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An introduction to Sustainable Cuisine

This is our first time at the Queensland Garden Expo, so welcome to our stall and we hope that you enjoy our range of culinary plants!!

We decided to exhibit this year after creating our own sustainable backyard garden (it's definitely **not** a farm!) on a hillside location just a few kilometres from here in Kiels Mountain. Every time we had guests for dinner or lunch they would ask about all the 'unusual' vegetables and fruits that we were serving and many of our guests were then asking where they could get their hands on the plants/seeds/produce. Since most of the things we grow are very well suited to life in the subtropics, but not widely available at the more 'traditional'/mainstream garden centres and supermarkets, we started to propagate them and even went to some local markets to sell this range of delicious and delightful plants. The response was overwhelmingly positive and people quickly realised that although not traditional, many of these plants perform extremely well in the local conditions and provided excellent culinary returns. We encourage the cultivation of perennials as these plants just keep on giving and often require very little maintenance throughout the year, except to eat them- often taking care of the pruning / trimming at the same time!

We also believe in being responsible botanical citizens and therefore want to mention that because many of these plants grow well in this part of Australia (but are not necessarily originally from here), they have the potential to become 'weeds' if they escape cultivation and move into native habitats. This is, of course, also true of many popular ornamental and culinary plants, so we encourage all gardeners to be careful when planting in areas adjacent to bushland or where birds/animals/wind/water can spread seeds/leaves/stems into areas of native vegetation. We decided not to bring several of our favourite plant species to this Expo to avoid any controversy around the selling of potential environmental weeds, but we acknowledge that 'weeds' are very much in the opinion of the beholder...so perhaps coffee, guava, shizo and betel leaf could be on this 'hit list'. We're sorry in advance if you are upset with us for having these plants for sale, but we sincerely believe that they can be cultivated without spreading and we encourage all gardeners to take responsibility for their own plants!

On a more uplifting note, we are quite keen to share some of our culinary inspiration-particularly in relation with what to do with these plants! So here are a few recipes to get you started.....and if you are interested to learn even more 'hands on' ways to use these plants, why not come to one of our afternoon garden visits & cooking demonstrations?! We promise a great shared lunch and hopefully plenty of inspiration!!

- Check out our website for more details....
- And follow us on Instagram. We like likes!!

www.sustainablecuisine.com.au



sustainable_cuisine_sunshine

The plants we have at the Queensland Garden Expo 2017!

These are some of the plants we have chosen to bring along to QGE 2017....we have heaps more at our demonstration gardens and are currently in production with many other interesting species, so let us know what you want and we'll try our best to provide! We also welcome visitors, so make an appointment and come check us out....



ALOE VERA

(Aloe barbadensis)

A perennial small clumping succulent growing to around 25cm. Quite hardy and requiring very little water (but it does love the summer rain!)

thriving in shade to part sun. Doesn't like waterlogging, so keep it in a well drained place.

Great sticky gel inside each leaf is useful as a cooling agent- said to work on sunburn, skin burns and other conditions requiring soothing! This plant can be very successfully grown in a pot.

AMBARELLA TREE (MANZANA DE ORO)

(Spondias dulcis)

A very pretty medium sized tree growing rather quickly and reaching a height of around 8m.

Quite hardy and requiring very little water (but it does love the summer rain!) thriving in full sun.

Fruits are green on the outside and orange/yellow inside-usually eaten when they are still a bit crunchy. Flavour is quite tangy and refreshing with a hint of mango sweetness. This plant is grown worldwide and eaten raw or made into both sweet and savoury dishes depending upon the country/cuisine. The leaves are even used in Malaysia and Thailand as a fresh herb- they have a lemon-y flavour. The leaves go very well with fish dishes.

ARROWROOT (*Canna edulis*)

A very useful perennial plant with lovely large green leaves and a wonderful red flower. Dig up young purple ‘bulbs’ and use like a potato, but it does require slightly more cooking than a potato.

1 cm thick slices done on the BBQ are great, so are very thin slices fried in oil. Also very useful in curries and soups as it does not ‘fall apart’ like potatoes do. If you are really keen try making gluten free flour with it!

BETEL LEAF (*Piper sarmentosum*)

A perennial creeping vine that is used for the edible leaves. Likes growing in part sun/shade. Harvest the leaves any time year round and use as a very stylish edible dish for small canapés, also great for garnishing platters and many people eat the leaves like a salad green. An excellent fresh herb as well and as this plant is very vigorous in the garden if given the right conditions, a total winner. Very expensive to buy the leaves, so why not grow your own!?

BIRIBA

(Rollinia deliciosa)

A very handsome tree related to the custard apple and soursop. Originally from tropical and subtropical South America, this tree will not like frost or excessively cool temperatures. It should only reach around 8m in height and produce wonderful fruits with a lemon/creamy flavour. Much smoother inside than the custard apple, and more delicious.

BLACK SAPOTE

‘CHOCOLATE PUDDING FRUIT’

(Diospyros digyna)

A very pretty tree with lovely glossy green leaves and a wonderful canopy shape. The fist size fruits contain a thick dark brown pulp with a lush and sweet taste a bit like chocolate! Eat them once the fruit has become quite soft, we recommend harvesting when they are still ‘hard’ and allowing them to ripen on the bench. Great for smoothies.

BRAZILIAN SPINACH

(Alternanthera sissoo)

A very useful perennial green ‘spinach’ alternative which has glossy green leaves and a delicious crunchy texture. Great in a stir-fry context- much better than English Spinach for taste and texture. Can be used as an attractive edible ‘low hedge’ or garden border in the food/ornamental garden- responds well to pruning (ie harvesting!).

CHOCOLATE TREE

CACAO (*Theobroma cacao*)

A small to medium sized tree with large, green and very pretty leaves. The large, bright orange fruit pods are borne on the woody branches and stems, making it an even more spectacular plant! Originally from tropical America, this tree thrives in North Queensland, however, ours have done quite well outside through two winters on the Sunshine Coast. They do not really like extreme cold (ie below 10°C) or strong winds, so plant in a warm, protected position and water well. It is also recommended to plant them with some shade cover from the direct sun while they are small...ie under papayas or other such trees. If you have a glasshouse or special structure for orchids, bromeliads, etc. this plant is well known for growing very well in pots and fruiting after just a few years. The large 'cacao beans' inside the orange pods are surrounded by a delicious, sticky, white sweet pulp that is a rare treat associated with growing this tree!

CASABANAN (*Sikana odorifera*)

A perennial vine which will grow on/up/over whatever you give it. 5m-15m Extremely prolific fruiting with young green fruit very much like a zucchini and mature fruit like a cross between a watermelon and a sweet pumpkin. Added bonus is that this plant does not seem to suffer the mildew problems associated with zucchinis, etc.

This is a very vigorous growing perennial vine which needs a trellis or fence that can take a substantial weight.

CHILLIES (*Capsicum frutescens*)

Several varieties!!

A bushy perennial that is as beautiful as it is practical:

The ‘Rainbow’ chilli plant grows to about 50cm and has chillies that start off purple (not very hot), then turn yellow (mildly hot), orange (hot) and finally red (peak hot). Likes growing in full sun. Harvest the chillies at any time year round and use for curries, cooking, making pastes and drying. This plant always has chillies, so very useful in the kitchen garden.

CHILLIES (*Capsicum frutescens*)

The ‘Tree’ chilli plant grows to about 1.50m and has chillies that start off yellow (mildly hot) and eventually mature to orange (hot) and finally red (peak hot). Likes growing in full sun. Harvest the chillies at any time year round and use for curries, cooking, making pastes and drying. A very prolific chilli!

CHILLIES (*Capsicum frutescens*)

The ‘Long’ chilli plant grows to about 75cm and has chillies that start off green (mildly hot with wonderful flavour) and finally turn red (peak hot). Likes growing in full sun but very tolerant of part shade. Harvest the chillies at any time year round and use for curries, cooking, making pastes but not very good for drying. Good fruit yield.

CHILLIES (*Capsicum frutescens*)

The ‘Bonnet’ chilli plant grows to about 75cm and has chillies turn red (peak hot) and are shaped like bonnets. Likes growing in full sun. Harvest the chillies at any time year round and use for curries, cooking, making pastes but not very good for drying. Decent fruit yield and this is our hottest variety.

COFFEE (*Coffea arabica*)

A lovely shrub/small tree with glossy green leaves and the added benefit of growing your own coffee beans! The ‘green bean’ is inside a sweet fruit, and the outside of this fruit makes a great tea, even worthy of eating right off the tree.

CRANBERRY HIBISCUS

(Hibiscus acetosella)

A stunning shrub/small bush with amazingly coloured leaves with the added benefit of growing crunchy/tangy salad material! The leaves make a gorgeous ‘garnish’ on platters and are quite unique in flavour. They also make a great tea, imparting a pink colour and bright (sour-ish) taste to the tea.

DORRIGO PLUM

(Eniandra entrorsa)

A very handsome and rare tree growing to over 30m in warm rainforest conditions. Originally from NSW and the southern Queensland rainforests, this tree will grow relatively quickly in good conditions and it is tolerant of poor soils as long as it has some shade and moisture. It will produce an abundance of very sour fruits which look amazingly like plums.

DRAGONFRUIT (RED)

(Hylocereus costaricensis)

A very useful succulent ‘vine’ with a totally amazing flower and a wonderful pink fruit with red flesh. Grows very well in summer and likes to grow up a pole/tree trunk, taking up relatively little space in the garden. Fairly low maintenance but will grow better with higher quality soil and moisture.

DRAGONFRUIT (YELLOW)

(Hylocereus megalanthus)

A very useful succulent ‘vine’ with a totally amazing flower and a small yellow fruit with white flesh. Grows very well in summer and likes to grow up a pole/tree trunk, taking up relatively little space in the garden. Fairly low maintenance but will grow better with higher quality soil and moisture. This has a more sweet and delicious flavour than the red dragon fruit, but the vines
AND the fruit have spines.

GALANGAL (*Alpinia galanga*)

A clumping perennial that is used for the underground rhizomes. This plant grows brilliantly all year and also has a wonderful flowering habit so it looks awesome in the garden.

Likes growing in full sun to part sun/shade. Harvest the rhizomes at any time year round and use for curries from Indonesian, Thai and Malay recipes. Expensive to buy, so why not grow your own!?

GINGER (*Zingiber officinale*)

A clumping perennial that is used for the underground rhizomes. This plant grows brilliantly all year and does have a cool flower, but it does ‘die back’ in the cooler months (that’s when you harvest it!). Likes growing in full sun to part sun/shade. Harvest the rhizomes at any time year round and use for curries from Indonesian, Thai and Malay recipes and great in teas and tonics, sweet dishes and so much more. Very versatile.

ICE CREAM BEAN (*Inga feuillei*)

A very useful perennial tree with lovely glossy green leaves and a wonderful canopy shape. The pulp inside the bean pods have a sweet taste reminiscent of vanilla ice cream! The seeds can be cooked and used like a vegetable and the roasted seeds are a common street food in South America (where the tree comes from). Relatively quick growing up to 15+m.

LEMONGRASS (*Polygonum odoratum*)

A perennial clumping grass used for the edible bases of the stems which have a wonderful flavour. Harvest them any time year round and use in a range of Asian cuisines-particularly Thai, Indonesian & Chinese. A particular favourite is as a component of the Tom Yum soup. Also use the leaves in fresh teas.)

LOGANBERRY ‘SWEET TASTE’

VARIETY (*Rubus loganobaccus*)

A perennial cane which bears well in the subtropics. Expect fruit year round on the older canes. This plant likes to be ‘trained’ over and around a raised wire/trellis so that the tips aren’t able to keep touching the ground. When they do, the plant will put energy into running instead of fruiting.

MADAGASCAN ‘LIMA’ BEAN

(Phaseolus lunatus)

A perennial vine which will grow on/up/over whatever you give it 2m-5m. Extremely prolific year round and very tolerant of ‘neglect’. Fresh very young beans are crunchy and great sautéed in garlic and fresh herbs, but the highlight is the dried beans which are beautiful and can be used like any other dried bean for soups, stews, Mexican cuisine, etc.

MALABAR SPINACH (*Basella alba*)

A perennial creeper / vine / climber that is as beautiful as it is practical. This particular plant loves the QLD summer conditions and grows very well in hot & humid weather. It can grow over a fence/shed/wall and is also meant to be great for feeding to chooks. Harvest the leaves at any time year round and try stir frying the young ‘tendrils’ or serving them in salads. Many people believe these young ‘tendrils’ taste like asparagus.

MALABAR CHESTNUT

(Pachira glabra)

A very handsome tree growing to around 4m. Quite hardy but it does love the summer rain! Thriving in full or part sun. Amazing flowers form first and then give way to pods full of chewy and tasty nuts. This plant has that tropical look with dark shiny leaves and the tree is worth growing the flower alone, but the nuts are delicious and easy to harvest.

MINI MEXICAN CUCUMBER (SANDIITA)

(Melothria scabra)

A prolific and delicate vine growing to around 6m.

Quite hardy but it does need rain during the hot Queensland summers! Thriving in full or part sun, this very hardy plant will produce an abundance of perfectly shaped, crunchy ‘mini cucumbers’.

Amazing in salads and never developing the bitter flavour of their larger cousins. This plant benefits from a trellis, structure or other plant neighbour to climb, making the delicious little cucumbers easier to harvest. It does not appear to suffer the powdery mildew problems of the larger members of this group (ie cucumbers, etc) which is a major bonus!

MOTHER OF HERBS

(Plectranthus ambionicus)

An almost succulent clumping perennial growing to around 50cm. Quite easy to keep it looking perfect! Thriving in full or part sun, this very hardy plant will produce soft leaves with a complex flavour resembling oregano/thyme. Great in salads also in long cooked meat or bean dishes.

This plant has a long history of culinary applications but it also has herbal/health uses and these benefits should be thoroughly researched before eating too much of it.

OKINAWA SPINACH (*Gynura crepoides*)

A very useful ground cover/low grower with beautiful glossy green leaves that are purple on the underside. Grows very well in summer making prolific leaves which can be cooked just like spinach or kale. Use these just like spinach, and once you have picked them, the plant will shoot out again.

PAPAYA (*Carica papaya*)

A very useful plant here in the subtropics. This type yields sweet deep orange/red flesh. Also try using the GREEN fruit to make salads and pickles.

Every garden should have several of these to ensure that one male plant is present and pollinating the females.

PEPINO

(*Solanum muricatum*)

A small and bushy perennial growing to around 50cm. Quite easy to look after and fast growing, this plant will thrive in full or part sun and will produce medium sized fruits with a complex flavour like a rockmelon. These fruits are also very beautiful too...with a light yellow skin and fancy purple 'tiger' stripes!

PERILLA ‘SHIZO’ LEAF (*Perilla frutescens*)

An annual herb much loved by Japanese chefs. Very exotic flavour which combines the taste of basil, mint and pepper. Works well with fish, avocado, pickles, salads, etc. Pick the leaves and pinch out tips to make the plant last longer.

PINEAPPLE (*Ananas comosus*)

An edible bromeliad which grows very well in the climate of this area. The bloom is quite spectacular as it comes out of the centre of the plant, kids love watching this process as the fruit ripens! Fairly easy to grow and should produce fruit and also continue to multiply like most bromeliads by ‘pupping’.

PURPLE GUAVA

(*Psidium rufum*)

A perennial small tree growing to around 4m. Quite hardy and requiring very little water (but it does love the summer rain!) thriving in full sun. Great little round red fruits are wonderful to eat! This plant can be cut back to any size and can also be grown in a pot. Sometimes known as Aracacagao in its South American homeland. Can withstand a hard pruning if you want to make it into an edible hedge or shape it into a less ‘straggly’ plant.

'RED LIPSTICK TREE'

ACHIOTE

(Bixa orellana)

A very pretty tree with sensational red flowers.

The small fruits contain a deep red pulp that makes a wonderful (and totally natural!) food colouring. Useful to add a red or pink colour to a range of culinary dishes from icing to rice...the only limit is your imagination. This tree is so beautiful in flower/fruit that it is worthy of being in any ornamental garden. Very popular in Philippine cuisine and showing up more frequently in high end restaurants as a meat rub/spice.

SAWTOOTH CORIANDER

(Eryngium foetidum)

A very useful herb to have in any garden. Quite hardy but it does love the summer rain! Thriving in full or part sun. The leaves have an amazing flavour both fresh and when dried. There are spiky flowers which form and are quite useful in curry pastes/pesto, etc. This plant has that tough look that makes it unfavourable to pests and easy to harvest the leaves all year round.

SOCIETY GARLIC

(Tulbaghia violacea)

A clumping perennial growing to around 30cm in height with strappy foliage and a lovely purple flower. Quite easy to look after and drought tolerant, this plant will thrive in full or part sun and will produce an abundance of very pungent leaves akin to a strong chive in flavour. Great as a garnish or to toss into dishes to finish with a garlic-like bite.

SHALLOTS

(*Allium cepa var. aggregatum*)

A clumping perennial growing to around 20cm in height with green foliage. Quite easy to look after and drought tolerant, this plant will thrive in full or part sun and will produce clumps of bulbs smaller than onions and in the opinion of most chefs and culinary experts- more delicate in flavour. The abundance of green leaves are akin to 'spring onions' and very useful as a garnish or to toss into dishes to finish with a garlic/onion-like bite. In the subtropics it is best to divide (and eat!) the shallots periodically throughout the year.

SUGARCANE (*Saccharum spp.*)

A perennial grass that is extremely useful for food and mulch. It looks good as a ‘bamboo alternative’ in the garden as well. Harvest the 1+ year old canes to make your own sugarcane juice, and/or the amazing ‘sugar cane prawns’ - OR - chảo tôm in Vietnamese. Run the crushed canes (and all the grassy leaf from the top of the plant) through a mulcher for instant garden mulch!!

Why not grow your own!?

SWEET POTATO (PURPLE)

(Ipomea batatas)

A vigorous perennial creeping vine. Quite easy to look after and fast growing, this plant will thrive in full or part sun and will produce medium to large sized tubers with a wonderful colour. Totally purple to partially white inside this is a great addition to a shared meal and many South Pacific Islanders love this hearty staple.

TAHITIAN SPINACH

(Colocasia esculenta)

A vigorous and rather attractive plant with nice leaves and a delicious stem. Quite easy to look after and fast growing, this plant will thrive in full or part sun but does love water. Cook the stems and leaves which are perfect for making Palusami a great addition to a shared meal and many South Pacific Islanders love this hearty staple.

TAMARILLO (*Solanum betaceum*)

A very useful perennial small tree with large, green leaves. Grows to 5m in height and has prolific and nutritious hanging fruits. As the plant grows, these leaves become huge (up to 40cm across!). Use these just like spinach, and once you have picked all the lower leaves, just cut the plant back and it will shoot up again. This is not a particularly drought tolerant plant, so do give it some water during dry times, but it does grow in a wide range of shade/sun and soil conditions.

TREE SPINACH (*Abelmoschus manihot*)

A very useful perennial shrub/small tree with large glossy green leaves. Grows to 5m in height and has prolific and nutritious leaves. As the plant grows, these leaves become huge (up to 50cm across!). Use these just like spinach, and once you have picked all the lower leaves, just cut the plant back and it will shoot up again. This is a very drought tolerant plant which grows in a wide range of shade/sun and soil conditions.

TONGAN KAVA / ROOTBEER PLANT (*Piper auritum*)

A perennial clumping plant that is as beautiful as it is practical. Stems and leaves have great tropical garden look. This particular plant loves the QLD summer conditions and grows very well in hot & humid weather. The soft leaves are wonderful for wrapping food on the BBQ/fire/coals. Many people also used the dried leaves as a spice. Grows best in a part to full shade position.

TRUE CARDAMOM

(Elettaria cardamomum)

A very beautiful ginger growing to around 1.5m.

Quite hardy but it does love the summer rain!

Thriving in part sun and filtered sun conditions.

The actual spice comes from the ‘pods’ full of seeds which may take awhile to be produced, but the plant looks wonderful in the meantime! The dried spice from these seed pods is very popular in Indian, Turkish, Persian, Moroccan cuisines.

Some gardeners also use the leaves as a flavouring.

TUMERIC (*Curcuma domestica*)

A clumping perennial that is used for the underground rhizomes. This plant does, however, ‘die back’ in the winter and that is a great time to harvest the bountiful rhizomes. Likes growing in full sun to part sun/shade. Harvest the rhizomes at any time year round and use for curries, teas and tonics. Very expensive to buy, so why not grow your own!?

TZIMBALO

(Solanum caripense)

A weeping/ clumping perennial growing to around 50cm with a sprawling growth habit like a cherry tomato plant. Quite easy to look after and fast growing, this plant will thrive in full or part sun and will produce an abundance of small fruits with a complex flavour somewhere between a grape and a passionfruit in taste. The fruits will be yellow with great purple stripes like their ancestor the pepino. Absolutely gorgeous in the garden and quite hardy.

A total favourite in our garden!!

VIETNAMESE MINT/CORIANDER

(Polygonum odoratum)

A perennial small bush that is used for the edible leaves which have a wonderful flavour also known as ‘Rau Ram’ in Vietnam. Harvest them any time year round and use in a range of fresh Asian cuisines. A particular favourite is as a component of the filling in rice paper rolls. Also use the leaves in salads or fresh teas.

WHITE SAPOTE

(Casimiroa edulis)

A very pretty tree with lovely glossy green leaves and a wonderful canopy shape. The fist size fruits contain luscious white pulp with a tangy creaminess that is delicious! Eat them once the fruit has become a bit soft, we recommend harvesting when they are still ‘hard’ and allowing them to ripen on the bench. Great for smoothies.

Recipes and ideas for what to do with all these plants!!!!

We love eating, and growing and cooking our own food...you obviously do too, since you are in the GIANT KITECHEN GARDEN!!



Growing your own is the best way to show your guests how awesome your garden is!!

Small things & Entrée sized dishes

This is a great way to get any party started! Guests love a good canapé, and it always makes the host look like a totally professional caterer/chef when these kinds of dishes show up. Chef secret: they also use relatively little ingredients and offer a WOW factor which is worth every minute of preparation!

One of our current favourites are the 'mini cucumbers' (aka Sandiita...aka Mouse Melon...aka Cucumelon) which are naturally bite sized anyway....make a zippy dressing , add a grilled scallop or a nice piece of fresh tuna – then top with a Sandiita and 'hey presto' an impressive dish!

Betel leaf canapés

This is a very general term which covers a wide range of dishes well suited to being served as canapés or bite sized party foods. Traditionally this leaf (*Piper betle*) is used to wrap the betel nut (which is actually a fruit that comes from a palm tree- *Areca catechu*) along with other components as a chewed stimulant in many countries. The leaf is therefore actually not related to the betel nut at all! In many other countries, the leaf is used as a fresh herb for flavour as well as a wide range of medicinal applications. In the Western kitchen, we recommend using the leaves as a lovely plate lining garnish and as an edible mini plate on which to serve bite sized canapes.



The Betel leaf is also a great fresh herb – used commonly by the hill tribe people (who inhabit Laos, Northern Thailand, Vietnam and Yunnan in China), but we'll get to that later! These first few dishes are just for ‘finger foods’ using the betel leaf as a beautiful party starter!

Prawn ceviche with coriander and kaffir limes

Many cultures around the world have a dish which is based around ‘curing’ seafood in the acidic juice of citrus, often with the addition of other herbs for flavour. Technically the acid of lemon/lime juice denatures the proteins of the seafood in a very similar way to cooking with heat. There are also some antibacterial properties associated with using lemon/lime juice, but in many parts of the world these dishes would not be considered very safe for the Western stomach! So we advocate making these ceviche dishes with the best possible very fresh seafood under hygienic conditions and the resulting flavours will be so delicious that they are well trying at home.

The ceviche

First start by making the ceviche base with the following:

1-3 lemons (or limes) juiced

4-16 coriander or sawtooth coriander leaves

4-6 kaffir lime leaves (ideally with the centre rib removed)

½ of a red onion

½-4 fresh chillis (up to you how hot you like it!)

Place all of these items into a glass bowl/dish. Then prepare the raw prawns (note: just about any raw white fleshed fish can be used in this dish, and some species are better than others. Generally the more firm and less oily the fish, the better it is for ceviche. Experiment with your local fish species and see which are best!

Peel, de-vein and coarsely chop ~10 prawns. It is important that GREEN (aka raw) prawns are used in this dish, NOT cooked prawns. If your local fish shop doesn’t have green prawns, then use a firm white fish.

Add the raw prawns to the ceviche base and make sure that the prawn meat is completely covered by the ceviche base. This lemon juice will ‘cook’ the prawns, so it is important to make sure that it is happening.

Mix well and cover glass bowl with cling wrap. Place in the fridge for at least ½ hour. The dish should be served chilled. When it is time to serve, simply spoon a bite sized-small amount of ceviche onto a betel leaf and garnish with a fresh coriander leaf and finely chopped kaffir lime leaves.

Alternatively serve this dish in a bowl accompanied by corn chips...letting guests help themselves.

Prawns grilled with smoked peppers

One of Australia's most popular seafoods would without a doubt be the prawn. There are several species of 'wild caught' prawns as well as some farmed ones as well- and we recommend the 'wild caught' prawns for the best overall flavour . For this particular dish it is very important to get uncooked (aka green) prawns as we will be cooking the prawns just prior to serving.

The marinade

1 red onion coarsely chopped

2-4 cloves of garlic coarsely chopped

½ cup of olive oil

½-4 fresh chillis (up to you how hot you like it!) coarsely chopped

A delightful alternative is to use Spanish Paprika ...this adds a wonderful smokey flavour and makes it feel like a Moorish Spanish Tapas dish.

A big handful of fresh parsley (to garnish) chop coarsely

1-3 limes cut into wedges (to serve)

A few Society Garlic leaves (to garnish) chop relatively finely

The technique

Mix the marinade ingredients together in a bowl (NOT the GARNISHES...have them ready on the side for serving) Next peel and de-vein ~ 500 grams of green prawns. It is important that GREEN (aka raw) prawns are used in this dish, NOT cooked prawns. Place all prawns into the bowl with the marinade ingredients. (this can be kept in the fridge until you are ready to cook the dish....anywhere from 1 minute to ~a few hours beforehand)

Make sure that the BBQ is very hot.

Simply tip the entire bowl of prawns + marinade onto the BBQ. Cook very briefly (~2minutes on one side, then flip all the prawns and cook ~1-2 minutes on the other side).

Serve immediately! As soon as the prawns come off the BBQ (and onto the serving platter), sprinkle them with salt/pepper. If you are serving this to guests as a part of a shared meal, then putting several slices of fresh lime (or lemon) on the platter is a great addition. We also like to sprinkle a garnish of chopped parsley and Society Garlic (or chives) over the platter.

Alternatively serve as canapes by placing 1 prawn on a betel leaf, squeezing lime juice over it and garnishing with parsley, Society Garlic (or chives).

Mooloolaba Tuna with Shizo, Macadamias and Avocado

One of the Sunshine Coast's best seafoods is the line caught tuna. There are several species of 'wild caught' tuna commonly caught off Australia's East Coast, and yellowfin is widely available from Mooloolaba. For this particular dish it is very important to get a nice piece of very fresh tuna as it will be eaten raw. We will be showcasing a wonderful herb called Shizo (aka *Perilla frutescens*) and the creamy texture of avocado

The mix method

A generous number of shizo leaves chopped neatly

1-2 ripe avocados

Wasabi paste (to taste)

10ml Soy Sauce

A few Society Garlic leaves (to garnish) chop relatively finely

A handful of macadamia nuts (to serve)

2 'fingers' (width) of fresh yellowfin tuna (even better if you can Bluefin!)

The technique

Mix the ingredients together in a bowl (NOT the GARNISHES...have them ready on the side for serving) Next, very precisely cut the fresh tuna into neat cubes approximately 1/2cm x 1/2cm. It is important that really fresh tuna is used in this dish. Place cubed tuna into the bowl with the marinade ingredients. (this can be kept in the fridge until you are ready to cook the dish....anywhere from 1 minute to ~an hour beforehand)

Simply spoon a small (bite sized!) amount of the tuna/shizo/avocado/soy/wasabi mixture onto a betel leaf (or an Asian spoon). Garnish with one macadamia nut and a sprinkle of Society Garlic leaves.

Serve immediately!

Alternatively serve as a cold salad dish and garnish with macadamias & Society Garlic (or chives).

Grilled cardamom and oregano chicken

This is great dish to serve either as a small bite sized canapé or as a component of a larger shared meal. The flavours and inspiration from this dish come from the Middle East and it is perfect for any guests or diners who don't like hot / chilli/ spicy foods, but who want delicious flavours.

The marinade

2-4 cloves of garlic finely chopped

½ cup of olive oil

1 tsp of salt and a very generous amount of coarse black pepper

6-12 cardamom pods (fresh or dried) Chopped as finely as possible

1 very generous handful of fresh oregano, coarsely chopped

4 Chicken thighs

A big handful of fresh parsley (to garnish)

1-3 limes cut into wedges (to serve)

A few Society Garlic leaves (to garnish)

The technique

Mix the marinade ingredients together in a bowl (NOT the GARNISHES...have them ready on the side for serving) Note: if you have a blender or Thermomix the marinade ingredients can be coarsely blended very easily.

Next place chicken thighs into the bowl with the marinade ingredients. (this can be kept in the fridge until you are ready to cook the dish....anywhere from 1 minute to overnight)

Make sure that the BBQ is very hot.

Simply tip the entire bowl of Chicken + marinade onto the BBQ. Cook thoroughly, flipping the chicken thighs (and even pressing them down a bit on the BBQ plate) to ensure even cooking.

Serve immediately! As soon as the chicken comes off the BBQ (and onto the serving platter), sprinkle with salt/pepper. If you are serving this to guests as a part of a shared meal, then putting several slices of fresh lime (or lemon) on the platter is a great addition. We also like to sprinkle a garnish of chopped parsley and Society Garlic (or chives) over the platter.

Alternatively to serve as canapes, put the cooked chicken onto a clean chopping board and roughly chop into bite sized pieces. Place a piece on each betel leaf, squeezing lime juice over it and garnishing with parsley, Society Garlic (or chives).

Mains and shared platter dishes....

We love having long lunches and shared dinners where our guests linger and have the chance to try a wide range of dishes. This is also a great way to try out a range of different culinary styles/levels of spice – giving your guests the option of having the hotter dishes- or avoiding them if they are afraid of chillis!!



Some of these dishes can be made in advance, freeing you up to do the last minute things and hot order dishes as the guests are arriving/seated. Timing is everything!

A great curry

This is great dish to serve as a component of a larger shared meal. The flavours and inspiration from this dish come from Southeast Asia but the amount of chilli can be varied for those who want delicious flavours without the extreme heat!

THE PASTE

First start by making a curry 'paste'- aka THE PASTE with the following:

- 1 piece of fresh turmeric (about the size of your thumb)
- 1 piece of fresh galangal (twice the size of the turmeric piece)
- 1 piece of fresh ginger (same size as galangal)
- 4-6 kaffir lime leaves (ideally with the centre rib removed)
- 2-4 stalks of lemongrass (bottom white bit only)
- 2-4 cloves of garlic
- 4-20 fresh chillis (up to you how hot you like it!)

Place all of these items into a blender / Thermomix or mortar & pestle and blend until they are a chunky thick paste. Once you have this paste it can be kept in the fridge for up to a week.

THE CURRY TECHNIQUE

Start some cooking oil in a deep saucepan on medium heat and add approximately 3 tablespoons of THE PASTE. Cook for 1-2 minutes until the fragrance starts to come out of THE PASTE.

Add vegetables such as pumpkin, potatoes, carrots, sicana, mushrooms, etc. and move around the pan, just coating the vegetables with the paste.

Add enough water to just cover the vegetables and simmer for ~10 minutes (until the vegetables are cooked).

During this cooking process you can add either canned coconut milk (I prefer the POWDERED COCONUT MILK) or about $\frac{1}{2}$ a cup of powdered coconut milk. This will make the chillies less hot...so add more coconut milk/powder if the curry is seeming too hot for your guests! Taste and add salt. OR for a more authentic flavour add FISH SAUCE instead of salt.

As you serve this, garnish the curry with coriander leaves.

Koong Paan Awy (Prawns wrapped around sugarcane)

This dish is one of the greatest discoveries we ever made while traveling in Asia! Because sugarcane is commonly grown all around warm parts of the world – including vast areas of coastal Australia- it appears in a wide range of cultural cuisines.

We certainly advocate having a few clumps of sugarcane in the garden if you have space and live in a warm enough area (ie anywhere north of Coffs Harbour, NSW). It looks every bit as awesome as many of the clumping bamboo species and comes with the added benefit of being able to eat it in so many ways. Most commercial growers will have large crops which are all harvested all at once before the ‘waste’ is either burned or turned back into the soil with big machines. From a home gardening perspective, we find that leaving a clump to mature and simply harvesting the mature canes when they are ready makes the next shoots grow which is always developing a very lush and green plant – like a perennial tall grass. We use ours as a ‘screen’ / background between levels of the garden and put clumps of sugarcane all around our property to create focal points.

Other than being used for this dish, the canes can be chewed on for a sweet bite and even juiced to make the most refreshing drink imaginable. Also the grassy tops of the plants, the rough bark and the crushed canes can be mulched and put back onto the garden! Perfect!!

THE PRAWN COMPONENT

First start by making a prawn ‘cake’ mixture with the following:

Approximately 500g of fresh GREEN prawns. These must be RAW, not cooked for this dish to work properly. Peel the prawns and remove the tails and any viscera/vein.

2 eggs (RAW)

1 piece of fresh turmeric (about the size of your thumb)

1 piece of fresh ginger (same size as the turmeric)

4-6 kaffir lime leaves (ideally with the centre rib removed)

2-4 stalks of lemongrass (bottom white bit only)

2-4 cloves of garlic

4-20 fresh chillis (up to you how hot you like it!)

1 Tablespoon of fish sauce

Place all of these items into a blender / Thermomix or mortar & pestle and blend until they are a thick sticky paste. Once you have this paste it can be kept in the fridge for a day or two.

Koong Paan Awy (Prawns wrapped around sugarcane) CONTINUED!

THE CANE COMPONENT

This can be done first...but it is good to do it outside as it can be a bit messy!

Start with approximately 1 or 2 sugar canes of ~1metre in length.

Chop off the green top and mulch it.

Carefully remove the outer 'bark' of the sugarcane to reveal the sweet and juicy middle. It is really only necessary to take off ~1mm of this 'bark' and once you get the hang of it, this is actually pretty easy to do. Use a bit machete or small garden saw or even a decent large kitchen knife, but do be careful!

Once the cane has been de-barked, simply cut into manageable sizes ~10cm in length and bring into the kitchen.

THE CONSTRUCTION AND COOKING

Take a small handful of a prawn 'cake' mixture and gently wrap it around the sugarcane ensuring that it completely goes around the cane. It is a good idea to leave a few centimetres of the cane with no mixture on it so that you (and your guests) and pick them up to eat!

We recommend that you get all of these constructed and placed on a platter ready for the BBQ

Once they are all ready, turn on the BBQ and (ideally) use the flatplate component to do the cooking.

Serve this dish with the sauce from the next recipe! It is a very useful dressing to make and once you have done it a few times, very easy to make quickly.

Green papaya salad

This dish is a northern Thai classic, often served with barbequed chicken as a common street food. We love it because the papaya trees always have at least a few green fruits on them, and therefore this dish can always be on the menu! It's super easy to make and unless you live near an Asian supermarket, it is actually not that easy to find green papayas for sale.

THE DRESSING

First start by making a spicey dressing with the following:

Juice from about 3 limes

1 piece of fresh ginger (same size as the turmeric) finely chopped

4-6 kaffir lime leaves (ideally with the centre rib removed) and very finely chopped

1-2 stalks of lemongrass (bottom white bit only) very finely chopped

2-4 cloves of garlic very finely chopped

4-20 fresh chillis (up to you how hot you like it!) very finely chopped

1-2 Tablespoons of fish sauce

1 Tablespoon of palm sugar

3 Tablespoons of crushed peanuts (or coarsely chopped)

3 Tablespoons of mini cucumbers coarsely chopped

THE SALAD TECHNIQUE

Take about 1/3 of green papaya per person. (so if you have 6 guests, you will need about 2 green papayas) Peel the papaya(s) and remove the seeds (which should be white, small and underdeveloped). You should just have the white, hard flesh left. This is then grated (I use the Thermomix....you can do either way...or use the food processor attachment for shredding carrots/cabbage). Once the shredded green papaya is prepared, simply toss the salad!

If there are some 'spice sensitive' guests, the salad can be left without the dressing, and the dressing left in a bowl nearby for guests to help themselves.

Garnish with lots of fresh coriander leaves, Vietnamese mint leaves.

Grilled sicana, arrowroot and pumpkin with dukkah

This came about because we struggled to grow zucchinis during the hot and humid summers on the Sunshine Coast. This vine (*Sicano odifera*), however, grew readily and was never struck down by powdery mildew. The unripe fruits are green and during the warmer months very abundant on this perennial vine, so we started harvesting them and using them to cook like a green vegetable. Very much like a zucchini in texture and flavour, these unripe fruits are great in any recipe that calls for zucchini.

It is important to pick the green sicanas at just the right time! They will gradually turn into a fruit with a very thick, hard skin. (one of the major advantages of this plant is how long-lasting the fruit is...up to ONE YEAR! Wow.) But if you want to use sicana as a grilled vegetable it is best to pick it before the skin gets to hard. Generally when the green fruits are around 20cm in length, they should be perfect for BBQing. The vine produces lots of fruit in the warmer months, so just experiment with them until you get to know them.

Arrowroot also absolutely thrives in the Australian subtropics, producing an abundance of year-round unground rhizome/tubers which are as good as potatoes (in our opinion) and the plant is way better looking!

Anyway, we all know that it's great to have a barbecue...and fresh garden vegetables are wonderful additions to the 'usual suspects' of steaks and sausage. Also they are healthy and many gardeners have an abundance of pumpkins and other grill-able vegetables.

THE TECHNIQUE

Start by seeding and peeling the pumpkin. Make slices of pumpkin about 3-4cm thick

Then slice sicana, keeping the skin on and seeds in. Make these slices about 3-4cm thick as well

Slice the arrowroot a bit thinner (~2cm) as it will take the longest to cook of these three vegetables

Coat all the vegetables in olive oil (or other oil of your choice) and season well with salt and pepper

Place onto a hot BBQ and cook for ~5 minutes, then flip over and cook the other side for ~5 minutes.

Test for 'done-ness' by slicing into the vegetables to see if they are soft in the middle.

Once you are sure that the vegetables are ready, simply place onto a serving platter and dust very liberally with DUKKAH (see recipe for this a few pages later!)

Garnish with lots of fresh parsley, fresh Society Garlic (or chives) and serve immediately.

The ultimate curry paste

This came about because clients asked about how to make a curry from scratch, and we realised that we ONLY ever made them like this, so why not pass on a few tips. This is, however, one that we never use a recipe for at home- simply using whatever ingredients are most abundant or recently harvested, etc. The basics are our subtropical garden plants; galangal or ginger (or both), turmeric, chillies, lemongrass, kaffir lime leaves and garlic. The variations can include; fish sauce, palm sugar, cumin, coriander seeds, coriander roots, sawtooth coriander, karachi, etc. Really, once you start making your own curry paste, you'll NEVER go back to the bought stuff in the jar again!!

THE PASTE

First start by making a curry 'paste'- aka THE PASTE with the following:

A few pieces of fresh turmeric (about 3x the size of your thumb)

1 piece of fresh galangal (twice the size of the turmeric piece)

1 piece of fresh ginger (same size as galangal)

4-12 kaffir lime leaves (ideally with the centre rib removed)

2-4 stalks of lemongrass (bottom white bit only)

2-4 cloves of garlic

4-20 fresh chillis (up to you how hot you like it!)

OPTIONAL We often use the seed heads from Sawtooth Coriander in our curry pastes. It can be a bit spiky, so be careful when prepping it, but just remove the hard stems and drop all the leaf/flower structures into the curry paste!

OPTIONAL Add about 2 tablespoons of either FISH SAUCE or a SHRIMP PASTE. Both are available in Asian grocery shops and even at some bigger supermarkets. This adds a savour (and authentic) flavour element to the curry and we highly recommend it.

Place all of these items into a blender / Thermomix or mortar & pestle and blend until they are a chunky thick paste. Once you have this paste it can be kept in the fridge for up to a week.

Beef Rendang

This dish totally rocks! It is so simple and easy to make, and although it takes a long time to cook, it is well worth the time. It does rely on one particular ingredient that must be purchased from the Asian section of the supermarket or a specialist Asian grocery shop. Ketjap manis (aka kechup manis, kecap manis, sweet soy sauce, etc.) which is a traditional Indonesian sauce made from soybeans, sugar and salt with a few other ingredients as preservatives, etc. Some people may not want to use it for health reasons, so perhaps substitute palm sugar + soy sauce? We just accept that ketjap manis is a component of this traditional Sumatran dish and use all of our garden produce for the spices!

THE PASTE

First start by making a Rendang ‘paste’- with the following:

- 1 piece of fresh galangal (twice the size of the turmeric piece)
- 1 piece of fresh ginger (same size as galangal)
- 1-2 tbs Black pepper
- 1-2 tbs Coriander seeds
- 2-4 cloves of garlic
- 4-20 fresh chillis (up to you how hot you like it!)

We usually grind the pepper & coriander seeds to a fine powder first with a spice grinder. Then either with a mortar and pestle (or a Thermomix/blender, etc) make all the other ingredients into a thick paste. Add the powdered pepper and coriander to the spice paste and mix well. This ‘paste’ is very useful in making a range of other dishes and it keeps for several days in the fridge.

Beef Rendang (CONTINUED!)

THE TECHNIQUE

Next get a large, heavy pot ready (Le Creuset or similar) or even a slow cooker if you want to make this in advance.

First chop ~600g of beef into bite-sized chunks. (just about any cut of beef will do)

Heat a few tbs of cooking oil (NOT olive oil!!) in the heavy pot and quickly sear/brown the beef chunks. Set the beef aside.

Then get the pot hot again and add a very generous scoop of the Rendang paste and quickly sauté the paste for a minute or two until fragrant. Then add the seared beef to the pot (at this stage using the slow cooker would be ideal) and stir well to ensure that the spice mixture fully coats the beef chunks. Also add the following (and stir in well):

1 leaf of turmeric (coarsely chopped)

3-4 kaffir lime leaves (midrib removed and finely chopped)

2-4 stalks of lemongrass (bottom white bit only) cut into ~3cm pieces

Enough water to just cover the meat and ingredients (~200ml)

Place the lid on the pot and slowly cook (ie on simmer setting or in the slow cooker) for about 30 minutes. Stir occasionally to ensure that dish does not burn on the bottom of the pot.

Then take off the lid and add:

~2 cups of coconut milk

~1/2 cup of Kecap manis

Simmer for another hour or so with the lid off until most of the liquid is cooked away, making a thick, rich, meaty finished dish! Make sure that you stir occasionally to ensure that dish does not burn/stick on the bottom of the pot. Add salt to taste immediately prior to serving. This dish goes really well with rice and as a component of a shared meal with a range of other dishes.

Chicken wrapped in Leaves!

This came about because we found ourselves with some wonderful large leaves....the betel leaf, bananas and the Tongan Rootbeer plant. This dish is actually from the hilltribe people who inhabit the region currently Northern Thailand, Laos, Northern Vietnam and Yunnan in China. The recipe is very easy to make from our subtropical garden plants and we find if you don't add ANY chilli at all, it suits guests who don't like very spicy food. Note: serve it with a hot sauce on the side for the chilli lovers!

THE FILLING

First start by making a spice paste with the following:

1 piece of fresh galangal (about the size of your thumb)

1 piece of fresh ginger (same size as galangal)

4-12 kaffir lime leaves (ideally with the centre rib removed) finely chopped

6-10 betel leaves, coarsely chopped

10-12 sprigs of Society Garlic (or chives, or spring onions)

1-2 stalks of lemongrass (bottom white bit only)

2-4 cloves of garlic

Soy sauce (to taste...about 50ml)

4-8 fresh chillis (up to you how hot you like it!) **You can also totally OMIT the chillies if you want a more mild dish.**

This paste can be made in the Thermomix, blender, or mortar and pestle.

Next add either 400g of chicken mince OR alternatively use the Thermomix/blender to mince up ~4-5 chicken thighs. Mix the spice paste with the chicken mince to make a sticky filling.

THE TECHNIQUE

Put a generous handful of the chicken/spice mixture onto a Tongan Rootbeer plant leaf (or banana leaf and wrap. Wrap another leaf around this to ensure that no chicken mixture is sticking out. Wrap a third leaf around the parcel and secure with a skewer or toothpicks. Set aside and make another one until all the mixture is used.

Get the BBQ plate very hot. Place the parcels onto the BBQ plate and cook for 10-15 minutes. Then flip parcels and cook for another 10-15 minutes on the other side. Take off the BBQ and serve immediately on a platter, allowing guests to 'open' their own steaming parcels! They love it!!

Fish in banana leaves (Meen pollichatu)

This dish is a favourite in Southern India...and a regional speciality of Kerala. We were very lucky to have several days with an Indian chef on the Malabar Coast who shared the secrets of this complex but well worthwhile dish. Almost all of the ingredients can be grown in the subtropical garden, but a few are probably a bit easier to purchase from a speciality Asian/Indian store. The key is making the wonderfully complex spice mixture which is a delicious and rich mix of flavours. This mixture takes awhile to make and it can be done the day before and kept in the fridge.

THE SPICE MIXTURE

First start by making a cooked spice mixture:

Heat a pan and add ~2tbs of cooking oil (NOT Olive oil...) and then add to the hot pan:

2 tsp Mustard seeds

2 tsp Fenugreek seeds

Stir seeds until they start to 'pop' (but be careful not to burn them!) Then add the following:

4 Onions (coarsely chopped)

6 cloves Garlic (coarsely chopped)

5-12 Chillies (coarsely chopped) *depending upon the type you have and how hot you want the dish to be!

1 piece of fresh Ginger (coarsely chopped)* about twice the size of your thumb

1 piece of fresh tumeric (finely chopped)* same size as ginger

A few curry leaves

Stir this over the heat until very fragrant (a few minutes) and then add the following dry spices:

1 tsp finely ground black pepper

4 tsp finely ground coriander seeds

2 tbs of Garam Masala powder (you can make this yourself from a blend of spices, but the flavour of the final dish is more authentic if you use the spice mixture from a good Asian/Indian grocery shop.

Stir this over the heat until it is thick and a deep brown colour (a few minutes...being careful NOT to let it burn) and then add the following:

4-6 tomatoes coarsely chopped

20 ml of Tamarind water

Fish in banana leaves (Meen pollichatu) (continued!)

THE TECHNIQUE

Continue to cook this spice mixture over medium heat for 5-10 minutes and stir constantly to ensure that it does not burn on the bottom of the pan.

Next you should add coconut milk to the spice mixture to achieve a balance between the heat of the chillies/ the tang of the tomato & tamarind and to give the dish its final richness. This is a personal thing, but ~2 cups of coconut milk should be about right. Mix the coconut milk into the spice mixture and turn the heat off. At this stage, we recommend tasting the spice mixture and adding salt to taste...about 1 tsp should be enough. Leave the mixture to cool.

Next take your fish filets and PARTIALLY cook them (either in pan or in a BBQ).

We recommend about a 100g fish filet per guest, and the spice mixture recipe above will be about 4 guests worth, so you need around 400g of fish. We found that a white fish works best with these spices as any more heavy fish (ie salmon, tuna, etc) tends to be overpowered by the wonderfully rich spices. In Queensland, we usually go for a white fleshed reef fish like snapper or red emperor. In cooler climates you could choose an ocean perch or even a blue eye trevalla.

So, lightly salt/pepper each of the fish filets, and sear for ~1 minute per side, just to partially cook the fish, do NOT fully cook the fish!

Put a generous handful of the spice mixture onto a Tongan Rootbeer plant leaf (or banana leaf). Then put the pre-cooked fish slice onto the spice mixture and wrap. Wrap another leaf around this to ensure that no fish or mixture is sticking out. One or two banana leaves should be sufficient. If using the Tongan Rootbeer plant leaf, it might be necessary to wrap a third leaf around the parcel and secure with a skewer or toothpicks. Set aside and make another one until all the mixture is used.

Get the BBQ plate very hot. Place the parcels onto the BBQ plate and cook for around 10 minutes. Depending upon the fish type (and how thin the filets were), it might slightly more or less time to cook, so we often recommend making one extra parcel which can be opened up and tested!

Once finished, simply take off the BBQ and serve immediately on a platter, allowing guests to 'open' their own steaming parcels! They love it!! Works really well when served with rice.

Alternative spinach dishes

This climate really does suit these more ‘alternative’ spinach-like vegetables. In our Sunshine Coast garden some species like Malabar Spinach, Tree Spinach and Okinawa Spinach are year-round perennial staples. More ‘traditional’ spinaches like Kale, English Spinach and even Silverbeet can often fall victim to a range of pests as well as the hot/humid summers. The Malabar Spinach, Tree Spinach and Okinawa Spinach, however, are mostly disease free throughout the year and they actually seem to LIKE the summer season! Although there can be a ‘slimy’ quality to these vegetables, we recommend cooking them in several different ways as there are various techniques that can disguise this less conventional texture.

A spiced spinach/greens dish

THE TECHNIQUE

Collect ~4 big Tree Spinach leaves per person
(or about 30 Okinawa spinach leaves per person)
(or about 8 big Malabar spinach leaves per person)

Ideally actually use all three (and any other greens you have in the garden) for a more varied texture/flavour!

½ of a small onion per person, finely chopped
1 tsp of any of the PASTES (per person) from the previous recipes
Handful of coriander or Society Garlic for garnish

Get a wok or big sauté pan and add some cooking oil (NOT olive oil). Add onion and paste and quickly sauté until fragrant (~1 minute). Then add the greens (coarsely chopped) and briefly stir to coat the green with onion/spice paste. Cook for 1-2 minutes and then add a splash of water to the pan and place the lid on. Turn off the heat and let the greens gently steam for a few minutes. (This will be a matter of taste, some people like the greens just lightly cooked, others like them more ‘soft’ and well done). Serve immediately after garnishing with coriander/Society Garlic.

Warm super greens with dukkah

THE TECHNIQUE

Collect ~4 big Tree Spinach leaves per person
(or about 30 Okinawa spinach leaves per person)
(or about 8 big Malabar spinach leaves per person)

Ideally actually use all three (and any other greens you have in the garden) for a more varied texture/flavour!

½ of a small onion per person, finely chopped
2 tbs DUKKAH (per person) from the recipe below
Handful of fresh parsley for garnish

Get a wok or big sauté pan and add some cooking oil (NOT olive oil). Add onion and quickly sauté until fragrant (~1 minute). Then add the greens (coarsely chopped) and briefly stir to coat the green with onion/spice paste. Cook for 1-2 minutes and then add a splash of water to the pan and place the lid on. Turn off the heat and let the greens gently steam for a few minutes. (This will be a matter of taste, some people like the greens just lightly cooked, others like them more 'soft' and well done). Serve immediately after garnishing with DUKKAH and fresh parsley.

Hot greens with peanut sauce

THE TECHNIQUE

Collect ~4 big Tree Spinach leaves per person
(or about 30 Okinawa spinach leaves per person)
(or about 8 big Malabar spinach leaves per person)

Ideally actually use all three (and any other greens you have in the garden) for a more varied texture/flavour!

½ of a small onion per person, finely chopped
2-3 tbs peanut sauce (per person) from the recipe below
Handful of fresh coriander and / or Society Garlic/ kaffir lime leaves (finely chopped) for garnish

Get a wok or big sauté pan and add some cooking oil (NOT olive oil). Add onion and quickly sauté until fragrant (~1 minute). Then add the greens (coarsely chopped) and briefly stir to coat the green with onion/spice paste. Cook for 1-2 minutes and then add a splash of water to the pan and place the lid on. Turn off the heat and let the greens gently steam for a few minutes. (This will be a matter of taste, some people like the greens just lightly cooked, others like them more ‘soft’ and well done).

Before taking the greens out of the pan, simply stir in the peanut sauce and mix well to ensure that the peanut sauce completely coats the greens. This will greatly ‘thicken’ the dish, so it is advisable to cook this one a bit less to compensate.

Serve immediately after garnishing with fresh coriander/kaffir lime leaves/Society Garlic.

Palusami

This dish we first discovered in Samoa, but most of the Pacific Island cultures have something similar. We loved it so much that one of the first plants to go into our Sunshine Coast garden was the basis of this dish, the Taro /Tahitian Spinach. We even call this plant *PALUSAMI* in honour of the love of the wonderful, rich and delicious dish that we had so often on our travels around Samoa and Tonga. So, like many of the staples of the Pacific Islands, this dish is totally devoid of chillies and it is designed very much to be a ‘side dish’ to go with long cooked meat dish(es) and a starchy root vegetable dish(es) based on a shared Sunday evening family meal, often cooked in an underground stone fire/oven. If that sounds all too hard to re-create at home, never fear, we’ve adapted it for making in a pot on the cooktop and it’s super easy.

THE TECHNIQUE

Collect ~4 young taro leaves per person

1/2 cup coconut milk per person

1/4 cup water per person

1/2 tsp salt per person

Black pepper to taste

½ of a small onion per person, finely chopped

OVEN METHOD:

Wash taro leaves and remove outer part of spine. Alternate four leaves and place in an oven proof dish. Basically, form leaves into a cup. Pour mixture of remaining ingredients into taro leaves. Arrange these cup/ bundles around the ovenproof dish. Bake in a 170C degree oven for 1 hour. We recommend simply bringing the ovenproof dish to the table and allowing guests to help themselves. There will be a lot of coconut milk, etc. which leaked out of the leaves, and that is part of the shared eating experience!

STOVETOP METHOD:

Wash taro leaves and remove outer part of spine. Coarsely chop leaves and place aside. Very briefly sauté the onions in a pot/pan large enough to hold all the ingredients (depends how many guests you are going to be serving!) and then add the taro leaves to the sautéed onions, stir briefly to soften the leaves. Add water, coconut milk, salt, pepper and gently cook (not quite boiling!) for ~20 minutes until leaves are very tender and the mixture is a lovely ‘thick soup’ like texture. Adjust salt and pepper to taste and serve.

Dukkah

This is one of our 'go to' spice mixes....super easy to make and (sorry to say it) the bought versions are way overpriced for what they actually are! We usually have at least one batch of this on hand all the time, and as soon as it dwindles, simply whip up another. The recipe here is a guide only , as there are many permutations which you should try (ie vary the amount of these spices, use different nuts, etc. etc.)

THE TECHNIQUE

½ cup of Coriander seeds
1/2 cup of Cumin seeds

1/4 cup sesame seeds
1/2 tbs salt

½ cup of nuts (traditionally it would be almonds, but macadamias are great, so are hazelnuts, so are Malabar chestnuts!!!)

Get a small pan quite hot and add Coriander and Cumin seeds. Stir them CONSTANTLY for ~3 minutes until they are smelling very fragrant. Be VERY careful not to burn them!!!! Once this is done, take them off the heat and allow them to cool.

Using a blender/food processor or mortar/pestle (we actually use a COFFEE GRINDER which is dedicated to spices!) put the toasted Coriander and Cumin seeds in and get them to a coarse grind texture. Place them aside.

Chop the nuts as finely as you can until they are NOT quite a paste but more like 1mmx1mm or 2mmx2mm. This can be done with a knife, or in the food processor / spice grinder. Be careful as we are not trying to make a nut butter, but rather a course (dry) texture.

Finally combine ground cumin & coriander with the rough nut mixture. Add the sesame seeds and salt and mix completely.

Store in airtight jar(s).

Peanut sauce

This is one of our total favourites for enhancing a greens dish, and it's sensational on tempeh, tofu, chicken, etc. as well. It does need to be made fresh (more so than the dukkah which lasts for weeks in a jar at room temperature) and kept in the fridge. It will last for a week if kept refrigerated, and like the previous recipe, there are many options of how to make this sauce depending on what ingredients are at hand and how spicy you'd like the final result to be.

THE TECHNIQUE

5cm piece of fresh galangal

5-12 fresh chillies

5 kaffir lime leaves (midrib removed)

2-3 stalks of lemongrass (just the white juicy bottoms, not the leafy tops)

3 garlic cloves

1/2 tbs salt

1 cup of peanuts

Using a blender/food processor or mortar/pestle (we actually use a Thermomix) put galangal, kaffir lime leaves, lemongrass, chillis and garlic in and get them to a coarse grind texture.

Place the peanuts into the mixer and blend until nice and relatively smooth. There will always be chunks in a sauce like this, and that is OK.

If you want a more 'drizzling' sauce for putting over barbequed meats and vegetables, we recommend adding a bit of water to the mixer to achieve a more 'pour-able' texture. We like this as a more thick 'paste' and use it to cook with and it can be watered down and made more of a smooth pouring sauce at any stage.

Sweets....

Fresh sugarcane juice

This is usually a refreshing chilled drink made to order by vendors on the side of the road in Asia/Latin America/South America where the weather is hot and the sugarcane commonly grown. More recently there have been a few clever entrepreneurs making this drink at markets and food events in Australia (albeit for a relatively high price when compared to the Asian/South American versions!). Because we advocate growing a patch (or more) of sugarcane in the home garden, it is very easy to make this whenever you want! Kids in particular love to crush the cane and we've had a simple pedal powered crusher built to keep them entertained! Depending upon the time of year, the juice yield can vary, but generally a litre of juice can be extracted from just 1 or 2 mature canes.

THE TECHNIQUE

45cm piece of sugarcane (grassy top removed)

Optional:

1-2 Limes/lemons

2-3 stalks of lemongrass (just the white juicy bottoms, not the leafy tops)

Knob of ginger

Simply cut the sugarcane and have the other (optional) ingredients on hand and ready to go.

Have a large jug of ice ready.

Get the hand powered juicer or machine powered juicer ready.

Just slowly feed the sugarcane into the juicer and collect the juice in the empty jug.

Add optional ingredients along the way to ensure that the final juice is well mixed.

Pour juice over ice and serve immediately. REALLY refreshing after a hot day in the garden!!

Cooking and Garden classes!!!

We are offering a few afternoon garden rambles with ingredient foraging sessions at our property.....this will be a fun and informative way to see what we grow and how we do it....

THEN we'll also have a few days with cooking class/demonstration and, OF COURSE, a great lunch to follow!!!



If this sounds like your kind of thing then sign up on our email list and we'll stay in touch!!

- **Saturday the 9th of September will be our “SPRING INTO YOUR GARDEN” session with a full cooking class and lunch (we’ll probably make Beef Rendang and a few of the spicy dishes then!!).**
- **Sunday the 8th of October will be our “SEASONAL SENSATIONAL” session (probably make the Banana Leaf dishes and a few of our Thai favourites then!!).**

Timber: Something totally different!!

We also have a portable timber mill which is really useful for turning fallen timber into rustic garden benches. A few of these are being used in our stall this weekend at the QGE!

The benches we have in our stall are made from Tallowood (*Eucalyptus microcorys*) and Bloodwood (*Corymbia intermedia*) both of which are native hardwoods. These trees were felled ~ 5 years ago and have been down and drying on our property for the entire time. We simply milled them to this rustic condition and put them together. If you drop by, we have also used them for other more fancy walls and screens around the pool. This craftsman grade work was done by our friend Cam Darling from Tessellate Furniture. So if you have any fallen timbers on your property, we are willing to come over to help you mill them! Just ask us for details....



In fact, we would like to offer you the opportunity to take these benches home at the end of the Expo, so ALL of our benches (except the big rickety one in the middle...it's NOT made out of nice hardwoods!) are for sale!!

- 1) The thinner 'exterior' timber benches are very durable and much lighter to move around.
These are for sale at \$20 per metre.
- 2) The thicker 'slab' timber benches are much heavier and more suited to permanent benches.
(we have quite a few of these around in our garden...) These are for sale at \$40 per metre.



With all of these rustic timbers, they are basically just chainsaw finished and rather rough. They can be planed, sanded, varnished or oiled if you are into that sort of thing!! They look amazing when taken to the next level like this....and we encourage you to do that when you take them home!