



# BUSH FOODS

Since the time of *Tjukurpa*, hunting and gathering has linked *Anangu* with the land. Gathering food expresses and reaffirms knowledge and ownership of the land. Pitjantjatjara is one of the local languages spoken by *Anangu*.

### Pitjantjatjara words for bush foods

**Mai** (pronounced *may*)

- Vegetables such as *tjanmata* (bush onion) and native pigweed
- Fruits such as *kampurarpa* (desert raisin), *arngulji* (bush plum), *ili* (native fig) and *wayanu* (quandong)
- Seeds such as *wakalpuka* (dead finish) and *wanguu* (woollybutt grass)

**Tjuritja** (pronounced *joo-rrat-ja*)

- Sweet foods such as nectar (honey grevillea) and *tjala* (honey ants)

**Maku** (pronounced *mah-ko*)

- Edible grubs such as witchetty grubs

**Kuka** (pronounced *kooka*)

- Meat such as sand goanna, perentie, and rabbit
- Eggs of birds and lizards

### Tasks for women, men and children

With bush food collection, women and men perform specific tasks that contribute to the benefit of the whole community. Traditionally, the separation of men's and women's functions exists by law, and these functions are balanced by a strong sense of cooperation.

*Anangu* women were traditionally responsible for gathering *mai*, *tjuritja*, *maku* and *kuka*. Men can and do dig for honey ants or collect fruit, but generally they are more likely to be hunting *kuka* (meat). The men use a *kulata* (spear) with the addition of a *miru* (spear thrower) to hunt *malu* (red kangaroo), *kanya* (euro) and *kalaya* (emu). Children have an important role to play in gathering and hunting. They accompany their parents and other adults to collect bush food and play, dig and work with the adults while watching and learning.



### Implements used in food collection

Women use three types of bowls. A *wira* is the smallest of the three bowls and is also used as a digging tool. *Kanilpa* is used primarily for cleaning seeds and *piti*, the largest dish, is shaped for carrying water. A head ring, *manguri*, is used to carry dishes on top of the head and a *wana* (digging stick), is used to loosen the earth to find bush foods.

A large grindstone is used to process seed and the ground seed is then made into *nyuma* (seed cake). A smaller grindstone is used for preparing medicinal plants and ochre.

These traditionally designed implements are now often made for sale as artefacts. They are also used for demonstration and learning purposes.

The *wana* (digging stick) and *wira* (digging tool) are now made of metal and the *kulata* (spear) is often replaced by a rifle.

Today people still enjoy hunting and gathering bush foods for teaching, enjoyment and experience. Animal foods are still prepared according to the Law. Such knowledge is highly valued and the older people are keen to pass it on to their children and grandchildren.

### A great deal more to learn

The information in this fact sheet represents only a small fraction of the traditional knowledge of *Anangu*.

*Anangu* spend a lifetime learning from their parents and grandparents and it is the richness of this living tradition and culture that makes Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park a World Heritage living cultural landscape.

We hope you enjoy the opportunity to learn about *Anangu* culture. You will gain a new appreciation of the importance of conserving the park's natural and cultural values.

