Wilderness Survival: How To Catch Edible Frogs

Frogs are considered a delicacy or as a routine food in many parts of the world.

Remember that fact when forced to survive in the wilderness and the idea of hunting frogs for eating gives you chills.

Even though many frogs are on the verge of extinction, there are others with so many members that they can serve as a food source in time of need. Read the following article to learn which frogs are safe for eating, and how to catch and turn them into a tasty meal.

Frogs to Avoid

As a rule, most of the frogs in the United States are safe to eat. That being said, as global weather patterns shift, it is entirely possible that poisonous frogs will move into areas where they don’t normally live.

Here are some frog characteristics that may indicate they have poisonous skin or other body parts that make them unsuitable for eating:

- Blue, red, yellow, orange, or other brightly colored frogs. As with many other animals in nature, one that is brightly colored tends to signal danger. They are not trying to hide or camouflage themselves because anything that may try to eat them will see the colors and leave them alone.
- They tend to be active during day hours. Most frogs that are safe to eat will be out during dark hours when their predators are more likely to be asleep or would have a harder time seeing them.
- They are observed eating prey that consume plants with high alkaline content. For example, if there are poison ants in the area, and you see frogs consuming them, these particular frogs may be able to take the poison and store it in their skin. With the exception of one species of frog in South America, known poisonous frogs do not make their own poison. Instead, they consume

plants with high alkaline content and then store the poison in their skin. It should be noted that the muscle meat from these frogs may still be safe to eat as long as you know how to get the skin and poison sacs off without contaminating the meat.

- You should also be aware of the differences between frogs and toads, since toads can be poisonous without showing indicators that you would see in frogs. In order to tell the difference between frogs and toads, remember that frogs have smooth skin, while toads will have bumps on them. Frogs also have longer, narrower faces while toads have shorter, wider ones. If you watch a frog capturing its prey, you will notice that it has a sticky tongue that extends easily. By contrast, a toad will actually have to capture its prey in its mouth. Finally, if you watch their motions, frogs will only hop (they also have longer legs than toads) while toads can run and jump as well as hop.

Parts You Can Eat and Parts to Avoid

Typically, most people only eat the back legs of the frog because that is where you will find the most meat. If the frog is especially large, you might also try for the front legs. Even though frogs have a good bit of skin, it is best not to eat it for the following reasons:

- If the frog is poisonous or going to cause you to get sick, the greatest concentration of poison will be in the skin.
- Since frog skin is always moist, it is also a prime breeding ground for bacteria. You can easily come into contact with salmonella and several other diseases. If you must eat frog skins and know that the species is safe, be sure to cook the skins at a high enough

temperature.
- Many people feel that frog skin is a bit strong tasting and a bit hard to swallow. Needless to say, if you are very hungry and very little food is available, you can find ways around these issues.

Insofar as the frog's internal organs, remember that they consume all kinds of insects. You can be exposed to all kinds of poisons and diseases if you ingest the digestive and related organs. In addition, you will also find that frog organs aren't very large. You are likely to be wasting more time and effort trying to consume the organs than it's worth.

Testing to See if the Frog is Edible

Consider a situation where you are an experienced camper, have seen the world, and feel that you know just about all there is to know about living off the land. Perhaps you have eaten frog meat as a delicacy, and have even captured and eaten them on your outdoor adventures. To you, it may make perfect sense to consume frogs in the post crisis world, and it is likely that you will look to them as a valuable source of nutrition. Now, let's add one more point in your favor and even say that you know the local species of frogs quite well in many areas of the United States and feel confident that you know which ones are safe to eat and which ones aren't.

Under these circumstances, you may feel that you don't need to perform a modified Universal Edibility Test in order to determine if the meat is safe. You, and anyone that you are traveling with that trusts your judgment on these matters can become very sick or even wind up dead for the following reasons:

- As with any other species on this Earth, offspring can be produced between species that may or may not produce

offspring. In this case, as poisonous frogs move from one region to another, they may just produce poisonous offspring that aren't as colorful or have traits that cause you to mistake them for safe frogs. If you do not run some kind of Universal Edibility Test, you will have no chance to find out the truth before consuming too much of the meat.

- Nuclear attacks aside, there are many other sources of man made nuclear contamination in the environment. Aside from causing all kinds of mutations, the nuclear material may also have a large impact on insects and other food sources for the frogs you are planning to eat. Even if the frog is from a non-poisonous species, that does not mean it isn't harboring increased levels of radiation that will pose a risk to your health.
- Heavy metals, pesticide runoff, fertilizer runoff, and many other industrial poisons find their way into the water where frogs spend most of their lives. As a result, if you don't pay careful attention to the area where the frogs are living, and the quality of the water, you may wind up consuming all kinds of hazardous materials that have nothing to do with the species of frog you are trying to consume.

When evaluating the safety of frogs (and many other kinds of game) it is best to do a modified form of the Universal Edibility Test that accounts for modern hazards. Bear in mind that there may still be other factors that you will need to consider and account for in adaptions to this basic method:

- Start off by making sure that you know what region you are in. Find out if there are nuclear facilities, industrial dumping grounds, old factories, or factory farms within 100 miles of the area where you plan to catch frogs. If any of these factors apply, then be extra careful when evaluating each animal that you are planning to consume.

- Next, study look at the soil, water, grass, trees, insects, and animals in the area where the frogs are living. Does the water or soil have an unusual odor to it? Dig into the soil and see if there is an unnatural or chemical smell to it. Is the vegetation healthy, or does it show signs of plant tumors, unusual growth patterns, or sickly development? Are there a lot of dead birds, animals, or other insects around? Do you see signs of unusual growth, deformed limbs, erratic behavior, or anything else that might indicate chemical or nuclear poisoning? If you see sick animals, insects, or plants in the area, you can rest assured the frogs are also contaminated.
- Now study the frogs. Are they healthy and active during their normal hours of being awake? If so, then you may have a safe, viable source of frogs to hunt.
- After capturing one frog that you believe safe to eat, study the bones, skin, flesh, and organs for signs of abnormal growth or poisoning. Make sure that you know enough about frog anatomy and diseases so that you can spot the kinds of illness that might indicate the animal and those in the surrounding area may have been exposed to heavy metals or other toxins that might be harmful to you and other survivors. If you see signs of these illnesses, do not capture any more frogs unless you intend to use them as bait.
- Once you have determined the frog is safe from an environmental perspective, it does not hurt to make sure you haven't captured a frog that is a poisonous hybrid. For this, you can follow the more conventional points of the Universal Edibility Test. Carefully skin the frog and separate it into hind legs, front legs, organs, and skin.

If you only intend to eat the hind legs, then just use them fully cooked for the test. Just remember if you decide to try and eat frog organs or skins later on, you will need to the

Universal Edibility Test all over again.

Where to Find Frogs

Almost all edible frogs will be found in or near a pond or other shallow bodies of fresh water. If the body of water has a muddy bank, reeds, or logs dipping into the water, look in these spots first for frog hiding places.

If you are scouting an area at night, listen for the sound of something jumping into the water, as this is likely to be frogs. To draw frogs to your area, you can try making waves in the water to mimic insects or other prey that would be of interest to frogs.

3 Ways to Catch Frogs

With the exception of making a trap for frogs, the other two methods for capturing them usually have to be done at night when the animals are out and searching for prey of their own.

Method 1: Catch Frogs By Hand

As surprising as it may sound, catching frogs by hand is actually the easiest of the three methods. Once you have spotted a frog, start moving towards it. As you approach the frog, move one hand in circles.

Keep moving your hand with a circular motion, and then simply grab the frog with the other hand when you are close enough. It is best for your catching hand to come from behind the frog since it won’t be able to see your hand that way. You can also aim a flashlight at the frog to stun it temporarily.

Just make sure that you act quickly to grab the frog or it will get away on you. Once you have hold of the frog, be sure to hold it by the hips and let the rest of your hand support under its armpits. The frog will be unable to get out of your

hands.

Method 2: Catch Frogs in a Net

After locating a frog of interest, you can use a flashlight or the circular hand motion to slow down the frog's attempt to escape. Instead of putting your hands around the frog's body, use the net to capture it instead.

As with catching frogs by hand, the net should come from behind the frog and swish under it. If the frog is on land, the hoop of the net should fully surround the frog. Try to get your hands onto the frog's body as quickly as possible.

Do not forget that frogs are strong jumpers. If you have one captured in a net, it can jump around quite a bit and make its escape before you know what is happening.

When choosing a net for catching frogs, make sure that the holes in the net are small enough to prevent the frog from through it. It is also better to choose a net with a shorter handle because you will be less tempted to rely on the mesh of the net to hold the frog until you can a better hold of it.

Method 3: Make a Frog Trap

Since you may need several frogs to make a good meal, it is likely that you will want to use traps as well as hunt for them. There are many different ways to make frog traps.

One of the most common ways is to simply get them to fall into a pit or waiting tin that they cannot jump out of easily. In this case, you may set a bucket or something else into the mud bank of a pond, and then cover it over with twigs and leaves. When the frogs land on the twigs, they will fall through and be unable to get out of the pail.

You can also try making a frog trap similar to the way you would make a mosquito catcher. Simply take a plastic bottle, cut the top off, and then invert it into the bottle. Set a

cricket or some other suitable bait inside the bottle. Even though the frog will be able to squeeze into the bottle opening, it will not be able to get back out.

Video first seen on Amber Haines.

How to Prepare Frogs for Cooking

Unlike a fish out of water, a frog won't simply suffocate and die in a matter of minutes. No matter whether you capture a frog by hand, in a net, or in a trap, you will have to kill the frog and then do a bit of work to make what little meat there is ready for eating.

Dispatching the Frog

As fragile as frogs may seem, they can actually be difficult to kill. The fastest and most humane method is to behead the frog. Some people prefer to pith the frog (basically stick something sharp through the brain case so that the brain is destroyed). Other people crush the frog's skull by bashing it into something hard or using a hammer.

Skinning the Frog

Skinning a frog is actually much easier than it looks. Follow these steps:

- Start off by taking a sharp pair of scissors and cut off the feet at the ankles.
- Next, cut across the lower part of the frog's belly. Continue cutting until you have made a line all the way around the frog. If you want, at this stage, you can also sever the spine and remove the legs. It is easiest to take them off in pairs so that you do not lose any of the valuable muscle meat. Set the legs aside so that you can check the internal organs for signs of disease.
- Cut from the bottom of the abdomen up to the throat, and

then across the shoulders. Open the flaps and observe the organs. Do you see signs of tumors, abnormal swelling, or anything else that might indicate the frog had some kind of disease or exposure to hazardous chemicals?

- If it seems that the frog was healthy, go back and look at the skin from the belly area on the part that is still attached to the legs. You should be able to see a clear color difference between the skin and the flesh beneath it. Take the sharp point of a knife, or even a scissor and gently pry between the flesh and the skin. It will loosen fairly easily. Keep prying until you find something like threads that hold the flesh and the skin together. They will pull apart easily, or snip them with the scissors.
- Once you have enough of the skin pulled away from the flesh, just go ahead and pull the skin straight down over the frog's legs. Even though frogs skin can be slimy and moist, you should be able to pull the skin with your bare hands. If you are having problems, go ahead and use a pair of pliers.
- Before cooking the legs, you can cut between them. If there are any organs or other material besides bone and muscle, remove it before cooking.
- Do not forget to wash the frog legs in clean water to remove bits of the organs or other unwanted residue that may have come from the skin or other parts of the frog.

Video first seen on Crawdaddy Kings.

Basic Ways to Cook Frogs

You can cook frogs just as you would any other kind of meat. They can be fried in oil, boiled as for soup and stew, roasted, or baked. Do not forget that frogs also carry bacteria just like any other animal. Make sure that the flesh

cooks thoroughly, especially in areas near the bone.

Does it Pay to Grow Edible Frogs?

If you have a homestead or are planning to raise smaller animals for meat, you may be very tempted to try raising frogs instead of fish. Here are some advantages and disadvantages to consider:

- Even though frogs are fairly easy to care for, it can take several years for them to grow large enough to eat.
- Since frogs are considered a delicacy in many parts of the world, you can purchase frogs that are specifically bred for human consumption. Depending on your needs, you may want to start off with about 6 or 7 pairs of frogs and then calculate how many you will need for routine nutritional needs.
- If you have a homestead and outdoor ponds, you can keep edible frogs around to control the insect population. In fact, if you also have larger animals that tend to draw flies and other insects, a few frogs may be quite useful.
- There are few, if any municipal codes that would prevent you from keeping frogs as pets. As such, you can more than likely keep several dozen of them indoors without may problems. Just remember that you will have to keep a fairly large number of if you expect to have a steady diet of frog legs.
- When it comes to alternative meats, frogs taste like chicken. Once they are skinned and cooked, they also don’t look all that different from conventional meat. As a result, adapting to frog meat may be easier and more palatable than trying to adjust to insects. You use them as a “gateway” alternative food if you already know that you will need to make the jump to indoor insect farming.

Right now, there are many species of frog that are plentiful

to the point of being a nuisance in some areas. This, in turn, leads more than a few people to believe they will make a viable source of food in a crisis situation.

Even if you are an experienced hunter or camper, and have consumed frogs before, it is important to exercise caution. In these times, our society is not the only thing that is changing. There are subtle, and not so subtle changes happening to the climate and temperatures on this planet.

Animals, including frogs, will adapt as quickly as they can. These adaptions may include mating with neighboring poisonous species that will make it harder to determine which frogs are safe to eat.

When consumed with care and awareness, frogs can make a valuable and nutritious meal that should not be overlooked. You may also want to consider the advantages and disadvantages of raising frogs so that you do not have to hunt them or be as concerned about consuming poisonous or diseased specimens by accident.

If I missed something in this post or you've tried this wild delicacy, leave a comment in the section bellow and share your experiences and tips with all the readers.

Our ancestors' experiences serve as a great lesson for those planning to survive any hard times to come. Click on the banner bellow to discover more lost pioneer survival skills!

*This article has been written by **Carmela Tyrell** for Survivopedia.*

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