



Shaaw Gumboots

July 2012

Gumboot determination recognizes the gumboots “stick-to-it tenacity”. Characterizing “gumboot determination” captures not only the purpose and strength of this small creature, but describes how the Alaska Native people of Southeast Alaska survived and overcame epidemics.

-Gumboot Determination: The Story of the SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium.

DÁA SAWÉ? (WHAT IS THAT?)

The Tlingit people have been utilizing the precious resources that naturally thrive in the region of Southeast Alaska. Living on the coast provides access to an array of resources that are unique to the ocean and shoreline.

The fluctuations of the tides provide convenient access to a variety of shellfish and seaweed, such as gumboots.

Gumboots are also re-

ferred to as black leather chiton. There are many types of chiton. This one in particular has the scientific name *Katharina tunicata*. Its Tlingit name is shaaw.

Shaaw is a marine mollusk. It is found in tidal zones and sub tidal zones. They have eight shells that line the back. They tend to live on rocks in close proximity to algae and seaweed



because that’s what they like to eat. It is also typical for chitons to live on rocks where there is plenty of wave exposure.

Although, this is a food not found in the typical American diet, it is a food with nutritional

HARVESTING GUMBOOTS



Harvesting gumboots is a fun, healthy activity that can be enjoyed with family and friends. The time of year to collect gumboots is not as limited as cockles and clams, however, always pay attention to the toxic algae blooms

because other shellfish may be enticing when on an outing. Gumboots attach themselves firmly to rocks. Their tendency to hold on tightly is where the phrase “gumboot determination” comes from. Tools like knives or flat-

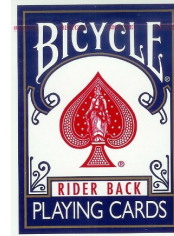
head screwdrivers are helpful when prying them from their surfaces. Be respectful and appreciative of the foods collected and never waste what you take.



Gumboots are an excellent source of iron, protein, and vitamin A.

NUTRITION INFORMATION	
Per Serving– 3 oz. cooked	
Calories	83
Protein	17.1 g
Carbohydrate	0 g
Fat	1.6 g
Calcium	121 mg
Vitamin A	495 RE
Iron	16 mg

3 oz



A 3-oz. serving of meat is about the size of a deck of cards.



Gumboots are heart friendly because they are low in fat

Iron is needed for several reasons. It is especially important so blood can effectively carry oxygen throughout the body. Low amounts of iron can cause fatigue or can keep your mind from thinking clearly. For adult females, the recommended amount is 18 mg per day. For males it is 8 mg per day. Most foods that are obtained from the ocean have very high levels of iron.

SHAAW TOOXÁ. (WE ARE EATING GUMBOOTS.)

Gumboots can be eaten in a variety of ways. They can be eaten raw directly from the beach if it is necessary, or if that is simply how it is preferred. They can also be eaten boiled, steamed, pickled, and roasted. When it comes to all traditional foods, methods vary from family to family and village to village . Learning the methods directly from family and knowledgeable individuals makes it significant because of the relationships and values that develop through the process. To communicate the respect and stewardship to the land is a value that is learned over a lifetime. Conveying that message through writing is nearly impossible. That is why experiencing this lifestyle firsthand is encouraged and necessary to understand and become familiar with Tlingit culture and way of life.