

Uluru–Kata Tjuta National Park Notes

Bush foods

Since the time of Tjukurpa, hunting and gathering has linked Anangu with our land. Gathering food expresses and reaffirms knowledge and ownership of the land.

Pitjantjatjara Words for Bush Foods

Mai

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

Tjuritja

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

Maku

- Edible grubs such as witchetty grubs

Kuka

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



From left to right - an assortment of bush foods in a *piti* (bowl), *maku* are fat, juicy and delicious, *tjala* are an excellent sweet food source, and *tinka* is a popular *kuka* (meat) with Anangu

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 *kuḷata* (spear) with the addition of a *miru* (spear thrower) to hunt *maḷu* (red kangaroo), *kanyaḷa* (euro) and *kaḷaya* (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 whilst 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, *manguṛi*, 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 *kułata* (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.



The processing of *wanguu* (naked woollybut grass) (left) is a time consuming and articulate process where the seed is used to make damper



Kułata's are made out of the wood from spearvine. *Anangu* use fire and a cutting tool to straighten and shape the spear. The *miru* is used to provide speed and accuracy when throwing spears

A great deal more to learn

The information in this park note represents only a small fraction of the traditional knowledge of *Anangu*. Through working together with the traditional owners and engaging in cultural practices such as hunting, gathering, tool making, ceremonies, and daily life, non-Indigenous people can continue to experience and learn this amazing culture. *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 Tjuṯa a World Heritage living cultural landscape. We hope you enjoy the opportunity to learn about *Anangu* culture such as the stories, landscape values, cultural significance and the importance of protecting and conserving the natural and cultural values of the park.



A *wana*, *wira*, *tjiwa* and *tjungarj*, tools used by *Anangu* women



Kali, *kułata*, *miru* and *tjuṯinypa*, tools used by *Anangu* men



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