

Product Picks

Deforestation, decreasing biodiversity, increasing pesticide use—those are just a few of the ways that our industrial food system is bad news for people and the planet. The good news is that it doesn't have to be that way. For millennia, communities have been farming, tending, and collecting a vast diversity of foods. These foods, their heirloom seeds, and, in some cases, the traditions that go with them, are endangered by the industrial food system, its patented seeds, its pollution, and its vast monocultures. Yet one way we can grow a new food system is to support those who are cultivating and innovating a very old one.

We asked members of our staff and editorial board for some of their current favorite products that support traditional foods and the communities they are rooted in.

Find them online or at your favorite natural food store!



NATIVE HARVEST WILD RICE

Over 90% of what is sold as “wild” rice in grocery stores today is actually cultivated rice, misleadingly labeled as wild and undercutting fair prices for the labor-intensive collection of native manoomin. I had my first taste of true wild rice on a trip to northern Minnesota, one of the areas where the Ojibwe have been hand-harvesting rice for centuries. Rice is an important part of traditional diet and income, and both are now under threat from cultivated “wild” rice as well as the race to patent and genetically manipulate the native species. This is a glaring example of how the industrial food complex often trumps food sovereignty. – KERSTIN

nativeharvest.com





THREE SISTERS NIXTAMAL TORTILLAS

The first time I tasted these tortillas, I was reminded of what real corn tastes like: nutty, a little sweet, and so satisfying that I find myself choosing plain beans and skipping fancy taco fixings to taste the tortilla a little more. “Three Sisters Nixtamal” evokes the traditional indigenous planting of corn, beans and squash together. That’s a reminder of traditional food systems that value biodiversity and nutrition. Yellow, blue or a blend of northwest-grown heirlooms, they are all organic, traditionally processed, and a staple in my kitchen. – ANNA
threesisterspdx.com



GUAYAKI YERBA MATE

Guayaki’s Yerba Mate is a great way to wake up in the morning. It also keeps me going in the afternoon. I prefer to make it the traditional way using the loose leaves because it helps me to stay grounded and reminds me of the importance of communities organizing. But when I’m on the road I use the tea bags. When I drink it, I often fantasize about sitting communally in Argentina sipping from the tip of a bombilla from a pre-Colombian gourd while gossiping with locals. – DANA
guayaki.com



LOTUS FOODS BLACK RICE

Lotus Foods has become my go-to dedicated fair trade brand for kitchen staples like rice and noodles. Their heirloom black rice is a particular favorite. In this age of climate crisis, economic inequality and gender disparity, their use of production methods which “practice water saving” and also “reduce methane emissions and women’s workloads” enables conscious shopping amid aisles and aisles of food choices with few similar assurances. – FLETCHER
shop.lotusfoods.com

NATIVE HARVEST MAPLE SYRUP

There is nothing that rivals the rich taste of a real maple syrup, and Native Harvest, who hand harvests their maple syrup in Minnesota, produces one of the best American all-pure maple syrups. Owned and operated by the non-profit White Earth Land Recovery Project, which facilitates the recovery of the original land base of the White Earth Indian Reservation, while preserving and restoring traditional practices of land stewardship, language fluency, community development, and the strengthening of spiritual and cultural heritage. I use Native Harvest’s maple syrup as a daily substitute for regular sugar, pouring a small amount in my morning coffee, and for smothering pancakes or drizzling on toast. I even use this maple syrup brushed on a filet of wild-caught sockeye salmon before putting it in the smoker. Delicious! – STUART
nativeharvest.com