

Indigenous Midwinter (“Christmas”) Recipes

**by
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Blue Corn, Pumpkin & Walnut Pancakes with a Pumpkin Whipped Topping Served with Wintergreen Hot and Iced Sun Tea

Haudenosaunee have a wide variety of corn & squash (pumpkin) varieties used for many different dishes and are harvested along with walnuts in the autumn for the winter months. These recipes create a contemporary and simple midwinter dish that can be enjoyed at home. Haudenosaunee corn and squash (pumpkin) varieties relate to Haudenosaunee agricultural and have ceremonial connections to our harvest. This relates to how Haudenosaunee eat traditionally during Midwinter. These recipes have ingredients that can be accessed at your local grocery store. Corn, Pumpkin, Walnuts & Wintergreen are all staple foods Indigenous to this region of Ontario, and have been readily available during Midwinter and the Winter Solstice since time immemorial.

Blue Corn, Pumpkin & Walnut Pancake

Makes 6 to 8 pancakes

4	eggs
4 tbsp	pumpkin purée
2 tbsp	walnut oil
1 1/2 cup	blue cornmeal
3 tsp	baking powder
4 tbsps	maple syrup
2 tsp	salt
3/4 cup	water
1/3 cup	chopped walnuts (plain or maple candied for garnish)

Mix all ingredients in a blender (except chopped walnuts) and let stand for about 15 minutes. Without restirring, pour serving sized amounts onto a lightly oiled and hot pan. Wait until bubbles form on top of pancake then flip. Remove from grill when second side is cooked. Try to avoid too much flipping; a good pancake only needs to be flipped once! Pile on your pumpkin whipped topping (see recipe below) and sprinkle plain or maple-candied walnuts on top as a garnish.

Pumpkin Whipped Topping

1 cup	heavy whipping cream
¼ tsp	confectioner's sugar
1 tsp	vanilla extract
1 tsp	cinnamon
½ tsp	allspice
3 tbsp	pumpkin purée

Chill mixing bowl and beaters in the freezer for 10 minutes. Beat cream with sugar until soft peaks form. Add vanilla, spices and pumpkin puree. Beat for 1 to 2 minutes or until stiff peaks form.

Wintergreen Sun Tea

Tea is started with fresh wintergreen that is fermented, or left sealed in a 1litre glass jar of fresh, chlorine-free water at room temperature or in a warm area for 3 days. It is called a “Sun tea” because traditionally it is left out in the sun to be brewed entirely by the heat of the sun, in a window sill. Allowing fresh wintergreen to ferment for 3 days allows for the maximum amount of its oils to steep into the water (fresh, not dried, is the key to a good herbal tea!). It is well worth the wait! Wintergreen is fresh in the winter months.

Hot Tea

1 cup 3 day fermented fresh wintergreen water, brought to a rolling boil
Fresh wintergreen leaves & a lime slice for garnish
Sugar or honey to taste (optional)

Iced Tea

½ cup 3 day fermented fresh wintergreen water at room temperature
2 tbsp lime juice
2 tbsp fine sugar
Crushed ice
Fresh wintergreen (muddled) and lime for garnish

Iced Tea ingredients are combined and shaken together to dissolve sugars, and is poured over fresh crushed ice.

Wintergreen as an Indigenous medicine: Wintergreen is an indigenous plant and is great if you are looking to do a day trip of foraging in the Carolinian forests of Ontario. It contains methyl salicylate and is used similarly to aspirin for the relief of achy muscles, headaches and joint pain. It is a good medicine for elders who live with pain from arthritis, and is good for digestion. It is recommended that if you have an allergy to Aspirin, you should avoid wintergreen, or at least minimize your use as it has similar chemical properties. It is the custom of Haudenosaunee that you only pick every third leaf, so that you leave enough for future generations to enjoy. A good forager always makes sure to leave the plant healthy and abundant!