

Finding Common Foods - Africa

This is a list of foods that are either not common in an Australian context or are used in different ways in Africa. It is not an exhaustive list. Some people from this part of the world are Muslim and may require access to Halal foods.

Name in English	Availability
Breads and Cereals	
Maize flour	Maize flour can sometimes be called Mealie meal and is used to make porridge.
Millet/millet flour	Depending on where you live in Africa will decide the identity of the main staple. In Sudan the staple tends to be millet, in Rwanda it tends to be sorghum and in other parts it could be Maize. Flour is used to make the staple porridge eaten alone or as an accompaniment.
Sorghum flour	Sorghum flour is another variety used to make porridge. Those coming from Rwanda will use sorghum more often than maize or millet.
Teff	Teff is a grain used in Ethiopia to make Injera. It is grown in Australia as animal feed but is currently unavailable for human consumption. Quinoa may be an adequate substitute
Injera	Injera is the Ethiopian/Eritrean name given to a flat, fermented bread. The dough is left overnight at room temperature to ferment and gives it a "sourdough" taste.
Asida	This is one of the South Sudanese names for the porridge. Also called Fufu or Mealie meal in other areas. This porridge can be made with either milk or water and can be served as a breakfast food or a little thicker as an accompaniment to meat and vegetable dishes. It can be flavoured with condiments such as tamarind or chilli.

Pulses	
Black-eyed beans	Used extensively both in cooking and as a snack. Also called cow peas, the leaves are also eaten but not readily available.
All other pulses	
Seeds and nuts	
Peanuts and peanut butter	Peanuts and peanut butter are used extensively throughout Africa. They are added to stews and to vegetable dishes.
Tahini	Tahini is a paste made from sesame seeds. It is used as a spread and as an addition to stews and vegetable dishes.
Fruit	
Plantain	Plantain is like a large green banana. It is quite starchy and is always cooked.
Tamarind	Available from Asian food markets in fresh, puree or dried form. The fresh variety is quite sweet while the puree and dried forms are sour.
Dairy	
Camel's milk	Camel's milk may be consumed by those coming from Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia and parts of Kenya. The milk has been shown to be lower in fat and lactose and higher in potassium and Vitamin C when compared to cow's milk. There is no commercial dairy in Australia.
Vegetables	
Sweet Potato/Sweet Potato leaves	Sweet potatoes are eaten extensively as are the leaves. Sweet potatoes are easily grown.
Amaranth	Also called Chinese spinach. Amaranth is green with a purple central vein and is a seasonal vegetable. It is used like a spinach and is easily grown.
Cassava/Cassava leaves	Cassava is a starchy tuber. It grows in tropical areas. The tubers are used as flour or grated in savoury or sweet dishes. The leaves are also eaten but are not readily available
Okra	Available fresh from Asian food markets. Also available frozen or canned.
Molokhia	Molokhia is a small green leaf which is used to thicken stews. Like okra when cooked for longer periods of time it becomes slimy and thick. It is available frozen from most Asian and Middle Eastern food shops. It is also readily grown.

Other green vegetables	There are many different types of green leafy vegetables eaten in Africa including, bitterleaf, which must be washed thoroughly before cooking to remove the bitter taste, red sorrel, pumpkin leaves and cow pea leaves are all eaten. Not all of these are readily available but spinach and many of the Asian greens such as bok choy are readily substituted.
Meat	
Dried fish	Dried fish is used in many dishes and is often used to flavour stews. The varieties used extensively are not readily available but those available from Asian food shops are readily substituted.
Goat	Goat meat is eaten by a number of different African groups. It can be found in some selected butcher's shops. Italian butchers sell goat as capreto.
Camel	Camel meat may be consumed by those coming from Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia and some parts of Kenya. Camel meat is available in Perth but needs to be requested.
Fats and Oils	
Red Palm Oil	This is used especially in West Africa and gives food a distinctive taste. This oil is less saturated than the palm oil used in food manufacturing but is still more saturated than readily available vegetable oils. It is not readily available but there are some local importers emerging.

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Community.Nutrition@dhhs.tas.gov.au