



Quandong

Santalum acuminatum



Central Australian Aboriginal names:

Eastern Arrernte: *pmerlpe*

Western Arrernte: *pmwerlpe*

Pintupi: *mangata*

Pitjantjatjara: *kuuturu*

Warlpiri: *mangarda*

Common names: Native peach, desert peach, wild peach

Distribution: Commonly found in woodland associations as scattered individuals or small groups on sands, sandy loams or gravelly ridges and occasionally on clay soils or rocky hillsides. Fairly common throughout South Australia, south Western Australia and New South Wales with a more restricted distribution in Queensland, Victoria and the Northern Territory.

Description: A small semi-parasitic tree up to 4 m in height with rough dark-brown fissured bark and pale green to olive leathery leaves. The flowers are very small and greenish white in colour. In late Autumn they give rise to round bright red fleshy fruits about 2–3 cm across, enclosing a round pitted stone about the size of a marble. The kernel of this stone is also edible.

Traditional uses/preparation: A traditional staple food, quandong is much sought after throughout its range. It has been an important traditional fruit to Aboriginal people, and although it is somewhat tart it is highly nutritious and contains twice the vitamin C of an orange.

The fruit is eaten fresh and excess may be dried then pounded into 'cakes' for later reconstituting in water. The large kernels are also highly nutritious, having a 25% protein and a 70% oil content. It does appear, however, that this food source was hardly ever utilised.¹

Commercial use: Quandong fruit is readily available dried or fresh frozen. Also available are a large range of products containing the fruit such as sauces, jams, chutneys, pies, liqueur, confectionery, and as a flavouring for yogurt and in herbal teas.

1. Latz P. 1995. *Bushfires & Bushtucker: Aboriginal plant use in Central Australia*. IAD Press, Alice Springs Australia, pp.259.

Recipes for quandong

Quandong jam

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- 2 1/2 cups or 250 g dried quandong fruit
- 4 cups water
- 2 1/2 kg castor sugar

Reconstitute the dried quandong fruit by placing them overnight in a large bowl with a litre of water. Put the quandong, water and sugar into a large saucepan. Place the pan on a high heat, stirring constantly to dissolve the sugar and bring to the boil. Lower to medium heat and let the jam come to a good simmer.

Cook for about 40 minutes or until the jam reaches setting point. Test that the jam is ready by dropping a teaspoon of it onto a chilled saucer and cool. If set, the jam should wrinkle when touched. If it is too loose, cook a little longer. Be careful not to overcook and caramelize the sugar, as this will alter both the colour and flavour of the jam. Once the jam is ready, pour into sterilised jars and seal. The unopened jars will keep for up to a year. Refrigerate the jam once opened.

Quandong, port and chilli sauce

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|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| 1/2 cup or 50 g of dried quandong fruit | 1/2 teaspoon chilli powder |
| 2 cups or 500 ml apple juice | a pinch of salt |
| 1 cup port | 2 teaspoons cornflour, dissolved in a little cold water |

Place the dried quandong fruit in a saucepan with the apple juice and bring to a simmer. Cook at a simmer for 10 minutes, turn off the heat, allow them to cool, then stand for at least 2 hours to rehydrate fully. Add the port, chilli powder and salt and simmer for 5 minutes. Thicken the sauce slightly by briskly stirring in the dissolved cornflour and cooking for 3 minutes before removing from the heat. This rich and flavoursome sauce suits most game meats such as kangaroo, duck, rabbit and lean pork.

Quandong pie

From: <http://recipes.chef2chef.net>



- 250 g plain flour
- 200 g unsalted butter, very cold
- 125 ml sour cream
- OR 2 sheets of ready-made shortcrust pastry

- 1 cup dried quandong fruit
- 2 cups of water
- 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
- Juice of 1/4 lemon (a squeeze)
- 1/2 cup sugar
- Egg wash (beaten egg) & extra sugar to sprinkle

To make the sour cream pastry: Roughly chop the cold butter and add to the flour in a food processor. Pulse this mix until the butter pieces are the size of olives. Add the sour cream and pulse again until just incorporated – it does not have to be perfectly smooth or uniform. Turn onto a well-floured cool surface and roll the dough into a rectangle. Cover and leave to rest in the fridge for at least 20 minutes. Roll 1/2 the pastry into the shape and size of your pie tin, line the tin with pastry and rest it in the fridge. Roll out the rest of the pastry for the pie lid. OR use readymade shortcrust pastry and fit to your pie dish.

Put the quandong fruit, apple, water, cinnamon and lemon into a saucepan and boil until soft, about 30 minutes. Add the sugar and stir until it is all dissolved. Let the mixture cool. Brush egg wash on the edges of pastry in the pie dish. Pour the cooled mixture into the pie dish, cover with pastry lid and brush with remaining egg wash and sprinkle with sugar. Bake in a moderate oven until golden brown. Serve warm with plenty of thick cream.