

# HOLIDAY KITCHEN FORAGE

A close-up photograph of a dark green ceramic bowl filled with a thick, dark red relish made of wild cranberries. A silver spoon is partially submerged in the relish, with its handle extending towards the top left. The background is a warm, out-of-focus orange and yellow light, suggesting a fire or a warm indoor setting.

EPISODE #3

## WILDNESS ON THE HOLIDAY TABLE

Wild Cranberry (+Elderberry) Relish  
Foraging Wild Cranberries

A close-up photograph of a single, round, reddish-purple wild cranberry hanging from a thin branch. The branch is surrounded by small, green, needle-like leaves and some dried, brown pine needles. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green and brown, suggesting a natural outdoor setting.

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# EPISODE #3 WILDNESS ON THE HOLIDAY TABLE

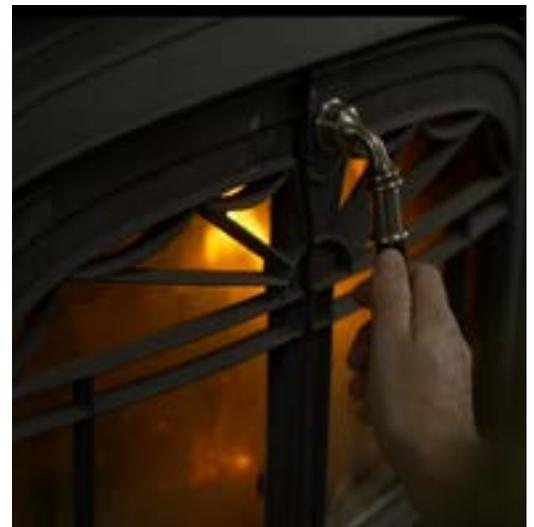
## Wild Cranberry (+Elderberry) Relish Foraging Wild Cranberries

*Put a healing twist on the traditional holiday relish with the addition of elderberries. These magenta jewels harvested in the summer can now come out of the freezer to be joined with the cranberries (*Vaccinium macrocarpon*) we'll gather from a nearby mountain bog (or, if the forage was unsuccessful, from my local food coop).*

### **Wild Cranberry (+Elderberry) Relish**

Makes one+ cup

- 1 cup cranberries, preferably wild (4 oz by weight)
- 3 tablespoons maple syrup
- 1/3 orange, zested, peeled and finely chopped, remember to remove most of the white bitter pith
- 1/3 cup finely chopped apple
- The following freshly and finely ground spices:
  - 4 whole cloves
  - 1/2 inch cinnamon stick
  - 2 allspice berries
  - Pinch ginger
- Palmful raw walnuts or pecans (preferably soaked and dried), finely chopped.
- **Optional:** 3 tablespoons elderberries (frozen or fresh)



### **To Make:**

Place berries and maple syrup into a pot, cover, and heat gently to a low simmer. When most of the cranberries have popped, add the orange and apple and cook until apple is almost soft. Then add nuts and spices and cook until apples are fully cooked. Chill and serve. Makes 1+ cups of Relish.



## Episode #3: Takeaway Points

- Look for cranberries in wet, acid, peaty soil; bogs, marshes; at the shores of lakes, rivers, and other edges of water.
- Late fall is tail end of wild cranberry season (here in NY) but we are up for the adventure to find the last remaining cranberries. For primetime forage for cranberries in earlier fall.
- Cranberries grow in fragile ecosystems so tread lightly when visiting them.
- Only harvest the berries, and do not pull up the stem or root.
- Cranberries can be harvested after frost, and it perhaps improves their flavor.
- The species of cranberry we feature in this episode is called large cranberry; scientifically referred to as *Vaccinium macrocarpon*. This is the progenitor, the wild ancestor, of cultivated cranberry. Other species of wild cranberry such as *V. oxycoccus* and *V. vitis-idea* can be used similarly.



- This is a native mini shrub of North America, growing to 8" tall with small, evergreen, smooth, oblong leaves. Leaf edges are not rolled in (recurved) and if so, not much. Leaf underside is pale.
- Fruit (and flower) grows on a long stalk (pedicel) below the tip, not at the tip.
- See if you can spot the small green bracteole on the fruit stalk, visible during a harvest moment in mini bog.
- Flavor: very sour, tart, bright, astringent.
- Cranberries are rich in bioflavonoids and antioxidants. They support our health in general, esp. the urinary tract; and also help us deal with urinary tract infections.
- The zest of orange peels, and other citrus, offers lovely aromatics to flavor food with, as well as digestive support.

- The zest is the colorful outer part of the peel. The white inner part of the peel, the pith, is bitter, so don't include unless you are looking for bitter.
- For making this relish use a sturdy pot with a tight fitting lid.
- Fresh grind your spices for strongest flavor and therapeutic benefit.
- If the spices don't hit the grinder (as when grinding small amounts), use a mortar and pestle.
- The spices not only add appealing flavor but also support digestion and immune health.

