

# Suxkáadzi Beach Asparagus



## *Traditional Foods for Healthy People*

You may hear some people refer to it as sea asparagus, sea beans, or pickle-weed. The scientific name for this food is *salicornia virginica*. Its Tlingit name is **suxkáadzi**.

Beach asparagus is a delicious plant that grows along the coast. Some think that they look like tiny cacti or dwarfed asparagus. The flavor has been compared to salty green beans.

Because the condi-



tions of the land must be right for its growth, not all communities are lucky enough to have access to it. If you happen to be in an area where beach asparagus grows,

take the opportunity to try this delicious treat. Do not waste anything, show respect for the land and share with family, friends, and elders.

### **Beach Asparagus is a great source of vitamin A**

Vitamin A is important for good vision, especially at night. It is needed for the immune system to operate properly. It can also help keep your skin healthy. It is best to get vitamin A from food rather than supplements so that you do not consume too much of it at once.



## Harvesting and Preparation

Beach asparagus can be picked in early summer before it becomes fibrous and stringy. This is when it is the most tender.

The simplest way to eat beach asparagus is fresh off the beach. They can be picked by hand but if you are collecting large quanti-

ties for storage, it may be easiest to use a knife or scissors. They tend to be very salty in flavor. Some choose to repeatedly rinse in fresh water to decrease its salinity.

Beach asparagus is a wonderful food that can be enjoyed in a variety of ways. If they

are still fresh they can be steamed or sautéed like other vegetables. Many people choose to mix it with mild flavors to counterbalance the salt.

If you want to preserve them for future use, they can be quickly blanched. To blanch, bring a pot of water to

a rolling boil and then submerge the asparagus with a strainer very quickly (10-15 seconds).

Then the asparagus can be jarred and pressure cooked. When it is later used, they can be reheated like other canned vegetables. Enjoy!