

OJIBWE TEAS AND COFFEE

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Makademashkikiwaaboo (coffee)

Aniibiishaaboo (Tea)

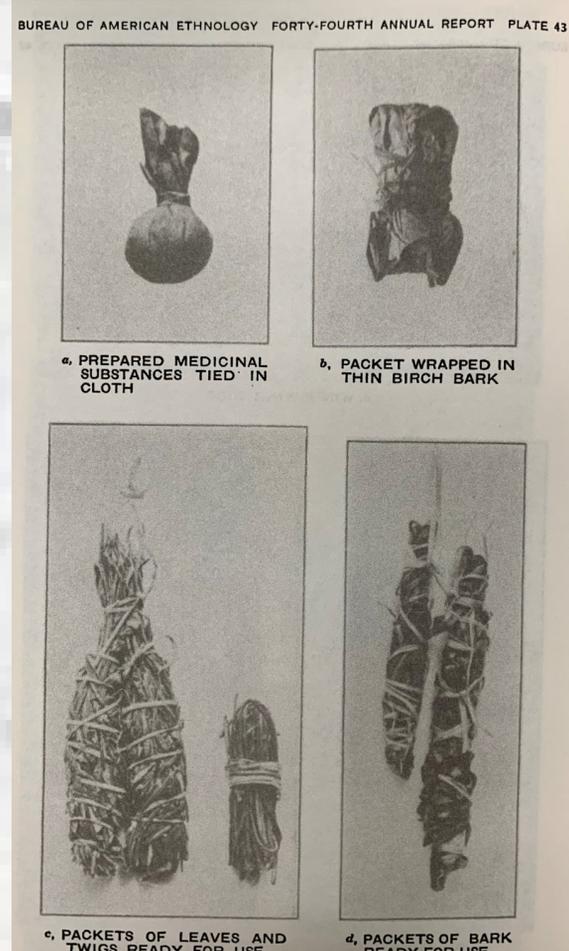
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Frances Densmore
Bureau of American
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TRADITIONAL TEAS AND MODERN COFFEE ROASTERS

In the past, the Ojibwe used all parts of plants and trees both for medicines and beverages. Today there is a resurgence in plant knowledge and usage. In this guide, we will focus on some of the more common ones used based on the work of Frances Densmore, published in 1928, "Uses of Plants by the Chippewa Indians", along with traditional teachings of the local Ojibwe community. All traditional teas should be used in moderation.

Before the Ojibwe gather anything from nature, we pray and offer tobacco in thanksgiving to the Creator. The gathering is done in a way that does not hinder the plants' re-growth. The leaves and bark are tied into packets or bundles for usage as shown in the picture above.

Today, there are Indigenous coffee roasters and commercial tea producers as well.

Cedar and Labrador Tea

Giizhik (Cedar) is the medicine associated with the north section of the Medicine Wheel and is considered one of the strongest plants the Anishinaabeg use. Elders say you should put some cedar in your shoes to bring goodness and repel negative influences. The crackling sound that cedar makes when placed into a fire is said to call the good spirits. It is used in sweat lodges and during grief ceremonies. Cedar and Sage are used to purify the home. Cedar bark is used to weave mats and as wigwam coverings. Cedar tea has anti-inflammatory properties, being high in vitamin C. When making cedar tea no branches or twigs of the tree should be used as it contains thujone in the oils, which is a toxin. Cedar tea should not be consumed in large amounts.



Photos by Michele Hakala-Beeksma

Mashkiigobagwaaboo (Swamp/Labrador Tea) is used for respiratory illness and digestive discomforts and is an anti-inflammatory. Its leaves have an astringent property.

Ledum groenlandicum-
labrador/swamp tea, wiki
commons



Sweetgrass Tea

Wiingashk (Sweetgrass/*Anthoxanthum hirtum* in Latin) is the medicine of the south on the Medicine Wheel. We refer to it as our Grandmother's sacred hair, the hair of Mother Earth. Its smell reminds us of the gentleness, love, and kindness that comes from our Grandmother. It is said to attract the ancestor's attention and causes them to pray for us. Wingashk should be cut with scissors and an offering of asemaa (tobacco) should be made. When gathering anything you should state what you will be using the plant/tree for and thank it for helping you. Wiingashk grows in wet soil and needs a lot of sunlight. The blades are shiny and if you run your fingers from tip to root you will feel some roughness, in the other direction it will feel smooth. Three sections of seven strands are braided together and remind us that we are stronger together than we are a part of. There are seven directions on the medicine wheel (east, south, west, north, sky, earth, and self). There were seven stops on the Ojibwe migration. The seven strands remind us of the seven grandfathers teaching of humility (wolf), courage (bear), honesty (sabe or bigfoot), wisdom (beaver), truth (turtle), respect (buffalo), and love (eagle). The Seven Grandfathers' teachings remind us of how we should live. The teachings should all be used together in all situations, to leave one out is to invite discord in your life. The three strands can represent body, mind, and soul or love, peace, and harmony that connects us to the land. They can also represent the generations behind us, the current generation, and the generations ahead of us.



Sweetgrass Braid-photo by Michele Hakala-Beeksma

Chaga, Rose Hip, and Wintergreen Teas

Chaga (*Inonotus obliquus*) is a fungus/mushroom that grows on birch trees. Native Americans and Eastern Europeans, have been drinking tea made from Chaga for centuries. It is high in antioxidants and has anti-inflammatory properties. Beta-D-glucans (helps regulate the immune system, blood sugar, and cholesterol levels), Betulin and betulinic acid (may aid in cancer fight), Polysaccharides, Phytosterols (promotes liver, heart and intestinal health), are all found in Chaga tea.



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Rosehips are a fruit that grows on rose plants. They are round to oblong, typically range from orange to bright red, and form at the base of a rose flower's petals. Rosehips are usually harvested after the first frost of the year. Rosehips (fruit) are high in vitamin C and have been used by Native Americans for sickness for centuries. Drying rosehips for tea reduces the amount of vitamin C but there are still significant amounts of anti-oxidants and anti-inflammatory properties.



ROSE HIPS BY ANNE BURGESS, CC BY-SA 2.0 <[HTTPS://CREATIVECOMMONS.ORG/LICENSES/BY-SA/2.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/)>, VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Wintergreen is an herb that is made into a tea and used as a flavoring in various products. It has a compound that is aspirin-like and is traditionally used to reduce fever, treat headache, and reduce pain and swelling.



AGNIESZKA KWIECIEŃ, NOVA, CC BY-SA 4.0 <[HTTPS://CREATIVECOMMONS.ORG/LICENSES/BY-SA/4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)>, VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Indigenous Coffee Roasters and Tea Producers

Makedemashkikiwaaboo is the Ojibwemowin word for coffee. Which is translated as 'black medicine liquid'. Coffee beans are grown in the area around the equator and at different elevations. Drying and roasting, and grinding are all part of the process that brings coffee to us. Today, Indigenous people have started roasting businesses that bring economic health to Indigenous communities.

There are also Indigenous-owned tea producers.

