# Oceanian cuisine

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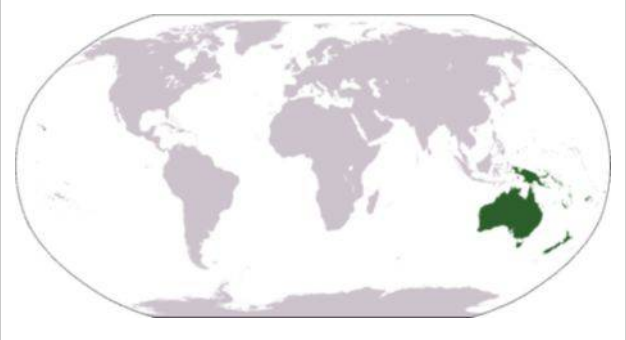
# Oceanic cuisine

The **cuisines of Oceania** include those found on Australia, New Zealand, and Tasmania, and also cuisines from many other islands or island groups throughout Oceania. A cuisine is a characteristic style of cooking practices and traditions,[2] often associated with a specific culture.



## Australia

Other than by climate and produce availability, Australian cuisine has been influenced by the tastes of settlers to Australia.[3] The British colonial period established a strong base of interest in Anglo-Celtic style recipes and methods. Later influences developed out of multicultural immigration and included Chinese cuisine, Japanese cuisine, Malaysian cuisine, Thai cuisine, Vietnamese cuisine. Mediterranean cuisine influences from Greek cuisine, Italian cuisine, and Lebanese cuisine influences are strong, also influences from French cuisine, Indian cuisine, Spanish cuisine, and Turkish cuisine, German cuisine, and African cuisine. Regional Australian cuisines commonly use locally grown vegetables based on seasonal availability, and Australia also has large fruit growing regions. The Granny Smith variety of apples first originated in Sydney, Australia in 1868. In the Southern states of Victoria and South Australia, in particular the Barossa Valley, wines and food reflects the region's traditions and heritage.[4] Australia's climate makes barbecues commonplace. Barbecue stalls selling sausages and fried onion on white bread with tomato or barbecue sauce are common.

A cooked Balmain bug. Also known as the *butterfly fan lobster*, it is a species of slipper lobster that lives in shallow waters around Australia.

*Bush Tucker* (bush foods) harvested at Alice Springs Desert Park. Bush foods are edible native plant species and animal products used by indigenous Australians as a contemporary or traditional food.[1]

### Tasmania

During colonial times typical English cuisine was the standard in most areas of Tasmania. Tasmania now has a wide range of restaurants, in part due to the arrival of immigrants and changing cultural patterns. There are many vineyards throughout Tasmania,[5] and Tasmanian beer brands such as Boags and Cascade are known and sold in Mainland Australia. King Island off the northwestern coast of Tasmania has a reputation for boutique cheeses and dairy products. Tasmanians are also consumers of seafood, such as crayfish, orange roughy, salmon and oysters, both farmed and wild.

- Regional foods
  - Billy tea
  - Boston bun

- Butterfly pan lobster
- Damper
- Granny Smith apple
- Kangaroo meat
- Lamington, dessert cake
- Macadamia nut

- Bushfood
  - Bush bread
  - Bush tomato
  - Finger lime
  - Lemon aspen
  - Lemon myrtle
  - Quandong

## New Zealand

A Hāngi being prepared, a New Zealand Māori method of cooking food for special occasions using hot rocks buried in a pit oven.

New Zealand cuisine is largely based upon local ingredients and seasonal variations.[6] New Zealand is an island nation with a strong agricultural-based economy, and nationally and regionally grown produce and fresh seafood is prominent. The kumara is a type of sweet potato that's been grown in New Zealand for hundreds of years, and is believed to have been imported by early Maori settlers in the mid-1200s.[7] Varieties of kumara include gold, white and red, with red usually the being sweetest. Kiwifruit is a significant part of New Zealand agricultural production.[8] Similar to the cuisine of Australia, the cuisine of New Zealand is a diverse British-based cuisine with Mediterranean and Pacific Rim influences as the country becomes more cosmopolitan. Historical influences came from the Māori culture. New American cuisine, Southeast Asian, East Asian and Indian traditions have become popular since the 1970s.

- Regional foods
  - ANZAC biscuits are a sweet biscuit popular in Australia and New Zealand, made using rolled oats, flour, desiccated coconut, sugar, butter, golden syrup, bicarbonate of soda and boiling water.
  - A Boston bun/Sally lun is a large spiced bun with a thick layer of coconut icing, prevalent in Australia and New Zealand.
  - Hāngi is a traditional New Zealand Māori method of cooking food using heated rocks buried in a pit oven.
  - Pavlova is a meringue-based dessert.

## Gallery

Oceanic foods and dishes

Granny Smith apples originated in Australia.

A dish from an Australian restaurant

A pavlova is a meringue-based dessert and an icon of New Zealand cuisine.

Kiwifruit, a well-known New Zealand food

Samoan *umu*, an oven of hot rocks above ground

A fruit dessert dish in an Australian restaurant

Paniki in yellow soup

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# Australian cuisine

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**Australian cuisine** refers to the cuisine of Australia and its indigenous and colonial societies. Indigenous Australians have occupied the lands of Australia for some 40,000–60,000 years, during which time they developed a unique hunter gatherer diet, known as "bush tucker", drawn from regional Australian flora and fauna—such as the kangaroo. Australia was, from 1788 to 1900, a collection of British colonies in which culinary tastes were strongly influenced by British and Irish traditions - and agricultural products such as beef cattle, sheep and wheat became staples in the national diet. Post-war Australia's multicultural immigration program lead to a diversification of the cuisine of Australia, particularly under the influence of Mediterranean and East Asian migrants.

Australian cuisine of the first decade of the 21st century shows the influence of globalisation. Organic and biodynamic foods have become widely available and there has been a revival of interest in bushfoods.[2] British traditions persist to varying degrees in domestic cooking and the takeaway food sector, with roast dinners, the Australian meat pie and fish and chips remaining hugely popular, but there are also new elements featured in these foods. Meat is a core food in Australian cuisines. The production of meat is a significant part of the country's agricultural economy, and it has been historically a significant part of Australian's diet and agricultural economy. To barbecue meat is considered traditional in Australia.[3] While fast food chains are abundant, Australia's metropolitan centres possess many famed haute cuisine and nouvelle cuisine establishments offering both local and international food due to strong multiculturalism. Restaurants whose product includes contemporary adaptations, interpretations or fusions of exotic influences are frequently termed "Modern Australian".

## Indigenous Australian bushfoods

*Bush tucker* (bushfoods) harvested at Alice Springs Desert Park.

Before the arrival of the First Fleet of Europeans at Sydney in 1788, indigenous Australians survived off the often unique native flora and fauna of the Australian bush, for between 40,000 and 60,000 years. Hunting of kangaroo, wallaby and emu was common. Other foods widely consumed included bogong moths, witchetty grubs, lizards and snakes. Bush berries, fruits, and honeys were also used.

Resource availability and dietary make-up varied from region to region—desert dwellers could be constantly on the move to find new foods, while other tribal districts allowed relatively fixed positioning. Fish were caught using technologies such as spears, hooks and traps. Food preparation techniques also varied, however a common cooking technique was for the carcass to be thrown directly on a camp fire to be roasted.

## Development of modern Australian cuisine

Chinatown, Sydney; Multiculturalism and immigration has contributed to the development of a diverse cuisine.

Following the pre-colonial period, European settlers began arriving with the First Fleet of British ships at Sydney harbour in 1788. The diet consisted of "bread, salted meat, and tea, with lashings of rum (from the West Indies, but which was later made from the waste cane of the sugar industry in Queensland)."[4] The British settlers found some familiar game in Australia - such as swan, goose, pigeon and fish - but the new settlers often had difficulty adjusting to the prospect of native fauna as a staple diet. They set about establishing agricultural industries producing more familiar Western style produce.

After initial difficulties, Australian agriculture became a major global producer and supplied an abundance of fresh produce for the local market. Stock grazing (mostly sheep and cattle) are prevalent throughout the continent. Queensland and New South Wales became Australia's main beef cattle producers, while dairy cattle farming is found in the southern states, predominantly in Victoria. Wheat and other grain crops are spread fairly evenly throughout the mainland states. Sugar cane is also a major crop in Queensland and New South Wales. Fruit and vegetables are grown throughout Australia.

Sheep grazing in rural Australia. Early British settlers introduced Western stock and crops, Australian agriculture now produces an abundance of fresh produce.

Other than the indigenous climate and produce, Australian cuisine has been derived from the tastes of immigrant settlers to Australia and the produce they have introduced to the continent. The British colonial period established a strong base of interest in Anglo-Celtic style recipes and methods. Subsequent waves of multicultural immigration, with a majority drawn from Asia and the Mediterranean region, and the strong, sophisticated food cultures these ethnic communities have brought with them influenced the development of Australian cuisine.

Fresh produce is readily available and thus used extensively, and the trend (urged by long-term government health initiatives) is towards low-salt, low-fat healthy cookery incorporating lean meat and lightly

cooked, colourful, steamed or stir-fried vegetables. With most of the Australian population residing in coastal areas, fish and seafood is popular. In the temperate regions of Australia vegetables are traditionally eaten seasonally, especially in regional areas, although in urban areas there is large scale importation of fresh produce sourced from around the world by supermarkets and wholesalers for grocery stores, to meet demands for year-round availability. During Spring: Artichoke, Asparagus, Bean shoots, Beetroot, Broccoli, Cabbage, Cauliflower, Cucumber, Leek, Lettuce, Mushrooms, Peas, Rhubarb, and Spinach. During Summer: Capsicum, Cucumber, Eggplant, Squash, Tomato, and Zucchini.[5]

## Drinks

A traditional billycan on a campfire, used to heat water.

*Billy tea* is the drink prepared by the ill-fated swagman in the popular Australian folksong "Waltzing Matilda". Boiling water for tea over a camp fire and adding a gum leaf for flavouring remains an iconic traditional Australian method for preparing tea, which was a staple drink of the Australian colonial period.

### Alcoholic beverages


Penfolds Grange, 1999, an Australian wine

The Australian Wine Industry is the fourth largest exporter of wine around the world, with 760 million litres a year to a large international export market and contributes $5.5 billion per annum to the nation's economy. There is also a significant domestic market for Australian wines, with Australians consuming nearly 500 million litres of wine per year in the early 21st Century. Wine is produced in every state, with more than 60 designated wine regions totaling approximately 160,000 hectares. Australia's wine regions are mainly in the southern, cooler parts of the country, in South Australia, New South Wales, Victoria, and Western Australia. Amongst the most famous wine districts are the Hunter Region, Margaret River and Barossa Valley and among the best known wine producers are Penfolds, Rosemount Estate, Wynns Coonawarra Estate and Lindeman's. The Adelaide Hills region is also renowned for its wine production and attracts both national and international tourists.

Beer in Australia has been popular since colonial times. James Squire is considered to have founded Australia's first commercial brewery in 1798 and the Cascade Brewery in Hobart, Tasmania, has been operating since the early 19th century. Since the 1970s, Australian beers have become increasingly popular globally - with Fosters lager being an iconic export brand. However, Fosters is not the biggest seller on the local market, with alternatives including Victoria Bitter & Carlton Draught outselling the popular export. Craft beers are also becoming popular, from breweries such as Coopers and Little Creatures.

Rum served as a currency during the late 18th and early 19th centuries in Australia when metallic currency was in short supply.[6]

### Coffee culture

Australia has a distinct coffee culture and is often cited as being one of the most developed and vibrant in the world. The development of the coffee industry has grown not from coffee chains but through independent cafés born out of early Greek and Italian immigration since the early 20th century.

A flat white with latte art.

The iconic Greek cafés of Sydney and Melbourne were the first to introduce locally roasted coffees in 1910. In 1952, the first espresso machines began to appear in Australia and a plethora of fine Italian coffee houses were emerging in Melbourne and Sydney. Pelligrini's Espresso Bar and Legend Café often lay claim to being Melbourne's first 'real' espresso bars opening their doors in 1954 and 1956 respectively. This decade also saw the establishment of one of Australia's most iconic coffee brands, Vittoria which remains the country's largest coffee maker and distributor. The brand existed in Australia since 1958, well before it moved to the US.

The flat white, was developed in Australia and New Zealand in the 1980s. It has become extremely popular across the country and is one of the most popular espresso beverages. The flat white's popularity has spread, and is beginning to take hold in the United Kingdom.

In the 1980s, Italy's Lavazza coffee began its export business in Australia, a whole decade before expanding into the UK and US markets. Since this time espresso based coffees have remained the most popular form of coffee amongst Australians. Australia is also leading the way in the production of organic & Fair Trade coffee.

Although Australians often drink tea at home, it has been found that in out-of-home establishments where tea and coffee are sold together, tea accounted for only 2.5% of total sales. To this day, coffee chains such as Starbucks have very little market share in Australia. One reason for this is that unlike in the United States and Asia, Australia already had a developed coffee culture for many decades before coffee chains came to the market.

## Fish and seafood

The cooked tail of a Balmain Bug

Australia's 11 million square kilometre fishing zone is the third largest in the world and allows for bountiful access to seafood which significantly influences Australian cuisine. Clean ocean environments around Australia produce high quality seafoods for domestic consumption and export. Lobster, prawn, tuna, salmon, and abalone are the main ocean species harvested commercially, while aquaculture produces more than 60 species for consumption including edible oysters, salmon, southern bluefin tuna, mussel, prawn, barramundi, yellowtail kingfish, and freshwater finifish .

While inland river and lake systems are relatively sparse, they nevertheless provide some unique fresh water game fish and crustacea suitable for dining. Fishing and aquaculture constitute Australia's fifth most valuable agricultural industry after wool, beef, wheat and dairy. Approximately 600 varieties of marine and freshwater seafood species are caught and sold in Australia for both local and overseas consumption.

Australian cuisine features Australian seafood such as: Southern bluefin tuna, King George whiting, Moreton Bay bug, Mud Crab, Jew Fish, Dhufish (Western Australia) and Yabby. Australia is one of the largest producers of abalone and rock lobster.

Fish and chips is a take-away food that originated in the United Kingdom and remains popular in Australia.[7] It generally consists of deep-fried fish (often flake rather than cod in Australia) batter with deep-fried chipped (slab-cut) potatoes. Flathead is also popular sport and table fish found in all parts of Australia. Barramundi is an iconic sporting fish found in Northern Australian river systems.

Typical serving of fish and chips.

Confit of Tasmanian Ocean Trout

## Fruit

There are many species of Australian native fruits, such as Quandong (native peach), Wattleseed, Muntries / Munthari berry, Illawarra plums, Riberry, Native Raspberries and Lilli pillies.[8] These usually fall under the category of "bush tucker", (bush foods), which are used more commonly in restaurants and used in commercial preserves and pickles but are not generally well known to Australians due to low availability.

A Granny Smith apple

Australia also has large fruit growing regions in most states for tropical fruits in the north, stone fruits and temperate fruits in the south which has a mediterranean or temperate climate. The Granny Smith variety of apples first originated in Sydney, Australia in 1868. Another well known Australian apple variety is the Cripps Pink, known locally and internationally as "Pink Lady" apples, which was first cultivated in 1973.

Fruit is widely used in Australian cuisine, but is consumed mostly in its fresh, rather than cooked form with the successful "2 fruit and 5 veg" campaign for healthy portions per day. In terms of cooked fruit dishes, fruits are often eaten poached in sugar syrup (often with spices such as vanilla, cloves or citrus peel) and eaten as a breakfast or dessert, which is more common amongst older Australians, or baked in dishes such as apple crumble, pies, pastries and cakes. Fresh fruit is often consumed simply without any adulteration at any time of day, or combined in fruit salad, which is a popular summer dessert nationally.

Popular and commonly available fruits produced in Australia are: apples, banana, kiwi fruit, oranges and other citrus, mangoes (seasonally), pears, nectarines, plums, apricots, grapes, melons, pawpaw, papaya, pineapple, passionfruit and berry fruits (such as strawberries, raspberries etc.). Other fruits tend not to be widely cultivated due to the plant requiring climate or soil conditions that are not cost effective, or the plant species not being well known to the general market. Many Australian homes in older suburbs will have fruit trees in the garden, mainly citrus and stone fruit, often of old-fashioned "heritage" varieties that are not suitable for commercial production.

## Regional cuisine

In the Southern states of Victoria and South Australia, in particular the Barossa Valley, wines and food reflects the region's traditions and heritage.[9] Barossa's early settlers brought their food traditions with them, instilling the region's cuisine with a strong German influence. Preserving, smoking and baking are techniques used in this regional cuisine. The area is famous for its vineyards and the abundance of fresh produce including fruit, nuts, vegetables and citrus. Dishes are made with poultry, livestock, yabbies and hare, some examples are: smoked Mettwurst, Lachsschinken and Bratwurst sausages. Traditional breads and yeasted cakes like Bienenstich and Streuselkuchen, pickled onions and gherkins, olives and olive oil, egg noodles, and a variety of chutneys, pickles and preserves, as well as dried fruits, Barossa cheese and quince paste - are all featured in the cuisine.

## Iconic Australian foods

An iconic Australian food is Vegemite (owned by the American Kraft Foods). Other unique or iconic national foods include macadamia nuts; Violet Crumble, a honeycomb chocolate bar; Cherry Ripe; Jaffas, chocolate with an orange-flavoured confectionery shell; the Chiko Roll, a deep-fried savoury roll similar to a spring roll; and the dim sim, a Chinese-inspired dumpling. Other popular Australian foods include Tim Tams, a chocolate biscuit; musk sticks; fairy bread which is buttered bread with hundreds and thousands; lamingtons; and the commercial breakfast cereal Weet-Bix.

Vegemite on toast

The Australian hamburger is, at its simplest, a fried beef patty, served with shredded lettuce and sliced tomato in a (usually toasted) bread roll. Tomato sauce (similar to ketchup but made with less sugar with a more liquid texture) or barbecue sauce are almost always included. Beetroot, pineapple and fried onions are also extremely common additions. Other frequently-served hamburger options are bacon, a fried egg and cheese. US-style pickles are rarely included, except in burgers from the usual American chains.


The Pavlova is an iconic and popular dessert in Australia.

ANZAC biscuits and the pavlova are considered by some to be Australian national foods,[10] although while the oldest known named recipe for pavlova is from New Zealand, its often said in the Australian history that the dessert took its name from Anna Pavlova at the Esplanade Hotel in Perth during a tour of the state where she danced "as light as air" in reference to the light meringue.[11] It has been suggested that the current pavlova is an improvement on the older recipe for a meringue cake found in a New Zealand magazine.

In the pattern of foods named after famous singers and dancers, Dame Nellie Melba also has several dishes named after her; well known is Melba toast and the Peach Melba, but also less well known is the Chicken Melba, recipes of which can be found in *Larousse Gastronomique*.

The meat pie (minced beef in a beef gravy, enclosed in a baked flaky pastry shell about 10 cm across) is a well-known take away item. Popular variants include steak, onion (diced fried onion), potato (mash potato on top of a traditional pie instead of a pastry top), curry (Indian) and pepper. An iconic way of serving meat pies is as a "pie floater", on top of a bowl of thick pea soup. While well known to Australian expats, the meat pie is becoming popular in the US, with food chain Pie Face opening its first chain in New York City in 2011. Sausage rolls are another popular take away item.

Kangaroo meat can be found in restaurants, some supermarkets and butchers.

Kangaroo meat is widely available in Australia, although it is not among the most commonly eaten meats. In old fashioned colonial recipes, it was treated much like ox tail, and braised until tender forming a rich gravy. It is available today in various cuts and sausages. Also eaten (in specialist restaurants) is emu meat and crocodile meat. Wombats were also an occasional item on the menu, until their legal protection in the 1970s.[*citation needed*] As these meats need specialist preparation they are not found in mainstream restaurants or at home, however products are now available in supermarkets made of kangaroo and emu meat.

Damper is a traditional Australian soda bread prepared by swagmen, drovers and other travellers. It is a wheat flour based bread, traditionally baked in the coals of a campfire.

Australia is one of the worlds major quality wine and beer producing nations. Australia has also in the past been known for producing high volumes of light lager style beers, mostly for domestic and export consumption, but since the 1990s has been producing many boutique and artisan quality beers that the general standard of public tastes have been improved as has local knowledge of boutique beers. Beers are served chilled in Australia, unlike in other parts of the world.

The nation also has a longstanding dairy industry (virtually from colonisation) and today produces a wide variety of cheeses, yoghurts, milk, cream and butter products. Australians are high consumers of dairy products, consuming (on average) some 102.4L of milk per person a year, which in part is due to its quality-coffee culture, 12.9 kg of cheese, 3.8 kg of butter (a small reduction from previous year, largely for dietary purposes) and a small increase to 7.1 kg of yoghurt products.


ANZAC biscuits, made without coconut


A pavlova garnished with pomegranates and cream


Damper (soda bread) being cooked over hot coals.

**Australian foods**

## Prominent Australian chefs

Prominent Australian chefs include:

- Stephanie Alexander
- Maggie Beer
- Guillaume Brahimi
- Jean-Paul Bruneteau
- Simon Bryant
- George Calombaris
- Pete Evans
- Manu Feildel
- Margaret Fulton
- Gabriel Gaté
- Peter Gilmore
- Bill Granger
- Guy Grossi
- Kylie Kwong
- Cheong Liew
- Stefano Manfredi
- Gary Mehigan
- Matt Moran
- Luke Nguyen
- Ben O'Donoghue
- Neil Perry
- Tobie Puttock
- Peter Russell-Clarke
- Cindy Sargon
- Curtis Stone
- David Thompson
- Tetsuya Wakuda
- Poh Ling Yeow
- Donna Hay

## Notes

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## External links

- Australian food and drink - Native Australians and early settlers (http://www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au/articles/foodanddrink/)
- Australian Flavour - Recipes verified as having been cooked in Australian in the late 1800s and 1900s plus others considered iconic (http://www.australianflavour.net/)
- Regency TAFE information website (http://www.tafe.sa.edu.au/Careers/HospitalityTravelTourism/tabid/701/Default.aspx)
- Australian Food Worldwide (http://www.sanza.co.uk)

# Christmas Island cuisine

The **cuisine** of **Christmas Island** can best be described as an eclectic combination of traditional Australian cuisine and Asian cuisine, particularly meals from Malaysia, China and Indonesia.[1]

## Population

As of 2009, the island had just 1,200 residents - 65% Chinese Malaysians and 20% Malays. Despite the island being an Australian territory, only 15% of residents are of European descent.[2] This figure also does not include the almost 600 people who work in or in association with the Christmas Island Immigration Reception and Processing Centre.

There are an additional 2,000+ people living at the Christmas Island Immigration Reception and Processing Centre. Their meals are flown in by the Australian Government via operator Serco.

## Food supply

Almost no fresh food is grown on the island due to nematodes in the soil. However, there are three local gardens on the island that grow small amounts of Asian greens. There is a community garden at Drumsite, another small community vegetable patch in Poon Saan and a temple garden also in Poon Saan. These community gardens are distinctive for their garden beds built up out of the soil, as the worms tend not to come up towards the heat and risk drying out, preserving the roots of the vegetables. Some of the Asian greens and vegetables grown include bok choy, choy sum, kangkong, chinese mustard, eggplant and okra among others.

Christmas Island Supermarket; one of the only supplies of fresh produce on the island.

Locals rely on government-contracted deliveries of fresh food from mainland Australia. As of November 2013 there is an additional air-freight of vegetables that arrives from Malaysia via Indonesia each Friday night for purchase on

Saturday morning. This air-freight caters mostly to the tastes of the local community bringing in fresh noodles, asian greens, fish, pork belly, bones and fillets, and other package foods like fish balls and tofu.

In recent years, the supply of fresh food has been impacted by a number of major incidents. In January 2012, the MV Tycoon crashed into the island's main dock at Flying Fish Cove, preventing subsequent fresh-food deliveries from reaching the island.[3] When food supplies by ship are not available, air-freighted deliveries have been known to sell out within hours.

## Wild food

Due to the tropical nature of Christmas Island's weather, a wide variety of food grows wild on the island. Fruit trees are found dotted around the island and on private properties. Some of the things that can be found by foraging on Christmas Island include:

- papaya
- mango
- coconut
- pumpkin
- chilli
- jackfruit
- wild lime
- bunga kantan (also known as laksa flower or torch ginger flower - botanical name Etlingera elatior)
- manquang (a Chinese turnip also known as jicama)
- tapioca
- lemongrass
- banana
- guava

Many other well known tropical fruits such as rambutan, lychee and durian do not grow on Christmas Island as there is inadequate soil depth and not enough steady rainfall throughout the year.

## Meals

As a result of supply issues, whole fresh produce can be difficult to acquire and so meals that make use of processed foods and canned foods are popular.

Traditionally, chickens were kept on the island and locals produced their own pickled eggs and Chinese century eggs. Dishes that made use of the chickens themselves were popular along with dishes that included the local Christmas Island red crab.

## Places to eat out

The island has a number of noodle bars offering Chinese and Malaysian dishes in accordance with the traditional cuisines of the island's residents.

There are 10 places to eat out on Christmas Island

- Cari Makan - a Malay cafe at Kampong - different specials each night of the week
- Le CLA (Chinese Literary Association) - a Chinese restaurant at Settlement
- The Barracks Cafe - an Australian cafe at Settlement
- The Golden Bosun - an Australian style pub
- The Christmas Island Resort - a restaurant selling a variety of Western and Asian food.
- Tracks Tavern - a pub at Drumsite that sells burgers and Thai Food

- Lucky Ho - a local Chinese Restaurant at Poon Saan
- Seaview Fish and Chips - a local "chippie" in Poon Saan
- Seasons Palace - another local Chinese Restaurant in Poon Saan
- The Coffee Shop (also known as Poon Saan Kopi Tiam) which sells a different Malaysian hawker dish special each day.

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# New Zealand cuisine

| Part of a series on the |
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**New Zealand cuisine** is largely driven by local ingredients and seasonal variations. Occupying an island nation with a primarily agricultural economy, New Zealand yields produce from land and sea. Similar to the cuisine of Australia, the cuisine of New Zealand is a diverse British-based cuisine, with Mediterranean and Pacific Rim influences as the country becomes more cosmopolitan.

Pavlova, one of the icons in New Zealand cuisine.

Historical influences came from Māori culture. New American cuisine, Southeast Asian, East Asian, and South Asian culinary traditions have become popular since the 1970s.

In New Zealand households, dinner (also known as "tea") is the main meal of the day, when families gather and share their evening together. Restaurants and takeaways provide an increasing proportion of the diet.

## Māori cuisine

When Māori (New Zealand's indigenous people) first arrived in New Zealand from tropical Polynesia, they brought with them a number of food plants, including kūmara (sweet potato), taro and tī plants. The plants grew well only in the north of the North Island, and would not grow at all in the colder parts of the South Island. Native New Zealand plants such as fernroot became a more important part of the diet, along with insects such as the huhu grub. Problems with horticulture were made up for by an abundance of bird and marine life. The large flightless moa were soon hunted to extinction. Rāhui (resource restrictions) included forbidding the hunting of certain species in particular places or at certain times of year, so that the numbers could regenerate.

A hāngi dinner as served to tourists.

Preparation of a modern hāngi for tourists at Mitai Maori Village, Rotorua.

Like other Polynesian people, Māori cooked their food in earth ovens, known in New Zealand as hāngi, although the word *umu* is also used as in other Pacific languages. Stones are heated by fire and food parcels, packed in leaves, are placed on top. The packs are further covered with foliage and cloth, or, nowadays wet sacks, then earth. Other cooking methods included roasting and, in geothermal areas, boiling or steaming using natural hot springs and pools. Occasionally food would be boiled in non-geothermal areas by putting hot stones into a bowl with water and the food; and some food was also cooked over the open fire. Some foods were preserved using smoke, air-drying, or layers of fat—particularly muttonbirds. Māori were one of the few people to have no form of alcoholic beverage.

### Food and religion

In traditional Māori religion food was noa, or non-sacred. This meant care had to be taken to prevent it coming into contact with tapu places or objects. If it did, the tapu of the place or object, and often the people associated with it, would be at risk. High chiefs, and people engaged in tapu work such as tattooing, were tapu and were restricted in how they could deal with food; the most tapu needing to be fed by others. One story tells of a war party which had to be postponed as no non-tapu people were available to load the food supplies into the party's waka.

### Pākehā influences

When Europeans (Pākehā) first arrived in New Zealand from the late eighteenth century, they brought their own foods with them. Some of these, especially pork and potatoes, were quickly adopted by Māori and helped end the threat of food shortages that had long plagued many Māori tribes. Potatoes were particularly popular as they were grown in a similar way to kūmara but produced a much higher yield with less effort. Other European foods such as wheat, pumpkin, mutton, sugar, and many types of fruit also became a common part of the Māori diet. American sailors brought new varieties of sweet potato to New Zealand, and these high-yield varieties quickly superseded the original varieties of kūmara.

Alcohol, initially rejected as 'wai piro' (stinking water), also became part of Māori life.[2] Most Māori tribes grew surpluses of food for trade with other tribes and with European visitors and settlers. Some tribes grew wealthy from this trade, although the Māori food industry declined in the mid-nineteenth century because of land loss and competition from settler farmers. Many traditional food sources, such as the kererū (wood pigeon) and other birds, as well as some types of fish and plants, became scarce as forests were destroyed and species were over-hunted.

### Māori cuisine today

A Māori boil-up

Present day Māori cuisine is a mixture of Māori tradition, old-fashioned English cookery, and contemporary dishes. Most large Māori gatherings feature a hāngi, which is likely to contain foods brought to New Zealand by Māori and by Pākehā. In recent decades there has been much concern that Māori have picked up the worst of European eating habits and as a result are disproportionately likely to suffer from obesity, heart disease, and diabetes.

Two dishes regarded as distinctively Māori are the boil-up - of pork, potatoes, kūmara, and dumplings, and pork and puha (*sow thistle*) which combine introduced and indigenous foods. Both dishes owe much to nineteenth century British cooking methods.

## New Zealand European cuisine

The majority of New Zealanders are Pākehā of British descent, so it is not surprising that the cuisine owes much to British cuisine.

### British Isles settler food

Nineteenth century British settlers in New Zealand tried as much as possible to reproduce the foods of their homeland. In the early stages of colonisation this was difficult as many ingredients were unavailable. Pākehā settlers ate native birds and fish, and used local ingredients in substitution for those which were unavailable, for example brewing tea and beer using unconventional plants. Most of these innovations were abandoned as the Pākehā population increased and conventional ingredients began to be mass-imported or produced in New Zealand. One innovation which was commonly served on New Zealand tables until the mid-1980s was colonial goose, a stuffed

leg of lamb which substituted for goose.[3] A major difference between British and Pākehā food was that meat was much more readily available to all social classes in New Zealand. Whereas in nineteenth century Britain, labourers ate meat in very small quantities, in New Zealand they could have it for every meal. Since meat was a high status food in Britain, British settlers in New Zealand ate vast quantities of it.[4]

It is noted Scotland provided the largest number of British ancestors of today's Pākehā. The Scottish legacy on food could be seen through a traditional preference of sweet foods, and a wealth of baking dishes to celebrate important occasions, reflected through cakes, scones, muffins and other mainly sweet baking dishes. The country's most iconic recipe book, the *Edmonds Cookery Book*, originally began as publicity material for a baking powder company, and contains a high proportion of baking recipes.

## From Antipodean British fare to Asia-Pacific fusion

For most of the twentieth century, Caucasian New Zealand cuisine remained highly derivative of British food.[5] From about the 1960s, the advent of affordable air travel allowed New Zealanders to travel overseas more easily. Most Caucasians went to Europe on OE, where they discovered French and Italian cooking, and also the Indian and Chinese restaurants of Britain as well as the New British cuisine. When the sojourners returned home they helped create a demand for better quality food and more variety. They also tried to discover what New Zealand cuisine was, experimenting with hangi and gaining a greater appreciation of New Zealand produce.

The United Kingdom's joining of the European Economic Community (EEC) (now the European Union) in 1973 sounded the death knell of New Zealand's identity as an agricultural producer for the British Isles, and the formal cultural ties, including cuisine, with the United Kingdom started to become diluted. During this period, certain non-British or Irish European dishes, such as beef bourguignon, had shed the 'ethnic' connotation and entered the mainstream New Zealand cooking.

The 1980s was marked with economic liberalisation dubbed Rogernomics (named for the then Minister of Finance, Roger Douglas) that abolished farm subsidies, forcing many farmers to find alternative means of survival. Many chose to produce specialty cheese types like Havarti, Brie and Stilton, or diversified into growing olives [6] or grapes instead of traditional meat and dairy farming. Avocado oil for cooking was commercialised in New Zealand in 1999 by a group of growers based in the Tauranga region.

Rogernomics also abolished much of import tariffs and instituted a more relaxed agricultural product import quarantine regime. This allows hereunto prohibited or prohibitively expensive specialty foods, such as genuine serrano ham from Spain, extra virgin olive oil from Italy, and mango from Thailand, to be available in New Zealand at reasonable costs. These two developments from Rogernomics have given birth to a proliferation of specialist food products available in New Zealand.

On top of changes in available ingredients, the 1980s also witnessed a wholescale liberalisation in attitude towards the formerly 'foreign muck' cooking styles and segmentation of lifestyles according to income and socio-economic status. New Zealand had by this time developed a largely distinct cultural outlook away from the British Isles, and this also made foreign cooking styles more acceptable among the general public.[7] The same era also saw the moneyed populations feeling free to openly emulate the luxurious eating and drinking habits of upper and upper middle classes overseas, as the traditional New Zealand preference of egalitarianism, manifested in widespread prejudice against any deviation from lower middle class lifestyles, waned in influence. In the words of New Zealand-based anthropologist David Veart, this period of seachange in New Zealand's culinary culture was akin to "being let out after a long school detention".

## Other cuisines in New Zealand

New Zealanders come from many ethnic backgrounds, and most immigrants to New Zealand have tried to reproduce their native cuisines or national dishes in New Zealand. Similar to early Pākehā settlers, this often proved difficult. Larger ethnic groups, such as the Chinese, were able to import some ingredients, but often dishes had to be modified to use local ingredients. Ethnic restaurants have served as community meeting places and have also given other New Zealanders a chance to try different cuisines. However for most of its history there were few ethnic restaurants in New Zealand other than inauthentic Chinese, Indian and Italian eateries.

The Immigration Act 1986 completely abolished nationality preference for immigration, and immigration from East Asia, Southeast Asia and South Asia has skyrocketed after the law was enacted. Many of these immigrants have brought their different cuisines to New Zealand, and often opened ethnic restaurants and takeaway eateries, giving New Zealanders a chance to try more authentic editions of Japanese, Thai, Malay, regional Chinese, Indian, and other Asian cuisines. Over time these ethnic cuisines have been gradually accepted by Pākehā and Māori New Zealanders. Consequently, most New Zealand cities have a wide variety of ethnic restaurants, and foods such as kebabs, couscous, and sushi are served virtually everywhere. Many ethnic origin dishes have been willingly adopted by New Zealanders as their own, including sushi, antipasto, butter chicken, pad thai, pasta, such that they appear in home cooking, as well as in generic New Zealand restaurants.

Ingredients for many ethnic dishes have become much easier to find in major cities, mostly through speciality or ethnic food stores started by many of the post-1987 migrants to New Zealand, but in some cases also through mainstream New Zealand supermarket chains. Similar to Australia, in time the increasing availability of ingredients gave birth to a more authentic style of ethnic cooking, and some ethnic food ingredients have been adopted for local cooking: ingredients such as extra virgin olive oil and sun dried tomatoes, and to a lesser extent fish sauce and rice paper were already seen as ordinary ingredients by the year 2000, whereas even by the late 1980s many people would still have regarded them as highly exotic.[8]

## Contemporary scene

As a result of various developments, the food scene of New Zealand in the early 21st century is in a state of flux: cosmopolitan Pacific Rim fares reign is now the norm in much of metropolitan eating out scenes,[9] and traditional hearty settlers food, now dubbed *Kwisine Kiwiana*, but reinterpreted through Pacific Rim cooking knowledge, is a popular cooking style for eating out scenes even in the most remote rural regions. Most of the home cooking prepared at households in Auckland is now a mix of traditional Kiwiana dishes heavily modified by Mediterranean and Asian techniques and ingredients, and adapted versions of Mediterranean, Chinese, and Indian dishes. In the more culturally traditional parts of the country, such as rural Canterbury and the West Coast. However, traditional Kiwiana fares are still the norm at many homes.

This hamburger at a Botany fast food chain contains slices of canned beetroot.

Certain vestiges of traditional Kiwiana dishes remain popular throughout the country, such as fish and chips, meat pies, custard squares, pavlova, and others.[10] An active nostalgia movement supports the traditional Kiwiana cuisine, as spreadheaded by the popularity of television series Kiwi Kitchen presented by Richard Till, which is believed to be a public response to a common perception that the traditional Kiwiana dishes are disappearing from the New Zealand tables. Home baking is particularly believed to be the last bastion of New Zealand cuisine still unaffected by international trends.

Concurrently, food habits are changing in Australia to lighter fares influenced by the Mediterranean, and subsequently Southeast Asian, styles of cooking. The proximity, common history, and strong modern political, economic, cultural, and family ties between the two countries means many New Zealand diners and chefs have always been well informed of the trends in the Australian dining scene. Many chefs had worked in Australia and endeavour to learn from their trans-Tasman counterparts, and in time the changing Australian culinary scene has trickle-down effects on the New Zealand cuisine as well.[11]

In general, there are minimal differences between the food preference of New Zealand and Australia. The food trends in New Zealand tend to trail its trans-Tasman counterparts by a few years to a decade, such as the Mediterranean cookery did not become mainstream in New Zealand until the dawn of 1990s, while its influence was already felt in Australia by the 1980s; and while Australia has by the early 21st century developed a well established niche specialist produce distributing channel, a similar system is still in its infancy across the Tasman. However, in recent times Auckland and Wellington have food fashions moving essentially in sync with that of Sydney and Melbourne.[12]

One major recent development in the food scene is the emergence of a genuine cafe culture and disappearance of the traditional institution of tearooms at large. Before the 1990s, tearooms proliferated throughout the country offering cream tea, with scones, cream, and cucumber sandwiches, muffins, and custard squares, with filtered coffee or tea as drinks. New Zealanders have copied the Australian habits of adopting Mediterranean practice of drinking espresso derived coffees.[13] In time, cafes became wildly popular and many tearoom owners converted their businesses to cafes and learned to use espresso machines in a rush. Cream tea has gone out of fashion in the contemporary New Zealand dining scene, and scones are baked at homes rather than served in eateries.

Vegetarianism had been regarded as an alternative lifestyle for many years; but became more mainstream during the 1980s even though consistent vegetarians are still rare. Despite exhortations by the Ministry of Health and their allies for people to eat less meat, and more cereals, fruits, and vegetables, a highly meat-based diet remains a part of New Zealand culture, albeit with decrease of red meat consumption and intake of fish and chicken has been on the rise.

Gluten free foodstuffs have become part of the dietary trends in New Zealand, with cafes and restaurants increasingly offering gluten free versions of popular foods such as cakes, pizza, and hamburger buns. Some supermarkets, delicatessens and bakeries similarly offer gluten free products and there has been a rise in speciality stores.

## New Zealand cuisine in other countries

New Zealand cuisine has made minor impacts on the world at large, although Australia does feel influences from New Zealand cuisine, with certain renowned chefs such as Iain Hewitson, Justin North and Philip Johnson being New Zealand-born and Stephanie Alexander[14] and Neil Perry actively including New Zealand culinary styles into their works. Certain personalities, such as foodie Lauraine Jacobs, baker Dean Brettschneider, and writers David Burton and Julie Biuso, are widely respected among the professional food industry around the world. The famed chef Peter Gordon of London hails from New Zealand originally. The country's most famous culinary export, the pavlova, has been the object of a decades-long battle with Australia over where it was invented.

Fusion cuisine and the *Pacific Rim* style of cooking are major cuisine styles that interact with modern New Zealand cuisine, with chefs from New Zealand actively learning overseas trends,[15] and chefs like Peter Gordon, bakers such as Dean Brettschneider, and foodies such as Lauraine Jacobs impacting fusion and Pacific Rim cuisines from New Zealand cuisine. *Cuisine* magazine, first published in 1986, has earned global fame and is held in high prestige among the worldwide foodie communities.[16]

## Wines

New Zealand has a successful wine industry, with about 76 million litres being exported in the year to June 2007. The first vines are thought to have been introduced by missionary Samuel Marsden, and planted in 1817 by Charles Gordon, superintendent of agriculture for the missionaries, according to Dr Richard Smart who was viticultural editor of both editions of The Oxford Companion to Wine.[17] Official British resident James Busby is credited with producing wine at Kerikeri in 1833, and Charles Darwin noted the winery in his diary when he visited Kerikeri in 1835.

Small vinyards were also planted by French settlers in Akaroa in the 1840s. However wine was drunk in relatively small qualities well into the twentieth century, with the average per capita consumption only about 2.6 litres in 1966. The high price of imported wines probably prevented New Zealanders from developing a taste for wine, although it did help sales of local vintages.[18] The quality of these wines slowly improved, with New Zealand wines winning three gold and 13 silver medals at the International Wine Fair in 1963.[19] Aided by the deregulation of the economy in the 1980s and 1990s, domestic wine consumption increased and New Zealand wine won increasing accolades internationally.

There are 10 major wine-producing areas in New Zealand, with Marlborough famed for its sauvignon blanc, Gisborne for its chardonnay, and Central Otago and Martinborough building a reputation for pinot noir and pinot gris. Hawkes Bay is known for its bold cabernets and Auckland's Waiheke Island is home to one of the top 20 cabernet blends in the world. Marlborough and Hawkes Bay are New Zealand's two premium wine-growing regions.

## Patterns of eating

Fish and chips, a popular take-away food in New Zealand.

Most New Zealanders eat their main meal – known as *dinner*, or sometimes *tea* – in the evening. Most families living in one household try to eat dinner together several times a week. The formality and structure of these meals varies from family to family. Although, a few New Zealanders cook most things 'from scratch', most New Zealand home cooks are dependent to some extent on pre-made ingredients (in particular, packaged soup and sauce mixes). Cakes are very rarely made from packet mix - this has never really taken on in New Zealand. Most families eat takeaways (take-out), such as fish and chips, Chinese food, or pizza about once or twice a week. In flats (households shared by a group of unrelated young people), flatmates will generally either take turns cooking or each cook and eat individually.

In the summer, the barbecue is common, generally as a social event. Guests will usually be invited to bring beer (or wine), and on occasion meat, which the host will cook. Sometimes guests contribute a salad to the gathering instead. It is traditional for the men to cook the meat, and for the women to do everything else, although these patterns are changing. Similar Māori gatherings will often feature a hangi (pronounced *hung-ee*), a pit in which meats or fish are cooked with vegetables. A deep hole is dug in the ground, lined with red-hot stones and covered with vegetation. The food is then placed on top. The whole oven is sprinkled with water and sealed with more vegetation. The hole is then filled with earth and left to steam for several hours. Traditionally, men dig and prepare the hole, and women prepare the food to go in it. All members of an extended family (whanau) help out for such a feast. The occasion is

relaxed, friendly and fun, with people often eating the meal under a marquee.

Many New Zealand gatherings feature a custom known as 'bring a plate' or 'potluck' in which each guest will bring a plate of food to share. This allows people to host large groups without incurring serious expense. Similar customs include guests bringing salads or meat to a barbecue. Most New Zealand parties are 'BYO' (bring your own alcohol), but in this case the drinks are not usually shared. This is especially the case with parties hosted by young people, who cannot usually afford alcohol for more than a few people. One exception is sometimes the 21st birthday party, which will often be funded by the host's family. Weddings are also normally catered for by the hosts and their family.

New Zealand's eating out culture has developed strongly after the mid-1970s, thanks partially to the liberalisation of liquor licensing laws and popularisation of cafes and other similar casual dining establishments. It is common for people to visit cafes regularly for lunch or morning or afternoon snacks. On the other hand, visits to restaurants are still regarded as special occasion treats for most of the population.

There is a 'fast food' culture similar to that in the United States, Australia and Britain. Many American fast food chains have a presence in New Zealand, and local variants based on quality local produce (such as Burger Fuel [20] and Hell Pizza [21] for example) have arisen. The pie is possibly the nearest thing New Zealand has to street food, though its popularity has waned.[22] Pies are actually still the most common take away lunch and is sold everywhere, dairies, bakeries, supermarkets, petrol stations, school lunch tuck-shops. we produce our own pies and import very few from Australia. Pies can be made with beef, lamb, chicken, pork, apple or custard. A fast food chain based on pies, Georgie Pie, was founded in 1977, but went out of business in the mid-1990s. Currently another fast food chain selling pies exists: Australian-based Jester's [23] produces pies throughout New Zealand's North Island, predominantly Auckland.

In the main centres, food courts have become popular, with several in Auckland alone. Immigration has led to an increase in choice and quality, with many food halls offering cuisines including Thai, Indian, Turkish, Malaysian, Japanese and Chinese, as well as distinctly New Zealand fare such as roast dinners.

## New Zealand foods

### Developed in New Zealand

- Hangi food
- Pavlova
- Colonial goose
- Lolly cake
- Pork and puha
- Hokey pokey ice cream
- Anzac biscuits
- Afghan biscuits
- Sausage sizzle

### Imported cuisines, now significant in New Zealand

- Fish and chips
- Roast lamb and mutton
- Vegemite (the Australian version) and Marmite
- Scones
- Lamingtons
- The boil up
- Meat pies

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[3] pg 124-128, David Burton, *Pavalova Paradise Lost*, *Cuisine* issue 127, March 2008

[4] 'Food, drink and dress' in *Te Ara: The Encyclopaedia of New Zealand:* http://www.teara.govt.nz/NewZealandInBrief/Society/9/en

[5] 'Food' in *Te Ara*.

[6] As an example, in 1984 there were only two producers of olive oil hailing from New Zealand. 20 years later, the figure stands at 600. Andre Taber, *A Buyer's Guide to New Zealand Olive Oil*, New Holland Publishers, 2007, pg 9

[7] David Veart, *First, Catch Your Weka: the Story of New Zealand Cooking*, Auckland University Press, September 2008, pg 216-294

[8] Peta Mathias in 2005 claims ingredients such as fish sauce and rice paper are now a normal part of New Zealand household pantries. Peta Mathias, *A Cook's Tour of New Zealand*, Penguin Viking, July 2005, pg 16. Many New Zealanders still regard these as 'ethnic' ingredients, although as in Australia the foreign connotation is decreasing with the passage of time. See also David Veart, *Ibid*, pg 295-314.

[9] There are even reports that in Auckland by 2007, the traditional fund-raising sausage sizzles at many schools in the more affluent suburbs have been replaced with sushi, a supposedly lower fat and healthier alternative.

[10] Author David Burton has witnessed plenty of New Zealand comments that they are thankful New Zealand no longer eats much of traditional Kiwiana fares. David Burton, *Ibid*

[11] An example is Judith Tabron, owner of the Soul Bar and Bistro in Auckland. Tabron invites Australian chefs such as Bill Marchetti, Philip Johnson, Stephanie Alexander, and Greg Malouf across the Tasman to New Zealand as guest chefs at Soul from time to time specifically to teach her staff about current Australian food trends, and some of their styles of cooking have become part of the standard menu at Soul which subsequently become New Zealand eating scene via the publishing of these dishes' recipes in popular home cookbooks in New Zealand. Judith Tabron, *Soul*, Random House New Zealand, 2005, pg 7-9

[12] A positive Australian comment on modern urban New Zealand cooking, specifically Auckland, is from Bruce Elder of the Sydney Morning Herald, "...here was a time when discriminating eaters [from Australia] were told to take a packed lunch when visiting New Zealand. Now it is consistently good and also, at the upper end, very cheap. With an exchange rate of around $NZ1.20 equalling A$1 meals at the best restaurants in Auckland work out at around A$25 for mains and that, literally, is half what you would pay for the same in Sydney's upmarket restaurants." Bruce Elder, *Eating in New Zealand (Part 2)* http://blogs.smh.com.au/trampaboutnz/archives//007306.html.A number of Sydney and Melbourne fine-dining restaurants have Auckland connections - such as Wildfire restaurant in Sydney is owned by the former owner of Cin Cin in Auckland. Molecular cuisine has also landed in Auckland as in Sydney by 2006, but is still unheard of in much of the country.

[13] This is alluded to by Peta Mathias. Peta Mathias, *Ibid*, pg 54

[14] The second edition of Australian foodie Stephanie Alexander's *The Cook's Companion* includes several recipes made with ingredients traditionally produced in New Zealand but not her own country. Judith Tabron, *Ibid*, pg 128

[15] Mark McDonough of Zarbo Cafe and Deli claims how he actively sources overseas food and accompanying culinary ideas for inspiration. Mark McDonough, *Zarbo: Recipes From a New Zealand Deli*, Random House New Zealand, 2002, pg 6

[16] For example, the *Cuisine* magazine was selected as the best food magazine in the world at the 2007 Le Cordon Bleu World Food Media Awards run by Tasting Australia and sponsored by Le Cordon Bleu, beating other food magazines published in other parts of the English-speaking world http://www.cuisine.co.nz/index.cfm?pageID=54996&r=1

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[21] http://www.hell.co.nz

[22] true-blue-kiwi

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## External links

- 'Food, drink and dress' in *Te Ara: The Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*. (http://www.teara.govt.nz/NewZealandInBrief/Society/9/en)
- Webpage on traditional Māori food (http://media.newzealand.com/index.cfm/purenz_page/D65BA3E2-803F-405A-B022-D9CAF1D47FF6.html)
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