

## Unit 1.2.1

# Food Production and Consumption Among Victoria's First Peoples

### Key Knowledge and Key Skills

#### Key Knowledge 1.2.1

The characteristics of food production and consumption among Victoria's first peoples prior to European settlement, including the range of foods and flavourings available; tools and technologies used; human and natural resources required; specialist knowledge and practices; and the contribution to health.

#### Key Skills 1.2.1

Evaluate foods and flavourings indigenous to Australia and through practical activities demonstrate, observe and reflect on contemporary culinary uses.

#### Key Skills 1.1.7

Participate in and reflect on practical activities to explore the history and culture of food in Australia

**V.C.E. Food Studies Study Design p. 13 and 14, Extracts from the V.C.E. Food Studies Study Design (2023-2027) reproduced by permission; © VCAA. V.C.E. is a registered trademark of the VCAA. The VCAA does not endorse or make any warranties regarding this study resource. Current V.C.E. Study Designs and related content can be accessed directly at [www.vcaa.vic.edu.au](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au). Readers are also advised to check for updates and amendments to V.C.E. Study Designs on the VCAA website and via the VCAA Bulletin and the VCAA Notices to Schools.**

## Key Terms and Definitions

A **human resource** can be defined as a person's knowledge and skills, which they can apply to a particular situation to help them think, plan, and problem solve.

**Indigenous Australians** is used to describe both Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people.

A **natural resource** is anything that occurs naturally in nature and can be used by people to meet their needs and wants.

**Victoria's First Peoples** are considered to be descendants of Indigenous Australians who inhabited Victoria for at least 40,000 years before European contact.

## Victoria's First Peoples

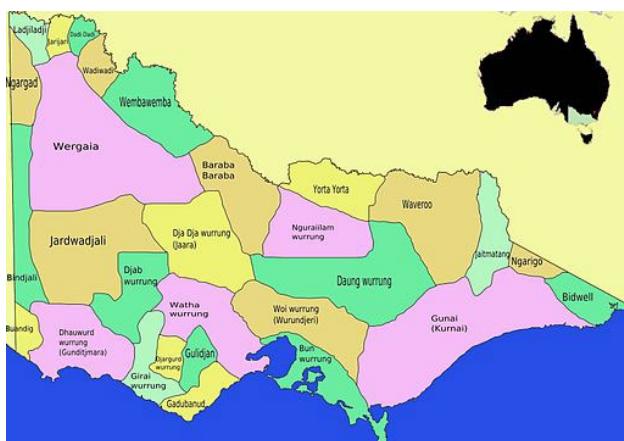
There is a suggestion that people first arrived in Australia by boat after Mt Toba in Indonesia erupted around 74,000 B.C.E. While this is only a suggestion, there is definite evidence that people lived in Australia from around 60,000 B.C.E.

The first Indigenous Australians inhabited the top end of Australia. Eventually, they made their way down to south-eastern Victoria and across to the Great Sandy Desert in Western Australia. Then, they arrived in Tasmania. It is thought that Indigenous Australians inhabited Victoria for around 40,000 years before European settlement.

Before Europeans arrived, Indigenous Australians lived in small family groups within the different Aboriginal language territories. Each of these cultural groups had its own ceremonies, customs, traditions, and laws. They had their own set of knowledge and skills about the environment and food preparation and consumption.

Indigenous Australians formed tight-knit communities where sharing was highly valued and formed an integral part of their culture. Food was not just a source of nutrition in these communities. It was shared collectively as part of social gatherings where stories of the past were shared, and knowledge and skills were passed down by elders.

The map below identifies the different Aboriginal language territories in Victoria, to which many Indigenous people belong.



Source: Tirin aka Takver, CC BY-SA 3.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons

## Human and Natural Resources

Victoria's First Peoples used a range of human and natural resources for hunting, gathering food, and surviving off the land.

Indigenous Australians used human knowledge or natural resources to determine things like:

- how and when weather patterns were going to change;
- when plants and animals were in season; and
- when and where animals were breeding.

This knowledge helped them develop the skills they needed to track, hunt, and fish to feed their communities.

Indigenous Australians shared their knowledge and skills so that their people would survive from one generation to the next over thousands of years.

### Seasonal Calendars

Indigenous Australians used a range of natural resources in a variety of different ways to ensure their needs were met. Due to their geographical location and climate, the natural resources available to Indigenous Australians living in Victoria would have been very different from those living in the desert in Western Australia. Indigenous Australians residing throughout Australia had their own yearly seasonal calendars. The type of food they consumed and where they lived depended very much on their seasonal calendar.

Victoria's Peoples had their own seasonal calendar depending on their area. Seasonal climates are different throughout Australia. Fruits such as finger limes and Davidson's Plum are more likely to grow in the tropical climate of Queensland compared to the colder climate in Victoria.

**Watch** this video series about the seasonal calendars in Northern Australia: <https://youtu.be/O6PdSQQmql>

Below is a representation of the Gariwerd seasonal cycle. The language groups Djapwurrong and Jardwadjali are used by the custodians for the Gariwerd (Grampians) region.

Kooyang	Gwangal moronn	Chunnup	Larneuk	Petyan	Ballambar
Late summer	Autumn	Winter	Pre-spring	Spring	Early summer
January–March	March–May	May–July	July–August	September–November	November–January
Eel season	Honey-bee season	Cockatoo season	Nesting bird season	Wildflower season	Butterfly season
Hottest and driest time Scarce surface water High bushfire risk Night sky is bright with skies	Warm, still days Country starts to cool Cooler mornings Red sunrises and golden evenings	Freezing winds Coldest time of year Bleak mists Rain	Dramatic weather changes Wettest time of year Rivers run high	Tempestuous weather Warmer days Bush bursts into life Emu constellation appears	Summer heat starts Hot, dry days Stable weather

Source: [Gariwerd calendar – Indigenous Weather Knowledge – Bureau of Meteorology \(bom.gov.au\)](https://www.bom.gov.au/climate/indigenous-knowledge/gariwerd-calendar/)

## Food and Flavourings

Indigenous Australians hunted, gathered, prepared, and consumed a wide range of highly nutritious foods. It was initially thought that they all lived a nomadic lifestyle. However, some evidence now suggests that only the Indigenous Australians living in arid areas lived a nomadic or semi-nomadic lifestyle.

It is now thought that Victoria's First Peoples' movements were based on their understanding of the seasons and their environment. They were very much in tune with their environment and knew exactly how, when, and where to obtain food.

A range of food and flavourings that Victoria's First People consumed have been included below. Additional information about how they cooked, grew, and prepared these foods has been provided.

### Grains

#### Grasses

**Kangaroo grass** (*Themeda triandra*) was a hardy and resilient native grass found throughout Australia. In summer, Indigenous Australians would make flour by grinding the seeds of this plant using a grinding stone. They then made the flour into a dough and roasted it in the fire. Bread produced from kangaroo grass seed flour is reported to taste slightly nutty and contains more protein and minerals than wheat flour.

**Lomandra grass** (*Lomandra longifolia*) was also used as a grain. Indigenous Australians chewed the white starchy base of the plant as a source of energy. They ate the seed whole or grounded it into flour. Lomandra leaves were used to make eel traps, nets, and baskets for carrying food. The roots of the plant were also used to treat insect bites.



**Kangaroo Grass**

Source: Rexness from Melbourne, Australia, CC BY-SA 2.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0>>, via Wikimedia Commons



**Lomandra Grass**

Source: Arthur Chapman, CC BY 2.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0>>, via Wikimedia Commons

## Animal Sources

### Land Animals

Indigenous Australians hunted emus, kangaroos, goannas, lizards, snakes, possums, and wallabies. The women captured and killed small animals. The men hunted birds and formed organised groups to hunt larger animals such as emus and kangaroos. They used various skilful techniques and tools such as spears, clubs, and boomerangs for hunting.

Animal foods consumed traditionally by Indigenous Australians were, on average, lower in saturated fats and contained more polyunsaturated fats. This could have protected them from cardiovascular disease.

Men often climbed trees to find the possums and birds that nested in them. The possums, which were nocturnal, were caught, killed, gutted, skinned, and cooked in coals before being eaten. Possums were a primary source of meat in Victoria. It was common for the skins of possums to be worn for warmth and used as baby carriers, blankets at night, and even drums in ceremonies and burials.

There are 17 types of native ducks in Victoria. The most common are the Pacific Black Duck and the Australian Wood Duck.

[Click on this link](#) to read about how the men and women at Jareelyallock, Reedy Creek, near Wangaratta, caught ducks.

The Fruit Bat or Grey-Headed Flying Fox is one of four flying fox species found in Australia. It is commonly found in Victoria and is a traditional food source for Victoria's First Peoples. To prepare bats for consumption, the wings were usually removed, and the bats were then roasted in the coals of a fire. The skin was not eaten, but the flesh has been said to taste like chicken.



*Image: Australian Wood Duck*

Source: Quartl, CC BY-SA 3.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0>>, via Wikimedia Commons



*Image: Possum*

Source: Arthur Chapman, CC BY 2.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0>>, via Wikimedia Commons

## Eggs

Victoria's First People consumed duck, emu, iguana, and turtle eggs. Indigenous people did not remove all of the eggs from a nest; they would always ensure some were left to ensure the species would continue to live.

## Marine Life

Indigenous Australians ate a wide range of foods from the oceans, rivers, and lakes. They ate a range of seafood, including crabs, crayfish, eels, seals, shellfish, turtles, and beached whales. Aboriginal peoples caught fish, turtles, and stingrays using barbed spears, baskets and nets, and lines with hooks made from sea shells.

The long-necked turtle (*Chelodina longicollis*) was a valuable food source for Victoria's First Peoples. It was found in coastal waters and inland waterways such as dams, rivers, and canals. To cook the turtle, Indigenous Australians covered it with hot coals and baked it over a low fire for a long time.

Short-finned eels (*Anguilla australis*) were caught in traps made from stones and nets woven from grasses or vegetation. Some of these traps would have a large opening at one end and a smaller opening at the other. Marine life of all sizes would enter the larger opening, and immature marine life was able to escape using the smaller opening. This ensured that there would be plenty of marine life for years to come.

A range of techniques was used for cooking eel. The Gunditjmara People, located in south-west Victoria, smoked fish and eels in trees that had been hollowed out. Eels and fish were also hung over fires to dry.

**Watch** this video about how Indigenous Australians used fish traps: <https://youtu.be/Qa5WSRxpUi0>

## Insects

Every year, in spring, Bogong moths (*Agrotis infusa*) migrate from parts of eastern Australia to the Victorian Alps. They arrive in the Alps in summer and stay in caves in a dormant state known as aestivation. At the end of the summer, they return to southern Queensland and western and north-western New South Wales, where they produce offspring and die.

Victoria's First People would follow the moths on their annual migration to the Alps. It was there that the moths formed part of the ceremonial celebrations as well as providing nourishment. The roasted moths tasted like chestnuts. Indigenous Australians also ground them into a paste. They preserved them for several weeks using a technique called smoking. The moths were considered a valuable source of nutrition with a decent fat content that met Aboriginal people's significantly high energy needs.

**Watch** this video to discover more about the Bogong moth: <https://youtu.be/Z7w44Ka0xXI> and <https://youtu.be/NPI-YIOW6-A>

## Fruits, Seeds, and Vegetables

Indigenous Australians collected and prepared a wide variety of fruits, seeds, and vegetables. They were an excellent food source as they often contained high amounts of antioxidants, fibre, minerals, and vitamins. Specialised knowledge and skills were required to prepare some foods so they were safe to eat.

Root plants were a popular food source for Victoria's First People because they were available all year. In contrast, fruits and seeds tended to be seasonal. Indigenous Australians only took what they needed from the land; they followed sophisticated, sustainable practices that did not deplete the land of natural resources and allowed it to replenish itself between harvesting.

## Fruits

Muntries (*Kunzea pomifera*) are a type of fruit that indigenous Australians highly valued, particularly in South Eastern Australia and Western Victoria, where they grow well. However, they have also been found in the Big Desert region of northwest Victoria.

These fruits comprised a significant portion of the diet of the Ngarrindjeri people in the lower Murray area. They dried the fruit and/or baked it into cakes during wintertime. They made the berries into a dried fruit lather and traded it with other tribes for tools, such as axe heads from the volcanic plains of Western Victoria.

The Lilly Pilly (*Acmena smithii*) is a small berry that is pale mauve or white in colour. It tastes a little sour and tart. It grows well in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, and King Island.

## Vegetables

The Murnong yam daisy (*Microseris lanceolata*) was a staple food for Victoria's First People. It produced a round tuber that looked similar to a miniature carrot. Eaten raw, they tasted crisp and bland. However, they produced a sweet syrup when cooked overnight in baskets placed in an earth oven. Unfortunately, these yams are now difficult to find in the wild. This is because the sheep that European settlers introduced dug up the tubers and disturbed the soil, disrupting further plant regrowth. The introduction of rabbits in 1859 further exacerbated the problem.

Warrigal greens (*Tetragonia tetragonoides*) are an indigenous plant found throughout Australia all year round. For this reason, it was a popular food among Indigenous Australians. Smaller baby leaves can be eaten raw and do not need to be cooked before consumption. However, larger leaves contain a significant amount of oxalate, nitrate, and saponin. They, therefore, are considered unsafe for humans to consume raw. To remove the toxins, Warrigal greens must be served hot or blanched in boiling water before using. Warrigal greens taste very similar to English spinach and can be used similarly in cookery. They are high in vitamin C, fibre, and antioxidants.

**Watch** this video to learn more about Warrigal greens: <https://youtu.be/darOkFsJyiQ>

**Watch** this video to learn more about Murnong Yam Daisy: <https://youtu.be/IDpYR67oD2I>

## Greens and Herbs

River mint (*Mentha australis*) grows throughout Victoria and is usually found along the edges of streams and rivers. It has a spearmint aroma and flavour. Victoria's First Peoples lined the sides of earth ovens with it, which enhanced the flavour of the food being cooked.

Saltbush (*Atriplex*) is a sprawling grey-blue shrub. Indigenous Australians roasted and ground the seeds to use as flour. The leaves were eaten fresh and used to wrap around meat while cooking. Saltbush mainly grew in dry regions of Southern Australia.

The chocolate lily (*Dichopogon strictus*) is a plant that grows abundantly in Victoria. The tubers were either eaten raw or roasted over the fire. It is recommended that the tubers are eaten when they are young as they become bitter with age. The plant produces small edible purple flowers that have a strong chocolate aroma. The flowers were digested and used to cleanse the blood by Indigenous Australians.



Image: Saltbush



Image: Chocolate Lily

Takver from Australia, CC BY-SA 2.0

<<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/>>, via  
Wikimedia Commons

## Tools and Technology

Indigenous Australians used various tools and technology to help them hunt, gather, and prepare their food. The tools and technologies varied from region to region.

## Tools for Gathering and Preparing Food

### Baskets, Bowls, and Containers

Indigenous Australian women used a variety of bags and baskets to carry food and other goods. These bags were often made from animal hair, bark, grasses, and leaves. Some of the bags and baskets were large enough to carry small children who would be slung over their mothers' backs.

They also carried water in a vessel made from limbs of gum trees that had been dug out or burnt to make buckets. Bark that had been sewn together using a rope and handle was also used to collect water. Shells were used as drinking cups.

### Canoes

Indigenous Australians living in northern Australia carved canoes from single logs. These canoes moved quickly through open waters. The canoes built by Victoria's First Peoples were different. These canoes were made from the bark found on eucalypt trees such as Mountain Ash, Red Gum, or Stringy Bark.

Different types of bark canoes were built by people living along the coast to those living around rivers. The canoes constructed for seawater were deep, while the canoes used on rivers were flatter. Larger canoes were used to transport people. In contrast, smaller canoes were likely used to collect eggs and fish or transport small loads of food and goods.

The tree that the bark was removed from was called a scarred or scar tree. Indigenous Australians removed the bark by making deep cuts in the tree using a pickaxe or other similar tool. After removing the bark, the trees were left with a long oval-shaped scar or mark. Containers such as coolamons, shelters, tools, and weapons were also made from the bark of these trees.

**Watch** this video to learn more about these canoes: <https://youtu.be/fcDCYXfahcA> or <https://youtu.be/M4QgWSTS-DU>

### Earth Ovens

Indigenous Australians often cooked their food by steaming it in an earth oven. An earth oven consisted of a pit that held heated stones or burnt lumps of clay. Food was then placed on top of the heated stones or clay, and the hole was covered with earth. Food was sometimes wrapped in leaves before being placed in the oven. The steam and heat generated from the stones or clay helped to cook the food and enable it to retain some of its moisture.

**Watch** this video to discover more about earth ovens: <https://youtu.be/m-hBCVrk4LQ>

**Watch** this video about a range of tools used by Indigenous Australians: <https://youtu.be/2luSTxBCXTQ>

### Grinding Stones

Indigenous Australians used slabs of stone, called grinding stones, to grind and crush different things, mainly food like seeds, berries, and insects. The base rock is called a tijwa, and the grinding rock is called a tjungari. These stones were used as a pestle and mortar. A coarse flour could be made from grinding the stones, which was then used to make a damper or bread.

## Tools for Hunting Food

Indigenous Australians used spears to kill most animals and boomerangs to kill birds or wound other animals.

### Stone Cutting Tools

Indigenous Australians made flakes of sharp stone by hitting one stone with another smaller stone. These flakes would be used as spear tips when hunting and knives for butchering. They could also be used for making goods out of bark, bone, or wood and scraping animal skins. Ground-edged axes were made using large flakes of stone. Sometimes they attached the axes to wooden handles using natural resin and plant fibre or kangaroo sinew.

## Specialist Knowledge and Practices

Indigenous Australians had a range of expert knowledge and techniques that enabled them to control the environment, leading to their ability to consume a varied diet regularly.

### Firestick Farming or Cultural Burning

Firestick farming is the practice of burning old vegetation in selected areas of land regularly. Fire and smoke caused animals under trees, shrubs, grass, and other ground coverings to come out into the open, where they could be hunted and caught more easily. Once an area had been burnt, animals returned to feed on the new plant growth, increasing the Indigenous Australians' food supply.

Regular burning meant fewer large bushfires damaging the area. Indigenous people worked hard to avoid large-scale bushfires. Large bushfires resulted in a polluted water supply, poor soil fertility, and less food available.

**Watch** this video to further understand firestick farming: [https://youtu.be/LwL\\_-JWCn-8](https://youtu.be/LwL_-JWCn-8)

**Watch** this video to further understand fire management: [https://youtu.be/KZ\\_En7x8tzU](https://youtu.be/KZ_En7x8tzU)

### Aquaculture

Aquaculture is a set of resources and practices used to cultivate fish and other marine animals. Indigenous Australians practiced aquaculture; the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape, located in Victoria, is one of the world's oldest aquaculture systems worldwide. It consists of a dormant volcano, where the local people built a series of ponds, weirs, and channels to help capture and breed eels.

Indigenous Australians were also able to capture a wide range of marine life using technology such as canoes, nets, spears, and traps strategically placed in areas where it was easy to catch fish and eels.

**Watch** these videos about how Indigenous Australians developed eel traps at Budj Bim in south-western Victoria: <https://youtu.be/pCax40qFvrE> and <https://youtu.be/QOKCCNNct1M>

### The Contribution to Health

Prior to European settlement, indigenous Australians consumed a varied and highly nutritious diet. Many of the plants they consumed were also used for medicinal purposes. They were extremely high in antioxidants and nutrients; they are now often referred to as superfoods.

**Watch** this video about the nutritional value of native plants: <https://youtu.be/E9kXvTOMYd4>

**Watch** this video about the nutritional value of native animals: <https://youtu.be/mLrGjpBCRb8>

## Written Activity One

### The Art of Healing

**Read** the media article at the link below:

<https://theconversation.com/the-art-of-healing-five-medicinal-plants-used-by-aboriginal-australians-97249>

Using the article, **create** a poster about the medicinal benefits of one of the plants found in Victoria.

Your poster must include the following information:

- The scientific and common name of the plant,
- A description of the plant,
- An image of the plant, and
- An explanation of the plant's nutritional and medicinal health benefits.

Display your poster in your classroom.

## Written Activity Two

### The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating

#### Create a Guide

The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating provides a visual representation of the types of foods that Australians should consume. Following the guide enables people to select the right amount and type of food that promotes health and wellbeing. The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating has a circle divided into five sections representing each food group. The space dedicated to each area indicates the proportion of food from each food group that should be eaten daily.

The Australian Government has released two Australian Guide to Healthy Eating Documents: one for the general Australian population and one for the Indigenous Australian population.

These guides can be viewed at the links below:

- The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating:  
[https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/sites/default/files/content/The%20Guidelines/n55\\_agthe\\_large.pdf](https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/sites/default/files/content/The%20Guidelines/n55_agthe_large.pdf)
- The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Guide to Healthy Eating:  
<https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/file/indigenous-guide-healthy-eating-%E2%80%93-poster>

Your task is to create an Australian Guide to Healthy Eating that includes foods Victoria's First People consumed before European settlement. You will also need to include images and descriptions of these foods.

#### PMI Chart

After creating this guide, list the positive, negative and interesting aspects of the diets of Victoria's First Peoples before European settlement in the chart below.

Positive	Minus	Interesting

#### Answer the following question:

What do you think the health status of the modern-day Australian would be like if we had continued to produce and consume the food that Indigenous Australians ate prior to European settlement?

## Written Activity Three

In small groups, select a video to analyse and work together to answer the questions.

As a class, watch each video and listen to each group report about their topic.

### Media Analysis: Budj Bim

Watch the videos at this link: <https://youtu.be/Qa5WSRpUj0> and <https://youtu.be/QOkCCNNct1M>

1. Describe what Budj Bim was like so many years ago. Who lived there? What happened there?

2. Why is the aquaculture system established at Budj Bim considered advanced technology? How did these systems trap marine life?

3. What evidence is there that Indigenous Australians occupied the area permanently?

4. Why is this area of such high cultural importance?

## Media Analysis: Charlie's Kitchen

Watch the video at this link: [https://youtu.be/8q0eFs\\_ECbs](https://youtu.be/8q0eFs_ECbs)

1. Charlie states that she is a Yorta Yorta girl.

What region of Australia does Charlie originate from? Where is this region in Australia?

2. What indigenous ingredients did Charlie use in her cooking? Research each ingredient to find out if they are native to Victoria.

3. Why are less Indigenous flavourings needed when cooking compared to conventional herbs and spices?

4. Why is the sharing of food important in Indigenous culture?

Why was eating together important for this Indigenous family?

5. After viewing this video, respond to this statement:

"It is easy to incorporate Indigenous ingredients into everyday cooking."

Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Justify your response.

## Media Analysis: The Indigenous Café Making Indigenous Ingredients Mainstream

Watch the video at this link: <https://youtu.be/Hfxr28CGUck>

1. Identify the Indigenous foods mentioned in this video.

2. What is the aim of the café?

3. Why are people surprised by the café?

4. How were the leaves used to make the damper?

5. What does Mabu Mabu mean?

6. How can the use of Indigenous ingredients be increased?

## Media Analysis: Aboriginal Cultural Burning in Regional Victoria

Watch the video at this link: [https://youtu.be/LwL\\_-JWCn-8](https://youtu.be/LwL_-JWCn-8)

1. Where is Coranderrk Station?

2. What is a cultural burning? How does this differ from a bushfire?

3. When was the last cultural burning at Coranderrk Station? Why was it the last cultural burning to take place around that time?

4. What kind of knowledge and skills are required in order to coordinate a cultural burn?

5. The term 'managing country' was used earlier in the video.

What is meant by this term?

6. Why did Indigenous Australians undertake cultural burns so many years ago? Why are more people undertaking cultural burnings now?

## Media Analysis: Seeing the Land from an Aboriginal Canoe

Watch the videos at this link: <https://youtu.be/fcDCYXfahcA>

1. How did Indigenous Australians make canoes?

2. What other items did Indigenous Australians make from bark?

3. In what ways were the canoes advantageous?

4. What did Indigenous Australians use the canoe for?

## Media Analysis: Earth Ovens

Watch the videos at this link: <https://youtu.be/m-hBCVrk4LQ>

1. What is an earth oven?

2. How is an earth oven made?

3. How does food cook in the earth oven?

4. What kind of native foods can be cooked in the oven?

How do the sensory properties of this food change when cooked in the earth oven?

## Media Analysis: The Incredible Journey of the Bogong Moth

Watch the video at this link: <https://youtu.be/Z7w44Ka0xXI>

1. What does the Bogong Moth look like?

2. Where do the Bogong Moths originate from? Where do they travel to each year?

3. Why do researchers think the Bogong Moths go to the caves each year?

4. Describe the 'life' of a Bogong Moth.

5. How do the Bogong Moths find their way to the caves each year?

## Media Analysis: The Journey of the Bogong Moth – This Place

Watch the video at this link: <https://youtu.be/m-hBCVrk4LQ>

1. What does Mugabareena mean?

2. What happened at Mungabareena? What makes this a special meeting place?

3. What does Mungabareena mean?

4. What were the roles of the men and women at Mungabareena?

# Practical Activity One

## Embracing Indigenous Foods

### ***Why haven't we embraced indigenous foods?***

*If you ate as many jellybeans as the number of Italian and Chinese restaurants you've come across in your time, you'd probably turn into one giant multi-coloured jellybean. That is to say, you would've come across a lot of said restaurants... as well as Indian and Thai and Greek and British (I'm lumping Aussie pubs in that category). But how many Australian indigenous restaurants have you come across? You'd hardly fill up on those jellybeans, I bet.*

*Same goes for native spices in our everyday cooking. Ask those around you if they have tasted cumin, coriander, cinnamon and all those exotic spices and you'll pretty much have a clean sweep of affirmatives. But ask for wattleseed, strawberry gum or kutjera enthusiasts and crickets will chirp, chirp chirp.*

*Let's face it, as a nation of eaters, growers and sellers, we've been awfully slow at embracing our own produce, there's no question about that. The question is why?*

*By Maria Hannaford*

*Source: Hannaford, M. (2013, June 13). *Sustainable Table*. Retrieved from Question – why haven't we embraced indigenous foods?: <https://sustainabletable.org.au/question-havent-embraced-indigenous-foods/>*

### **Let's Cook!**

#### **Are you ready to embrace Indigenous cuisine in common foods that are considered to be Australian?**

Working in a group of two, you will make one version of the filo triangles using baby spinach and the other using Warrigal greens.

Spinach and Cheese Triangles	
<b>Ingredients:</b>	
100g baby spinach	1 tablespoon pinenuts or sunflower seeds, toasted
½ Granny Smith apple, grated	1 teaspoon lemon, finely grated
125g ricotta cheese	4 sheets of filo pastry
1 tablespoon beaten egg, lightly beaten	1 tablespoon olive oil
<b>Step 1:</b>	
<b>Preheat the</b> oven to 180°C.	
<b>Line</b> a baking tray with baking paper.	
<b>Step 2:</b>	
<b>Half-fill</b> a medium-sized saucepan with water. <b>Bring</b> to a boil.	
<b>Rinse</b> spinach.	
<b>Add</b> salt and spinach to the boiling water. <b>Cook</b> for 30 seconds or until just wilted.	
<b>Drain</b> and <b>rinse</b> under cold water. <b>Drain</b> well.	
<b>Step 3:</b>	
<b>Spread</b> pinenuts or sunflower seeds evenly over the lined baking tray.	
<b>Bake</b> for 7 to 10 minutes.	
Gently <b>shake</b> the tray occasionally so the nuts or seeds brown evenly.	
<b>Observe</b> them carefully as they burn easily.	
<b>Remove</b> from the tray immediately and <b>set aside</b> .	
<b>Step 4:</b>	
<b>Squeeze</b> all moisture from spinach and apple.	
<b>Place</b> into a mixing bowl.	
<b>Add</b> ricotta, nuts or seeds, egg, and lemon rind.	
<b>Season</b> with salt and pepper.	
<b>Mix</b> well to combine.	
<b>Step 5:</b>	
<b>Remove</b> four sheets of pastry from the package.	
<b>Brush</b> pastry lightly with oil and layer on top of each other.	
<b>Divide</b> into pastry into six even strips.	
<b>Place</b> a tablespoon of spinach mixture in the corner of the filo pastry and <b>fold</b> diagonally, creating a triangle.	
Continue folding to <b>make</b> a triangle shape.	
<b>Click</b> this link to find out how to fold the triangles: <a href="https://www.taste.com.au/baking/articles/how-to-fold-filo-pastry-triangles/so6dhpgj">https://www.taste.com.au/baking/articles/how-to-fold-filo-pastry-triangles/so6dhpgj</a>	
Note: Cover the pastry immediately with a clean, damp tea towel to stop the unfilled pastry from drying out.	
<b>Step 6:</b>	
<b>Brush</b> lightly with oil.	
<b>Place</b> onto a baking tray.	
<b>Bake</b> for 20 to 25 minutes or until golden and crisp. <b>Serve</b> hot.	

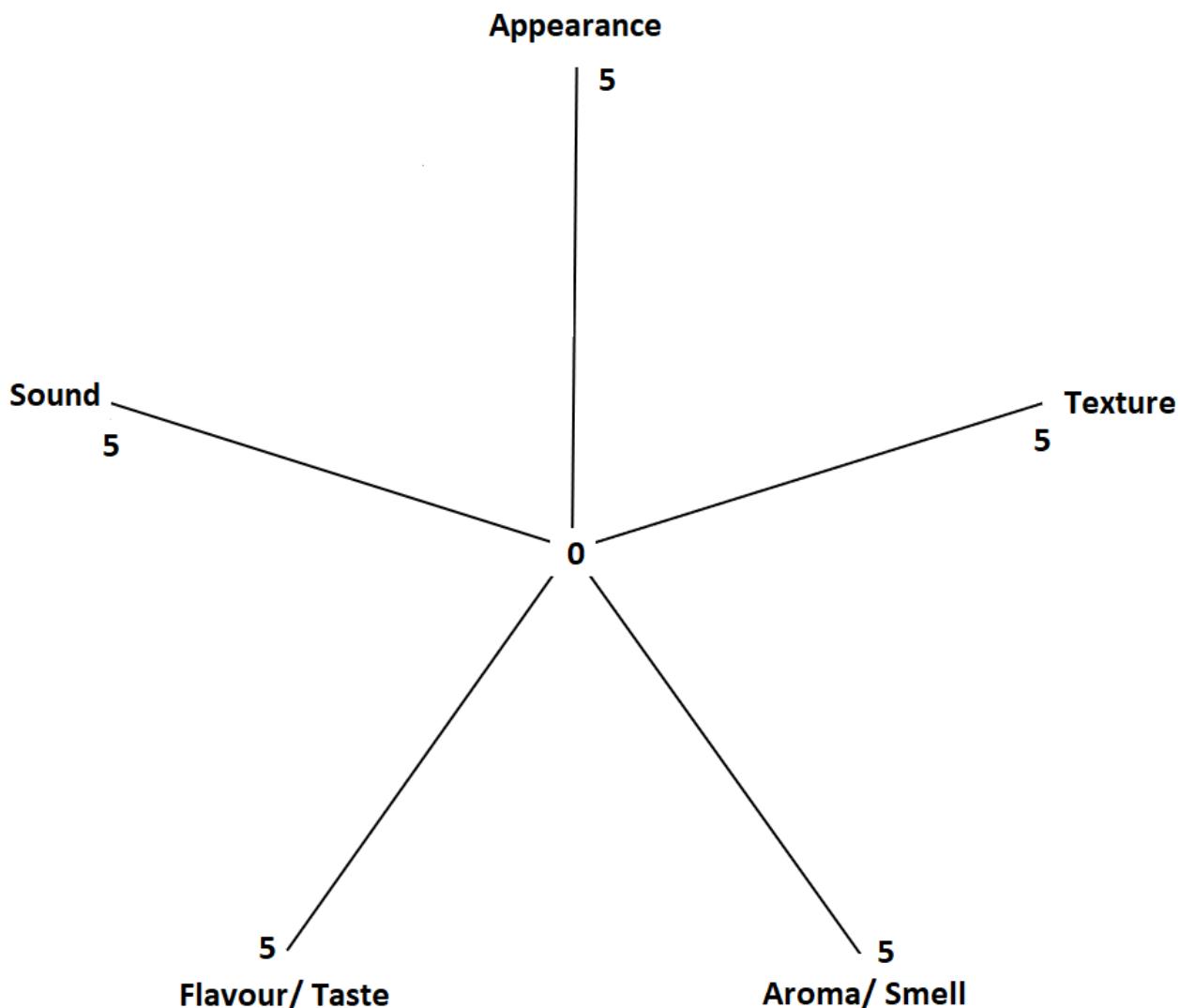
**Let's Evaluate!**

Sensory analysis is also called a sensory evaluation or sensory test. Sensory analyses help describe the physical properties of food and determine how well-liked a food product is.

**Conduct a sensory evaluation of the triangles made with baby spinach and Warrigal greens.**

1. Using a red pen, mark a dot along the line that best represents how you feel about the baby spinach triangles' appearance, texture, smell/ aroma, taste, and sound. Join the dots together.
2. Using a blue pen, mark a dot along the line that best represents how you feel about the Warrigal green triangles' appearance, texture, smell/ aroma, taste, and sound. Join the dots together.

The more a hexagon-style shape appears, the more highly rated the product is.



Answer the following questions:

1. Which type of triangle did you prefer?

2. Using the results of your sensory evaluation, explain why you preferred this triangle and not the other triangle.

3. Now that you have sampled some indigenous foods, are you more willing to use them in your cooking?

4. What might be some reasons why indigenous ingredients are not used widely in Australia?

5. Do you think this is changing? Explain your response.

## Practical Activity Two

### Which is Best?

In this task, you will be asked to conduct a sensory evaluation of various indigenous flavourings and herbs.

#### Let's Cook!

1. Working in groups of four, each student will prepare one batch of the damper.
2. Each person in the group must use different indigenous flavourings and herbs in their damper.
3. After making the damper, the students must conduct a sensory test on each type of damper.

Damper	
<b>Preparation Time:</b> 15 minutes	<b>Cooking Time:</b> 30 minutes
<b>Ingredients:</b>	
1 cup self-raising flour	125ml milk
¼ teaspoon salt	2 teaspoons dried herbs
2 tablespoons butter	1 tablespoon butter, for serving
<b>Method:</b>	
1. <b>Preheat</b> the oven to 180°C.	
2. <b>Line</b> a baking tray with baking paper.	
3. In a large bowl, <b>stir</b> together the flour and salt. <b>Add</b> the indigenous flavouring or herb.	
4. Using the rubbing-in technique, <b>combine</b> the butter and flour.	
5. <b>Add</b> the milk and stir the dough with a butter knife. The dough should be tender but not that sticky.	
6. <b>Turn</b> out onto a lightly floured workbench and <b>form</b> it into a smooth round ball.	
7. <b>Cut</b> a cross in the top of the damper and <b>brush</b> with extra milk or sprinkle with additional flour	
8. <b>Bake</b> for about 30 minutes or until golden. When it is ready, the bottom of the damper will sound hollow when tapped.	
9. <b>Serve</b> with butter.	

**Let's Evaluate!**

1. Write the names of each flavouring and herb in the first column below.
2. Rate each type of damper's appearance, texture, aroma/smell, and taste by selecting the facial expression which best describes how you feel about the damper.
3. Record a word that describes the flavour and herb in the damper. Try to avoid using words such as nice, beautiful, or awful.

These words state how much you like the food rather than its sensory properties.

Click here to access a list of words you could use: <https://www.foodafactoflife.org.uk/media/6174/sensory-vocabulary-p316.pdf>

Flavouring or Herb		Appearance	Texture	Aroma/ Smell	Taste
	Rating	  	  	  	  
	Descriptive Word				
	Rating	  	  	  	  
	Descriptive Word				
	Rating	  	  	  	  
	Descriptive Word				
	Rating	  	  	  	  
	Descriptive Word				
	Rating	  	  	  	  
	Descriptive Word				

Answer the following questions:

1. Which flavouring and herb did you like the most? Why did you like this one the most?

2. Which flavouring and herb did you like the least? Why did you like this one the least?

3. Suggest a dish or recipe where you could use each of the flavorings and herbs.

<b>Flavouring or herb</b>	<b>Dish or Recipe</b>	<b>Explain why you think this flavouring or herb would be suitable for this dish or recipe.</b>

## Summary Activity

Answer the questions below:

<b>What is the main idea about this key knowledge and key skills?</b>	
Write two or three sentences in your own words.	
<b>What is meant by the term human resource?</b>	<b>Provide an example of a human resource used by Indigenous Australians.</b>
<b>What is meant by the term natural resource?</b>	<b>Provide an example of a natural resource used by Indigenous Australians.</b>
<b>Identify examples of foods that Victoria's first peoples produced and consumed prior to European settlement and explain how these foods could be used in contemporary dishes or recipes.</b>	
Grains	
Meat	
Fish	
Insects	
Fruits, seeds and vegetables	
Greens and herbs	

**Provide two examples of how Victoria's first people used specialist knowledge and practices to hunt and/or gather food.**

--	--

**Identify three foods that were an excellent source of nutrition for Victoria's First People.**

**Explain why these foods were nutritious.**

--

--

## Exam Preparation

### Multiple-Choice Questions (5 marks)

Choose the response that is correct or that **best answers** the question.

#### Question 1

Which of the following is an indigenous plant food that grows naturally in Victoria?

- a. Finger lime.
- b. Murnong yam daisy.
- c. Macadamia nuts.
- d. Possum.

#### Question 2

Prior to European settlement, Victoria's First People used baskets to:

- a. Help catch fish.
- b. Start fires.
- c. Give kangaroo meat more flavour.
- d. Sell at markets to tourists holidaying in Australia.

#### Question 3

Indigenous Australians consumed a:

- a. High fat and varied diet.
- b. Nutritious but limited diet.
- c. Nutritious and varied diet.
- d. High fat and limited diet.

#### Question 4

Warrigal greens require blanching in order to:

- a. Remove the toxins and make them safe to eat.
- b. Make them suitable for consumption.
- c. Help them cook faster.
- d. Decrease their nutritional value.

#### Question 5

Indigenous Australians have acquired the knowledge and skills to hunt, capture and prepare a range of animals for food. This is referred to as:

- a. An environmental resource.
- b. A natural resource.
- c. A practical cooking skill.
- d. A human resource.

**Short Answer Questions (15 marks)****Question 1 (4 marks)**

Victoria's First people consumed a varied diet.

- a. Identify two plant foods they found naturally growing in Victoria. (2 marks)

- b. Identify two animal foods they found in Victoria. (2 marks)

**Question 2 (3 marks)**

To aboriginal peoples, water is life. Aboriginal peoples in the past used water from rivers for all their water needs - drinking, fishing, and washing. As well as using the water, spending time on rivers and billabongs is central to intergenerational knowledge and cultural transfer, and family time.

Source: The University of Melbourne, n.d. *Indigenous voices in water*. (Online) Available at:

<https://indigenousknowledge.unimelb.edu.au/curriculum/resources/indigenous-voices-in-water> (Accessed 10 September 2022).

- a. Identify one food that Victoria's First people sourced from or around water. (1 mark)

- b. Explain how Indigenous Australians captured this food source. (2 marks)

**Question 3 (4 marks)**

Compare how Victoria's first people cooked food in the earth oven with how food is cooked in an oven nowadays.

**Question 4 (4 marks)**

Fire-stick farming is also known as cultural burning and cool burning.

- a. Describe what firestick farming is. (2 marks)

- b. Discuss how firestick farming is beneficial. (2 marks)

## Exam Preparation

### Multiple-Choice Questions (5 marks)

Choose the response that is correct or that **best answers** the question.

#### Question 1

Which of the following is an indigenous plant food that grows naturally in Victoria?

- Finger lime.
- Murnong yam daisy.
- Macadamia nuts.
- Possum.

The answer is not A. Finger limes grow naturally in tropical climates.

The answer is B. The Murnong Yam Daisy was a staple food for Victoria's First People.

The answer is not C. Macadamia nuts are native to northern New South Wales, southern-eastern Queensland and Central Queensland.

The answer is not D. Possums were a primary source of meat in southern parts of Australia, but the question refers to plant foods, not animal foods.

#### Question 2

Prior to European settlement, Victoria's First People used baskets to:

- Help catch fish.
- Start fires.
- Give kangaroo meat more flavour.
- Sell at markets to tourists holidaying in Australia.

Baskets were used for a variety of purposes.

The answer is A. Baskets or woven nets, were used to catch a range of marine life.

The answer is not B. It is unlikely that baskets were used to start fires.

The answer is not C. Bark, flavourings and herbs were used to add flavour to the meat.

The answer is not D. There were no tourists in Australia at that time.

#### Question 3

Indigenous Australians consumed a:

- High fat and varied diet.
- Nutritious but limited diet.
- Nutritious and varied diet.
- High fat and limited diet.

The answer is not A. Some food sources, such as the Bogong Moth, were dense in energy. However, many of the plant foods they consumed were not.

The answer is not B. Indigenous Australians managed the environment to ensure they could obtain a variety of nutritious foods. Their diets were not limited.

The answer is C. Indigenous Australians managed the environment to ensure they had a varied and nutritious diet. They also had a thorough knowledge of edible plants and those that were not.

The answer is not D. This response is similar to B.

**Question 4**

Warrigal greens require blanching in order to:

- a. Remove the toxins and make them safe to eat.
- b. Make them suitable for consumption.
- c. Help them cook faster.
- d. Decrease their nutritional value.

**The Answer is A.** Indigenous Australians determined if something was harmful by observing people's reactions after applying it to the skin or consuming it.

The answer is not B. Smaller leaves are suitable for consumption without being boiled as they have fewer toxins.

The answer is not C or D. In this case; the leaves are not blanched to enable them to cook faster or decrease their nutritional value.

**Question 5**

Indigenous Australians have acquired the knowledge and skills to hunt, capture and prepare a range of animals for food. This is referred to as:

- a. An environmental resource.
- b. A natural resource.
- c. A practical cooking skill.
- d. A human resource.

**The answer is not A.** An environmental resource is something that is found in the environment.

The answer is not B. A natural resource would also be found in the environment.

The answer is not C. The question related to hunting, capturing and preparing food, not just cooking.

**The answer is D.** A human resource can be defined as a person's knowledge and skills, which they can apply to a particular situation to help them think, plan, and problem solve.

**Short Answer Questions (15 marks)****Question 1 (4 marks)**

Victoria's First people consumed a varied diet.

a. Identify two plant foods they found naturally growing in Victoria. (2 marks)

Any of the following responses were accepted:

Kangaroo grass, Lomandra grass, Murnong Yam Daisy, Warrigal greens, River mint, Saltbush, and Chocolate lily.

b. Identify two animal foods they found in Victoria. (2 marks)

Any of the following responses were accepted:

Native ducks, fruit bats or grey-headed flying fox, possums, insects such as the Bogong moth and fish including crabs, crayfish, eels, seals, shellfish, turtles, and beached whales.

**Question 2 (3 marks)**

To aboriginal peoples, water is life. Aboriginal peoples in the past used water from rivers for all their water needs - drinking, fishing, and washing. As well as using the water, spending time on rivers and billabongs is central to intergenerational knowledge and cultural transfer, and family time.

Source: The University of Melbourne, n.d. *Indigenous voices in water*. (Online) Available at:

<https://indigenousknowledge.unimelb.edu.au/curriculum/resources/indigenous-voices-in-water> (Accessed 10 September 2022).

a. Identify one food that Victoria's First people sourced from or around water. (1 mark)

Any one of the following responses was accepted:

Crabs, crayfish, eels, fish, native ducks, seals, shellfish, turtles, and beached whales.

b. Explain how Indigenous Australians captured this food source. (2 marks)

For two marks, the student needed to explain how this food source was captured.

Possible responses included.

- Eels – They would make little pools of water using rocks. Eels would pass through a net and become trapped in one of the pools of water where they could be captured.
- Native Ducks - the men would come along with their boomerangs and would throw them low towards the ducks. The ducks would then fly low along the creek to where the women would be waiting in the bushes with their nets stretched across the creek – tied between two trees. The women would then come out and catch the ducks.

**Question 3 (4 marks)**

Compare how Victoria's first people cooked food in the earth oven with how food is cooked in an oven nowadays.

*In this question, the command term, compare, means the student needs to identify the similarities and differences. The degree of significance of these similarities and differences should also be provided.*

For two marks, the student could have discussed two brief **differences**:

- Victoria's first people dug a hole in the ground to cook food, whereas we cook food in ovens in our houses today. This is a big difference.
- The food in the earth oven was cooked by steaming, and we tend to bake or roast food in our ovens more than steam it.

Or, for two marks, the student could have discussed one **difference** in more detail:

- Victoria's first people dug a deep hole in the ground to cook food; they covered it with rocks and soil. The food was cooked by steaming. This is very different from the ovens we have nowadays that sit above the ground and are often located in our homes. Nowadays, people usually bake and roast food in their ovens.

For two marks, the student could have discussed two **similarities** briefly:

- The oven was lined with herbs such as rivermint. We often add flavouring to the food we cook in the oven too.
- Sometimes food was placed in baskets and cooked in the oven, just like casserole dishes in the oven nowadays.
- Food was sometimes wrapped in leaves and then placed in the earth oven. This is very similar to how people wrap food in foil nowadays.

Or, for two marks, the student could have discussed one **similarity** in more detail:

- Victoria's first people often cooked food with flavourings and herbs like rivermint. They wrapped food up in bark or leaves to keep it contained. We often do the same by wrapping food in foil and coating or adding herbs and spices.

**Question 4 (4 marks)**

Fire-stick farming is also known as cultural burning and cool burning.

- a. Describe what firestick farming is. (2 marks)

In this question, the command word, describe, means to provide characteristics or features accurately.

For two marks, the student needed to accurately describe the characteristics or features of firestick farming.

The student could have provided two brief responses:

- Firestick farming is the practice of burning small areas of land.
- Firestick farming involves lighting up old debris and burning it off.

Or, the student could have provided one more detailed response.

- Indigenous Australians would intentionally burn old vegetation in a controlled environment with a skilled and knowledgeable elder.
- Firestick farming involves burning old bark, leaves, sticks, or debris in small areas under strict observation by experienced Indigenous Australians.

- b. Discuss how firestick farming is beneficial. (2 marks)

In this question, the command word, discuss, means to present a clear argument about the benefits of firestick farming.

For two marks, the student needed to discuss how firestick farming is beneficial.

The student could have provided two brief responses:

- Regular burning meant fewer large bushfires were less likely to occur.
- The fires meant the animals would come out, and the people could catch them.

Or, the student could have provided one more detailed response.

- Fire and smoke caused animals under trees, shrubs, grass, and other ground coverings to come out into the open, where they could be hunted and caught more easily.
- Once an area had been burnt, animals returned to feed on the new plant growth, increasing the Indigenous Australians' food supply.
- Burning old debris like branches, leaves, and shrubbery