

## Green Salmonberries — Urungilet (N), Urunguliit (S)

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AANAMA NIU'UTAAQINGA, "URUNGULIIT PITURKUNAKL." – MY MOM ALWAYS TOLD ME NOT TO EAT THE UNRIPE SALMONBERRIES.

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Photo: Unripe salmonberry, AM628

Salmonberries (*Rubus spectabilis* Pursh) are perhaps the most widely harvested wild fruit in the Kodiak region. The big juicy berries are a favorite summer treat, enjoyed fresh and in a mouth-watering assortment of deserts and preserves.

Salmonberries flower in late spring and bear fruit between June and August. Harvesters have different opinions about when they are best to pick. Some gather the fruit when it is bright red. Others wait until the berries ripen to a deep crimson color. However, all agree that unripe berries should be avoided. Eating green, yellow, or even light red berries can cause constipation. For this reason, many Alutiiq people eat salmonberries mixed with sugar and milk. This simple dish helps people avoid the unpleasant side effects of consuming quantities of these tasty but binding berries, especially if they are not entirely ripe.

If a love of salmonberries leads to an uncomfortable situation, there are traditional remedies. Tea made from pineapple weed (*Matricaria discoidea* DC.) is said to be soothing and have a gentle laxative effect. If you need something more powerful, culture bearers advise eating boiled sourdock leaves and stems (*Rumex occidentalis* S. Watson) by themselves. A tea made by boiling sourdock roots is also an effective treatment. Be careful, however, sourdock is also an emetic. Too much taken by itself can induce vomiting!