



Muntries

Kunzea pomifera



Common names: Muntries, Munthari, mantari

Distribution: Southern coast of Australia, with inland extensions, from Portland in Victoria to the Eyre Peninsula and Kangaroo Island in South Australia. Areas with a natural rainfall of 500–800 mm per year.

Description: Muntries, or Munthari, is a prostrate native plant growing along the southern coast of Australia. It has radial branches spreading over sandy ground for up to 3 metres in all directions. The small round leaves are about 3–4 mm in diameter and the plant displays profuse cream, feathery flowers in spring. The grape-like, sweet fruit of *Kunzea pomifera* are borne on the apical meristems in clusters of 3 to 9. Their colour is a mosaic of green, red and purple and they range in size from 5–13 mm in diameter. The fruit has a granny smith apple flavour with a subtle spicy cranberry or juniper finish and are said to be rich in antioxidants. The fruit form in clusters and ripen in February to March.

The summer crop is highly valued by Aboriginal people, who have eaten them for at least 10,000 years. The first settlers also made the most of muntries, making them into jams and chutneys, but then they were forgotten until about 10 years ago. Now there are commercial plantations in South Australia, Victoria and NSW.

Traditional uses/preparation: Eaten fresh or dried and pounded into large cakes for trading and/or storage for later use.

Commercial use: Muntries are available fresh, dried and frozen. The fruit is used in a range of value-added products such as marmalades, chutneys, preserves, cakes, fruit chews, ice cream, muffins. They can also be added to salads.



Recipes for Muntries

Muntries pizzetta with fresh goats curd, dukkah and rocket

From: Russell Jeavons – <http://www.abc.net.au/federation/federactive/feast1.htm>

200 g organic bread flour
100 g stone-ground 80% light wheat flour
1 tsp salt
1 tsp dried yeast
250 ml warm water

100 g fresh muntries
200 g goat's curd
50 g of your favourite dukkah
Olive oil

For the pizza dough combine the flours, salt, dried yeast and water, allowing enough warmth in the water to ensure that the dough is at body temperature as it comes together. You can tell this because it is neither hot nor cold to touch. It will be sticky at first – if not, add more water. Continue to knead until the dough is smooth. Put aside in a warm place under a damp cloth to prove for one hour. Pinch off a walnut sized pieces of dough, pressing them out flat to make small disks (8 cm) and push the muntries into the dough. Brush with good olive oil and cook in a moderate oven for 10–15 minutes.

Serve the pizzetta with bowls of fresh goat's curd, dukkah and fresh baby rocket so that the diners can garnish the pizzetta themselves.

Muntries upside down cake

From: <http://www.abc.net.au/indigenous/stories/s2216394.htm>

250 g butter
250 g caster sugar
4 eggs
1 teaspoon of vanilla essence
1 pinch of salt
4 cups of self-raising flour
1 cup of milk
1 1/2 cups of fresh muntries
1/2 cup dried quandong halves



2 bananas, peeled and sliced lengthways
1/2 cup each of ironwood honey and maple syrup
1/2 cup glace orange
1/2 cup glace riberies
2 tablespoons of lime juice

Preheat the oven to 180°C. Cream the butter and sugar. Add the eggs slowly one at a time and blend well. Sift in the flour and salt and fold in gently. Add the vanilla. Crush 1 cup of the fresh muntries and fold them through the cake mix, then transfer to a lightly greased cake tin. Bake in the preheated oven for about 50 minutes at 180°C.

For the topping: chop up the glace orange, quandongs, remaining muntries and the glace riberies and put in a saucepan. Mix the ironwood honey and maple syrup through the chopped fruit and add the lime juice. Warm through (do not boil) and allow the fruit to soak in the syrup.

Turn the cake out of the tin and lay the sliced bananas over the top (bottom) of the cake. Spoon the warm topping mix onto the bananas and the cake, letting the juices run through into the sponge, which will soak it up. The honey and maple syrup should hold the berries together on the top of the cake. Serve warm with cream.