Amaranth, whether wild harvested or growing in the garden, is a versatile healthy ingredient. The young green leaves are high in vitamins A and C, folic acid, and iron. The grain is high in protein and is gluten free.

**Basic Cooking Instructions:**

**Greens or Quelites**
Use like spinach. Small sprouts can be eaten raw. Wilt down larger leaves in stir fries, soups, or beans. Avoid leaves that are larger than 4-5 inches as they tend to be woody and bitter.

**Cooked cereal**
Combine 1 cup grain with two and a half cups water in a pot and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for up to 20 minutes, until grains are fluffy and water is absorbed. For a porridge-like consistency, use 3 cups water and cook longer.

**“Popcorn”**
Preheat a pot or skillet over high heat (must be very hot), and add amaranth seeds one or two tablespoons at a time. Too many will cause it to burn. Continuously stir the seeds with a spoon or swirl pan as they pop. The process should take less than 30 seconds or your pan is not hot enough. Once most have popped, quickly remove from pan. Repeat with more grain. Popped amaranth can eaten on its own, served with milk and fruit for a healthy breakfast, or added to salads for a nutty crunch.

**Amaranth Crackers**
1/2 C amaranth grain
sea salt
1 C Parmesan cheese (optional)

Prepare amaranth grain according to basic instructions. It should have a sticky consistency when finished. Allow to cool. Line cookie sheets with parchment paper, having the paper will make it easy to remove the crackers. When amaranth is cool roll into 1/2 inch balls and place on cookie sheets. Wet your fingers and press each ball down to create a flat cracker making sure they are uniform thickness. Sprinkle each with sea salt. Place in a preheated 320 degree oven for 20 minutes, or until each is toasted. Add the Parmesan cheese when there is 5-10 minutes left to cook. Once cooled, peel off of the parchment paper. They should be crisp and firm and easily peel off of the paper.

**Vegetable Amaranth Pilaf**
1 lg onion, chopped
1 carrot, sliced
1 stalk celery, chopped
2 Tbs butter
2 cloves garlic, minced
1/2 C amaranth grain
1/2 C brown rice
1 1/4 C water
2 Tbs fresh parsley, minced
1/3 C grated Parmesan cheese
1/4 slivered almonds or pinon nuts

In a saucepan, saute onions, carrots and celery in 1 Tbs butter over medium heat until melted. Add garlic, carrot, and celery, and amaranth, and cook for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add remaining butter and the rice. Cook and stir a few minutes, add water. Cover and bring to a boil. Stir cover again, and reduce heat to a simmer. Cook about 30 minutes or until rice is tender and fluffy. Season with fresh herbs and stir in cheese just before serving. Top with almonds or pinon nuts.

**Amaranth Tabbouleh Salad**
1/2 C amaranth grain
1 C cucumber, chopped
1/2 C celery, thinly sliced
1/2 C red onion, finely chopped
1/4 C fresh mint, chopped
1/4 C flat-leaf parsley, chopped
1/4 C pine nuts, toasted
2 Tbl extra-virgin olive oil
1 tsp grated lemon rind
2 Tbl fresh lemon juice
1/4 tsp salt
1/2 C drained canned chickpeas, optional
1 Cup feta cheese, crumbled

Prepare amaranth grain according to basic cooking instructions. Allow to cool and drain any excess water. Combine with all of the other ingredients, tossing to evenly distribute. Store well in the fridge for up to 1 week.
Alegria bars

3 C popped amaranth (see basic cooking instructions)
6 Tbl honey
6 Tbl agave nectar
6 Tbl butter
6 Tbl sunflower seeds
1/2 C slivered almonds, sunflower seeds, and/or pumpkin seeds
1/2 C dried apricots, diced
1/4 C cranberries

In a large saucepan combine honey, nectar and butter. Cook over medium heat for 7 minutes, stirring constantly. The amount of time is important for the bars to properly set. When the mixture is golden brown, thick and sticky, add the popped amaranth, nuts, seeds, and dried fruit. Stir with a wooden spoon until all ingredients are coated with the syrup. Transfer to an 8x8 inch glass baking dish that has is coated with nonstick spray. Push the mixture into the corners and firmly pressed down. Let cool and the syrup will harden. Cut into 2x3 inch squares.

Amaranth Peanut Butter Cups

3/4 C popped amaranth
1 C peanut butter, creamy or chunky
2 Tbl butter, melted
1/2 C powdered sugar
1/2 C crushed peanuts
1 bag semi-sweet chocolate chips

In a large bowl, combine peanut butter, and melted butter until smooth. Add powdered sugar and peanuts and combined. Pour in amaranth and mix again. Prepare a muffin pan with non-stick spray in each cup. Fill bottom of each cup with chocolate chips. Place in a preheated 350 degree oven for 5 minutes to melt chips. Remove from the oven and drop generous spoonfuls of amaranth mixture in each cup. Use the back of a spoon to press amaranth into the melted chocolate and to create a flat top. Place in the fridge for at least 15 minutes. Pop out each cup, using a knife if necessary. Store in an airtight container in the fridge.

Beans with Amaranth

1 lb dried black beans
1/2 large onion, chopped
4 garlic cloves, minced
2-4 Tbl epazote
3/4 lb amaranth greens, washed and stems removed

Cook beans. Add onion, garlic and epazote towards the end of the cooking time. In a separate saucepan, bring water to a boil. Blanch the amaranth greens in the boiling water for 2 minutes. Immediately transfer to a bowl of ice water. This will stop the cooking process and set the color. Drain the greens, removing excess water and coarsely chop. Add to drained beans to serve.

Eggs with Amaranth Greens

1/2 lb amaranth greens, washed and finely chopped
1 medium onion, finely diced
1 clove garlic, minced
7 eggs, beaten
1/2 C milk
1/2 tsp salt
1 tsp ground black pepper
1 tsp red pepper flakes (optional)
1/2 C grated cheese

Beat eggs and milk together in a large bowl. Add other ingredients, except cheese, making sure amaranth leaves are coated. Pour mixture into a greased 8x8 inch baking pan adding the cheese on top. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees and cook for 35 minutes.