



Northern Wild Rice Harvesting and Processing

Northern wild rice can be harvested and processed with modern machinery, using more traditional methods, or by a combination of these methods

Natural Stands

Harvest of northern wild rice from Minnesota lake and river systems is by hand with no mechanical equipment.



<https://www.flickr.com/photos/usacehq/21221666104> U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

<http://www.native-art-in-canada.com/wildrice.html>

Traditional harvest involves the use of a canoe propelled by a long, forked, pole. Cedar knocking sticks (or flails) are used to drop the mature grain into the canoe.

Cultivated Crop

At harvest, the water in irrigated paddies is drained over ~4-6 weeks starting in August, until the land is dry. Then a combine is utilized to separate the grain from the rest of the plant and collects the seed.



<https://www.riviana.com/>

Processing



<https://www.flickr.com/photos/usdagov/25350274199>

Parching



National Archives and Records Administration [Public domain]

Jiggling



National Archives and Records Administration [Public domain]

Winnowing



<https://www.flickr.com/photos/widnr/6549628865>

↑
Un-Cured

↑
Cured



Curing Process

Parching: Heating slowly over a fire to dry rice and break down hulls

Jiggling: Dancing on rice with moccasins to break hulls

Winnowing: Tossing rice into the air to remove the hulls from the grain

Curing: The biological and chemical process that breaks down hulls and changes the color and flavor of wild rice.

Hulling: Removal of hulls, usually using machinery

Grading: Separating grains by size and color

References:

Oelke, EA (2007) *Saga of the grain: a tribute to Minnesota cultivated wild rice growers*. Schumacher, J., Schreiner, R., and Council, M. C. R. (Eds.) Lakeville, Lakeville: Hobar Publications.

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