



A Nature Hike

On your hike with WildCare's Terwilliger Nature Guides, how many acorns did you see? Ten? Twenty? One hundred? Even more?? Depending on the time of year, you may have seen hundreds of acorns along the ground! Fall is the busiest season for collecting acorns to store them away for the winter.

Acorns are an important meal for not just animals, but also for people! Acorns are too bitter for people to eat straight from the ground or from the tree. The Coastal Miwoks created a way to prepare the acorns so they could eat them without the bitterness.



First, they have to collect all the acorns! They make baskets to carry all the acorns— unlike chipmunks who just stuff the acorns in their cheek pouches!



The acorn's skin is removed by cracking open the shell and tossing it to loosen the skin even more.



Once all the shell and skin are gone, a big rock is used to smash the acorn insides into a flour.



Next water is poured over and over into the flour until all the bitterness is washed away.



Finally, the acorn mixture is cooked up to make a nutritious acorn mush, soup, or bread to eat!



All this work to prepare the tiny acorns means there will be many healthy meals to last through the winter time!



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Sometimes squirrels forget where they hid their acorns when they buried them in the fall. If the acorn receives the right combination of soil, sunlight, and rain, it may start to grow into a new oak tree! Squirrels play an important role of keeping the forests healthy and growing!

**Draw an acorn sprouting into a new oak tree by the squirrel.
Include in all the things an acorn would need to grow (*sunlight, water, soil*).**

