



CHOLLA BUD recipes

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The mission of Native Seeds/SEARCH (Southwestern Endangered Aridland Resources Clearing House) is to conserve, distribute, and document the adapted and diverse Varieties of agricultural seeds, their wild relatives and the role these seeds play in cultures of the American Southwest and Northwest Mexico.

Cholla buds are low in calories, high in calcium and iron. Cholla buds are an ideal food for diabetics. They contain complex carbohydrates that help balance blood sugar levels and provide sustained energy.

The buds of the Buckhorn (*Cylindropuntia acanthocarpa*) and Staghorn (*Cylindropuntia versicolor*) cholla are harvested in April in the spring in the Southwest. They are harvested when the petals are formed but flowers have not yet opened. After the spines are removed, they can either be cooked like other vegetables, added to soups, or dried to be reconstituted for later use. The flavor is similar to asparagus tips.

Cholla buds, called *ciolim*, are an important resource among the Pima and Tohono O'odham.

BASIC PREPARATION OF DRIED BUDS

Examine the buds and remove any remaining spines. Presoak for 3 hours or overnight to reduce cooking. Fill a large saucepot with water and bring to a boil. Add dried cholla buds and simmer until buds are soft. Typically presoaked buds will soften in about 45 minutes. If you did not presoak, simmer for 1 1/2 to 3 hours. Drain and use in any recipe. They are a great addition to pasta dishes (warm or cold), quiches, beans, vegetable soup, or simply sauteed with garlic and olive oil.

A half cup of dried cholla buds will make around 2 cups of reconstituted buds. Store in the fridge for 3-6 days.

Dried buds are a viable from the Tohono O'odham Community Action and San Xavier Co-op Farm. They can also be purchased from Native Seeds/SEARCH. All of these organizations offer occasional harvesting classes and demonstrations.

SONORAN SALAD

1/2 cup dried cholla buds, reconstituted and chopped
1 cup White Sonoran wheat berries, cooked
1 cup brown tepary beans, cooked
1-2 jalapeños or other fresh chile, diced
2-3 P'ittoi onions (greens and bulb), chopped

Dressing:
2 Tbls olive oil
2 Tbls lemon juice

This salad is full of heritage foods of the Sonoran Desert. Mix together cooked cholla buds, wheat berries, beans, chile, and onion. In a small bowl whisk together dressing ingredients. Add salt to taste and pour over other ingredients. Can be served warm or cold.

CHOLLA BUD SALSA

1/2 cup dried cholla buds, reconstituted
1/2 cup tomatoes, diced
1/4 cup red onion, diced
1/4 cup cilantro, chopped
1-2 jalapeños, diced
1 Tbls lime juice
salt

Prepare dried cholla buds and chop into large pieces. Combine with remaining ingredients. Add salt to taste.

CHOLLA AND CALABACITAS

1/2 cup dried cholla buds, reconstituted
2-3 summer squashes, sliced
1 cup fresh corn, removed from cob
1 clove garlic, minced
1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
1 Tbls olive oil
salt and pepper to taste

Saute together cholla buds, squash, corn and garlic with olive oil. Cook until squash is tender, but not mushy. Zucchini or yellow crookneck can be used. Turn off the heat and stir in tomatoes. Add salt and pepper to taste. Crushed chiltepinas are also a nice addition.