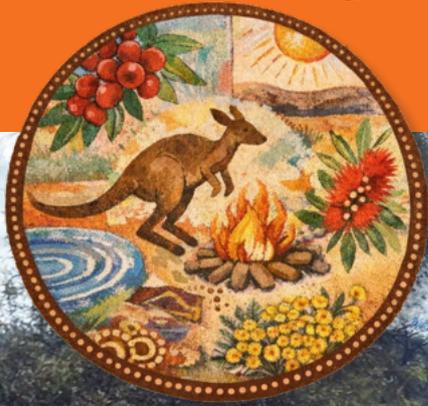


Cooking Food Found on Country

Dookerniny Mereny Noongar Boodja

Cooking - Dookerniny | Food - Mereny | Found on Country - Noongar Boodja



Acknowledgement of Country

Narrogin Primary School acknowledges the Wiilman Noongar people as the Traditional Custodians of this land - where we grow together, play together and learn together.

We respect and learn from Elders past, present and emerging.

Together, we care for the land, sky and waterways, and we continue to learn from First Nations people.

Ngarojin Kadidjiny Mia ana nidja Wiilman Noongar moort koora ngarla, karla nidja Boodja. Windji ngalak malatj kendjil, wabiny kendjil were kaditj kendjil.

Knaat djinanginy ngaank nidja biidja. Koora moorditj moort ana nyorn ngulla moyran.

Kendjil, ngalak kwob bidjaram nidja Boodja, worl werbilyas wer ngalak ngardi maral kaditj baalak Koora-Boola moort.

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Kangaroo Stew (Yonga Stew)

Kangaroo (*yonga*) was a traditional source of food (*meriny*). It is a delicious cut of meat and can be cooked on a BBQ, over coals or in a stew.

Traditionally the whole yonga was used:

- The meat was cooked for *meriny*
- The fur was made into warm cloaks - *yonga bwoka*
- The bones and sinew were used to make hunting tools such as spears - *kitj / gidjee*



Yonga Stew

Ingredients

- 500g yonga meat, cut into small strips
- 2 onions, chopped
- 2 carrots, peeled and sliced
- 2 potatoes, peeled and diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 cups beef or vegetable stock
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 tablespoon flour
- Salt and pepper to taste

Method

1. In a large pot, heat olive oil on a stove top.
2. Brown the yonga meat on all sides. Remove and set aside.
3. Add onions and garlic, cooking until soft.
4. Sprinkle flour over the onions and stir well.
5. Return the meat to the pot and mix.
6. Add carrots, potatoes, salt and pepper.
7. Pour in stock to cover ingredients.
8. Bring to a gentle simmer.
9. Simmer for around 2 hours until meat is tender.
10. Adjust seasoning if needed.
11. Serve with fresh damper.

Note

This recipe is a guide, different vegetables, herbs or seasoning can be added.



Quandong Jam (Kwondong Jam)

The quandong (*kwondong*), tree is a parasitic plant, meaning it attaches to the roots of another plant to access water and nutrients. The berries turn bright red when ready to pick.

Kwondongs, are harvested during summer, the *Birak to Bunuru Noongar seasons*.

They are high in vitamin C and have many traditional uses:

- The fruit flesh can be peeled off the seed and eaten fresh or made into jam
- The flesh can also be dehydrated to make a fruit leather
- The nut can be cracked out of the kernel and eaten raw or roasted
- Crushed nuts produce oil used good for skin moisturising
- Ground nuts mixed with water (*kep*) or emu (*weitj*) oil were used as medicine
- Seed kernels can be threaded to make jewellery



Kwondong Jam

Ingredients

- 2 cups quandong
- 2 cups caster sugar
- 2 cups water (*kep*)
- 1 teaspoon balsamic vinegar

Method

1. Peel skin off the berries and put into a pot.
2. Add *kep*, caster sugar and vinegar.
3. Bring to the boil, then reduce heat and simmer, stirring regularly.
4. Once thickened, remove from heat and allow to cool.
5. Spoon into sterilised jars.
6. Serve on fresh damper or with vanilla ice cream.

Note

This recipe makes approximately 4 jars



Damper (Mereny)

Traditionally, damper was made by crushing dried seeds or leaves like acacia wattle (*kwonyert*) or old man saltbush (*binga*) using grinding stones (*ngarniny boya*).

The powder was mixed with water (*kep*) and cooked on the hot coals by a fire (*kaarla*).

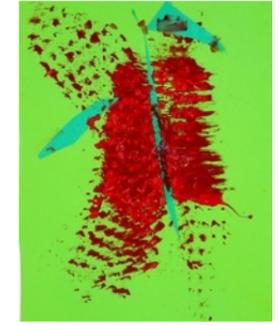


Bottlebrush Cordial (Birdak Mungit)

The colourful bottlebrush flowers (*birdak*) attract nectar-feeding birds and insects.

The flowers are full of sweet nectar and bloom during *Kambarang and Bunuru* (spring and summer).

The flowers can be used to make a sweet drink (*mungit*).



Mereny

Ingredients

- 1 cup plain flour
- 2 cups self-raising flour
- 1 cup water (*kep*)

Method

1. Combine flours in a bowl.
2. Gradually add *kep* to form a soft dough.
3. Gently knead on a floured surface.
4. Shape into a round loaf and place on a floured tray.
5. Bake at 200°C for 25–30 minutes until golden and hollow sounding.
6. Serve with butter, quandong jam or honey.

Optional variation

Cook small portions on an oiled BBQ, turning until golden and puffy.



Birdak Mungit

Ingredients

- Red bottlebrush flowers (*birdak*)
- Water (*kep*)

Method

1. Collect nectar-rich *birdak* flowers.
2. Remove flower heads from stems.
3. Place in a bowl and cover with hot *kep*.
4. Allow to steep.
5. Strain through cloth to remove solid bits leaving the bright red liquid.
6. Cool in the fridge to chill or serve over ice

Note

For the sweetest *mungit* choose *birdak* that look and feel sticky, juicy and wet.



Noongar Words Glossary

Acacia wattle - *kwonyert*

Bottlebrush flower - *birdak*

Children - *koolanga*

Cooking - *dookerniny*

Elders - *birdiya*

Emu - *weitj*

Fire - *karla*

Food/damper - *mereny*

Grinding stone - *ngarniny boya*

Kangaroo - *yonga*

Kangaroo cloak - *yonga bwoka*

Knowing self - *kadiny ngaany*

Old man saltbush - *binga*

On country - *Noongar boodja*

Quandong - *kwondong*

Spear / hunting tools - *kitj / gidjee*

Sweet drink - *mungit*

Water - *kep*

Six Noongar Seasons

The Noongar six-season calendar is based on nature's rhythms, guiding sustainable hunting, foraging, and cultural practices.

These seasons reflect specific environmental changes, like flowering plants and animal behaviors, indicating food resource availability and weather shifts.

While these seasons are guided by natural cycles, not fixed dates, they can loosely be aligned with the Australian seasons.

Birak: December - January, first Summer.

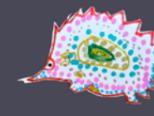
Bunuru: February - March, second Summer.

Djeran: April - May, Autumn.

Makuru: June - July, Winter, first rains.

Djilba: August - September, Spring second rains.

Kambarang: October - November, Spring wildflower season.





Narrogin Primary ran a *Kadiny Ngaany (Knowing Self)* cultural program with Year one to six Indigenous boys (*koolangas*) at the school. The *koolangas* explored culture through being on Noongar boodja, learning about bush medicine and food, and participating in traditional storytelling, music, art and dance.

It was wonderful to have local Elders (*Birdiya*), community members, and the Indigenous corporation KEEDAC supporting the *koolangas* on their journey. Uncle Ross, Pop Rockie, Frank, Wayne, and Basil generously shared their knowledge, ideas, and wisdom, coming together to celebrate learning.

Thank you to Aunty Raelene for the delicious *mereny* and Johnny cakes, and to Uncle Chadd for teaching the boys how to make *yonga* stew. The *kwondong* jam, made from berries the boys picked and investigated, was enjoyed with ice cream for dessert. The boys proudly played didgeridoos they had decorated and practised, sharing their learning with an audience. This celebration honoured culture, community, and connection.

This book has been compiled by Andrea Cowcher in collaboration with Chadd Kickett, who co-designed and co-presented the *Kadiny Ngaany* program. Pop Basil Kickett kindly shared his knowledge and translated Noongar words and language for this project.

Thank you to KEEDAC for supporting the program and for helping to showcase the boys' learning by funding this cookbook, a valuable resource for sharing Noongar culture and language into the future.

