

Indigenous Food Hubs

2025 Harvest of the Month



JULY: SUNFLOWERS

CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Almost all tribes have had a history of using sunflowers for food, medicine and in ceremony. The Hidatsa used wild verse cultivated sunflowers in the production of cooking oil because the seeds of their smaller flower heads produced superior oil. In the Northeast, sunflowers are part of the Onondaga (Iroquois) creation myth. In the Southwest, the Hopi believe that when the sunflowers are numerous, it is a sign that there will be an abundant harvest.

NUTRITION FACTS

- One of the best natural sources of Vitamin E.
- Contains primarily healthy fats.
- Provides magnesium, selenium, and a high fiber content.
- Complete, plant-based protein.

A TETON DAKOTA SAYING

“When the sunflowers were tall and in full bloom, the buffaloes were fat and the meat good.”

FUN FACTS AND MEDICINAL USES

- Sunflower are an annual plant that grows 2 to 8 feet tall with flowers 2 to 5 inches wide.
- During the last 3,000 years, tribal communities increased the seed size by about 1,000 percent! They consistently chose the biggest seeds to plant for the next crop to create a food plant.
- Sunflower seeds are eaten raw, roasted, cooked, dried and ground as well as made into sunflower oil.
- They are native to all of North America.
- The Cochiti used juice from freshly crushed sunflower stems for cuts and wounds.
- The Cherokee used an infusion of sunflowers to treat kidneys.
- The Dakota used an infusion of sunflowers for chest pains and pulmonary troubles.



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3-INGREDIENT SUNBUTTER COOKIES



TOTAL TIME

15 Minutes



SERVINGS

24 Cookies

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup - Natural sunflower seed butter
- 1 cup - Sugar (Do not recommend substitute this, especially with a liquid sweetener)
- 1 egg
- Sea salt for topping (optional)



DIFFICULTY:

☒ EASY ☐ MEDIUM ☐ HARD

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350 and line two baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. Mix sunflower seed butter, sugar, and egg together in a medium bowl. The mixture will be thin at first; stir for about 30 seconds until it thickens.
3. Roll tablespoon-sized spoonfuls of batter into balls. Place several inches apart on the prepared baking sheet. (They should not spread too much while baking.)
4. Use a fork to press a crisscross pattern into them.
5. Top with sea salt, if desired.
6. Bake cookies until they puff up slightly, about 10 minutes. They may not turn noticeably golden brown, but they are done.
7. Cool in the pan on a wire rack.

NOTES

- These cookies are best while still warm on the day they are baked.
- Sunflower seeds and butter promote digestive health.



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