

KAURNA COUNTRY TRADITIONAL FOODS, MEDICINES AND REMEDIES





Catalyst Foundation acknowledges and respects the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, sea and community.

We recognise the diversity of Aboriginal people and the importance of land, culture and heritage to the Elders and their communities. Catalyst Foundation desires to walk together with the Aboriginal community in parallel on a “Two Ways” journey of cultural and knowledge exchange.



Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people are advised that this brochure may contain images of deceased people.

WHO WE ARE

Catalyst Foundation is the leading provider of community information in South Australia focussing on areas such as home support, aged care services, disability, housing, independent living, digital literacy, retirement living and connecting people to services.



For 25 years, our core value and reason for being as an organisation is **people helping people**. We believe that knowledge is the key to people from all walks of life, families and carers accessing the information and services they need to make informed choices in this changing world.

We are governed by a Board of highly skilled, knowledgeable and committed individuals. Our Board and our staff believe in a culture of continually seeking to improve our services in an innovative and sustainable way.

We support and auspice small community organisations that align with our values and offer support and assistance to the community in our core service areas of disability, ageing, lifestyle, business and employment and learning.

For more information visit www.catalystfoundation.com.au

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The [Catalyst Foundation](#) project, *Positive Ageing in Kurna Country Communities through Traditional Foods, Medicines and Remedies*, was funded with the support of the [Office for Ageing Well, SA Health](#).

The project aimed to create awareness of the importance of retaining and collating information on Healing with Traditional Foods, Medicines and Remedies in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community as well as the wider community, this includes people such as GP's, medical centres health and community groups.

An essential project outcome was to involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities in the development of the booklet and the information continued within. The project also sought to increase community awareness of the value of these traditional resources and their importance to living culture.

One of the learnings of this project was the importance of storytelling and sharing of knowledge by the Elders with each other to the project to enable the development of this resource detailing the healing and health benefits of certain traditional foods, medicines and remedies found in Kurna culture. This resource is available through the Catalyst Foundation website and we hope it is widely read and used.

We wish to thank and acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and community groups who took part in this project and have contributed their valuable time, effort and knowledge in creating an informative resource which we hoped will prove valuable for all.

INDEX

WHO WE ARE	3
PROJECT BACKGROUND	4
INDEX	5
NATIVE LEMONGRASS	6
NATIVE PINE.....	7
YAM DAISY	7
QUANDONG.....	8
RECIPE: QUANGDONG SORBET FOR TWO.....	9
RED RIVER GUM.....	10
MUNTRIES.....	12
RECIPE: MUNTRIE, FIG AND PROSCIUTTO SALAD	13
PIGFACE KARKALLA	14
RECIPE: MUSHROOMS AND PIGFACE SCRAMBLED EGGS	15
KANGAROO MEAT	16
RECIPE: SPAGHETTI & KANGAROO MEATBALLS	17
WATTLE SEED.....	18
RECIPE: AUNTY STEPHANIE GOLLAN’S WATTLE SEED SCONE	19
BOWER SPINACH	20
RECIPE: GARLIC BUTTER BOWER SPINACH	20
CLAY, MUD & DIRT	21
NGANGKARI HEALERS.....	22
REFERENCES	23

NATIVE LEMONGRASS

This plant is found widely across Australia except in the cool temperate regions making South Australia's dry arid environment perfect conditions for this plant (Tucker Bush, 2018). Native Lemongrass is an aromatic grass, with a strong citrus smell (Tucker Bush, 2018).

Traditionally, Native Lemongrass is used medicinally by Aboriginal people to treat a variety of illnesses from colds and sore throats to diarrhoea, skin rashes and sores (NITV, 2017). The root of this grass also has medicinal properties; a remedy mixture can be applied to ears to soothe an ear ache (NITV, 2017).

Recent research by Griffith University in New South Wales, has also found Native Lemongrass to have medicinal properties in treating headaches and migraines (Gold Coast Bulletin, 2010). A five year study found, when boiled into a tea and consumed, Native Lemongrass is just as potent and effective in treating sufferers of chronic migraines (Gold Coast Bulletin, 2010).

Although traditionally Native Lemongrass is utilised medicinally, the leaves and stalks can be used in cooking and beverages or as a flavouring ingredient in teas, soups, curries, sauces, marinades and cakes (Tucker Bush, 2018). The essential oil produced by the grass is also valued and can be found in beauty and skincare products (Tucker Bush, 2018).



NATIVE PINE

The Native Pine, a pine that occurs naturally in most states of Australia (State Flora, 2015). In South Australia it is widespread mainly in the lower rainfall areas and is called Southern Cypress Pine, Native Pine or Murray pine (State Flora, 2015). In Western Australia it is commonly referred to as Rottnest Island Pine (State Flora, 2015). The Kurna name for this plant is 'Narnu' (City of Playford, 2011).



Medicinally, the leaves and twigs of the Native Pine can be boiled and placed on the chest as a cold and flu remedy (City of Playford, 2011). It can also be used to treat rashes as an ointment (City of Playford, 2011). Traditionally, for general illness, the Native Pine is burnt and used as 'smoking medicine' (City of Playford, 2011). The resinous woody sticks can also be used as natural teething sticks for babies (Aboriginal Plants in the Grounds of Monash University -A Guide, 2010).



YAM DAISY

The Yam Daisy is a member of the Australian yam family (SBS, 2018). This plant grows naturally in dry and cool environments of Southern and South Eastern parts of Australia (SBS, 2018).



A much loved staple food source for Indigenous Australians, Aboriginal Elders like Uncle Bruce Pascoe are helping educate on the importance of this food by revitalising their return to the Australian landscape (SBS, 2018). Common Aboriginal names for the Yam Daisy are 'Murnong' and 'Nyamin' (Tucker Bush, 2018). 'Kandara', is believed to be the Kurna name for Yam Daisy (City of Adelaide, 2019) Traditionally, the highly prized edible tubers of this plant were dug up, collected in

bulk and put into pit ovens for cooking (Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity, 2018). Yam Daisies when raw, taste sweet with a coconut and grassy flavour with texture like a radish however, when roasted or fried Yam Daisies taste similar to a salty potato (SBS, 2018). Yam Daisies can also be turned into a paste and used in desserts (Tucker Bush, 2018). Although traditionally the bitter tasting leaves were not eaten they are edible and can be added to salads as greens (SBS, 2018).

QUANDONG

Often referred to as Wild Peach, Native Peach and Desert Peach, Quandongs are probably one of the more well-known native fruit trees of Australia (Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation, 2014). This resilient and versatile fruit is drought-tolerant and grows wild throughout arid and semi-arid Southern Australia (Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation, 2014). Fruit is best harvested between August and October (City of Playford, 2011).



Traditionally, in the Kaurna language the Quandong is called ‘Gurti’. Other Aboriginal names for the Quandong are Guwandhuna, Gutchu, Wanjanu, Mangata, and Wadjal (Australian Native Foods and Botanicals, 2018). Fresh or dried, Quandongs have been an important source of food for Indigenous Australians for thousands of years (AgriFutures Australia, 2017). When dried, Quandongs have a strong shelf life and can be stored for up to eight years (ABC News, 2017). The main part of the Quandong eaten is the mature ripe fruit pulp. Although the inside kernels of the nut are also edible, the taste can vary and is generally considered unpleasant (AgriFutures Australia, 2017).

When ripe, the fruit of the Quandong tree is red in colour. The taste of Quandongs can be sour, tart, tangy and salty to sweet depending on the fruit tree harvested (AgriFutures Australia, 2017).

The smell is described as being similar to dry lentils and beans with earthy fermented notes (AgriFutures Australia, 2017). The texture of the Quandong fruit is very dry and has low moisture content when compared to other fruits (Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation, 2014). The flesh of the Quandong can be used to make delicious jams, sauces, relishes, desserts and syrups (Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation, 2014). This fruit also pairs really well with red meat such as grilled kangaroo.

Highly nutritious, Quandongs have powerful health benefits. Just 100 grams of dried Quandongs will provide more antioxidants when compared to blueberries and equal levels of vitamin E than an avocado (Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation, 2014). It will also provide 50% of the recommended daily intake of folate with rich sources of magnesium, zinc and iron (Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation, 2014).



RECIPE: QUANDONG SORBET FOR TWO

Ingredients

4 cups quandong, peeled, seeded and pureed

1/2 cup sugar

1/2 cup water

Oil for brushing tin

Method:

Make sugar syrup by bringing sugar and water to the boil. Reduce heat and simmer until sugar has dissolved. Remove from heat and allow cooling then adding the quandong puree. Brush tin or individual cups with oil. Pour in the sorbet mixture and freeze until firm. Turn out the sorbet loaf onto a serving platter or serve individual cups. Add the quandong sauce (see below) and serve.

Quandong Sauce

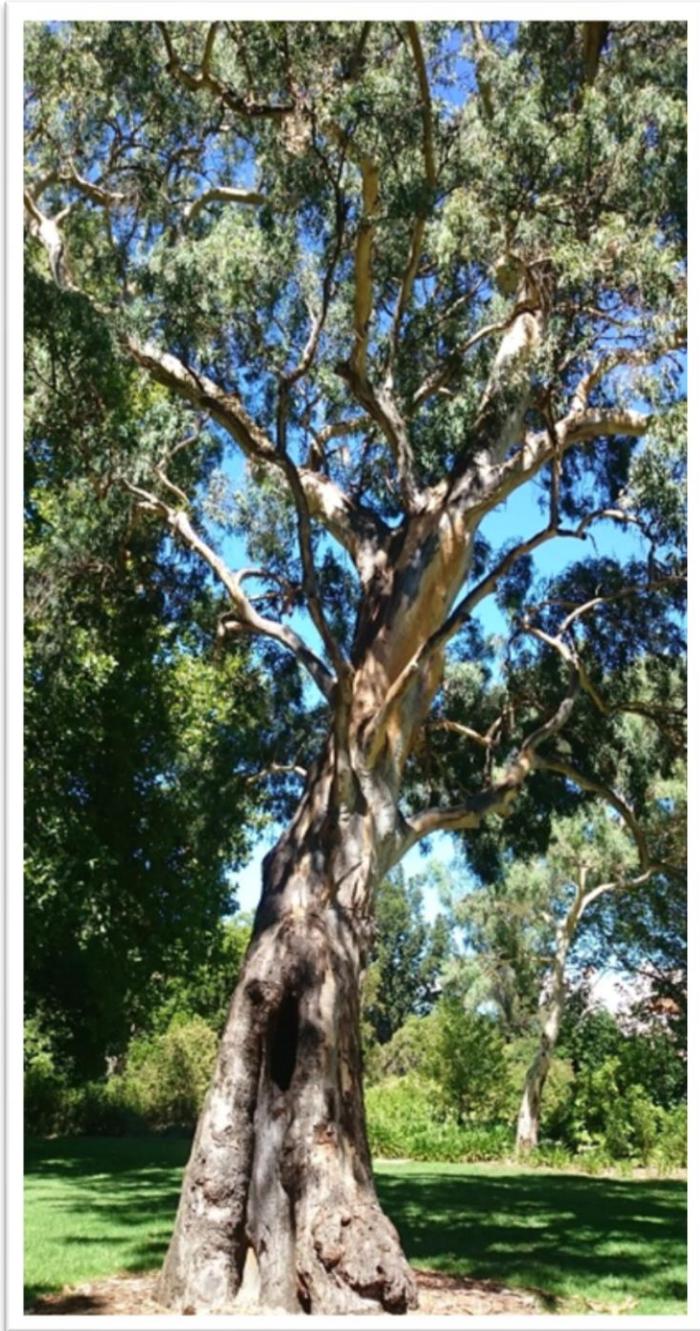
3 cups fresh quandongs

1/2 teaspoon vanilla essence

Place ingredients in a blender and process until smooth. Spoon into serving bowls and serve with the sorbets.



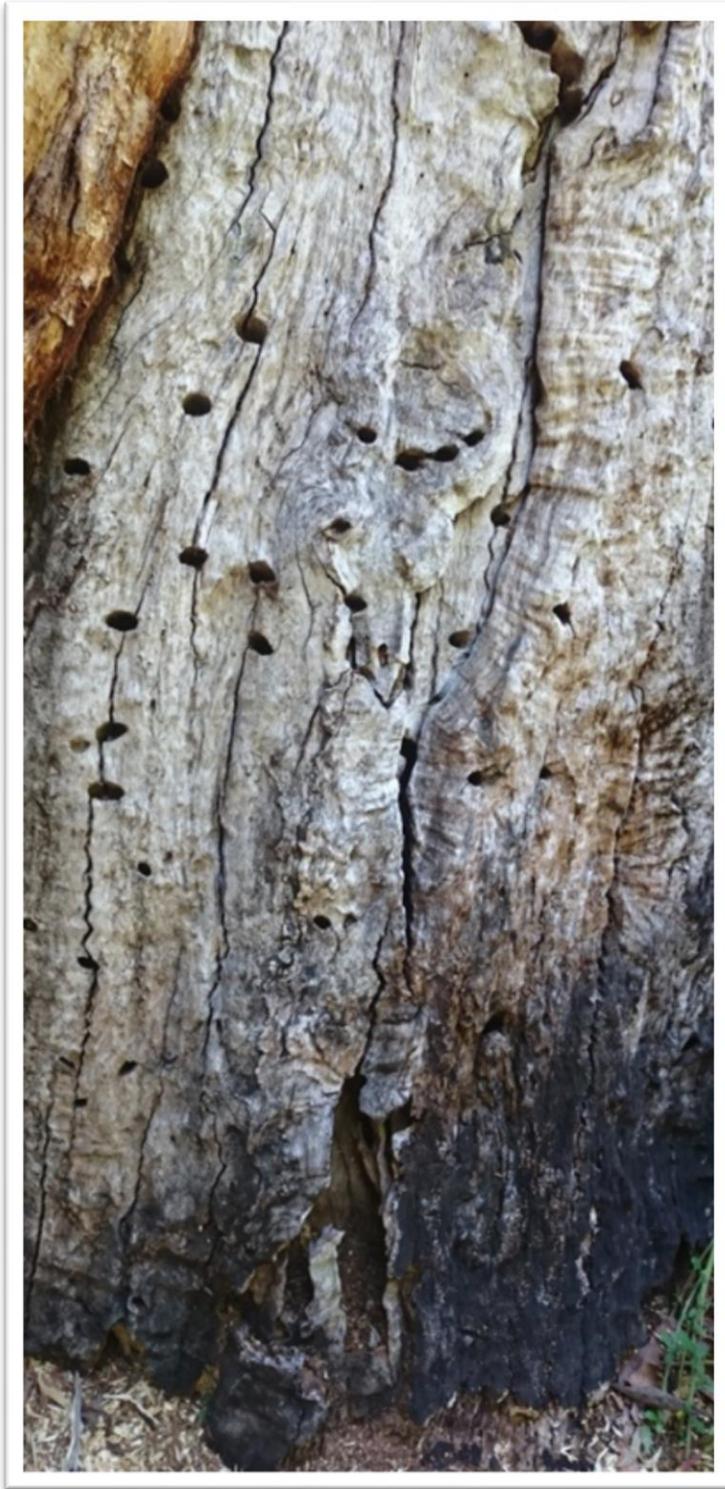
RIVER RED GUM



The River Red Gum Eucalyptus is the most widely distributed eucalyptus species in Australia (Discover Murray Mallee Australia's Great River, 2019). Commonly called 'Red Gum' because of its red heartwood, it is one of the best known and loved trees in the Australian landscape (State Flora, 2015). River Red Gums can be found in all southern mainland states (State Flora, 2015).

The Kurna name is 'Karra'. Traditionally Kurna Country people as well as other Aboriginal Countries used the tree for its medicinal properties. Strong supporting evidence has been documented of the antiseptic properties of the essential oils found in the leaves of this tree (Natural Medicinal Herbs, 2018). Coughs, colds, sore throats and other respiratory type infections can be relieved by crushing, boiling and rubbing a handful of young leaves over the chest (Natural Medicinal Herbs, 2018).

Young leaves were also heated in a pit over hot coals, and the vapours were inhaled, which helped with the treatment of general sickness (Discover Murray Mallee Australia's Great River, 2019). Aunty Stephanie Gollan, Kurna and Ngarrindjeri Aboriginal Elder, shares her best remedy during winter is to crush a handful of young leaves in a hankie and inhale to clear away any cold and flu symptoms.



Other medicinal properties can be found in the gum and heartwood of the River Red Gum.

The gum or sap of the tree has health benefits with its high tannin content which can be used to seal burns and cuts (Woolshed Thurgoona Landcare Group, 2019). While the heartwood can be diluted in boiled water and used to treat diarrhoea in children.

Although prized mostly for its medicinal value, the River Red Gum is also an important indirect source of food for Aboriginal people. Native bees provide a mild and good flavoured tasting honey while a variety of native birds produce a precious protein source through eggs and meat.

MUNTRIES

Muntries are a wild shrub which can grow both coastally and inland in South Australia and some parts of Victoria (AgriFutures Australia, 2017). This low ground cover shrub grows small berries which can vary in colour from green to red and purple as they ripen



(Native Tastes of Australia, 2019). Depending on the variety, muntries can be harvested from early February to early April (South Australian Native Foods Association, 2018).

Muntries can be eaten fresh, used in desserts and salads, or processed into a range of products such as jams, chutneys and ice cream (Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation, 2014). Flavour wise, the taste of muntries have been likened to a sweet apple with a hint of spice resembling juniper berry (South Australian Native Foods Association, 2018).

In the Aboriginal Kaurna language muntries are known as ‘Mantirri’ or ‘Mantiri’. Other Aboriginal names include Munthari, Munta and Mantari. Muntries scientific name Kunzel Pomifera is also sometimes referred to as Munterberries, Emu Apple and Native Cranberry (Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation, 2014).

Traditionally, muntries were highly valued, much loved in Aboriginal culture and were consumed fresh and cooked.

Aboriginal Elders share stories of excess berries being pounded into a pulp, shaped into flat cakes and sun dried for later consumption. Another way was to bake in cakes for use later in the months not available. Some Aboriginal groups were well-known to trade the muntrie flat cakes for weapons and other commodities.

Known health benefits associated with muntries include high levels of vitamin C and antioxidants (AgriFutures Australia, 2017). In fact, studies have shown muntries to have the richest sources of antioxidants among fruits (AgriFutures Australia, 2017). Muntries also contain calcium, magnesium, iron, potassium, sodium and fibre (Australian Native SuperFoods, 2018). In recent years, antioxidants and their health benefits have been widely researched and maybe beneficial in heart health, wound healing, lowering risk of infections, and cancer (AgriFutures Australia, 2017).

RECIPE: MUNTRIE, FIG AND PROSCIUTTO SALAD

Serves 4-6

Ingredients:

450g prosciutto, thinly sliced

200g fresh or frozen muntries, thawed out

4 large ripe figs, sliced in eighths

4 peaches, stone removed and quartered

2 mozzarella or burrata balls, ripped into pieces

Extra Virgin Cold Pressed Olive oil

Balsamic Vinegar

A few sprigs of mint, picked

A few sprigs of basil

Salt and pepper to taste

Method:

Layer the meat and mozzarella on the base of your serving platter and in between it tuck in the peach and figs. Generously scatter over your muntries, picked herbs and then drizzle over the oil and vinegar. Season with salt and pepper and enjoy.



PIGFACE KARKALLA

Pigface is an all year round native succulent plant known in the Kaurna language as 'Karkalla' (City of Playford, 2011). Pigface has distinctive thick green curvy leaves with purple or dark pink flowers (SBS, 2018). Predominantly, Pigface grows along coastal areas of South Australia, in- land areas around South Australia and other parts of Australia. This low-maintenance plant also grows well in dry and rocky regions (City of Playford, 2011).



Pigface plant's flowers are said to resemble a pig's face, hence where the name for this unusual plant comes from (SBS, 2018). Other common names are Ice Plant, Beach Banana and Karkalla (SBS, 2018).

Traditionally, Aboriginal people have used Pigface fresh and dried as a valuable food source, squeezing the fruit between their fingers and dropping the luscious juice into their mouth (South Australian Native Foods Association, 2018). The leaves were also used to accompany meat to give it a salty flavour (South Australian Native Foods Association, 2018).



The texture of the fruit is described as jelly-like comparable to a kiwi fruit or strawberries with a salty fig -like flavour. The leaves are fleshy and high in salt which makes it a great salt substitute in salads, meat, egg dishes and seafood (SBS, 2018). The fruit also works well in pickles, jams and chutneys (South Australian Native Foods Association, 2018).

From a nutrition and health perspective, every part of this plant is fit for human consumption including its water (SBS, 2018). The juice extracted from this plant, has similar properties to Aloe Vera and can be used to soothe burns, bites, stings and aide in digestion (SBS, 2018). Laboratory studies also show Pigface extracts to have significant antioxidant, antiplatelet, and anti-inflammatory activity (South Australian Native Foods Association, 2018).

RECIPE: MUSHROOMS AND PIGFACE SCRAMBLED EGGS

Serves 1

Ingredients:

2 eggs

1/2 Cup fresh pigface leaves

1/2 Cup mushrooms (sliced)

2 Teaspoons Butter or Ghee

Cracked Black Pepper to taste

Method:

Scramble eggs in a bowl and set aside

Sautee fresh pigface and sliced mushrooms on medium heat in melted butter or ghee until slightly soft.

Stir in eggs creating ribbon patterns in pan until eggs are set to liking.

Take off heat, add cracked black pepper to taste and serve with toasted wood fire bread.



KANGAROO MEAT

Kangaroos are a unique animal to Australia and its meat as a source of protein is gaining popularity. Having adapted to the Australian environment, the world's largest marsupial is a robust animal which can survive extreme temperatures and can go without water for long periods of time (SBS, 2018).

Kangaroos are also less destructive and have a smaller impact on the land than sheep and cattle, making their meat a greener option for many Australians (Sustainable Table, 2017). The most common species harvested for human consumption in South Australia are the Red, Common Wallaroo and Western Grey (Sustainable Table, 2017).

For Indigenous Australians, kangaroos play an integral role in culture. For thousands of years, kangaroos were hunted for their meat to eat and skins to wear during the colder climate months (Native Tastes of Australia, 2019). Depending on the type of kangaroo being described, the Kaurna people have distinctive words for each one (Kaurna WarraPintyanthi, 2019). For the male red kangaroo 'Tarnda', the female red kangaroo 'Kurlo', male grey kangaroo 'Nanto', female grey kangaroo 'Wauwe' (Kaurna WarraPintyanthi, 2019).

Kangaroo meat has a rich flavour similar to lean beef without being overpowering and masking other flavourings when added to it (KIAA, 2018). This is most likely attributed to the natural vegetation kangaroos eat (Sustainable Table, 2017). Many different types of cuts are available from butchers and supermarkets with the cost often being cheaper than beef and lamb. The meat is very versatile to cook with and can be prepared in a variety of ways from, slow cooked dishes to BBQs (K-ROO, 2018).

Health wise, kangaroo meat is free from human intervention, antibiotics, added growth hormones or chemicals (KIAA, 2018). Kangaroo is a very lean low fat meat and the fat it does contain is mostly polyunsaturated (K-ROO, 2018). This is why it is considered to be one of the healthiest sources of animal protein to consume from the red meat group (K-ROO, 2018).

Kangaroo meat also contains important minerals, in particular Iron, for a healthy immune system, energy production and movement of oxygen around the body (K-ROO, 2018). Zinc, another important mineral, can also be found in kangaroo meat and is essential for growth, development, wound healing and healthy immune function (K-ROO, 2018). Zinc also helps protect against cellular damage and promotes maintenance of healthy hair, nails and hormonal balance (K-ROO, 2018).

RECIPE: SPAGHETTI & KANGAROO MEATBALLS

Serves 4-6

Ingredients:

1kg Kangaroo Mince
1.5 cups fresh breadcrumbs
2 eggs
2 garlic cloves, crushed
1 tbsp olive oil, for frying
1 cup grated parmesan cheese
1/3 cup flat-leaf parsley, chopped
2 tsp dried oregano
500g spaghetti or spiralled zucchini for gluten free option
Cracked black pepper to taste



SAUCE

3 x 400g canned chopped tomatoes
1 tbsp olive oil
1 onion, finely diced
1 cup fresh basil leaves
Cracked black pepper to taste

Method:

In a bowl, combine kangaroo mince, breadcrumbs, parsley, egg, garlic and parmesan, season with pepper. Roll mixture in to balls (approximately 1 tablespoon each) and chill for 30 minutes.

Heat oil in a frying pan and fry meatballs in batches until brown. Remove and drain off oil on paper towels.

To make sauce, heat oil in a pan, fry the onions until softened. Add the canned tomatoes, cover and bring to boil. Reduce heat to low and simmer, partially covered for 20 minutes.

Return meatballs along with basil to the pan, allow to simmer uncovered for a further 10 minutes or until cooked through.

Serve meatballs and sauce over cooked spaghetti. Sprinkle with parmesan.

WATTLE SEED

There are hundreds of species of wattle found in Australia; few have the intensity of flavour as the seed of the Elegant Wattle or *Acacia victoriae* (Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation, 2014). Other species include *Acacia murrayana*, *pycnantha*, *retinodes*, *rivalis*, *saligna*, *microbotrya* and *jennerae* (Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation, 2014). The Elegant Wattle can survive tough weather conditions and has broad geographic reach into Australia's Central Desert region, South Australia, Western Australia and New South Wales (Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation, 2014).



Wattle seed has been a diet staple for Indigenous Australians for thousands of years (Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation, 2014). The *pycnantha* species more commonly known as the Golden Wattle is identified as 'Mirnu' to the Kurna people in South Australia (City of Adelaide, 2019). Traditionally, wattle seed was collected by Aboriginal women and ground with a 'Tawirti' (grindstone) into a flour to make 'Johnny Cakes', a flat pancake/bread which is high in protein, carbohydrates, making it a perfect food source to take on long hunting expeditions (City of Adelaide, 2019).



In more modern times, wattle seed is seen as a versatile ingredient which can be used in both sweet and savoury recipes (Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation, 2014). When lightly roasted, wattle seed has a nutty flavour and when roasted longer a more chicory taste, creating a perfect caffeine-free coffee alternative (Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation, 2014). With its unique flavour profile, ice cream and cakes carry the flavour well as do more robust dishes such as curries and casseroles (Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation, 2014).

From a health perspective, wattle seed is a certified low glycaemic index (GI) food, which is beneficial to people with diabetes, as the sugars in the seed are released much slower into the blood stream than other seeds and grains (Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation, 2014). Studies also show high levels of protein as well as good sources of magnesium, zinc, calcium, iron and selenium (Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation, 2014).

RECIPE: AUNTY STEPHANIE GOLLAN'S WATTLE SEED SCONE

“

You only need three ingredients to make wattle seed scones.

I use white flour but to make healthier you can use wholemeal. Then your wattle seeds, about a tablespoon and water. Mix together, to make dough. Cut into scone form and place in oven at 200 degrees Celsius until cooked. You will know from the tops turning brown.

When cool place in a tea towel and then place in plastic freezer bag to keep them soft!

”



BOWER SPINACH

Bower Spinach is a native green from the Ice-plant family which grows along the South Australian coastline on cliffs, sand dunes and in foreshore scrub but occasionally extends inland along tidal or brackish waterways (Agriculture Victoria, 2019). It can also be found growing in Victoria, Western Australia, New South Wales and Tasmania (Agriculture Victoria, 2019).



Traditionally, this valuable green leaf plant is used as a food source by Indigenous Australians. The broad green leaves have a delicate salty flavour of the sea with a crisp texture (Wild Pepper Isle, 2017). When fruiting, the plant produces juicy red berries which are edible and have a delicious sweet and salty flavour (Wild Pepper Isle, 2017).

There are many valuable health benefits associated with Bower Spinach, a rich source of beta-carotene, which benefits eyesight. Beta-carotene can be converted to vitamin A (DoveMed, 2018). This can help prevent vitamin A deficiency, itching eyes, eye ulcers, and dry eyes. Bower Spinach also contains Vitamin K which can help with calcium absorption and keeping our bones healthy and strong (DoveMed, 2018). Good sources of vitamins C and B as well as minerals such as magnesium and potassium can also be found in Bower Spinach (DoveMed, 2018).



RECIPE: GARLIC BUTTER BOWER SPINACH

Ingredients:

1 cup Bower Spinach

1-2 cloves garlic

1 tablespoon butter or olive oil

Method:

Sauté 1 cup of Bower Spinach in garlic butter for a couple of minutes.

Add black pepper and a squeeze of lemon to taste

Serve alongside your favourite grilled fish or seafood.



CLAY, MUD & DIRT

Geophagy, often seen in the animal kingdom where animals ingest small amounts of clay, dirt or mud to deactivate toxins in the stomach prior to being absorbed and poisoning the body (Australian Geographic, 2012). By eating small amounts, some animals can actually tolerate poisonous plants and therefore access an otherwise unavailable food source (Australian Geographic, 2012).



Indigenous cultures, including the Australian Aboriginals, also embraced this technique medicinally (Australian Geographic, 2012). Beneficial absorption and binding powers of clay minerals help cure gastrointestinal toxins produced by infection, allowing inclusion of toxic plants into the Aboriginal diet without getting sick (Australian Geographic, 2012). Topically, direct application of specific types of soil was also used on fresh wounds (Australian Geographic, 2012). A carefully selected KNOWN source of mud or sediment can be used to relieve and act as a physical barrier to slow down the growth of infections on open wounds (Australian Geographic, 2012).

Some health professionals such as Nutrition experts also believe the practice of geophagy, in particular consuming small amounts of certain clays; can help in the detoxification process of the body with health benefits seen in healthier skin and anti-ageing (Herb n' Clay, 2019).

Researchers in South Australia are also investigating how certain types of clay can help improve health outcomes (University of South Australia, 2018). Through the digestive system, researchers at the University of South Australia believe clay can absorb, pass fat and aide in weight loss for patients classified as obese and are at higher risk of serious health conditions such as cardiovascular disease, type II diabetes, and some cancers (University of South Australia, 2018).

NGANGKARI HEALERS

Aboriginal healers referred to as ‘Ngangkari’, which means ‘Healer’, are unique in the sense a person is born with the ability to become a healer. Through family



blood lines, the teachings and knowledge are passed down. If the gift of being a healer is recognised in a person regardless of age, family and community members acknowledge this ability and give recognition of “doctor like” status to the person and their ability to heal.

Extensive knowledge and innate abilities allow Ngangkari to interpret symptoms and provide treatment options based on a patient’s ailments. Four main healing practices used by Ngangkari include healing touch, visual cleansing, bush medicines and spirit realignment.



Pain and blockages can be removed through a healer’s hands. Healers consider the spirit as a fundamental part of a person's body and help patients reconnect to culture. This is important as it helps Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people become stronger, more resilient and have better coping mechanisms in life.

Recognition of traditional healing practices by medical bodies in Australia has enabled more Ngangkari to work alongside Doctors and medical staff in community health clinics and hospitals. Although the majority of the patients seen by Ngangkari are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, the healing options are offered and open to anyone. To find out more about Ngangkari healing visit www.antac.org.au

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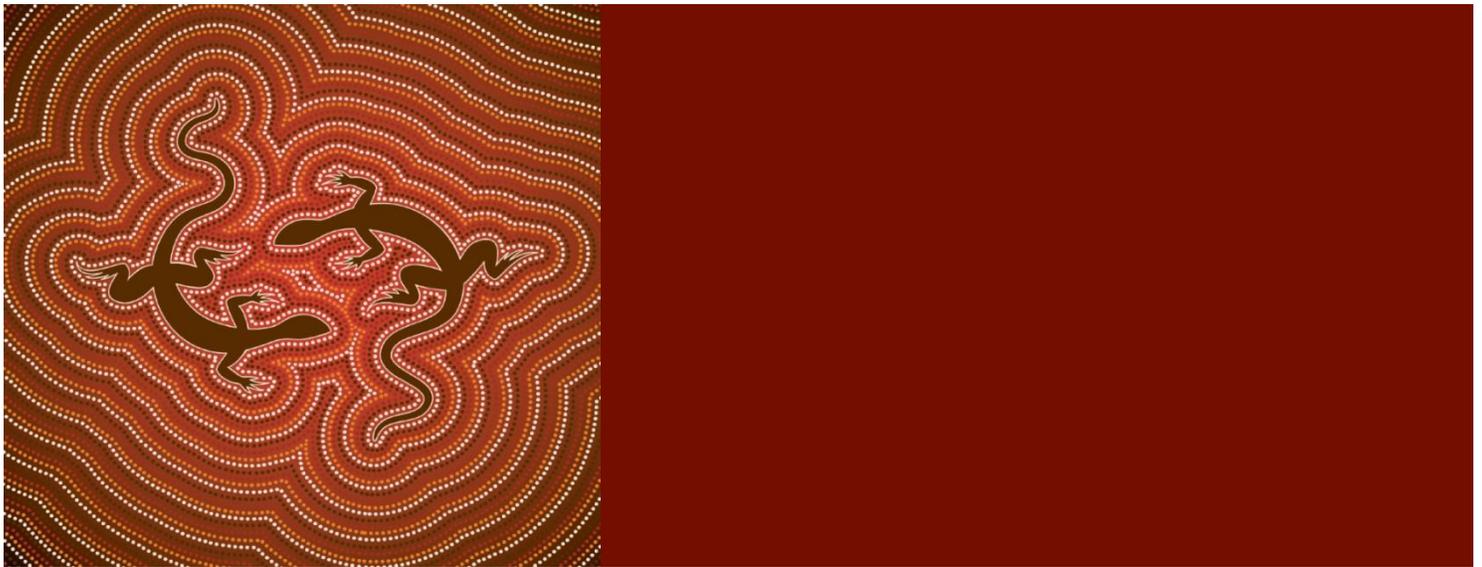
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