

Processing Wild Rice student page



*Harvesting wild rice
Minnesota Historical Society Collections Online; Original
photo: Frances Densmore E97.32W p32*

Beds of wild rice grows on Minnesota lakes. Canoes are poled, not paddled, through the water to avoid harming the rice beds.



Harvesting wild rice today. Photo by Annette Drewes



*Gathering wild rice.
Minnesota Historical Society Collections Online
E97.32W r12*

Gatherers bend the stalks of wild rice into the canoe, and knock off the grains with ricing flails into the bottom of the boat.



Gathering wild rice today. Photo by Annette Drewes



*Collecting wild rice. Minnesota Historical Society
Collections Online E97.32W r22*

Wild rice grains are collected into bags.



Collecting wild rice today. Photo by Annette Drewes

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Parching wild rice. Minnesota Historical Society Collections Online; Original photo possibly by M.C. Colburn E97.32W r32

Wild rice is parched in cast iron pots over a fire.

Today, people also use large parchers.



Parching wild rice. Photo by Annette Drewes



Treading wild rice. Minnesota Historical Society Collections Online E97.32W p5

A boy wears special moccasins to tread (or dance) on parched rice. This cracks the inedible husks and separates them from the grains.



Unprocessed wild rice husks. Photo by Annette Drewes



Winnowing threshed wild rice. Minnesota Historical Society Collections Online; Original photo by Monroe P. Killy E97.32W p40

Winnowing allows the wind to blow away the inedible husks and retain the heavier grain in the basket.

Wild rice is still winnowed in baskets today.

However, large quantities of rice harvested for sale can be winnowed through a machine that separates the husks from the grain.