

FOOD

Sample our unique bush tucker while you're down under...

A UNIQUELY AUSTRALIAN INVITATION

Traditional Aboriginal food – or bush tucker – sustained Australia's original inhabitants for millennia. Now bush tucker has come of age. Once only found in the diet of indigenous Australians, native foods are popping up on menus across the country and commercially produced versions are creeping onto the shelves of our supermarkets.

Aboriginal chef Mark Olive is showing how it is done on Australia's first indigenous cooking show, *The Outback Café*, while our restaurants are embracing more and more our locally grown bush tucker, the food found in our deserts and outback that has sustained our indigenous population for more than 50,000 years. As native foods gain a greater following, it's quite commonplace to find our restaurants adopting such flavourings and ingredients as lemon myrtle and bush tomatoes as part of a mod-Oz menu.

Australian native specialties such as warrigal (a spinach-like green), kangaroo and emu, macadamias and wattle seed are becoming more commonplace on menus – along with native mint, wild limes and native rosella – a member of the hibiscus family that's highly regarded by serious jam makers.

Bush tucker has gone mainstream as Australian chefs are experimenting more and more with its unusual and delicate flavours.

You can try an indigenous restaurant or eat in a gourmet restaurant that just happens to have native ingredients or Aussie dishes such as emu or kangaroo on the menu. Or you can go bush on a bush tucker tour with Aboriginal Australians in our outback. They'll lead you back through time to places where you can find and cook our native bush foods in the wild. They'll show you how they've survived off the land for centuries, by catching animals, digging up roots, eating leaves and even using them as medicine.

You can take your senses on a 50,000 year journey, hunt and cook, or simply taste 'bush tucker'. Or, you can choose to buy some native produce at a local market and cook up a storm. Either way, be sure not to miss the opportunity to taste the world's oldest cuisine.

Key Aboriginal food facts

- The term bush tucker refers to the varieties and species of native Australian fruits, seeds, nuts, fungi, mammals, reptiles, fish and birds that sustained indigenous Australians for 50,000 years or more before white settlement.¹
- Kangaroo meat has no cholesterol and is extremely low in fat.
- The macadamia nut was Australia's first commercially grown and exported bush food. They have impossibly hard shells, are high in monounsaturated fats, and have been shown to reduce cholesterol and lower the risk of heart disease.
- Other boom industries lie in wait, including kangaroo apple, while trials of bush tomatoes, quandongs and native citrus are occurring

at farms nationwide. Aussie scientists are also doing extensive research on developing bush foods from its current status as a cottage industry.

- Native foods and ingredients – berries, nuts, herbs and spices – are also used in making indigenous beauty and massage products which are used in spas and salons across the country.
- A nomadic people, Aboriginal groups moved with the seasons to give the land time to recuperate and to where they knew various food sources would be available, such as to NSW for the annual Bogong moth migrations.²
- Aboriginal people learnt how to use poisonous berries and wash out or neutralise the toxins in order use them as medicine or to make them more palatable and nutritious.
- The influence of native foods on contemporary Australian cuisine has seen chefs using lemon aspen and myrtle (not unlike lemongrass), bush tomatoes, Illawarra plums, lilli pillies and muntari berries, often blended with traditional dishes of meat and fish. Other bush tucker includes quandongs (native peach), wattle seeds (a nutty, mocha flavour sometimes used in ice-cream), Kakadu plums (less sweet than the usual varieties) and bunya bunya nuts (delicious in satay sauces), witchetty (witjuti) grubs (large grubs found in the trunks and roots of certain wattle trees) and bogong moths (a hefty migratory moth roasted in a fire and eaten like peanuts).

Uniquely Australian

- **Eat in a restaurant serving bush tucker** such as the famed Red Ochre Grills in Adelaide or Cairns.
- **Order native products** such as desert flakes, saltbush, rivermint, pepperberry, lemon myrtle, and Kutjera (Desert Raisin) online from Outback Pride on The Outback Café website; then use them to prepare the recipes also found online such as yabbie salad, flash damper, lemon myrtle barramundi or sugarbag honey crumble. There's also a complete directory of community information on how the food is produced and where to find indigenous suppliers Australia wide.
- **Pick up a copy of *The Outback Café* cookbook** where you'll find a host of innovative recipes using native ingredients, or order it online.
- **See the *The Outback Café* starring Aboriginal chef Mark Olive** – aka the Black Olive. A chef for more than 20 years, Olive started Melbourne's first indigenous restaurant. The show will teach you how to make Bush Tucker Pizza or Wallaby Stack.
- **Try some indigenous wine** from Murrin Bridge estate, our first indigenous wine label started in 2001. The grapes are grown in Wiradjuri country in the Riverina of Western NSW. The Murrin Bridge





Aboriginal community planted vines in 1998 and, in 2001 produced their first vintage. The wine is now widely available.

- **Drive to Brewarrina** 90 km east of Bourke on the Kamilaroi Highway. In one of the great inter-tribal meeting places of Eastern Australia, you'll come across Fish Traps (or Nggunhu) which sustained thousands of Aboriginal people during tribal gatherings over the centuries. Roughly 40,000 years old, the Fish Traps are elaborate man-made stone constructions in the riverbed.
- **Dine under a million stars** at the award winning Sounds of Silence Bush restaurant at Uluru. Dine on an all inclusive gourmet BBQ of Australian delicacies such as kangaroo, barramundi and buffalo, then sit back and take in the mystery of the desert at night as an astronomer takes you on a tour of the clear Southern night skies.
- **See the beautiful Mutitjulu Waterhole**, whose life-giving waters have been drunk by generations of Aboriginal people, where you discover local bush foods and hear tales of desert survival on a Kuniya Siunset Tour in Uluru.
- **Learn about traditional sources of bush food and medicine** and sample bush foods such as witchetty grubs, bloodwood apples and bush bananas on a bushtucker tour in the Northern Territory with Dreamtime Tours.
- **Join an Aboriginal wetlands tour.** On a three-day eco-tour in the Aurukun Wetlands with the Wik and Wik Way people, swim in a natural waterhole, fish for breakfast and harvest the delicate honey of native sting-less bees.
- **The Top End is an open-air bush food larder** but it takes an expert to tell the difference between a ripe bush passionfruit and one that will give you stomach ache. Only two operators are licensed to take tours into Arnhem Land and on these tours you'll be led by Aboriginal guides.
- **Join Lindsay Bookie, a senior traditional owner**, who runs Lincartan Bushtucker Tours out in the middle of the Simpson Desert. Lindsay wakes at four every morning to get the fire ready for his guests. He will be your tour guide, catch bushtucker, then prepare your dinner and entertain you at night.
- **Eat witchetty grubs and fresh crab** and go swimming in the Arafura Sea with the Tiwi people on the Tiwi Islands of Melville and Bathurst, across Darwin. Explore the bush and maybe come across some Torres Strait islanders cooking a lizard as part of their traditional meal.
- **Dine at Bilngkumu Restaurant** in the Daintree Village surrounded by the rainforest. The food uses fresh Queensland produce and native indigenous plants.
- **For Australian cuisine infused with gourmet bush tucker**, enjoy the dining experience at Julaymba Restaurant at Daintree Eco Lodge in the Daintree rainforest, where the menu has been designed in consultation with the local Aboriginal Kuku Yalanji people and uses food gathered from around the property.
- **Join Jirrbal guides for a half-day walk** along a forest track following a traditional Aboriginal trading route, stopping for lunch at a spectacular rainforest waterhole. You'll learn about rainforest species and their traditional uses as bush tucker.
- **Take a bushtucker workshop at The Dilly Bag**, in historic Eumundi, run by an indigenous female chef, Dale Scott, who also produces a range of bushtucker products.
- **Sample indigenous ingredients** while watching an Aboriginal performance at Flames of the Forest, a rainforest dining experience in Cairns, which features dishes such as Australian bush damper with smoked semi dried tomato & lemon myrtle pesto oil.
- **See bush foods grown** at Reedy Creek Nursery in South Australia. This nursery supplies bush food plants to indigenous communities around Australia for commercial propagation.
- **See the bush fruit growing enterprise** run by members of the Nepabunna indigenous community in South Australia's Flinders Ranges. They grow quandong (urti) and desert apple (kutjera). Jump into a ute with the locals, including kids, to see the Malkawi cave paintings.
- **Order the feral mixed grill at the Prairie Hotel**, Parachilna or try the innovative, contemporary dishes incorporating Australian native ingredients such as kangaroo, emu, quandongs and bush tomatoes.
- **Go on an outback bush tucker and bush medicine tour** in the Flinders Ranges at Iga Warta with members of the Adnyamathanha culture.
- **Try bushtucker in the bush** when you go on a Pepperbush Bush Tucker Experience Tour into the Tasmanian bush. You'll eat specialities such as Tasmanian Three Spice Trout (lemon myrtle, mountain pepper and native kunzea) on a salad bed, or Mountain Burgers with pickle-berry sauce, or Wallaby Tenderloins.
- **Eat at the Bush Food Café** on a visit to the Brambuk Aboriginal Cultural Centre in the Grampians of Victoria. Go on a guided walk, taste bush tucker food and visit the centre's garden.
- **Try the tapas tucker at Tjanabi @ Fed** in Melbourne, an upmarket bush food restaurant which recently reopened in Federation Square. It features native game meats and native Australian produce.
- **Try bush-tomato dip and marinated kangaroo kebabs** as you listen to the didgeridoo played and stories told at The River Retreat in the Swan Valley wine region of Western Australia. Storytelling and didgeridoo-playing combine with authentic bush food to create an Aboriginal cultural experience.
- **Visit the Wardandi community** at Yallingup in the Margaret River region of Western Australia and follow the 1 km Bush Story Trail. Ask the men from the community to show you where abalone can still be found in rock pools on the beach and the women to take you into the bush to find witchetty (witchuti) grubs, sea celery and sea cabbage.
- **Join a bush tucker tour** at Kooljaman, an upmarket tented safari-style camp at Cape Leveque in Western Australia. Learn about local bush foods, join a fishing party or go mud-crabbing with a local guide. Light a fire, cook your catch and eat it; this has to be one of life's great experiences.
- **Spend the day with tour guide Doc**, a top indigenous advisor, at Esperance in Western Australia. Learn about gathering 'bush tucker', bush medicine and how to find fresh drinking water - even at the beach.

For further information please contact:

Tourism Australia
International Media Relations
GPO Box 2721
Sydney NSW 1006
Phone: +61 2 9360 1111
Email: internationalmedia@tourism.australia.com
www.australia.com



1 Ibid
2 <http://www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au/articles/foodanddrink/index.htm>