

From Rock Oysters with Green Ants to Davidson's Plum Lamington. A bushfood menu.

October 2025

In 2025 Elder Bruno Dann and Tahlia Mandie published *The Australian Ingredients Kitchen - Simple recipes using bushfoods*.¹ To my knowledge that's the most recent bushfoods cookery book written by Indigenous persons. It's given me the opportunity to look over the other Indigenous authored bushfood books I have (eight of them) and build up a menu from them. They cover the years from 2001 – 2025.

The term 'bushfood' in this article means native plant matter – seeds, roots, fruit, leaves, flowers, stems, nuts – insects and insect matter.

What the Menu shows is a small part of the range of bushfood ingredients now available. Damien Coulthard and Rebecca Sullivan in their *First Nations Food Companion*² list 60 currently at commercial scale. They list another 39 as not yet commercially available.

The Menu gives a sense of the variety of dishes in which bushfood ingredients appear. I have included here one recipe per entry except in two instances where the dish is composed of several elements.

The items on the Menu run in customary format dish by dish and not by date order.

What is very clear is that bushfoods have a place at the multiculinary Australian table.

A Bushfood Menu

The earliest Indigenous authored bushfood cookery book I have come across was Mark Olives' 2006 *Outback Café A taste of Australia*.³ This menu begins with one of his recipes.

Bread

Damper for Vegans with Eucalyptus Butter

Mark Olive's Outback Café⁴

Mark Olive

In the last five years I've seen food trends change and grow significantly, along with people's general awareness. Of indigenous produce and its place in our kitchens and classrooms as a sustainable food option. It's exciting to know this will only continue to move forward.

Damper for Vegans with Eucalyptus Butter

Ingredients

- 500g self-raising flour
- 15g sea parsley/ sea celery
- 15-20 ml macadamia nut oil
- 200ml approximately of soy milk

¹ In 2025 Dann, Elder Bruno and Mandie Tahlia *The Australian Ingredients Kitchen*. Murdoch Books 2025

² Coulthard Damien and Sullivan Rebecca first nations food companion Murdoch 2022

³ Olive, Mark *Outback Café A taste of Australia* R.M. Publishing 2006

⁴ Olive ... 2006 p.6

- 100g flaxseed or canola butter at room temperature
- 5 drops of eucalyptus oil specific for cooking

Method

Pre-heat oven to 180°C. Combine flour and sea celery in a bowl. Add the oil and milk and mix together roughly using your hands, making sure not to overwork the mixture. Roll into a rough log and divide into handful sized balls. Place the damper on to a flour dusted baking tray and bake in the oven for 15-20 minutes or until golden brown. Serve with Eucalyptus Butter. To make butter, mix eucalyptus oil and butter in a small bowl.

Makes 12 dinner roll size dampers.

Entrée

Rock Oysters With Finger Lime Balsamic Dressing, Finger Lime Pearls and Green Ants.

Indigiearth⁵

Sharon Winsor

I wrote *Bush Food and Botanicals* as an introduction for the reader to Australian Native foods and plants, where they come from and how to use them in your day-to-day cooking.

Rock Oysters With Finger Lime Balsamic Dressing, Finger Lime Pearls and Green Ants.

Ingredients

- Freshly shucked Rock Oysters
- Indigiearth's Lemon Myrtle & Finger Lime- Balsamic Dressing
- 6 – 8 Finger Limes, cut lengthwise
- 25g green ants
- Rock Salt
- Edible flowers (optional)

Method

1. Arrange oysters on a bed of rock salt.
2. Drizzle balsamic dressing over oysters
3. Remove pips of fruit from Finger Limes
4. Garnish with a teaspoon of Green Ants
5. Add an edible native flower for decoration (optional)

Main course

Warrigal Green Timbales

Coo-ee Cuisine⁶

Dale Chapman

I believe integrating bush tucker into the home kitchen is as simple as ensuring that the home cook is confident in substituting and enhancing family favourites with these unique ingredients.

Warrigal Green Timbales

Individual savoury custards without the guilt of pastry. As an accompaniment served warm or excellent served cold as picnic food.

250g Warrigal greens, blanched and well-drained

1 tsp chopped dill

⁵ Winsor, Sharon *Bush Foods and Botanicals* 2024 (Second Edition)

⁶ Chapman, Dale, Coo-ee Cuisine, Dale Chapman 2016

2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
100g feta cheese
250g ricotta cheese
1 cup milk
3 eggs
Pinch Dorriggo pepper
½ tsp salt
6 cherry tomatoes

- Preheat oven to 160C
- Grease six medium muffin ramekins well and place on a baking sheet
- In a large bowl, combine eggs, milk, cheese, garlic, dill, pepper and salt. Beat lightly
- Divide the blanche Warrigal greens amongst the ramekins and pour over the egg mixture evenly.
- Cut the cherry tomatoes in half and place the two halves on each ramekin
- Cook 20 – 30 minutes until set to the touch. Do not overcook.

Main course

Native dukkah-crusted kangaroo steaks with Davidson's plum sauce
Bush Tukka Guide⁷
Samantha Martin

In the past bush tukka has not received the respect it deserves...I share with you my passion to educate the world about my rich and wonderful culture and hope to inspire everyone to introduce bush tukka into their lives.

Native dukkah-crusted kangaroo steaks with Davidson's plum sauce

Ingredients

Davidson's plum sauce

- ¾ cup water
- 300g caster sugar
- 1 cinnamon stick
- ¼ glass red wine
- 1 star anise
- 500g Davidson's plums, washed and quartered (no need to deseed)
- Pinch of salt

Kangaroo

- 1 large purple yam or sweet potato, peeled and sliced
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 500g kangaroo fillets
- 8 broccoli stalks

Native bush dukkah

- 25 g dried bush tomatoes, whole or crushed
- 25g dried lemon myrtle leaves, or whole leaves crushed
- 10g wattleseed, whole or crushed
- 10g mountain bush pepper, whole or crushed

⁷ Martin, Samantha, Bush Tuukka Guide Hardie Grant 2014 pp.188-90

- 10g saltbush or sea salt, whole or crushed
- 100g roasted macadamias, whole or crushed

Method

Davidson's plum sauce

1. In a saucepan, mix the water, sugar, cinnamon stick, wine and star anise. Bring to boil.
2. Once the mixture has boiled and the sugar has dissolved, add the Davidson's plums and simmer on the lowest heat for about an hour until the plums have completely disintegrated.
3. Strain the sauce through a sieve, keeping the liquid. Discard the skins, seeds and any pulp. Put the liquid back into the saucepan and reduce by half until thickened.
4. Add salt to taste, stir then pour into jug and cool to room temperature.

Note: The sauce is best prepared at least an hour before cooking, or even the day before. Store cooked sauce in a jar or airtight container; refrigerate until ready to use.

Dukkah

1. If you are using whole ingredients, put the bush tomatoes, lemon myrtle leaves, wattleseeds, mountain bush pepper and saltbush/sea salt, into a food processor or blender, and grind coarsely. Add the roasted macadamias and add to the mixture, and grind a little more, until pounded to your liking.
2. If you are using crushed ingredients, put all in the ingredients into a sealable sandwich bag and shake well. Crush the roasted macadamias and add to the mixture, combining all ingredients well.

Kangaroo and purple yams

1. Pre-heat an oven to 180C. Spread the yams or sweet potato over a tray and drizzle with 1 tablespoon of olive oil, place in the oven and cook for 10-15 minutes or until golden brown.
 2. Prepare your dukkah. Season with salt to taste.
 3. Place the kangaroo fillets onto a baking tray, pour over half the oil. Take the dry dukkah mix and sprinkle all over the minya (meat), ensuring each fillet is well coated.
 4. Heat a large non-stick frying pan over medium high heat. Add the remaining oil and the kangaroo fillets to the pan and cook for 4-5 minutes each side or cooked to your liking. NOTE: Kangaroo is best cooked medium.
 5. Boil steam or microwave broccolini till tender. Place the cooked broccolini into a bowl and season with sea salt and cracked pepper. Toss to combine.
 6. Cut the kangaroo fillets into thick slices and pour over the resting sauce.
- To serve, pour the sauce over the sliced kangaroo fillets.
Serve with broccolini and purple yams on the side.

Salad

Burrata and tomato salad with saltbush, pepperberry and bush basil

The Australian Ingredients Kitchen⁸

Elder Bruno Dann and Tahlia Manide

In the past few years, native ingredients have been embraced by fine dining-establishments across the country for their unique flavour profiles, which enhance gourmet dishes. But you don't need to have culinary training to explore the potential of these ingredients – they can simply be integrate into your home kitchen and recipes, and we're keen to show how.

⁸ Elder Bruno Dann and Tahlia Manide The Australian Ingredients Kitchen Murdoch 2025

Burrata and tomato salad with saltbush, pepperberry and bush basil

Ingredients

- 6 firm tomatoes: use a variety of tomatoes including heirloom and Black Russian
- 3 tablespoons olive oil infused with native pepper (pepperberry)
- 300g burrata cheese
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar (available from greengrocer or supermarket)
- 5 – 6 fresh basil leaves
- 1 teaspoon sea salt
- Saltbush powder, to taste
- Pepperberry powder, to taste

Slice the tomatoes approximately 1 cm thick and delicately place them on a plate, overlapping them and mixing the types. Drizzle with 1 tablespoon of the oil

When ready to serve, remove the burrata from its container and gently tear it into large pieces, arranging it over the tomatoes. Drizzle remaining oil and the balsamic glaze over the tomatoes and burrata. Sprinkle with the sea salt, saltbush and pepperberry, and finish with the fresh basil leaves.⁹

Dessert/Pudding

Wattleseed Caramel Panna Cotta

Mabu Mabu¹⁰

Nornie Bero

This book celebrates the many Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander communities who have been gathering, growing, harvesting and using native ingredients for more than 60,000 years on the lands now known as Australia. Sovereignty was never ceded.

Ingredients

10g (1/4 ounce) powdered gelatine

1 vanilla bean

250ml (8 ½ fl oz/1 cup) thick (double/heavy cream)

70g (3 ½ oz) caster (superfine) sugar

Honeycomb Caramel

1 teaspoon finely ground wattleseed

100g (3 ½ oz) caster (superfine) sugar

Method

1. To make the caramel, place the wattleseed and sugar in a small saucepan with 120ml (4 fl oz) water and cook over a medium heat for 20 minutes, whisking occasionally, until you have a thick caramel sauce.

Set aside to completely cool.

2. Activate the gelatine by adding it to 1 tablespoon to soften

3. Slice vanilla bean in half and scrape out the seeds.

4. Place the cream, gelatine, sugar and the vanilla bean and seeds in a small pot and simmer until the sugar has dissolved.

⁹ Elder Bruno Dann and Tahlia Manide of Kakadu Plum Co The Australian Ingredients Kitchen Murdoch 2025

¹⁰ Bero Nornie Mabu Mabu Hardie Grant 2022

5. Prepare four ramekins by spraying them with some cooking oil so the panna cotta doesn't stick.
6. Set in the fridge for 2 hours before eating. To serve, you can carefully run a knife around the edge of the ramekin to turn out the panna cotta if you like, or serve it in the ramekin.

Cake

Davidson's Plum Lamington

First Nations Food Companion¹¹

Damien Coulthard and Rebecca Sullivan

The First Nations Food Companion is an opportunity for all people, young and old, from all backgrounds to taste the flavours of the oldest living, continuous culture in the world.

Davidson's Plum Lamington

190g (6 ¼ oz) butter, grated

1 cup (220g) caster sugar

1 teaspoon wattleseed extract

3 free range eggs

2 ½ cups (350g) self-raising flour, sifted

1 cup (250ml) milk

220g (7 ¼ oz) dark chocolate (at least 80 percent cocoa solids)

1 cup (250ml) thickened cream

1 teaspoon vanilla paste

1/3 cup (35g) Davidson's plum powder

1 cup (90g) desiccated coconut or shredded coconut.

Davidson Plum Jam

1.5kg (3lb 5 oz) Davidson's Plums

300ml (10 ½ fl oz) orange juice

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1 teaspoon mixed spice

1.25kg (2lb 12 oz) caster sugar

(brown for more depth)

For Davidson's plum jam, wash, rinse and halve the plums, reserving stones for their pectin (place them in a square of muslin, and tie it closed with kitchen string). Add plums to a wide-based saucepan with orange juice, cinnamon and mixed spice. Add muslin bag of stones and bring to the boil, then simmer over medium-low heat until the skin falls away from the plums. This should take around 20 minutes.

Reduce heat to low add sugar and stir rapidly until it dissolves. Bring back to the boil and once it reaches a rolling boil, cook for a further 10 – 15 minutes or until it has reached setting point.

Remove from heat. Discard muslin bag and contents then pour jam into hot sterilised jars, seal and allow to cool. Store in a cool dark place for up to two years; refrigerate after opening. Makes 2.5 litres (10 cups).

For Lamingtons, preheat oven to 170C (325F). Grease and line a 20cm (8in) square tin with baking paper.

¹¹ Coulthard Damien and Sullivan Rebecca *first nations food companion* Murdoch 2022

Put butter and sugar in a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment

And beat for 2 minutes until light and fluffy. Add wattleseed extract and, with the motor running, add eggs one at a time, making sure that each one is fully incorporated before adding the next. Add flour and milk in batches. Alternating between the two and beating in bursts to combine.

Pour batter into tin and bake for 50 minutes until skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean. Cool for 5 minutes, then turnout onto a wire rack to cool completely. Slice in half lengthways then cut into squares.

Place chocolate, cream and vanilla in a heatproof bowl set over a saucepan of simmering water (don't let base of bowl touch water) stir until smooth.

Toss Davidson's plum powder with coconut to combine.

Dip sponge squares in melted chocolate, then quickly roll in coconut mixture to coat. Spread a third of the sponge squares with jam, top with another sponge square, followed by more jam and one more sponge square, followed by more jam and one more sponge square gently squeezing together.

Good eating !