QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE: **SURVIVAL FOOD IN CANADA**

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A mistake in setting up a fire, or in building a shelter, will not necessarily be deadly. Eating the wrong part of the wrong plant however, even in small quantities, may kill you within 15 minutes, lead to a slow and painful death, or cause irreversible liver or kidney damage. This guide is therefore designed to give you a summary of what you can actually safely eat (although gastrointestinal problems may still occur) in the Canadian wilderness. **Only the specific parts of the specific species listed in this guide are edible. Unlisted parts of a given species, or the same parts of an unlisted sub-species, may be toxic.** Additionally, animal, tree, and plant identification is assumed. **Do not consume any species unless you are able to formally identify it.**

ANIMALS

All mammals, birds, fishes and their parts, found in Canada, are edible (although they may contain parasites), **with the exception of the liver of the polar bear and bearded seal**.

DECIDUOUS TREES

The specified parts of the following deciduous species are edible. In order to avoid killing a tree, remove the bark sparingly from one side of the trunk only.

Species	Part	Preparation
AMERICAN BEECH *Fagus grandifolia*	**Nuts**	Raw/roasted
BALSAM POPLAR *Populus balsmifera*	**Inner bark** (Spring/early summer)	Scraped off in strips, eaten raw immediately upon harvest
	Sap	Raw
	Young catkins	Boiled/steamed
BASSWOOD *Tilia americana*	**Inner bark**	Raw/cooked
	Young buds	Raw/cooked
	Young twigs	Raw/cooked
COTTONWOODS *Pupolus* spp.	**Inner bark** (Spring/early summer)	Scraped off in strips, eaten raw immediately upon harvest
	Sap	Raw
	Buds	Boiled, steamed, or raw
	Seeds	Raw/roasted
MAPLES *Acer* spp.	**Sap**	Raw
PACIFIC CRAB APPLE *Malus glabatra*	**Berries**	Raw/cooked
RED ALDER *Alnus rubra*	**Inner bark**	Fresh or dried
SHARGBARK HICKORY *Carya ovata*	**Nuts**	Raw/roasted
SWEET BIRCH *Betula lenta*	**Sap**	Raw
TREMBLING ASPEN *Populus tremuloides*	**Inner bark** (Spring/early summer)	Scraped off in strips, eaten raw immediately upon harvest
	Leaf buds	Boiled
	Young catkins	Boiled/steamed
	Leaves	Raw
WALNUTS *Juglans* spp.	**Nuts**	Raw/roasted
WHITE ASH *Fraxinus americana*	**Inner bark**	Scraped off in long strips and cooked
YELLOW BIRCH *Betula alleghaniensis*	**Sap**	Raw
	Inner bark	Dried or grounded
	Leaves and catkins	Boiled, steamed or raw

SHRUBS, VINES, HERBS, SEDGES, AND FERNS

Identification difficulties, species similarities, potential toxicity and carcinogen properties, as well as typically low nutritional value, make consumption of these plants unsuitable in a survival situation. **Do not consume shrubs (and their berries), vines, herbs, sedges, grasses, ferns, and allies**.

MUSHROOMS

Mushrooms are too difficult to positively identify and have a low nutritional value. As a result, **do not eat mushrooms** while in a wilderness survival situation.

PLANTS NORTH OF THE TREE LINE

According to the Department of National Defence, all plants found north of the tree line in Canada are edible. Consume with caution.

CONIFER TREES

The specified parts of the following conifer species are edible. In order to avoid killing a tree, remove the bark sparingly from one side of the trunk only.

Species	Part	Preparation
BALSAM FIR *Abies balsamea*	**Inner bark** (Preferably in the spring)	Eaten fresh, or dried and grounded
DOUGLAS FIR *Pseudotsuga menziesii*	**Inner bark** (Preferably in the spring)	Eaten fresh, or dried and grounded
	Seeds	Raw, roasted, or grounded into meal
	White crystals	Raw
EASTERN WHITE CEDAR *Thuja occidentalis*	**Inner bark** (Preferably in the spring)	Eaten fresh, or dried and grounded
	Young shoots	Boiled/cooked.
HEMLOCKS *Tsuga* spp.	**Inner bark** (Preferably in the spring)	Baked or steamed, or dried and grounded. Difficult to digest if raw
	Branch tips	Raw or boiled
LARCHES *Larix* spp.	**Inner bark** (Preferably in the spring)	Eaten fresh, or dried and grounded
	Sap	Dried
	Young shoots	Boiled/cooked
PACIFIC SILVER FIR *Abies amabilis*	**Pith**	Hardened
PONDEROSA PINE *Pinis ponderosa*	**Inner bark** (collect in spring on cool and cloudy days)	Scrapped from outer layer and eaten fresh
	Seeds	Raw, roasted, or grounded into meal
SPRUCES *Picea* spp.	**Inner bark** (Preferably in the Spring)	Eaten fresh, dried into cakes, or dried and grounded
	Young shoots (Stripped of their needles)	Boiled
TWO-NEEDLED PINES *Pinus* spp.	**Inner bark** (Preferably in the Spring)	Fresh, or dried into cakes
	Seeds	Raw, roasted, or grounded into meal

POISONOUS PLANTS

Below are some of the most toxic plants in Canada.

Species	Part	Toxicity
WATER-HEMLOCK *Cicuta* spp.	**All parts. Higher toxin concentration in roots**	Two bites can lead to death within 15 minutes to 3 hours
POISON-HEMLOCK *Conium maculatum*	**All parts**	Deadly. Socrates was executed with this plant extract
BANEBERRY *Actaea rubra*	**All parts. Roots and berries are however most toxic**	Deadly. Paralysis of respiratory system and cardiac arrest
DEATH-CAMASES *Zigadenus* spp.	**All parts. Bulbs are most toxic**	Deadly with the ingestion of only two bulbs, raw or cooked
SEASIDE ARROW-GRASS *Triglochin maritima*	**All parts. Young flowering stalks are most toxic**	Deadly. Causes respiratory failure
MONKSHOODS *Aconitum* spp.	**All parts. Roots are however most poisonous**	Deadly within a few hours of ingestion