

## What are Some Desert Foods I Can Eat?

- *Tepary Beans*
- *Cholla Buds*
- *Mesquite Products including*
- *Mesquite Flour*
- *Mesquite Bean Tea*
- *Palo Verde Pods*
- *Green-Stiped Cushaw Squash*
- *Fast-Growing, Drought-Resistant Corn*
- *Chiltepin Peppers*
- *Organ Pipe Cactus Fruit*
- *Saguaro Cactus Fruit*
- *Quinces*
- *Agave negctar*
- *Many more!!!!*



## Where Can I Get these Foods or More Information about The Food?

- Visit the Dietician or Diabetes Educator at your local Indian Health Services Clinic
- Native Seeds Search offers Free Membership and up to 50 free seeds a year!

526 N. 4th Avenue, Tucson, AZ 85705  
(520) 622-5591  
Nativesseeds.org

- The Santa Cruz Valley Heritage Alliance offers a directory listing many locations, farmer's markets and other resources for these foods.

(520)429-1394  
www.SantaCruzHeritage.org



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## Returning to Our Roots:

### **Healing with Food:**

*How the Food of Our People Can Heal Our Health and Spirit*



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## It is Our Heritage



Traditional Tohono O'odham home with a Saguaro fruit-picking stick (kuipad)

For hundreds of years, our people, the Tohono O'odham, roamed the Sonoran Desert, other parts of the Southwest, and Mexico as hunters and gatherers. Our ancestors ate javelina, rabbit, and deer. They gathered many plants of the desert, including cholla buds, nopalitos (prickly pear cactus), acorns, papago peas, tepary beans, and chiltepin peppers. Our people made nectar from the agave, flour from the mesquite, and jellies and syrups from the nopalito and saguaro cactus fruit.

## It Was Our Way of Life

When our people, Tohono O'odham, roamed the land, and ate the food from the very land we roamed, our people were not overweight. We did not suffer from high blood pressure, and no one had diabetes. We honored the earth and took only what we needed to survive.

## It is Our Health

The food we eat is much different than what it was 100, 50, or even 30 years ago. Today, the Tohono O'odham nation has more people with diabetes than any other tribe, race, or ethnic group. Many of our people are overweight, have high blood pressure, stomach problems, strokes, heart attacks, and diabetes.

Native American Basketry



## What Sorts of Foods Did the Our People Eat and Why Were They Good For Us to Eat?

Many of the desert plants are low in calories and fat but high in fiber. The fiber helps you to feel fuller longer. This helps keep your weight down and can help prevent high blood pressure and high cholesterol. Many of these foods are safe for people with diabetics because they do not raise your blood sugar.



Tepary Beans

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