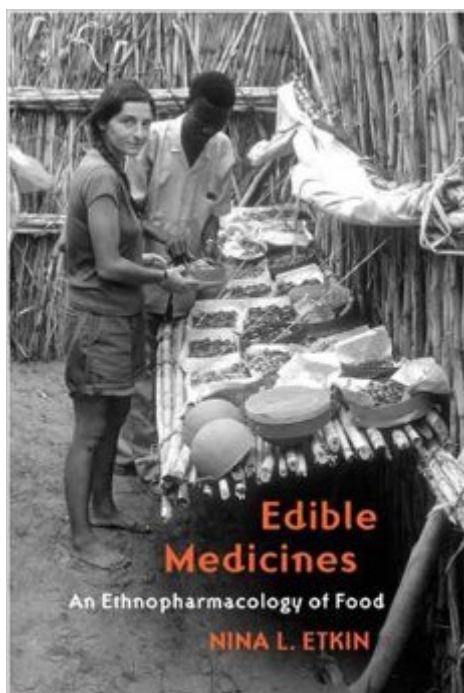


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# Edible Medicines: An Ethnopharmacology Of Food



## Synopsis

Chile pepper is used today as a flavoring, but Aztecs also applied it for toothache, sore throat, and asthma. The tonic properties of coffee have been recorded in Islamic pharmacopoeia since the eleventh century, and many peoples have used it to protect against Parkinson's disease. Although much has been documented regarding the nutritional values of foods, until recently little attention has been paid to the pharmacologic potential of diet. This book investigates the health implications of foods from the cuisines of peoples around the world to describe the place of food in health maintenance. In this wide-ranging book, Nina Etkin reveals the pharmacologic potential of foods in the specific cultural contexts in which they are used. Incorporating co-evolution with a biocultural perspective, she addresses some of the physiological effects of foods across cultures and through history while taking into account both the complex dynamics of food choice and the blurred distinctions between food and medicine. Showing that food choice is more closely linked to health than is commonly thought, she helps us to understand the health implications of people's food-centered actions in the context of real-life circumstances. Drawing on an extensive literature that transects food and culture, the history of medicine, ethnopharmacology, food history, nutrition, and human evolution, *Edible Medicines* demonstrates the intricate relationship between culture and nature. It will appeal to a wide range of scholars and professionals, from anthropologists to nutritionists, as well as general readers seeking a greater understanding of the medicinal aspects of food.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

First of all, let me say Bravo to the author. She has excellent writing skills and has somehow managed to pump insane amounts of information into a relatively short book. It's not a fast read. This is a lot of knowledge, but I feel enlightened already. It's not simply a book about food, culture, and health. It's a guided tour through the history of medicine and it will give a historical perspective on the relationship between food and health. But make no mistake, this is not a book on the perfect diet. This book is much deeper than that. I came to the conclusion on my own before I read this book, something was vastly wrong with the food system in America. As a medical student, I don't think we can fix healthcare without first changing the system of food production and distribution. People need to feel connected to the food they eat because food is not just sustenance, not just a hedonistic value, but a good diet is medicine unto itself. In the United States we spend less on food than other countries, but our bodies seem to fall apart because they are made of poor materials. I hope more people learn to treat food as an investment in their health, not as something to rid them of hunger. In the end, the less you invest in your food, the more you will be paying your hospital or doctor. And why do you think they aren't stopping you? Listen to Hippocrates a let your food be your medicine, and your medicine be your food.

College-level collections, doctors, nutritionists and even the general public will find *EDIBLE MEDICINES: AN ETHNOPHARMACOLOGY OF FOOD* an important guide linking food history, dietary needs and culture. Plenty has been written covering the nutritional values of food, but relatively little on the pharmacological potentials of diet: *EDIBLE MEDICINES* focuses on the medicinal properties of foods in different cultures and blends history with underlying medical concerns and reflections on human evolution. A fascinating survey. Diane C. Donovan  
California Bookwatch

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