

Native Bush Foods

Bush foods are native to Australia. It's often said that for thousands of years, the Australian bush was the original supermarket, providing food and water in abundance.

Bush foods include plants, vegetables, fruits, nuts, or berries that grow in the natural Australian habitat. People even use native flowers or herbs for culinary and medicinal purposes. The term bush food also includes native meat such as kangaroo and emu too.

Bush foods are commonly eaten by Aboriginal Australians, but you can find lots of bush foods in supermarkets in Australia today and more people are re-discovering the use of native bush foods. Many people also refer to it as 'bush tucker'.

Bush foods words:

Mai: means food from plants and includes vegetables, fruits and seeds.

Tjuritja: means sweet food such as honey.

Kuka: means edible animals.

Maku: means edible grubs (like the witchetty grub).

Examples of bush fruit and vegetables in Australia:

Bush vegetables	Bush fruits
Bush Yam	Davidson Plum
Karkalla	Finger lime
Longleaf Mat Rush	Kutjera
Native Leek	Lemon Aspen
Native Spinach	Lilly Pilly
Native Wintercress	Passion fruit
Solanums	Riberries
Tjanma ta	Ruby Saltbush
Warrigal Greens	Syzygium
Youlk	Quandong

Native bush fruits and vegetables often found in NSW



Davidson plum

Sour fruit is edible when ripens to purple.



Lilly Pilly

Fruit can be eaten fresh or made into jam.



Wattleseed

Ripe seeds can be roasted and ground into a flour for baking.



Finger lime

Small finger sized fruit can be eaten fresh. Has a citrus flavour.

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Mountain pepper

Both the leaves and berries can be dried and used as a cooking spice, and when milled, the hardened berries make for a terrific substitute for conventional pepper.



Quandong

The quandong is one of Australia's most versatile bush foods. Sweet and tangy and full of Vitamin c.



Ruby Saltbush

Small, red berries are edible and taste bit salty and sweet.



Samphire

Marsh samphire has vibrant green stalks, similar to baby asparagus, with a distinctively crisp and salty taste.



Warrigal greens

Blanched leaves used like spinach

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Lemongrass

Native Lemongrass is an aromatic grass, with a strong citrus odour, traditionally used in Aboriginal medicine to treat flu symptoms, chest infections and skin sores.



Sydney golden wattle

Green seeds can be eaten once roasted.



Lemon Myrtle

Fresh or dried leaves can be used to make tea or lemon flavouring for baking and cooking.



Coastal Banksia

There are 173 Banksia species, and all but one occur naturally only in Australia

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Grevilleas (spider flower)

Nectar can be soaked to make a cordial or eaten fresh from flowers.



Bush tomato

There are more than 100 Solanum species in Australia, but only a half-dozen are edible and the unripe fruits of these are toxic. This is a small, arid-zone shrub whose ripe fruits have a savoury, robust flavour similar to sun-dried tomatoes.



Kangaroo grass

Seeds can be ground and used as a gluten free flour substitute.



Native raspberry

Edible fruit, tastes like raspberry.

Cooking with native bush fruits and vegetables

<p>Lemon myrtle</p>	<p>Flavour: This herb has a clean and crisp lemon flavour.</p> <p>Use: Can be substituted in almost any recipe that calls for lemon or lemongrass. Example in salads, dressings and sauces.</p>
<p>Mountain pepper</p>	<p>Flavour: The leaves have a strong peppery taste.</p> <p>Use: Can be used fresh to add a lot of flavour to both sweet and savoury dishes, especially pastas and purees.</p>
<p>Wattle seeds</p>	<p>Flavour: This seed has a chocolate hazelnut flavour.</p> <p>Use: Great in breads, savoury recipes e.g. curries, and salads. Can also be used to thicken sauces.</p>
<p>Native gooseberries</p>	<p>Flavour: The flavour of these berries ranges from sour to sweet. The riper they are, the sweeter they are.</p> <p>Use: They can be used in desserts, jams, chutneys and added to drinks.</p>
<p>Finger lime</p>	<p>Flavour: It has a fresh lemony-lime flavour.</p> <p>Use: Perfect in a salad dressing, to garnish a salad or add some zing to your water.</p>
<p>Davidson plum</p>	<p>Flavour: It has a sour fruity flavour.</p> <p>Use: Often used in jams, yoghurt and sauces. Can also be added to smoothies.</p>
<p>Quandong</p>	<p>Flavour: This fruit has a sweet taste with and slightly sour and salty aftertaste.</p> <p>Use: Can be eaten fresh but also dried and stored for future use. Often used in products like jams, sauces and juices</p>
<p>Saltbush</p>	<p>Flavour: This herb has a salty, herby flavour</p> <p>Use: Combines well with other bush spices like lemon myrtle in seasoning mixes. Saltbush flakes are also good in bread, grilled food and pasta.</p>
<p>Bush tomato</p>	<p>Flavour: Has an intense flavour and can be compared to sun-dried tomatoes.</p> <p>Use: Usually used in dried form. In scones and breads, salsa, relishes and chutneys. Can be used in salads, but boil first. Great for to be used as tomato sauce.</p>