



Pick the Mushrooms That the Vikings Picked: Foray September 2010

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St. Anthony's Lightkeepers Seafood Restaurant on Fishing Point, the southern tip on the mouth of St. Anthony Harbour, as seen from one of the foray trails. St. Anthony will be the Foray headquarters. Note the iceberg in middle of the picture, behind the next point. Unfortunately iceberg season will be over at the time of the foray, but whales should be plentiful.

Studying tales of Vinland in Icelandic sagas, adventurer Helge and archaeologist Anne Stine Ingstad concluded that at least one Viking settlement must have been in northern Newfoundland. Searching the area in 1960, they were led to the site in L'Anse aux Meadows by fisherman George Decker. Excavations revealed that successive human groups have inhabited the site for over 5,000 years, and that the Vikings lived and worked there about 1,000 years ago.

To allow all participants to visit this UNESCO World Heritage Site, the foray will begin with a mycoblitze of L'Anse aux Meadows National Historic Site on Friday. Participants will be

divided into small groups that collect in designated parts of the Site. Afterwards a reception, complete with a welcome by Viking enactors, will be held at the National Historic Site. Saturday will consist of forays along trails in the ecoregion. Participants will collect mushrooms from the Viking settlement and its environs, foraging where the Vikings may have foraged. Although mushrooms are harvested in the region today, a formal mycological survey has never been done, making this the first mycological census for the Site and its ecoregion. Saturday's traditional wild mushroom cook-up will allow participants to sample mushrooms the Vikings may have eaten.

Evening talks and the Sunday morning sessions will teach identification of local mushrooms, advanced mycology, mushroom photography (both point and shoot and advanced SLR), mushroom growing (imported edibles and local mushrooms for food, interest or decoration), collecting of edibles, preservation and cooking, and using mushrooms to dye fabrics.

If you wish to dine out on stories that you picked mushrooms with the Vikings, early registration is advised. In order to ensure a good foray experience, with camaraderie and a small participant-to-faculty ratio, numbers are limited and registrations are accepted on a first-come-first-served basis. Registration forms, directions, travel and other information are available on the Foray Newfoundland & Labrador website, www.nlmushrooms.ca.

Mycophiles traveling from out of province are advised to plan on a longer visit. There is more to explore in the area than can be seen during the foray. In addition, only a 4–5 hour drive away is another UNESCO World Heritage Site, spectacular Gros Morne National Park. This is an opportunity to experience the hospitality of Newfoundland and Labrador, to foray in an uncommon northern habitat and to explore two World Heritage Sites.

Those with more time, interested in exploring additional areas of natural beauty or historic significance can begin by searching the Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism web page www.newfoundlandlabrador.com or turn to the Foray's travel advisor, Thresa Burden of the Viking Trail Tourism Association: call 1-877-778-4546 or e-mail tburden@vtta.nf.ca.