

Edible *Limu*... Gifts from the Sea

Ka uluwehi o ke kai



Limu wawae'iole
(*Codium edule*)

Plants are dark green with felt-like surface; form large mats in low intertidal to subtidal, 6-10 feet depth. Requires careful cleaning to remove from rubble and coral. Under refrigeration may be kept indefinitely, but best if eaten within 10 days. Usually chopped or pounded and mixed with salt and served alone with fish, seafood, or stew, or may be mixed with other seaweeds.



Limu manaua
(*Gracilaria coronopifolia*)

Two *Gracilaria* species, *limu manaua* and *ogo* (*Gracilaria parvisipora*) are used interchangeably. *Limu manaua* is 4"-6" tall, with cylindrical branches dark rose to light pink; *ogo* is taller (10"-12") with slightly flattened branches. **It is illegal to gather reproductive plants (with dark "bumps").** Hawaiian preparation involves lightly salting this limu.



Limu 'ele'ele
(*Enteromorpha prolifera*)

Very fine, dark green limu that grows in tufts on rocks in fine sand. Common in places with fresh water, such as streams or underwater springs. Cut 1/2" above base and clean carefully (remove all sand). Add a light amount of salt after draining and refrigerate in tightly covered container. Will keep for up to ten days, when it will develop a fermented odor. Usually eaten in stews or with lomi fish. A small amount flavors a large stew.

Limu: Our Hawaiian Tradition

Among Polynesians, Hawaiians are unique in their regular use of limu. In the olden times, limu was the third component of a nutritionally balanced diet consisting of fish and poi. While limu primarily supplied variety and interest, they also added significant amounts of vitamins and other mineral elements to the diet. A common part of the traditional Hawaiian diet, limu are still a common ingredient in foods enjoyed by all. Not only are limu sold in supermarkets, but original Hawaiian methods of preparation are still used.

Limu are served as vegetables in stews, poke, and salads; as condiments, adding zest to the meals; and are an important source of minerals, and vitamins, including vitamins A, C, B₁₂, and riboflavin.



Limu huluhuluwaena
(*Grateloupia filicina*)

Bushy, pyramidal plants with flattened stems and fine branches in one plane. Grows as small groups on rocks covered with fine sand. After washing, plants are usually finely chopped and lightly salted. Eaten with raw liver, raw fish; added to cooked beef at serving time; or eaten with dried or broiled he'e (octopus).



Limu kohu
(*Asparagopsis taxiformis*)

Plant has creeping basal portion from which soft, fuzzy uprights grow. Found on edges of reef in areas of constant water motion. Only uprights are collected; plants are rinsed thoroughly, soaked overnight, then lightly salted. Upper branches are pounded and rolled into balls the size of a walnut for indefinite storage. Used in small quantities as flavor is penetrating. Added to poke, lomi, and stewed beef. Favorite limu of most Hawaiians.



Limu kala
(*Sargassum echinocarpum*)

Of all limu in the Hawaiian Islands, *Sargassum echinocarpum* is most important in Hawaiian cultural practices. This alga is used in the performance of a forgiveness ceremony (ho'o pono pono) held by families or individuals who are quarrelling among themselves. All persons in a family - whether directly involved in the dissension or not - are given a symbolic piece of this plant, and all sit in a circle and pray for forgiveness of each other, and for unity and harmony. This might take an hour or two, or days: the point is that everyone in the circle must be in unity with each other at the end of the ceremony. In this way, the use of an alga is unrivalled in the world.



Limu lipoa
(*Dictyopteris plagiogramma*)

Branches are leaflike, somewhat wavy, golden colored, with dark brown midrib. Plant gives off strong, characteristic odor. Found subtidally 3-15 feet depth or more. Leafy branches are washed, and heavily salted for indefinite storage. Young plants can be chopped or pounded, lightly salted, and refrigerated for current use. Spicy flavor good with fish and meat dishes, especially stews.



Limu palahalaha
(*Ulva fasciata*)

Blade-like plants form light green branching ribbons, sometimes 2-3 feet long. Very common, often found attached to basalt rock and old coral. Wash well and remove small black snails that feed on blades. Chop into 1" or less pieces. Mixed with other limu and served with raw fish, or added to light soups.