



# Bush Potato

*Ipomoea costata & I polpha*

**Central Australian Aboriginal names:**

Alyawarr:	<i>anaty</i>
Anmatyerr:	<i>anaty, anek</i>
Eastern Arrernte:	<i>anatye</i>
Western Arrernte:	<i>natye</i>
Pintupi:	<i>ala, yala</i>
Warlpiri:	<i>karnti, paparda</i>



**Common names:** Bush potato, desert yam

**Distribution:** Found usually on Spinifex sand plains particularly to the north and north-west of Alice Springs.

**Description:** This vine or shrub grows to 1.25 m high when unsupported and can send out long tendrils that cover up to 3 metres. These tendrils will also scale shrubs and trees to several metres. With large dark green, broad ovate foliage, this plant has brilliant large trumpet-like pink to purple flowers that have a bright red throat. The plant flowers in summer following rains and produces large edible tubers.

Bush potato is a staple food within its region. It is quite sweet and juicy and is delicious when sliced and fried, roasted or baked. It can also be eaten raw. It is similar in many ways to the common sweet potato in appearance and nutrient value. Three types of tuber can be found under the one bush. The first is found on the long runners which occasionally send down roots, but usually only in good seasons. The second type of tuber is produced on the parent's lateral roots – up to 3 m from the plant base. The third type is found directly below the mature plant. These can be hard and woody because of their age.

**Traditional uses/preparation:** When eaten fresh like an apple, the white flesh is firm, juicy and slightly sweet (very much like the Jikama from Mexico). Roasted whole in the ashes of a fire and eaten hot they taste very similar to the common sweet potato.

**Commercial use:** Currently unknown.



## Recipes for Bush Potato



### Jicama Y Ensalada Picante (spicy salad)

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6 small navel oranges  
1 red onion, thinly sliced  
1 cup Jicama or bush potato, cut into sticks, 7cm x 1cm  
1/2 cup coriander, chopped  
Salt, to taste

1 red jalapeno chilli, seeded and diced  
Pinch of cayenne pepper  
6 cups mixed salad greens, tossed with a vinaigrette dressing of your choice

Peel and section the oranges. Remove all of the membrane from orange sections. Mix with the onion slices and bush potato sticks (Jicama). Sprinkle with fresh coriander and jalapeno, and season with salt and cayenne pepper. Cover and refrigerate for about 2 hours.

Serve cold on chilled plates on a bed of mixed greens that have been tossed with a citrus or balsamic vinaigrette.

### Individual crispy potato bakes

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30 g butter, melted  
400 g bush potatoes, peeled, thinly sliced  
350 g sweet potatoes, peeled, thinly sliced  
5–7 garlic cloves, peeled, thinly sliced

150 ml thick King Island cream  
1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh sage  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper  
Fresh sage leaves, to garnish

Preheat oven to 200°C. Drizzle melted butter evenly among ten 80 ml (1/3 cup) capacity muffin pans. Combine the garlic, potatoes, cream and sage in a glass bowl and mix well. Season with salt and pepper. Spoon the mixture into the muffin pans. Smooth the surface slightly and make sure they are packed in tightly. Bake in the preheated oven for 30 minutes or until golden brown and tender. Set aside for 5 minutes to cool slightly and set. Turn onto a clean chopping board. Arrange the potato bakes on a serving platter, sprinkle with the reserved sage leaves and serve immediately.



### Bush potato straws

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1 bush potato (or Jicama)  
1 fresh lime  
1/2 teaspoon salt

1/4 teaspoon chilli powder  
Fresh coriander, chopped finely

Peel and cut the bush potato (or Jicama) into 5–10 mm slices and then into straws or thin sticks. Squeeze lime juice over and sprinkle with salt, chilli powder (to taste) and fresh coriander. Makes a great refreshing snack.



### Yucatan fruit salad

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1 cup fresh pineapple, cubed  
1 medium bush potato, peeled, cubed (or Jicama)  
1 large mango (not too soft), cubed  
1/2 small red papaya, cubed

1/2 teaspoon Tabasco sauce  
2 tablespoon fresh coriander leaves, chopped  
1 tablespoon fresh mint leaves, chopped  
1 lime, juiced and zested

Put all chopped fruit in a bowl, mix and sprinkle on Tabasco sauce to taste. Add the chopped fresh herbs and juice and zest of the lime. Mix and chill well.