

Make soups, main dishes, salads and more with this New England delicacy.

**Learn to Cook Delicious (and Easy!) Dishes with Fiddlehead Ferns**

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**The Heart of New England Special Report:**



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*Everything you need to know to prepare, store and cook with fiddlehead ferns  
including delicious and creative recipes for soup & salads,  
egg dishes, side dishes and main meals*

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Backporch Publishing  
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## Fiddleheads: Free for the Pickin'

New Englanders are a frugal bunch. Mention the word “free” and they’ll line up in a hurry.

Free food falls into this category – as in “free for the picking.”

When spring arrives in northern New England the free food abundant in the woods is **fiddleheads**.

While the best fiddleheads spots are often a guarded secret (akin to Provence, France’s delicacy, truffles) – finding them is a special treat. These sprouts, in the shape of the top of a fiddle, are actually the young coiled leaves of shoot of the ostrich fern.

While nearly all ferns have “fiddleheads” those of the ostrich fern are unlike any other – they are **edible and delicious!**

While fiddleheads are really unlike anything you’ve ever tasted, they are close in taste to asparagus or artichokes, and are high in vitamins A and C. The season for these delicacies is short – and appears in during April and May.

Fiddleheads – which are usually found along river banks -- should be harvested as soon as they appear within an inch or two from the ground.

**But before you run out to collect these little delicacies, be forewarned that the Center for Disease Control has found a number of outbreaks of food-borne illness associated with fiddleheads** (nothing is simple, right?) But the outbreaks occurred when the ferns were eaten raw or lightly cooked (as in sautéed, parboiled or micro-waved). So...cook your fiddlehead thoroughly before eating them...boil them for at least 10 minutes. After than, you can eat them right away, or freeze or pickle them.

**If you’re unsure of what a fiddlehead looks like do not go out alone foraging for them!!** Go with an experienced forager, or identify the ones you pick at your local cooperative extension office. **Remember, some ferns can be poisonous and will make you sick!!** Your safest bet is to ask for fiddlehead ferns at your local farmers market or look for them in the produce section of your supermarket (in the spring only).

**If you can’t find them, ask your grocer (if he or she knows what they are!) — fiddleheads can be special ordered.**

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