

BOOK REVIEW

KAIKAI ANIANI: A GUIDE TO BUSH FOODS, MARKETS AND CULINARY ARTS OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA.

By R.J. May. Published by Robert Brown and Associates, Australia, 1984.
(Available from Gordon & Gotch (P.N.G.) Pty. Ltd). K19.95.

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Kaikai Aniani, as the foreword suggests, provides an excellent reference book on bush food in Papua New Guinea, both for the identification of foods and their use in cooking.

There are three main sections. The first describes the three main regions of Papua New Guinea - highlands, lowlands and fringe areas - and the main food crops in these areas. It is important that food is placed in a historical and cultural context in Papua New Guinea, as it is in this section, since food is very much part of the ceremonial as well as the everyday life of the villager.

Clear photographs in the second section enable the uninitiated reader to identify an extensive range of market and bush foods from all parts of the country. The book is therefore particularly useful for people new to Papua New Guinea who wish to buy local foods but have no idea what to buy; and indeed the third and last section of recipes, is good for those who don't know what to do with the foods once bought! With any luck the book might also persuade more expatriates living in Papua New Guinea to experiment with local food. One hopes that they won't be tempted to try the food item on page 87 - people!

There are some minor criticisms. From a nutrition point of view I would have liked to have seen more use of beans in the recipes as an alternative source of protein instead of meat.

The information on bush foods appears to be limited to areas the author visited. Many of these foods are much more widespread - for example, megapodes, mushrooms and berries. Also, there is little information and no photograph of one of the most nutritious of the highlands green leaves, *Rungia klossii*, which is a personal favourite as well as the 'namba wan kumu' for many parts of the highlands.

It would have been preferable too if the tables of food values had referred to more recent publications, such as 'Food Composition Tables for Use in the Pacific Islands'. SPC, 1983, rather than to older texts.

The use of blenders, and ingredients such as cream and wine in many of the recipes may restrict the usefulness of the recipe section. True 'fieldworkers' often do not have access to such luxury items.

There is however a good mixture of traditional recipes, recipes for the bush and recipes which use Papua New Guinea foods in new and imaginative ways. I am looking forward to trying 'flying fox with prunes' one of these days!

Finally, the most basic criticism is the limited market for the book due to its very high price - K19.95.

Overall, though, *Kaikai Aniani* is a book well worth having.