

Indigenous Food Hubs

2026 Harvest of the Month



JUNE: SEAWEED

CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

For thousands of years, coastal and island-dwelling Native people across North America have harvested seaweed as a vital food, medicine, and cultural resource. Seaweed, known by many names, was woven into daily life, ceremony, and ecological stewardship. Tribes relying on seaweed also consumed clams, fish, and wild greens.

USES FOR KELP

- Bull kelp bulbs were used as bowls and containers for fish oil.
- Kelp stems were dried into fishing line, nets, and anchor ropes.
- Seaweed is used as a wrap for steaming fish underground, and rockweed for steaming shellfish in clambakes.

TRIBES USING SEAWEED

- Tlingit and Haida
- Kwakwaka'wakw (Kwakiutl)
- Coast Salish
- Makah
- Klallam
- Sugpiaq, Eyak, and Unangan
- Wabanaki Confederacy

NUTRITION AND FUN FACTS

- **Thyroid Health:** One of the richest natural sources of iodine, a mineral essential for thyroid hormone production and metabolism. Before the advent of iodized salt, Indigenous people who ate seaweed rarely suffered from iodine deficiency or goiter.
- **Bone Strength:** Great source of calcium and vitamin K.
- **Iron for Energy:** Iron aids oxygen transport and helps prevent anemia.
- **Immune Support:** Source of vitamin C and vitamin A.
- **Heart Health:** Very low in fat and calories; fucoidan compounds in kelp are under research for cardiovascular benefits.
- **Seaweed requires no freshwater, no fertilizer, and no pesticides, and it absorbs carbon dioxide from the ocean as it grows!**



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RECIPE FOR HERRING ROE ON KELP SALAD

INGREDIENTS

For the seaweed salad base:

- 2 oz (about 1 cup) dried wakame seaweed (or pre-soaked fresh)
- 2 oz dried dulse or nori strips, cut into bite-sized pieces
- 3 tablespoons rice vinegar (or apple cider vinegar)
- 1 tablespoon toasted sesame oil
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce or tamari (low-sodium)
- 1 teaspoon honey or maple syrup
- 1 teaspoon fresh grated ginger
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- Sesame seeds, to garnish
- 2 green onions, thinly sliced

Optional protein toppers:

- 2–4 oz smoked salmon, canned salmon, or herring
- OR 2 tablespoons fish roe salmon roe (ikura)



DIFFICULTY:

EASY MEDIUM HARD

DIRECTIONS

1. Rehydrate the wakame by placing it in a bowl and covering it with cold water for 10 minutes. It'll expand dramatically from small, dried flakes into tender, glossy ribbons. Drain and squeeze out excess water, then cut into bite-sized pieces if needed.
2. Make the dressing by whisking together the rice vinegar, toasted sesame oil, soy sauce, honey, fresh grated ginger, and minced garlic in a small bowl until combined.
3. Combine the rehydrated wakame with your dulse or nori strips in a serving bowl. Pour the dressing over everything and toss well to coat every piece.
4. Add toppings. Scatter sliced green onions and sesame seeds over the salad. For the protein boost, lay on smoked salmon, or go the most traditional route with a generous spoonful of salmon roe (ikura) right on top.

Serve: Enjoy immediately or refrigerate up to 1 hour before serving for the flavors to meld.

NOTES

- Look for dried wakame or dulse at Asian grocery stores, health food stores, or online. Pre-shredded wakame salad packs make this recipe even easier!
- For the most traditional version, ask at a local fish market for fresh or canned herring roe.



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