Traditional Coast Salish Foods

If you look at what people ate five or six generations ago on an annual basis, there are hundreds of types of foods. Research now is showing that most Americans eat less than twelve foods on a regular basis. In this very short period of a couple of generations we’ve gone from an incredibly complex diet, eating with the seasons, eating many types of foods, to eating just a few.

— Elise Krohn, traditional foods specialist, Northwest Indian College

PLANTS
acorn • mountain ash • bearberry • bedstraw • biscuit root • wild blackberry • bladderwrack • blueberry • bulrush
camas • candy flower • wild carrot • cattail • bitter cherry • chokecherry • wild cherry • chickweed • clover • pacific crabapple • cranberry
currant • golden currant • dandelion • dogwood • elderberry • bracken fern • lady fern • licorice fern • ostrich fern • spiny wood fern • douglas fir
gooseberry • goosefoot • grape • hackberry • hazelnut • western hemlock • horsetail • huckleberry • bullwhip kelp • kinikinnick • knotweed • lamb's quarters
legume • miner's lettuce • lily root • mustard • nettle • nightshade • hooker's onion • nodding onion • wild onion • nori • nutmeat • indian plum • purslane
blackcap raspberry • raspberry • wild rose • salmonberry • seablite • seaweed • serviceberry • soapberry • spruce • coastal strawberry
wild strawberry • woodland strawberry • thimbleberry • vetch • violet • wapato • watercress

BIRDS
albatross • alcid • bufflehead • canvasback • american coot • cormorant • american crow • dove • ruddy duck • bald eagle
barrow's goldeneye • common goldeneye • canada goose • eared grebe • horned grebe • pied-billed grebe • western grebe • blue grouse
ruffed grouse • gull • barrier • hawk • great blue heron • belted kingfisher • common loon • pacific loon • red-throated loon • yellow-billed loon
mallard • common merganser • red-breasted merganser • common murre • marbled murrelet • owl • pelican • pigeon • northern pintail
tufted puffin • california quail • rail • sandpiper • lesser scaup • black scoter • surf scoter • white-winged scoter • shearwater
trumpeter swan • tundra swan • wild turkey • turkey vulture • american wigeon • pileated woodpecker

MAMMALS
black bear • american beaver • bobcat • townsend's chipmunk • cougar • coyote • deer • pocket gopher • snowshoe hare • eastern cottontail
canada lynx • mink • coast mole • moose • deer mouse • mountain beaver • muskrat • north american river otter • dall's porpoise • raccoon • rat • eared seal
hair seal • harbor seal • striped skunk • squirrel • meadow vole • steller sea lion • southern red-backed vole • wapiti • weasel • whale • grey wolf

FISH & REPTILES
northern anchovy • candlefish • codfish • pacific cod • spiny dogfish • wolf eel • flatfish • lefteye flounder • righteye flounder
starry flounder • greening • pacific hake • pacific halibut • alaska jingle • lingcod • red irish lord • plainfin midshipman
northern pike minnow • peamouth • pile perch • shinper perch • poacher • valleyle pollock • spotted rafish • ray • rockfish • sablefish • chinook salmon
chum salmon • coho salmon • pink salmon • sockeye salmon • pacific sanddab • scorpionfish • buffalo sculpin • great sculpin • pacific sculpin
staghorn sculpin • roughback sculpin • blue seaperch • striped seaperch • surfperch • shark • skate • smelt • c-o sole • curlfin sole • dover sole
english sole • rock sole • sturgeon • largescale sucker • pacific tomcod • trout • western pond turtle • mountain whitefish

SHELLFISH & OTHER MARINE LIFE
acorn barnacle • gooseneck barnacle • thatched barnacle • gumboot chiton • bent-nose clam • butter clam • california butter clam
gaper clam • inconspicuous macoma clam • littleneck clam • pacific coast clam • sand clam • softshell clam • venus clam • basket cockle
alaskan king crab • dungeness crab • dogwhelk • channeled dogwhelk • emarginate dogwhelk • grilled dogwhelk • oyster drill • geoduck • limpet
blue mussel • california mussel • olympia oyster • pacific octopus • checkered periwinkle • sitka periwinkle • sand dollar • giant pacific scallop
hind's scallop • pink scallop • rock scallop • moon snail • rock snail • sea snails • serpulid worm • pink shrimp • sidestripe shrimp • spot shrimp
hooked slipper shell • wrinkled slipper shell • sea urchin • vitrinella • dire whelk • purple whelk • short-spired whelk • wrinkled purple whelk

This list of nearly 300 food sources was compiled from a 2003 survey of 130 archaeological sites in King, Kitsap, and Snohomish counties, and information collected by Northwest Indian College from ethnographic accounts and Coast Salish elders, hunters, fishermen, and gatherers.

Courtesy of the Burke Museum and Elise Krohn