

Indigenous Food Hubs

2025 Harvest of the Month



APRIL: JUNIPER ASH

CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Many Southwestern tribes, including Navajo, Hopi, Zuni and Pueblo use juniper ash as part of their diet and have for hundreds of years. It is known as a sacred, healing element. Juniper ash, like corn pollen may be offered to the four directions for blessings during prayer. It signifies both physical nourishment and spiritual well-being.

MAKING JUNIPER ASH

- Get a branch from a juniper tree with a good amount of leaves.
- Cut the leaves away from the bark and let them dry out.
- Burn the now dry leaves to create a fine ash with a grey/white color.
- One branch should produce a couple of teaspoons of ash for use in other recipes.

THE DINE WAY

Pray while picking the g'ad (Juniper). Pray while making the ash. Pray while cooking the tooshchiin (blue corn mush). Every part of preparing a dish with juniper ash is a prayer.

NUTRITION AND FUN FACTS

- Juniper Ash is proven to be a great source of dietary calcium. One teaspoon has about the same amount of calcium as one cup of milk, or between 280 and 300 milligrams of calcium per gram of ash. Calcium is needed for strong bones!
- It also is a moderate source of iron, with one teaspoon providing between a quarter and a third of the recommended dietary allowance.
- When cooked together, juniper ash brings out healthy properties of corn, including niacin. Niacin makes the corn richer in calcium, zinc, iron and magnesium.
- White juniper ash combined with blue corn makes the color brighter. Together, they are used as a plant dye for sheep's wool.



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APRIL: JUNIPER ASH BLUE CORN MUSH



PREP/COOK TIME

20 Minutes



SERVINGS

4

INGREDIENTS

- 4 cups water
- 1 tsp juniper ash
- 1/2 tsp Salt
- 1 cup blue cornmeal

Optional:

- 1/4 cup sliced strawberries, or other berries
- 1 tbsp honey or maple syrup
- 1 tbsp pinions/other seeds



DIFFICULTY:

☒ EASY ☐ MEDIUM ☐ HARD

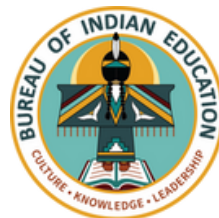
DIRECTIONS

1. Bring water to a boil.
2. Add salt and juniper ash to the water.
3. Mix blue corn meal and juniper ash.
4. Whisk in blue cornmeal, stirring vigorously, to avoid clumping.
5. Continue to stir over medium heat with whisk smooth.
6. Reduce heat to medium-high and continue to stir until thickens. (Approximately 30 minutes)
7. Serve in 1 cup (8 oz) servings.
8. Top with sliced strawberries or bananas and pinions or other seeds.
9. Can be served warm or cold.

NUTRITION FACTS

1 cup of mush with fruit and nuts:

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|----------------------|--------------------|
| • 215 calories | • 8 g fat |
| • 32 g carbohydrates | • 4.5 g fiber |
| • 4 g protein | • 75 mg of calcium |



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