are a vivid blue-green above and yellow-green underneath. The leaves are hairy and the bark, scaly and pale brown. The chestnut-brown acorns are pointed, about one-inch long and set in shallow scaly cups. The acorns were very widely used by Mendocino County California Indians for soup and bread.



BUR OAK or MOSSYCUP OAK

Quercus macrocarpa

Bur Oak is found widely throughout the Midwest. It is also found growing in the eastern half of the United States, and into parts of Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Tennessee and Kentucky. It is the most common Oak of Kansas and the prairie states. Usually the Bur Oak grows to an average height of eighty feet, but occasionally a Bur Oak twice that size is seen growing (the Bur Oaks grow larger in the south). It has also been known to only grow to six feet in height. The leaves are six to twelve inches long and three to six inches wide at the top. The leaves are lustrous dark green above and silver-green and downy below, turning dull yellow in the fall. The acorns are three-fourths to two inches long, half surrounded by the cup. The “fringy” scales on the cup give it the name Bur or Mossycup Oak. Yellow-green male catkins will appear as the wooly leaves unfold. The leaves have five to seven rounded irregular lobes and the terminal one occupies more than one-third the entire leaf and has irregularly crenate margins. The leaves crowd toward the ends of the twigs.



CALIFORNIA BLACK OAK or KELLOGG

Quercus Californica

Quercus Kelloggii

- Mom -- Yuki Indian name for this acorn
hon'-sol -- Concow Indian name for this acorn
tol -- Wailaki Indian name for this acorn
Du-she' ka-la' -- Little Lake Indian name for this Oak tree
Nun -- Yuki Indian name for this Oak tree

All these Indian names for this Oak ought to give you a pretty good idea how well loved this tree was and still is. This Oak is deciduous, the leaves are four to six inches long. The leaves are sharp and the lobes are bristle pointed. The acorns reach an inch or so in length, and the acorn cups are heavy and thick. Over and over again I read that Black Oak acorns make the best bread. I've made bread with them and it was good. Once, I somehow got the tiniest bit of peppermint into the recipe, by accident, and it was a surprise how delicious it was.



CALIFORNIA LIVE OAK or COAST LIVE OAK

Quercus agrifolia

Live Oak is found in California from southern Mendocino County southward into northern Baja, primarily west of the coast ranges. In the southern ranges, it replaces the Valley Oak in the hardwood range, and in valley and alluvial sites, it often attains a tall spreading appearance. Ranging from sea level to 4,000 feet, this evergreen Oak can grow as tall as 100 feet with a six foot diameter. This Oak likes river basins, and you may find it growing among Sycamore, Alder and Spruce trees. The growth is shrubbier at higher elevations. The dark green leaves are oval, underneath the leaves are pale-green and "hairy." The leaves are bristle-toothed. The acorns are light chestnut-brown in color and very pointed. The acorn cup is scaly and coarse.



CANYON LIVE OAK or *Quercus chrysolepis*
CAÑON or MAUL OAK

(One source also called this Pin Oak or Swamp Oak
(*Quercus palustris*)

Je'-je -- Yuki Indian name for this acorn,
signifying sharp-leaf acorn

ga-sha' -- Calpella and Little Lake Indian name
for this acorn

jesh -- Yokia Indian name for this acorn

This Oak has white, flaky bark with white, pale green, or yellow-green leaves. The leaves are oblong, not divided or lobed, and the oval acorns are chestnut brown and range from one-half to two inches long. The underside of the leaves are often covered with yellow hairs. Two different reports show this acorn as not very productive and extremely bitter, but in the book, *Early Uses of California Plants* (see bibliography), it's written that the California Shasta Indians buried these acorns in swampy mud for a year. After this, they were purplish in color and



ready to be roasted and eaten whole. I use Tan bark acorns all the time that turn a beautiful pink color after sprouting. Perhaps the burying in swamp mud made them sprout, converting them from starch to sugar state. I would try soaking these in a bucket of water, then shell them after they sprout, then grind and leach.

CURL-LEAF SCRUB OAK

Quercus dumosa revoluta

Bat'-som – Pomo Indian word for this three to eight-foot-high evergreen shrub. This bush has small light-green, convex, rigid leaves and small oval acorns less than an inch. Extremely bitter and because they're so small, they have been used very little as food.

No pictures available.

EMORY OAK or BLACK OAK

Quercus emoryi

Yes this Oak is also called BLACK OAK, and it can get confusing. Don't confuse it with the California Black Oak – they are not the same. This Oak grows in arid country. Occurring frequently in the Southwest and also into Mexico, from 5,000 to 10,000 feet elevations. It's a slender Oak, (diameter is two to four feet), and it reaches heights of up to seventy-five feet. If growing in an exposed area it may appear "shrubby." This Oak is often found growing with Pinon Pines, Jeffrey Pine, and Douglas Fir. The glossy leaves are dark-green on top and kind of hairy and pale green underneath. The leaves are not divided or lobed, they are coarsely toothed and not bristle-pointed. The leaves have one to five pairs of teeth. The acorns are reportedly "sweet", whether this means they don't need leaching, I don't know. The cup the acorn sits in is hairy, scaly and pale-brown. The acorn is dark chestnut brown, oblong and pointed, but small.



HIGHLAND LIVE OAK

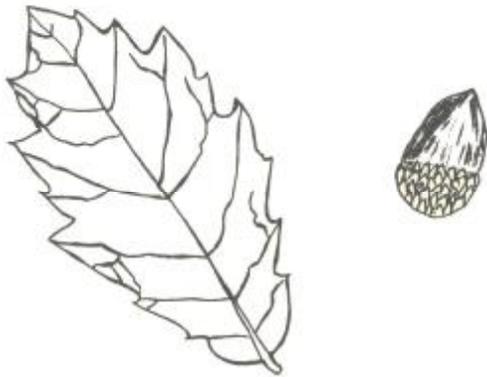
Quercus wislizeni

This evergreen oak is widely distributed in California from Siskiyou County south into Baja California. It is abundant in the Sierra Nevada foothills and in the coast ranges occupies the higher, drier, or more inland sites than the coast live oak. Interior live oak is generally found in more heavily wooded sites than the blue oak, and in chaparral habitats, lower elevations or other dry locations it often develops a shrubby form. Growing at elevations of 1500 to 7000 feet, this Oak can grow as tall as eighty feet, but with a diameter of two to six feet. (Slender compared to Valley White Oak that sometimes grow twenty-five feet in circumference.) The leaves are deep-green on top, yellow-green underneath. The leaves are small and oval, and quite "spiny toothed," not divided or lobed. The leaves are also glossy, flat and leathery. The acorns are pointed and oblong, a chestnut-brown in color and the acorn cup is light-brown, hairy and scaly.



ENGELMANN OAK or MESA Oak
Quercus engelmannii

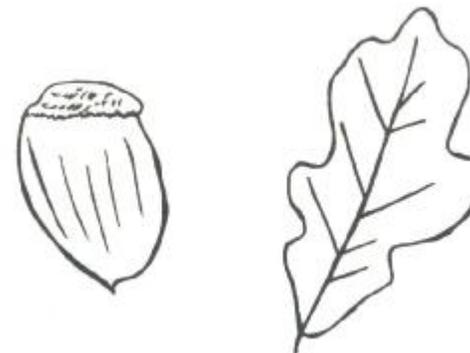
This semi-deciduous oak has a limited distribution in less than two percent of the state of California, primarily in western San Diego County. There, the Mesa Oak replaces the Blue Oak in the hardwood range.



MOUNTAIN WHITE OAK or
PACIFIC POST OAK or
OREGON OAK and also called
WHITE OAK

Quercus garryana

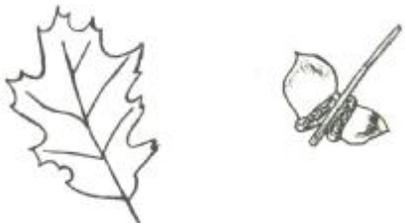
Ma-le' is the Yuki Indian name for this Oak that resembles the Valley White Oak, except the Valley White grows in the valleys and this grows in the lower hills. The leaf lobes are rounded and the leaves are deep green and shiny on top. The bark is pale orange-brown (or grayish-brown), and shallow ridged. The acorns are used for food and are full, oblong and rounded, set in shallow, scaly cups. This Oak tree also has grayish, hairy twigs. This tree is the principal timber Oak of the western United States.



NORTHERN RED OAK or
RED OAK or
EASTERN RED OAK or
GRAY OAK

Quercus borealis

This Oak grows throughout the entire Northeastern United States, Southeastern Canada, parts of the Midwest, some Southern States and the Middle Atlantic States. This Oak has a broad, symmetrically spreading crown of dense dark green foliage. The trunks of open-grown trees often separate at fifteen or twenty feet from the ground into several stout branches. This Oak can reach 150 feet in height and six feet in diameter. The bark is dark grey to reddish-brown. The leaves have five to eleven unequal bristle-tipped lobes. The leaves are five to nine inches long, four to six inches wide, dark green on top, light green beneath. The leaves appear in late spring and turn deep red or orange in autumn. The reddish-brown acorns take two years to mature. They are about an inch long. This Oak can be found growing with other Oaks, Sugar Maples, Elm, White Pine, and Hickories. It will grow faster than the other Oaks it is growing with.



PIN OAK or SWAMP OAK
Quercus palustris

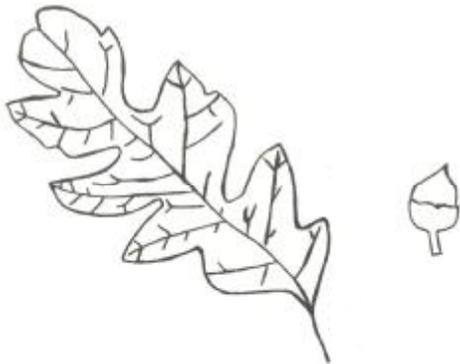
This Oak can be found from Southwestern New England to North Carolina, and from Ohio to Kentucky and Western Tennessee. It grows westward to Southeastern Iowa, Eastern Kansas, Northeastern Oklahoma and Northern Arkansas. It can reach 120 feet in height with a diameter of five feet. The drooping branches often touch the ground. The bark is light to dark grayish-brown. The shiny dark green leaves are three to six inches long, and light green underneath. The toothed lobes taper to narrow, pointed ends. The reddish-brown acorns take two years to mature, growing on the wood of the previous year. Before the Spring leaves have reached full size, the tree has tassels of pollen-bearing staminate flowers. The acorns are short and fat, and rest in saucer shaped cups.



SCRUB OAK also called WHITE OAK

Quercus gambelii

You may find this oak growing among Jeffrey Pines. It grows in the Southern Rocky Mountains from Colorado to Nevada and also from the Rockies to Mexico. When growing in dry regions it is quite shrubby. It does well in plateaus and upper slopes. The oblong leaves are dark yellow-green on top, on the bottom they are light green and “hairy.” The leaves are deeply divided and round lobed, with no bristle points. The bark is dark gray-brown. The acorns are small and a dark chestnut-brown. The cup that holds the acorn is scaly, hairy and yellow-brown in color.



TAN BARK OAK

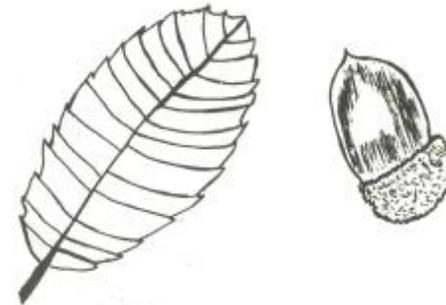
Quercus densiflora or *Pasania densiflor*

Lithocarpus densiflora

Sho'-kish -- Yuki Indian name for this acorn

ha'ha -- Concow Indian name for this acorn

This tree is thought to form a “connecting link” between Oaks and Chestnuts. Botanists are not considering it a “true” Oak. According to several sources, the acorn of the Tanbark Oak was highly prized by California Native Americans. This attractive and slender evergreen grows abundantly along the West Coast, from about a 300 foot elevation to 4,000 feet. Growing up to 100 feet tall, it can grow up to six feet in diameter. You may find it growing along side Redwoods and Douglas Fir. The oblong leaves of Tan Oak are light green with “rusty hairs” on the underside, medium in size, sharply toothed, not divided or lobed, not bristle-pointed. The leaves are regularly toothed. The oblong acorns are set in shallow cups.

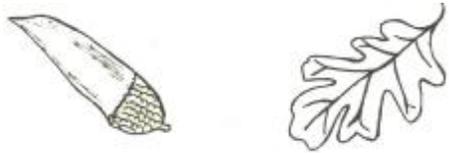


VALLEY WHITE OAK or
CALIFORNIA WHITE OAK or
VALLEY OAK or
WHITE OAK or ROBLE

Quercus lobata

- Ki-yam' -- Yuki Indian name for this acorn
- Skin'-cbon -- Wailaki Indian name for this acorn
- se-pa' -- Little Lake Indian name for this acorn
- lo-e' -- Concow Indian name for this acorn

This is the VALLEY OAK, but it is also called by some of the above names. This deciduous oak, was once an important member of California's Central Valley's riparian forests. From Shasta County to Los Angeles County, it is still a conspicuous oak in the hardwood range, especially in valley bottoms and on deep alluvial soils. The leaves are dark green with pale green undersides. They are oblong, smooth margined and deeply lobed. The acorns, perhaps the largest of all acorns, are one-and-one-quarter inches to two-and-one-half inches long, conical shaped, and chestnut-brown in color. The cups that hold them are "hairy" and covered with thick scales. These acorns have been highly sought after for animal feed, but more importantly were an abundant source of food for Native Americans that built their villages in the valleys around these trees. If you have access to even one good Valley White Oak, you are very fortunate.



WHITE OAK or
FORK-LEAF WHITE OAK or
RIDGE WHITE OAK or
STAVE OAK

Quercus alba

Some of these Oaks live to be 800 years old. They grow in the eastern half of the United States (including parts of Canada, parts of the Midwest and parts of the South). It attains its greatest size in the valleys of the western slopes of the Allegheny Mountains and the bottom lands of the lower Ohio Basin. Quercus "alba" possibly refers to the light colored bark. The pale gray bark has shallow fissures and scaly ridges, the bark can be two inches thick. Pollen-bearing, staminate, hanging blossoms appear in May when the first leaves appear. The glossy leaves are five to nine inches long with five to nine lobes, turning russet in the fall. The acorns are "sweet meated" and mature during early autumn, carrying no acorns through the winter. The shiny, brown acorn is three-fourths to one inch long, with about one-fourth its length in a shallow cup attached directly to the twig or by a very short stem.



WILLOW OAK or
PEACH-LEAF OAK or *Quercus phellos*
PEACH OAK may also be called:
SWAMP OAK, WATER OAK or PIN OAK

Here we go again with a lot of names. I hope giving you all the names it may be called by, will help you identify it. Over most of the range of this Oak, the tree usually grows forty to fifty feet high with a trunk fourteen to twenty inches in diameter, frequently found along streams and swamps, and also on higher land. It grows along the eastern coastal states of the U.S. from Southern New York, and in parts of the south. The shiny light green leaves look more like a Willow than an Oak, they are pointed and two-and-a-half inches to five inches long. The leaves are one-quarter to one inch wide, lighter green underneath. These leaves don't turn scarlet; they turn pale yellow before falling. This tree gets confused with Water Oak, because the leaves are similar. The Willow Oak acorns are about one-half inch long, greenish-brown, while other Oak's acorns are dark brown or nearly black.



“For most Ohlone groups, acorns were the staff of life, the food people ate nearly everyday of their lives.”

“Time itself was measured by the Oaks. The acorn harvest marked the beginning of the new year. Winter was spoken of as so many months (moons) after the acorn harvest.” (Margolin, page 41.)

Here is a Concow Acorn Song, sung and danced to herald in the acorn harvest, probably the biggest festival of the year -

Hu'-tim yo'-kim koi-o-di'.
The acorns come down from heaven.

Wi'-hi-yan'-ning koi-o-di'.
I plant the short acorns in the valley.

Lo'-whi yan'-ning koi-o-di'.
I plant the long acorns in the valley.

Yo-ho' nai-ni, hal-u'-dom yo nai, yo-ho' nai-nim'.

I sprout, I, the black acorn, sprout, I sprout.

(V.K. Chesnut, page 341)

“At the edge of the village a group of women sit together grinding acorns. Holding the mortars between their outstretched legs, they sway back and forth, raising the pestles and letting them fall again. The women are singing together, and the pestles rise and fall in unison. As heavy as the pestles are, they are lifted easily – not so much by muscular effort, but (it seems to the women) by the powerful rhythm of the acorn-grinding songs. The singing of the women and the synchronized thumping of a dozen stone pestles create a familiar background noise – a noise that has been heard by the people of this village every day for hundreds, maybe thousands of years.”

“Live oaks spread throughout the Bay Area, towering valley oaks occupied the inland valleys, small groves of black oaks dotted the hills, and extensive stands of tanbark oaks covered the Santa Cruz Mountains. Each tribelet knew the location of the oak groves around them, and the oak trees’ stages of development had a central place in the Ohlone mind. In the spring the people rejoiced at the bud-thickening and the leaf-burst of the deciduous oaks. Later they celebrated the appearance of the tiny cascades of pale oak flowers. As the summer progressed the sight of the gradually ripening, shiny, green nuts filled them with joy and security. Throughout the year the people responded to the stately rhythm of the oaks with the greatest awareness and involvement.”

Margolin, pages 13, 14 & 41

RECIPES

Acorn Pancakes
Acorn & Egg Breakfast
Acorn Tofu Breakfast
Bread
Acorn Soda Biscuits
Acorn Yeast Bread
Acorn Tortillas
Acorn Enchiladas
Acorns & Pasta
Acorn Salad Sandwich
Acorn Veggie Loaf
Acorn & Rice
Sauteed Mushrooms & Acorns
Acorn Spinach Burgers
Corn-a-Corn Mush
Acorn, carrot & Dock Soup
Acorns with Black Bean Broth & Pasta
Kidney Bean Acorn Salad
Acorn Veggie Soup
Acorn Crunchies
Split Pea Acorn Dinner
Acorn Casserole
Beets & Acorns
Acorn Lasagna
Acorn Cheese Pies
Acorn Dip
Acorn Dip II
Baked & Browned Eggplant Acorn Dip & Spread
Acorn Spaghetti Sauce
Acorn Chocolate Chip Raisin Walnut Cookies
Peanut Butter Acorn Cookies
Peanut & Acorn Yogurt Dessert
Pineapple Acorn Smoothie
Acorn Cheesecake
Acorn Cheesecake Too

VALLEY OAK (Quercus lobata)

You have to be a lover of native trees to nurture this awkward young oak. Unlike the Alder that seems to burst into a graceful, symmetrical shade tree almost over night, this Valley Oak will take decades to achieve the sturdy symmetry that will even hint of its ultimate magnificence. Allowing this awkward youngster a chance to grow, though, is a gift to the future, for the Valley Oak is the largest most picturesque of the western oaks. It forms a massive trunk with enormous, broad symmetrical crowns. Some of the finest examples of Valley Oaks remaining in Mendocino County can be seen in Round Valley. One in particular, on the Diamond H Ranch, is listed in the California Tree Registry as one of the largest in California. There is a silent crisis going on in California. California is losing her oaks. This may be due in part to dryer climate, but most assuredly it is due to grazing and cultivating on the valley floors. Next time you see a young oak that escaped the plow or cow, peeking out of a blackberry clump, or hugging a fence line, save it. Re-route the power line, jog the fence line, don't bulldoze the blackberries. Include the oak in your landscaping.

Ellen Drell, #6

ACORN PANCAKES

Sift together or mix well with a fork:

1-1/2 cups whole wheat flour

1-1/2 tsp. baking powder

1/2 tsp. salt

1 tsp. cinnamon

Stir in mixing well:

2 egg whites

1-1/2 cups cold milk

2 Tbs. honey

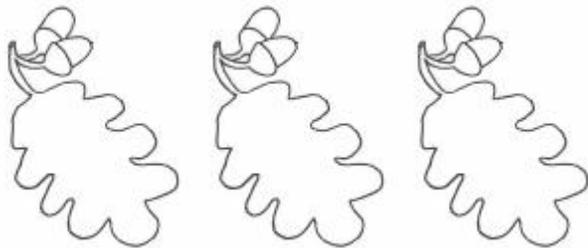
1/3 cup pre-cooked, cooled and strained acorns*

1 Tbs. vegetable oil

Heat griddle only moderately hot. If the griddle is too high, pancakes will be too mottled with dark and light patches, if too low, you'll get pale pancakes that might be heavy and tough. The "perfect" pancake will bake quickly and evenly with a smooth golden-brown surface. These pancakes have a little bit different texture, but they are very good. They may be a bit more moist inside than your usual recipe. Top with yogurt, maple syrup or fresh fruit like strawberries, blackberries, blueberries or cherries.

OAK - “any broad-leaved shrub or tree of the genus *Quercus*, the largest group in the beech family (Fagaceae), which includes the beeches (*Fagus*, *Nothofagus*), chestnuts (*Castanea*), chinquapins (*Castanopsis*), and tan oaks (*Lithocarpus*.) More than 400 species, 200 named varieties and forms, and 100 natural hybrids are distributed through the temperate regions of the Northern Hemisphere and, to a lesser extent, in the Southern Hemisphere at high elevations in the Andes Mountains and on mountains of the New Guinea area. Approximately 80 species are native to the United States, of which 58 are trees. About 60 species and varieties of tree oaks are native to China. The British Isles have two native species.”

Encyclopedia Americana Vol. 20, 1988



ACORN & EGG BREAKFAST

For this I have on hand cold boiled potatoes. Make sure the potatoes are cold, if they are warm they'll mush.

Sauté 3 Tbs. chopped onion with two chopped cold potatoes in 2 Tbs. vegetable oil. Add 1/4 cup leached, cooked, cooled and strained acorns*, and 3-4 beaten eggs (or egg whites). Mix together then top with shredded cheese and cover. When cheese is melted it's done.

Variations: Instead of potatoes add 1 can drained corn. Be creative with this and use green onions, parsley...spices like sweet basil, sage, celery, paprika...hot peppers, green peppers, mushrooms, chives, cilantro, etc.

ACORN TOFU BREAKFAST

“Its banks are well-wooded with oaks, planes, ash, willow, walnut, poplar, and brushwood. Wild grapes in great abundance overhang the lower trees, clustering to the river, at times completely overpowering the trees on which they climbed and producing beautiful varieties of tint....Our course lay between banks for the most part belted with willow, ash, oak, or plane, which latter, of immense size, overhung the stream, without apparently a sufficient hold in the soil to support them, so much had the force of the stream denuded their roots....

Within, and at the very verge of the banks, oaks of immense size were plentiful. The two most remarkable measured respectively twenty-seven feet and nineteen feet in circumference, at three feet above ground. The latter rose perpendicularly at a height of sixty feet before expanding its branches and was truly a noble sight.”

Captain Belcher 1840,
describing the Sacramento River
below Red Bluff California

Sauté until tender:

1/4 diced yellow onion

1 fresh chili pepper (I use either 1 Serrano or 1/4 to 1 jalapeno)

1 Tbs. vegetable oil

1 Tbs. water

Remove from heat and add:

1/4 pound cubed and broken (as fine as possible) tofu

1/4 cup leached, pre-cooked, cooled and strained acorns*

Return to heat mixing well with chilis and onions then remove from heat and add 2 egg whites, mixing well. Cook this mixture as you would scrambled eggs. When almost done, add sliced tomatoes on top and your favorite cheese. Cover until cheese melts. I like tamari (soy sauce) on top.

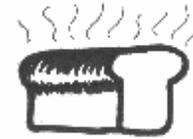
Variations: Add any of the following spices when sautéing onions basil, rosemary, thyme, paprika, cilantro.



“One of the most interesting Spring festivals in northern California was the Acorn Feast. This was held on the first full moon after acorns were in bloom. It was a prayer for a good crop of acorns, and there was dancing and singing in the feathered costumes, common to that area. It was a natural excuse for a gathering of friends, who came bringing contributions of salmon, venison and dried berries for puddings.”

“Time was no object to these happy people. The first day was a rehearsal of dances and waiting for others who came from a great distance. The second day was the Big Day, with all the trimmings of a great feast, while the third day was a review for late-comers who welcomed a chance to share the acorn soup, so symbolic of their way of life. Using everything that Nature gave them, wasting nothing, sharing all, and giving thanks.”

Van Allen Murphey, page 18



BREAD

Notice there's no sweetener in this. It doesn't need it. This recipe makes a beautifully colored brown bread. It is so good, I just eat it plain. It is a good bread with cheese, jelly or jam. It is soft and moist. Be creative with this bread. Slice it. Top it with salsa and cheese and melt it. This is a good meal served with fresh vegetables and a salad. Acorns mixed with flour make a wonderful bread. It is even better the next day. Refrigerate it then slice it real thin and toast in the oven. My adult son said it was “awesome” that way.

4 cups whole wheat flour
1 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. salt
1/2 cup vegetable oil
2 cups leached & drained acorns*
1-2/3 cups milk to make a soft dough

Sift flour, baking soda, and salt. Add acorns, milk, oil and mix well. Dough should be stiff but not dry. Bake at 325° for 25 or more minutes, (until done).

“Live oaks grow but slowly, and few large trees are left in the settled districts; but when standing in open places the trunk sometimes attains a great size, and an old tree, with its far-spreading boughs, often clothed with the beard-like ‘Spanish moss,’ has a peculiarly venerable aspect. One growing at Grove Creek, near Charleston, is said to have attained a girth of 45 feet at the ground; trees of 12 feet in circumference were formerly not unfrequent. The stalked oblong acorns in elongated cups are pleasant in taste, and were eaten by the Indians of Texas.”

Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. XVII, 1884

You can't believe how good these are - moist & tasty! They are also really easy to make. These are crunchy when left out in the air a few hours to dry. Probably would make great “crackers.”

ACORN SODA BISCUITS

2 cups flour
1/2 tsp. baking soda
1/2 tsp. salt
4 Tbs. vegetable oil (you can make without oil, but they aren't as moist)
3/4 cup milk (soy milk is okay)
1/4 cup leached & drained acorns*

Sift flour, baking soda & salt thoroughly. Mix in oil. Add acorns and milk. Dough will be stiff, if wet add a little more flour. Knead a little, then roll into balls then shape biscuits and bake on un-greased baking sheet at least 10 minutes, until done, 350-400°, or cook on a hot cast iron tortilla pan or skillet and turn, browning both sides.

Make the biscuits the size of English muffins. When cool split and toast.

These biscuits are so good! You can make mini-pizzas out of these too, or use the dough for a big pizza.

Try rolling them into little balls and baking them in a muffin tin. These are pretty sliced in half and topped with tomatoes or onions or a spread (even cheese) and are easy to make for a party.

“Acorns were a crop ideally suited to the Bay Area, and indeed to most of California. Unlike wheat, corn, barley, or rice, acorns required no tilling of the soil, no digging of irrigation ditches, nor any other form of farming. Thus, while the preparation of acorn flour might have been a lengthy and tedious process, the total labor involved was probably much less than for a cereal crop. Yet the level of nutrients in acorns was extremely high - comparable in fact with wheat and barley. What’s more, acorns were extremely plentiful. Frank Latta, an amateur ethnographer who spent a large part of his life studying the Yokuts, estimated that an Indian family consumed from 1,000 to 2,000 pounds of acorns a year. Granted that an Indian family tended to have more members than our own, nevertheless this is still a large quantity of acorns.”

Margolin, page 44

ACORN YEAST BREAD

In a large bowl mix:

1-2/3 cup warm water

1/4 cup honey

1/4 tsp. salt

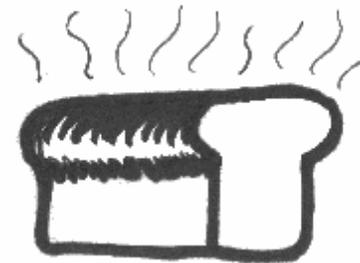
2 pkgs. dry baking yeast

2 Tbs. whole wheat flour

1 cup acorns

Stir to melt honey, then cover and set in a warm place about 10 minutes until foamy. After yeast gets foamy and starts to grow add 4 cups whole wheat flour 1/3 cup vegetable oil 1 cup leached & drained uncooked acorns*.

Mix well with a wooden spoon. Fill two standard bread pans and bake at 350° for 30 minutes.



“Oak environments are among California’s richest wildlife habitats; 110 species of birds use oak habitats during the breeding season, and 35 percent of California’s land mammals utilize oaks during some time of their lives. California’s deer herds are particularly dependent on oak habitats. By maintaining the health of your oak woodland, you also maintain an abundance and diversity of native wildlife.”

“Aside from reducing oak seedling and sapling survival, wildlife do not harm oaks, and instead provide benefits through maintaining ecological balances. Some birds and mammals even ‘plant’ acorns during their foraging activities. The presence of wildlife often adds beauty to a woodland and value to property. When desired, landowners can take some measures to increase the abundance and diversity of wildlife on their lands. Here are a few suggestions.”

“Leave brush piles in areas where they do not pose a fire hazard. These environments are used by quail for cover and by a variety of small animals for food and shelter.”

“Leave a few snags if they do not pose a fire hazard or safety concerns. Snags - dead, standing trees - are often rich environments for wildlife, especially birds. Woodpeckers and other cavity-nesting birds rely on these habitats, and predatory birds use snags as perches. Many birds will move acorns, inadvertently distributing them to new germination sites.”

“Add water impoundments (well away from oaks). Not only does year-round water increase wildlife diversity, it also improves fire-fighting capabilities.”

“Manage vegetation for diversity. The diversity of wildlife depends upon the diversity of habitats and age classes of vegetation. If you maintain grassland, oak woodland, shrubland, as well as diverse gradations between these vegetation types, you will encourage diversity in wildlife occupants. The edges between these zones are particularly rich in wildlife. For example, if you allow a field to become shrubby on the edges where it borders shrubland or woodland, you will be inviting deer, quail and other animals.”

Univ. of Calif., Berkeley Natural Resources

ACORN TORTILLAS

These especially good tortillas are made from:

1/4 cup leached & pre-cooked & cooled acorns’
1/4 cup bran
1/2 cup whole wheat flour
1/2 tsp. baking soda
1/2 tsp. salt
enough cool water to make a soft dough

Heat an un-oiled cast iron skillet. Roll out dough to “tortilla thickness” on a lightly floured board. Heat first on one side, then flip and cook until done.



“Historically, livestock grazing and wildlife production have been the dominant land use throughout the hardwood range. We can thank the livestock industry for the open, pastoral character of much of California’s countryside. But it is also in portions of this region that regeneration for several oak species has been poor, especially during the last 80 years. Cattle are the oft-named culprits, and although it is true that cattle do take their toll on the oaks by consuming acorns, seedlings, and saplings, oaks often do not regenerate even when the cattle are taken off the land. Obviously, the oak regeneration problem is more complex.”

“It has been suggested that grazing for the last hundred years has caused a combination of ecological reactions that are inhibiting natural oak regeneration. Such factors as changes in the species composition of the grassland, greater ground squirrel populations, insect and soil fauna changes, and alterations in populations of acorn and seedling eaters may all complicate oak regeneration. Whatever the causes, careful management is needed -- of both land and oaks -- if these trees are to continue their traditional and ecological role on the hardwood range.”

Univ. of Calif., Berkeley Natural Resources



ACORN ENCHILADAS (the best!)

- 1 dozen corn tortillas
- 1 medium size can of tomato puree
- 1 cup pre-cooked acorns*
- 1-2 Tbs. chili powder
- 1/4 cup sour cream
- 1 Tbs. soy sauce
- 1/4 cup chopped onion
- 1 clove garlic
- pinch of sugar
- 1 Tbs. olive oil

Sauté onions and garlic in olive oil. Add tomato puree, chili powder and soy sauce and simmer 5-10 minutes, stirring constantly so it doesn’t burn. Steam tortillas, or microwave to soften. Add remaining ingredients to sauce, and spoon into tortillas. Mixture should be thick, not runny. Place in a large casserole dish, cover with shredded cheese and bake in oven at 350° for 20 minutes.

“Innumerable insects find their livelihoods in the branches and leaves of the oaks, usually without much consequence to the healthy tree. The oak gall, for example, is a harmless swelling of branchlets in reaction to enzymes released where a wasp lays its eggs. These galls can be so abundant, colorful, and multi-formed that they resemble dangling Christmas ornaments.”



“There are some insect infestation however, like pit scales (appearing as pinhead-size scales on the bark of twigs and branchlets), oak moth, and other leaf-eating infestations, that can cause serious damage to oaks. Whenever a severe insect attack causes substantial leaf loss, changes in leaf color, twig die-back, sooty foliage and branches, or other significant changes in appearance, intervention may be required.”

“Watch your trees for signs of animal damage. Take care that the number of animals congregating under trees does not cause excessive soil compaction, expose the root crown at the base of the trunk, or expose surface roots. Also watch for excessive

chewing on the tree trunk. Animals can kill a tree by girdling if they chew around the tree, through the bark, and into living wood. These types of problems are of particular concern in paddocks or pastures where animals are concentrated.”

“Mature oaks in wildland settings are adapted to dry, summer conditions. Summer irrigation will doom the adult tree and is to be avoided, especially near the base of the tree. Do not water even ornamentals planted under oaks. If they need watering they do not belong there.”

Univ. of Calif., Nat. Resources

ACORNS & PASTA

1 pound cooked whole wheat macaroni shells
1/2 to 1 cup cooked acorns*
1 Tbs. soy sauce
Olive oil or butter to taste

Mix ingredients together and sprinkle with Parmesan cheese. You can get creative with this by adding hot peppers, mushrooms, olives, red peppers, etc.

QUOTE...

“Inland Indians of the Pacific slopes were blessed with the acorns of the oak tree. They ground their bread flour from this. It first had to be processed in fresh water, to remove the bitter tannic acid, Yurok Indians called their bread paup-saufp.”

“By special invitation, my wife and I were once privileged to watch an elderly Indian woman demonstrate the art of making sand bread. She was eager and smiling, which made it easy to ask questions; complimentary gestures to a friend, seldom extended to a stranger.”

“Screened and washed gravel was heated around the fire, which was built inside an outer ring of large rock in an area about four feet in diameter. When the gravel next to the outer ring of rocks was just the right temperature, it was raked to one side and smoothed off. She poured the dough onto the hot sand, and with a driftwood stick, raked hot rocks over the top. A wrinkled smile and an affirmative nod, said the cooking time was up; whereupon she flipped out the golden brown pattie, tapped rocks off its sides and said, ‘There, a good one!’”

Moore

ACORN SALAD SANDWICH

Mix together:

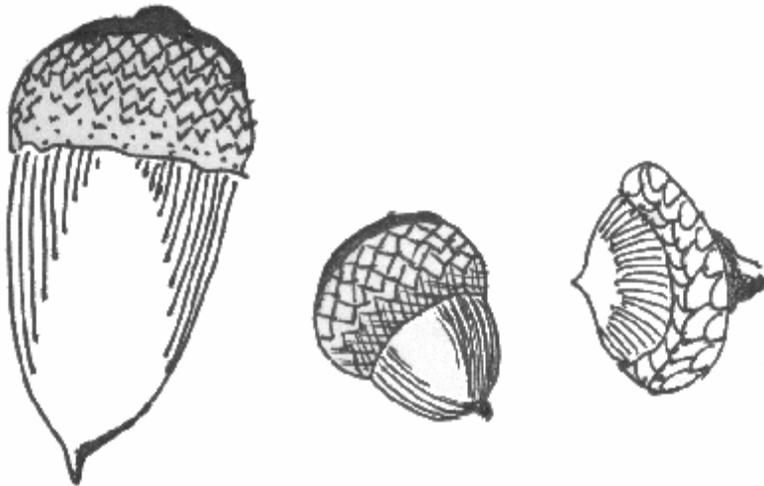
1 cup leached, cooked & cooled acorns*
5-6 Tbs. “light” mayonnaise
dash hot sauce
salt & pepper
2 Tbs. chopped dill pickle

Serve on whole wheat toast with crisp lettuce, or alfalfa sprouts.



“The fruit of the oak is known as an acorn and is composed of a nut and a cup, or involucre. The nut develops from the ovary of the female flower. The young ovary normally has three carpels, each of which bears two or three ovules. Only one of the ovules ripens into a nut; the others abort and remain associated with the integument of the functional ovule. Thus the mature nut is one-celled and one-seeded.”

Encyclopedia Americana Vol 20, 1988



ACORN VEGGIE LOAF



This is one of my earlier recipes. I found it on a note. Unless you have a scale, you'll have to “guess” at the weights. I thought it was worth including.

- 1 1/2 pounds leached & drained acorns*
- 1 1/2 pounds shredded zucchini
- 1/4 pound shredded cauliflower
- 2 large chopped green onions
- 1 cup whole wheat flour
- 1-1/2 cups water
- 1 tsp. chopped garlic
- 2 Tbs. olive oil
- 4 Tbs. nutritional yeast
- 1 tsp cumin
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 tsp basil

Mix this all together. If it is too thick and dry add more water. If it is too watery add more flour. Place in an oiled glass bread pan and bake at 325° for approximately 30 minutes. Baking time may vary. Slice and serve with lots of red miso.

“The Northern Pomo Indians looked upon the acorn as their staple food. The acorns, especially of the Black Oak, Tanbark and Live Oak, were gathered in the fall. Part of the crop was stored in large baskets in huts. Those to be used soon, were ground with pestles in mortar baskets, that were placed above hollows in hard anvil stones, then leached with water in a prepared basin of sand. The water, allowed to run over the acorn meal for sometime, took out the bitter tannic acid. The leached meal was either boiled as mush in baskets with water and red-hot stones, or baked in ovens as bread.”

Brown-Andrews page 11

ACORNS & RICE



Sauté together in 1 tablespoon vegetable oil until mushrooms are tender:

1-1/2 cups chopped mushrooms

pinch garlic salt

1/4 minced fresh jalapeno pepper

1/4 tsp five-spice (used in Chinese cooking)

pinch of celery seed (or 1/4 cup fresh diced celery)

1/8 tsp. dried sage

1/8 tsp. paprika

1 Tbs. soy sauce

1 Tbs. water

Add to above mixture mixing well:

5 cups pre-cooked and cooled brown rice

1/2 cup leached, pre-cooked, cooled and strained acorns*

1/4 cup soy sauce

Place entire mixture in a 1-1/2 quart casserole dish. Top with 1/4 cup chopped green onions. Cover and microwave on high for 10 minutes or bake at 325° for 20 minutes.

“Some oaks are of indirect importance from products formed by their insect enemies. Of these the Aleppo gall is yielded by *Q. infectoria*. *Q. coccifera*, a small bush growing in Spain and many countries around the Mediterranean, furnishes the kermes dye (KERMES). *Q. persica*, or according to some *Q. mannifera*, attacked by a kind of *Coccus*, yields a sweet exudation which the Kurds collect and use as manna, or as a substitute for honey or sugar in various confections.”

Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. XVII, 1884

SAUTED MUSHROOMS & ACORNS

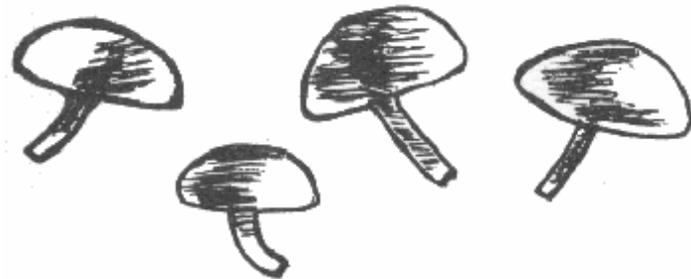
2 cups fresh chopped mushrooms
1/3 cup leached, pre-cooked and strained acorns*
1 Tbs. dried onions or 2 Tbs. fresh diced onion
garlic (optional)

Sauté this in olive oil or butter. Add a dash of soy sauce.

Variations: Add steamed veggies and put over rice and add soy sauce.

or:

Spread on whole wheat tortillas, put 1 tablespoon of shredded cheese on top and microwave until cheese melts. Top with alfalfa sprouts.



“The Concows [Indians] of Round Valley mixed the [acorn] bread dough with red clay before baking, claiming this made it sweeter. The acorn bread became black when baked and soon dried to a very hard loaf. John Muir was fond of this bread because it was such a compact, strength-giving food.”

“Pomo Indians considered the oaks to be personal property and passed down the possession of the trees in the family with definite rules. Some tribes also discovered the precursor to today’s penicillin-type drugs: the ground acorn meal was allowed to accumulate mold, which was scraped off to use for boils, sores, and inflammations. The wood ashes were used medicinally among the Cahuillas. Dye was made from the bark and tannin was used for curing buckskin. Whole acorns were also used to make musical instruments and necklaces as well as toys and trade items.”

Edible and Useful Plants of California, page 67

ACORN SPINACH BURGERS

1 small box chopped frozen spinach
1-1/2 cup leached, pre-cooked, cooled & strained acorns*
2 eggs or just egg whites
1/2 cup flour

Mix, then shape into patties and brown in vegetable oil or put on lightly greased cookie sheet and brown in a 350° oven until done.

Variations: Substitute the same amount of your favorite vegetable instead of spinach, ie; corn, broccoli, etc.



“Today, the oak is still prized for its wood and cooling shade. As they were a staple food for the Indians, acorns are still of paramount importance to many species of wildlife. The acorn’s greatest value is its availability during the winter when other food is scarce. Quail devour small acorns as do squirrels, chipmunks, deer, elk, mountain sheep, and Black Bear.

Bringle-Clark, page 69



CORN-A-CORN MUSH...VERY FILLING!

This is also an excellent base for burritos or veggie burgers.

1 cup polenta or other corn meal

3 cups water

1/4 cup leached, pre-cooked, & strained acorns*

Simmer polenta in water until it absorbs all the water, or cook in the microwave in a covered casserole dish for about 15 minutes. The bright yellow polenta will absorb the hot water. When done, add 1/4 cup or more acorns*. You can go several ways with this. You can eat it with honey on it, or I enjoy it with just soy sauce. (You can also make it easy on yourself and just boil leached acorns and polenta together.)

Variations: Cool the corn-a-corn mush. Add 2 egg whites and spices like basil, thyme, parsley, garlic, (chili powder, salsa and cheese for burritos), left-over chopped broccoli etc., and make burgers by baking on a lightly greased cookie sheet at 350° for 20 minutes, flipping once after 10 minutes. Or, brown lightly in a little oil.

...or sprinkle corn-a-corn mush with chili powder, salsa, fresh tomatoes and cheese and spread on tortillas and warm in microwave then top with sprouts. If you're a cilantro fan don't forget that!

“The edible acorns of several species are used as food for human beings especially in Asia; those of nearly all species are used as feed for hogs and are relished by game birds and mammals.”

Encyclopedia Americana Vol. 20, 1988

“The British oak is one of the largest trees of the genus, though old specimens are often more remarkable for the great size of the trunk and main boughs than for very lofty growth. The spreading branches have a tendency to assume a tortuous form, owing to the central shoots becoming abortive, and the growth thus being continued laterally, causing a zigzag development, more exaggerated in old trees and those standing in exposed situations; to this peculiarity the picturesque aspect of ancient oaks is largely due.”

Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. XVII, 1884

ACORN, CARROT & DOCK SOUP

Pick a handful of Dock leaves, (they're a weed), or substitute your favorite greens, steam and chop.

Discard Dock water.

Add 1/8 cup leached acorns* with the chopped Dock, in 1-1/2 cups water and 2 large shredded carrots. Add 1 clove garlic, 1 teaspoon cumin, 1 teaspoon sweet basil, paprika, and a dash of vegetable oil. Simmer 20 minutes. Salt to taste.

Very delicious.



“From Indian friends we learn that mortars with holes in their bottoms, were not always worn out, discarded mortars. They were often used, and are to this day, (among scattered tribes), in siphoning off the bitter from acorn flour; by seeping fresh water down through a sand base. Many times a basket was placed inside the mortar and filled with flour, where it was given the same fresh water treatment; the basket retaining the flour. Useless as those open bottoms may seem, that opening was put to a specific use. Some species of roots, herbs and tubers were ground and leached by the same method of acorns.”

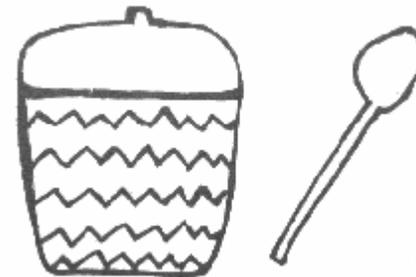
Moore, page 159

ACORNS WITH BLACK BEAN BROTH & PASTA

3 cups broth from cooking black beans
1-1/4 cup dried “elbow” pasta
1/4 cup ketchup
3/4 cup pre-cooked, leached & strained acorns*
tamari (soy sauce)

Cook the pasta in the broth until done. After it has cooked to desired texture, add remaining ingredients.

This is very good. It tastes as if you had added cheese to it.



“Acorns of the Valley White Oak are large and long. The method of preparing them has been described as first being pounded, the meats removed from the shells, the skin peeled, the meats then pounded into a fine meal and winnowed by tossing from one basket to another. Sand was scooped out from the ground to form a bowl, the meal was placed in it, then covered with sand and much water was poured over it. The mass was now removed and the sand washed off. This operation might take a couple of hours, after which the acorn flour was boiled into mush or made into bread. It has been remarked that this bread is best with fish.”

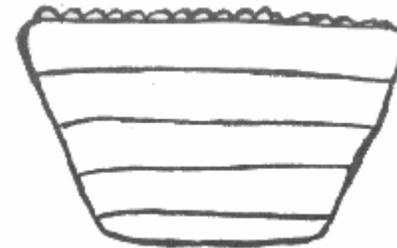
“Another recipe for acorn bread was as follows: Valley White Oak acorns were shelled, dried in the sun, rubbed in a basket to peel off the skin, then pounded into flour. Water from red clay was brought in from the mountain and mixed with the flour. The dough, which was formed into a large loaf and baked, made a black bread.”

“The California Black Oak has white spots on its bark. The acorns are prepared in the same way as those of the Valley White Oak. Acorns of the Blue Oak are small, black, very tough to grind and tasteless.”

KIDNEY BEAN ACORN SALAD

- 1-15 oz. can red kidney beans (or of course you can cook up fresh beans)
- 1- hard-boiled egg
- 1/3 cup “light” mayonnaise
- 1/4 cup leached, cooked, cooled and strained acorns*
- 1 tsp. vinegar

Mash the egg with the mayonnaise, vinegar & acorns. Drain beans, reserving liquid. Use the liquid if it's too dry. If desired add, chopped parsley, scallions or diced red onion, salt & pepper. Surprisingly good!!



“The oaks are widely distributed over the temperate parts of Europe, Asia, North Africa, and North America. In the western hemisphere they range along the Mexican highlands and the Andes far into the tropics, while in the Old World the genus, well represented in the Himalayas and the hills of China, exists likewise in the peninsula of Malacca, in Java, and in some other islands of the archipelago, several species occurring in the Moluccas and Borneo. On the mountains of Europe and North America they grow only at moderate elevations, and none approach the arctic circle. The multitude of species and the many intermediate forms render their exact limitation difficult, but those presenting sufficiently marked characters to justify specific rank probably approach 300 in number.”

Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. XVII, 1884

ACORN VEGGIE SOUP

1 tsp. salt
1 cup chopped celery
1/4 cup chopped onion
2 chopped carrots
1 cup chopped broccoli
1 cup uncooked barley
1 cup leached acorns*
2 Tbs. dried sweet basil
1-1/2 quarts water

Simmer until vegetables are tender, and barley is cooked. Season with tamari (soy sauce).

Variations: Add garlic, fresh tomatoes, mushrooms, spinach, zucchini, eggplant etc.

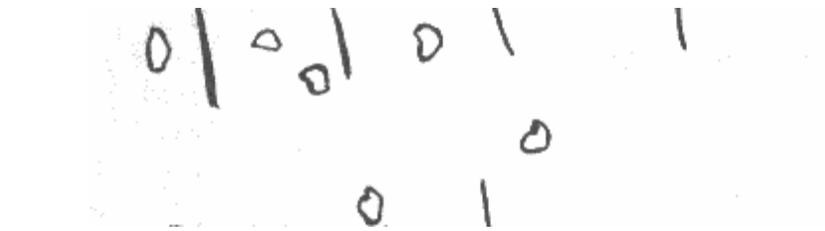


“The few ancient timber mansions still existing in England are generally built entirely of oak, which in many cases remains sound after the lapse of several hundred years, sometimes outlasting the brick and stone with which the structures have been repaired. The great oak woods that in early days covered the larger part of Britain had in Tudor times become so reduced that an Act was passed in the reign of Henry VIII, to enforce their preservation, and by the end of the 16th century oak planting became popular.”

Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. XVII, 1884

Acorn – “derived from a word (Goth akran) which meant “fruit” originally “of the unenclosed land,” and so of the most important forest produce, the oak. Chaucer speaks of “achornes of okes.” By degrees, popular etymology connected the word both with “corn’ and “oak-horn,” and the spelling changed accordingly.”

Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 1-2, 1910



ACORN CRUNCHIES

After your acorns are leached, you can “bread” them using cornmeal, and whole wheat flour. Bake lightly, (until crunchy). You can get creative with this by adding spices, butter, seasoning salt, etc. Make sure you keep stirring this, and don’t bake too long. Oven temperature – 325°.



“In California, acorns figured largely in Indians’ diets. There are many kinds of oak trees, and acorns varied in size and shape.”

“Black oak acorns were the favorites in northern California, Tan Oak came next, and the White Oaks last. When acorns were gathered, each kind was kept separate, but preparation was the same for all. The acorns were soaked overnight, which caused the shell to split open. Old women then picked out the kernals. Even the blind ones could do this. The nuts were spread on open work baskets to dry, and when they were dry enough, they were ground to flour in a stone mortar.”

Van Allen Murphey, page 24



SPLIT PEA ACORN DINNER

Rinse dried split peas. Cover with twice as much water and cook until done. Don’t let them get too thick. Add 1/4 cup leached acorns* for every cup of split peas you cook, and simmer slowly for 1/2 hour with chopped green onions, garlic and sweet basil. Season with miso or tamari (soy sauce). Serve with a salad.

Split peas and acorns are so good together you can omit the spices, garlic and onion, and it will still be tasty. I add a little soy sauce to each bowl of soup. It is an easy meal and very “hearty.”

“The acorn is the fruit, or nut, of the oak tree. Although today the acorn is regarded as a nut fit only for squirrels, it has been used as a standard food for ages and rates high in food value for human consumption. Some acorns are good to eat in the natural state, and most can be made palatable by removing the bitter tannin.”

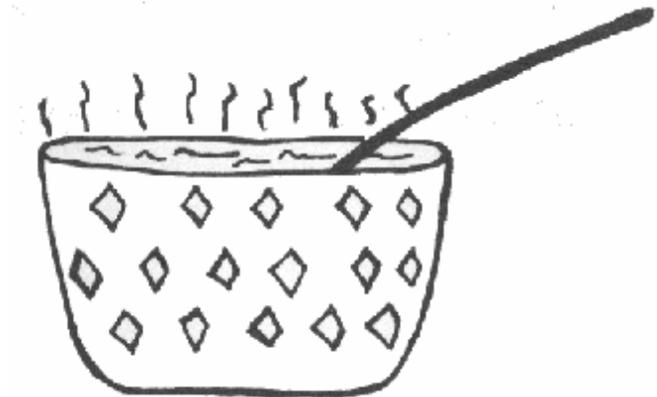
“Typically, acorns of the white oak group (including the chestnut oak, swamp oak and bur oak) are sweeter than those of the black (or red) oak group, and can be made into a meal for muffins. Husk the acorns and grind them in a mill. Mix the meal with hot water, and pour into a jelly bag to leach away the tannin; a second or third washing may be necessary. Spread the meal out to dry and then parch it in an oven. Use acorn meal as you would cornmeal.”

Encyclopedia of Organic Gardening, 1985

ACORN CASSEROLE

Boil 3/4 cup leached acorns* in 1-1/2 cups water about 10 minutes, until acorns thicken just a little. Remove from heat and add 1/2 cup ketchup and 2 tablespoons prepared salsa and 2 tablespoons tamari. Stir well and set aside.

Chop up six pieces of whole wheat (or other) bread and put in a medium sized casserole dish. Sprinkle with paprika, sweet basil and marjoram. Add 2 egg whites and one whole egg (or just 3 egg whites), and mix. Add the acorn sauce and mix well. Cover with cheddar cheese and top with black olives. Bake 20-30 minutes at 350°.



“When standing in dense woods the trees are rather straight and formal in early growth, especially the sessile-fruited kinds, and the gnarled character traditionally assigned to the oak applies chiefly to its advanced age. The broad deeply-sinuated leaves with blunt rounded lobes are of a peculiar yellowish colour when the buds unfold in May, but assume a more decided green towards mid-summer, and eventually become rather dark in time; they do not change to their brown autumnal hue until late in October, and on brushwood and saplings the withered foliage is often retained until the spring. The catkins appear soon after the young leaves, usually in England towards the end of May; the acorns, oblong in form, are in shallow cups with short, scarcely projecting scales; the fruit is shed the first autumn, often before the foliage changes.”

Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. XVII, 1884



BEETS & ACORNS

The beets are nice because they're alkaline.

Cook 2-1/4 cups leached acorns* in a small amount of water with:

3 good-sized raw shredded beets

1/2 chopped white onion

pinch each of basil and sage

Cook until beets are done. Serve on a bed of lettuce, or on pita bread, whole wheat or rye toast.



“The great regard paid to the oak probably originated in the value attached to its timber and fruit; the largest and most durable of European trees, its wood was looked upon as the most precious produce of the forest. With both Greek and Roman it was the favourite timber for house, bridge, and ship building; and the furrowed columns with spreading base that upheld their stone-built temples of historic age seem to indicate the oak-trunk as their archaic prototype. The tree was not in less esteem among the Teutonic nations; the long ships of the Northmen were hewn from the same “heart of oak” of which the war-ships of England were until lately constructed. The Anglo-Saxons employed oak timber not only for their dwellings and their fleets but occasionally for more sacred architecture, the church till recently standing at Greenstead in Essex, and supposed to have been erected in the 10th century was wholly formed of oak trunks roughly squared.”

Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. XVII, 1884

ACORN LASAGNA

Chop and sauté in 2 tablespoons olive oil:

1/2 onion
2 stalks celery
handful of mushrooms
1/4 tsp. dried basil
pinch oregano
pinch black pepper
1/4 tsp. salt

When onions are soft remove from heat and add, mixing well:

1 can (28 oz) crushed tomatoes
1 can (5 3/4 oz) drained pitted black olives
3/4 cup cottage cheese
1-10 oz. pkg. chopped spinach
1 small can tomato sauce
1/2 cup leached & drained acorns*
1 tsp. honey

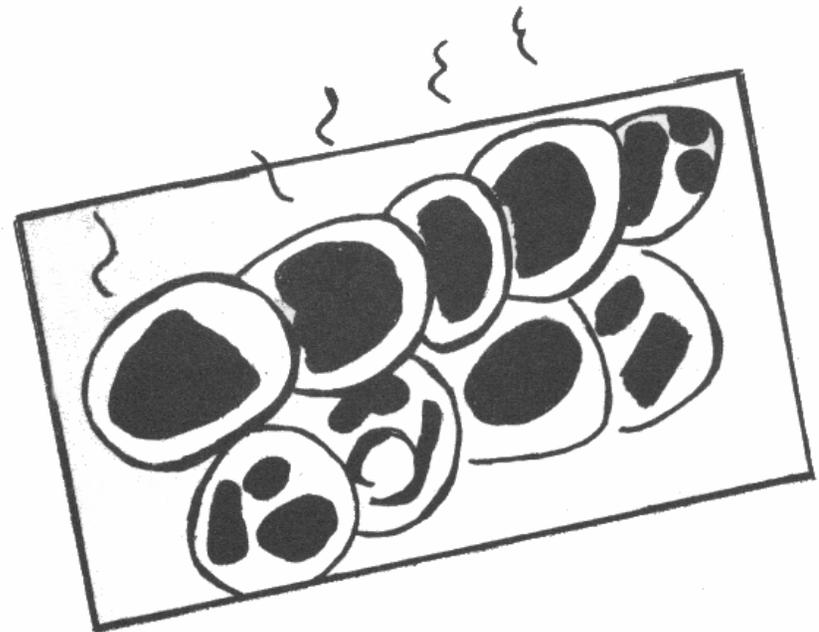
In a large casserole dish (13x9x2), layer this whole mixture with uncooked lasagna noodles, alternating noodles then above mixture. Top with mozzarella cheese. Cover with an inverted cookie sheet (saves valuable natural resources like “tin foil”) making sure that the lasagna pasta is covered with enough liquid so it cooks as it bubbles and bakes. Bake for 45 minutes at 350°.

“Many of the ancient oaks that remain in England may date from Saxon times, and some perhaps from an earlier period; the growth of trees after the trunk has become hollow is extremely slow, and the age of such venerable giants only matter of vague surmise. The celebrated Newland oak in Gloucestershire, known for centuries as “the great oak,” was by the latest measurement 47-1/2 feet in girth at 5 feet from the ground. The Cowthorpe oak, standing (a ruin) near Wetherby in Yorkshire, at the same height measures 38-1/2 feet and seems to have been of no smaller dimensions when described by Evelyn two centuries ago; like most of the giant oaks of Britain, it is of the peduculate variety. The preservation of these old trees has been in past times largely due to the survival of the reverence in which the oak was held by Celt and Saxon, - a feeling which seems to have been shared by several Aryan races.”

Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. XVII, 1884

ACORN CHEESE PIES

Make acorn biscuits (see recipe). Make them the size of muffins. Put about 6 of them in a large rectangle casserole dish and cover with acorn spaghetti sauce (see recipe). Top with jack cheese and warm in a 250° oven about 30 minutes, melting cheese. This makes a fantastic main dish. Good for a pot luck.



“The oak grows most luxuriantly on deep strong clays, calcareous marl, or stiff loam, but will flourish in nearly any deep well-drained soil, excepting peat or loose sand; in marshy or moist places the tree may grow well for a time, but the timber is rarely sound; on hard rocky ground and exposed hillsides the growth is extremely slow and the trees small, but the wood is generally very hard and durable. The oak will not bear exposure to the full force of the sea gale, though in ravines and on sheltered slopes oak woods sometimes extend nearly to the shore. The cultivation of this tree in Europe forms one of the most important branches of the forester’s art. It is frequently raised at once by sowing the acorns on the ground where the trees are required, the fruit being gathered in the autumn as soon as shed, and perfectly ripe seeds selected; but the risk of destruction by mice and other vermin is so great that transplanting from a nursery-bed is in most cases to be preferred. The acorns should be sown in November on well-prepared ground, and covered to a depth of 1-1/2 or 2 inches; the seeds germinate in the spring, and the seedlings are usually transplanted when one or two years old to nursery-beds, where they are allowed to grow from two to four years, till required for the plantation.”

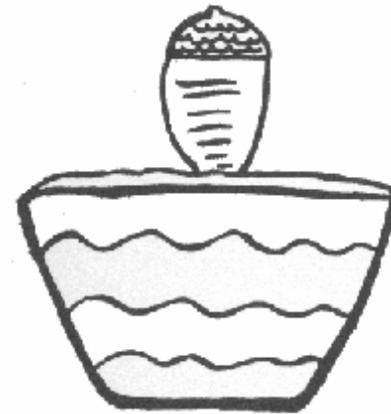
Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. XVII, 1884

ACORN DIP

This is a smaller recipe, a larger one follows. Mix together:

- 1 pint sour cream
- 3/4 cup pre-cooked, cooled and strained acorns*
- 1 heaping tsp. dried sweet basil
- 1/2 cup dried onion flakes

Refrigerate overnight for full flavor.



“The acorns of the oak possess a considerable economic importance as food for swine. In the Saxon period the “mast” seems to have been regarded as the most valuable produce of an oak wood; nor was its use always confined to the support of the herds, for in time of dearth acorns were boiled and eaten by the poor as a substitute for bread both in England and France, as the sweeter produce of Q. Esculus is still employed in southern Europe. Large herds of swine in all the great oak woods of Germany depend for their autumn maintenance on acorns; and in the remaining royal forests of England the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages yet claim their ancient right of “pannage,” turning their hogs into the woods in October and November.”

Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. XVII, 1884

ACORN DIP II

This is a big recipe for entertaining. Mix together:

1 quart sour cream
2 large cloves diced garlic
1 cup pre-cooked, cooled and strained acorns*
pinch of cumin
1 tsp. dried sweet basil
pinch paprika
1 Tbs. fresh parsley

Blend and serve with blue corn chips, celery, broccoli and cauliflower sticks, they'll love it!

“Q. Ballota, an allied form, abundant in Morocco, bears large edible acorns, which form an article of trade with Spain; an oil, resembling that of the olive, is obtained from them by espression. Q. Gramuntia, another allied species, also furnishes a fruit which, after acquiring sweetness by keeping, is eaten by the Spaniards.”

“In the woods of Oregon, from the Columbia river southwards, an oak is found bearing some resemblance to the British oak in foliage and in its thick trunk and widely-spreading boughs, but the bark is white as in Q. alba; it is Q. Garryana, the western oak of Nuttall. This tree acquires large dimensions, the trunk being often from 4 to 6 feet in diameter; the wood appears to be good, but experience has scarcely tested its durability; the acorns are produced in great quantity, and are used by the Indians as food.”

Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. XVII, 1884

BAKED & BROWNEG EGGPLANT ACORN DIP & SPREAD

This is served as a sandwich spread or a dip for chips and veggies & pita bread.

Bake a whole eggplant at 400° about 45 minutes. Cut and discard stem. Blend in blender with 3/4 cup cottage cheese, 1/2 cup mayonnaise, 1/4 cup leached and pre-cooked acorns*, 2 pinches marjoram, pinch cayenne, 1/4 tsp garlic powder, pinch black pepper, 1/4 tsp. salt and 1 cup diced celery tops. It's ready! Keep refrigerated.



“Acorns are produced on the Turkey oak in great abundance in some seasons, but in cold wet years do not always ripen in Britain; notwithstanding their bitterness they are greedily eaten by swine. Some southern varieties of this tree bear acorns comparatively sweet, and they are sometimes eaten after being roasted, in which process the tannic acid is partly destroyed.”

“In North America, where the species of oak are very numerous, the most important member of the group is *Q. alba*, the white oak abounding all over the eastern districts of the continent from Lake Winnipeg and the St Lawrence countries to the shores of the Mexican Gulf. The acorns are sweet, and were formerly eaten by the Red Men, but are too scantily produced in most seasons to be of much economic importance.”

Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. XVII, 1884

ACORN SPAGHETTI SAUCE

1 medium sized chopped yellow onion
1 clove garlic
1 tsp. dried sweet basil
1/8 tsp. dried thyme
1/8 tsp. dried paprika
pinch of dried celery seed
1/8 tsp. dried sage
1/4 tsp. marjoram
1/4 tsp. oregano
pinch dried rosemary
1/8 tsp black pepper
1/2 tsp salt
1 tsp sugar or honey
.....Saute in 2 tablespoons olive oil.

After sautéing, add 1 can (28 oz) whole peeled tomatoes. Stir in 1/2 cup uncooked leached and drained acorn* meal. Cook on high heat 5-10 minutes, stirring constantly, then simmer for 20 minutes. Preferably cool and put in refrigerator overnight to develop flavors. Serve over cooked whole wheat spaghetti. Serve with garlic bread and salad. Sprinkle each plate of pasta with tamari or parmesan cheese or add sour cream mmm...



“Some trees of the sessile-fruited oak bear sweet acorns in Britain, and several varieties were valued by the ancient Italians for their edible fruit. A peculiar kind of sugar called quercite exists in all acorns. A bitter principle to which the name of quercin has been applied by Gerber, its discoverer, has also been detected in the acorn of the common oak; the nutritive portion seems chiefly a form of starch. A spirit has been distilled from acorns in process of germination, when the saccharine principle is most abundant.”

Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. XVII, 1884

“OAK (*Quercus*) is a very large genus of trees and shrubs spread over the northern hemisphere and reaching southwards to Malay and Colombia. The oaks are members of the family Fagaceae. Nearly all are important members of the forest flora. Acorns furnish food for pigs; those of a variety of Holm oak are used for human consumption in Spain and Morocco. Leaves of two eastern Asiatic species are the food of the oak-feeding silkworms.”

Chamber's Encyclopedia, Vol. X, 1959

ACORN CHOCOLATE CHIP RAISIN WALNUT COOKIES

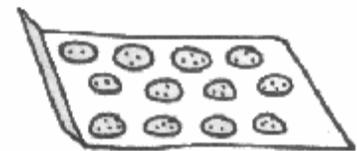
There is no added oil in this recipe. Fats in here are in the chocolate chips, walnuts and in the acorns.

Mix with spatula:

1 cup leached, pre-cooked, cooled, & strained acorns*
1/2 cup honey
2 egg whites
1 tsp. vanilla

Add & mix well:

2 cups whole wheat flour
1/2 tsp. salt
1 tsp. baking soda
2/3 cup milk



Then add this too & mix well:

1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips
1 cup raisins
1 cup walnut pieces

Drop by rounded teaspoons onto un-greased cookie sheet. Bake at 350° for 10 to 12 minutes. Always watch your cookies, oven temperatures vary.

PEANUT BUTTER ACORN COOKIES

This is an old-fashioned cookie recipe that instead of 1 cup butter, I substituted 1 cup acorns. It works beautifully!

Sift together:

2-1/2 cups whole wheat flour
1/2 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. baking powder
1/2 tsp. salt

Mix together well:

1 cup leached, pre-cooked & cooled acorns*
1 cup honey
2 egg whites (or whole eggs if you eat them)
1 cup peanut butter
1 cup milk

Mix all the ingredients together. Drop by spoonfuls on lightly greased cookie sheet. Bake at 325° for 10 to 12 minutes. Makes about 4 dozen medium-sized cookies.

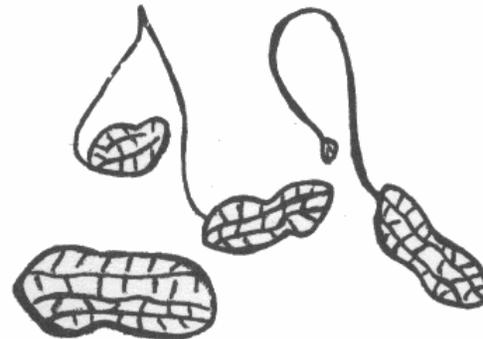


PEANUT AND ACORN YOGURT DESSERT

This recipe calls for leached dried acorns*, slightly baked. (See instructions at beginning of book for tips on drying.) They are mixed with raw peanuts that have been slightly roasted. Spread the acorns on a cookie sheet and bake them at about 325° for only about 5 minutes. Be careful when baking the ground acorns, just bake lightly. You want them to be crunchy, too much baking will make them hard.

3/4 cup roasted and ground peanuts
1/4 cup leached, dried and slightly baked acorns*

Mix the ground peanuts with the baked acorns and serve with plain yogurt or use as a topping for ice cream...mmmmmm!!!



PINEAPPLE ACORN SMOOTHIE

In a blender add:

2 cups chopped fresh pineapple

2 cups cold milk

1/2 cup leached, cooked and cold acorns*

1/4 cup honey

Blend and drink immediately. It's wonderful. Variations include substituting any kind of fruit or a blend of several fruits.



ACORN CHEESECAKE - REALLY!

Crust – 2 cups finely crushed graham crackers

1/4 cup vegetable oil (to save calories, omit oil)

Blend well, then press this mixture into a pie pan.

Filling – (8)oz. package cream cheese

1/4 cup honey

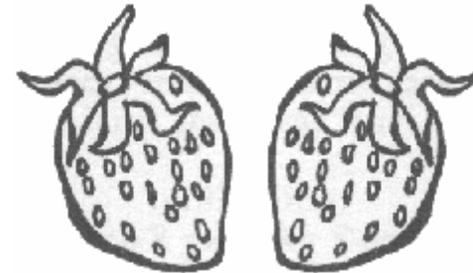
3 egg whites

1/2 cup leached, ground & strained acorns*

1/2 cup sweetened apple sauce

Let cream cheese soften at room temperature, then mix filling, blending well. I use a potato masher.

Add filling to crust and bake in a hot oven (425°) for 10 minutes. Turn oven down to 350° and bake 25 more minutes. This should set very firmly. If your oven is already warmed up, you might bake at 350° for about 30 minutes. Refrigerate and top with your favorite fruit; blueberries or strawberries, etc. Or eat the cheesecake with vanilla ice cream.



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ACORN CHEESECAKE TOO

This is the first cheesecake that I made. It was very firm, as I didn't use the sweetened applesauce. I rather liked it, almost better than the other version. I think it's worth including. Use any crust recipe you like. I didn't have any graham crackers on hand so I made a whole wheat pie crust. It was fine.

Filling:

1 pkg. 8 oz. cream cheese

1/2 cup brown sugar

3 egg whites

1/2 cup leached & drained acorns*



Follow directions from former cheesecake recipe.



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