

# NATIVE AUSTRALIAN FOOD FACT SHEET:

# Wattle Seed

[*Acacia species*]

There are many hundreds of Wattle species in Australia but not all are edible. They are spread all over Australia in diverse climates with huge variance in size, shape, leaf and the seed. Many have bright yellow flowers and slender green leaves. The seeds harvested from pods (like beans) have been an Aboriginal food for thousands of years.



## Uses:

Roasted and ground - in savoury or sweet dishes, baking, breads, ice-cream. Whole seed malted - used like a legume (bean) in braises, risotto, salads, breads, etc.

## Flavour/aroma/texture:

Great variation from light to dark roasting and grinding, from nutty grain flavours to coffee chicory characteristics. Whole roasted and cooked - have nutty grain or legume flavours.

## Seasonality:

Oct - Mar (variety and region dependent).

## Edible parts of the plant:

Only Dried seed is usually traded, whole or roast and ground.

## Fresh/Frozen:

Fresh (dried).

## Seed to harvest (growing):

Much seed is wild harvested across Australia in diverse climates, but more cultivation is now being undertaken.

**Size** - a huge variety of leaf size and shape over hundreds of species.

**Leaf** - large grey leaves 80 - 200mm long, 10 - 30mm wide.

**Flower** - famous for bright prolific yellow 'rod' flowers opening in winter and spring.

**Pods** - a huge variety in shapes and sizes, flat or very curly.

**Seeds** - glossy dark brown to black, multiple beautiful coloured arils from greys to whites, reds and oranges. Sizes 1-2mm to 4-5mm.

## Harvest to kitchen (processing):

- Seed pods are harvested from spring to late summer. Once harvested the seeds are separated from their pods, and sifted to remove any twigs, leaves and other foreign objects.

- Seeds are stored ready for use and can be roasted and ground to produce a flour or used whole in cooking.

- Seeds can be made into an extract using water or alcohol based methods.

## Kitchen to Plate (prep/cook):

- Ground roasted seed can be used in both sweet and savoury dishes, in baked goods, ice cream, beverages and condiments.

- Wattle seed extract can be used to flavour desserts, beverages, vinegar and syrups. Wattle "coffee" is used as a caffeine-free beverage.

## Other nutritional info:

Wattle seeds contains potassium, calcium, iron and zinc in fairly high concentrations. With a low glycemic index, they are good for diabetics, providing a steady stream of sugars that do not produce sudden rises in blood glucose levels. High in fibre - over 30% and are a rich source of protein. Most vitamins are found except for C, B12 and riboflavin.

## Shelf life:

Whole dry seed - many years.

Roasted and ground - 12-18 months.

Extract - 1-2 years.

## Storage:

Dried whole seed or grounds - ambient.

Extract - ambient.

## Companion flavours:

Chocolate, nuts, some fruits, baked goods.

## Substitute:

Nut essences, coffee, chicory, some pulses.

## Interesting facts:

The seeds of the Acacias have very hard husks, and when they fall to the ground, will last for up to 20 years, usually only germinating after bushfires. The hard outer casing protects the seed during long periods of dormancy on the ground. Wattleseed provided indigenous Australians with a rich source of protein and carbohydrate, as a staple and especially in times of drought. The seed was crushed into flour with flat grinding stones and cooked into cakes or damper. Certain species were eaten green (like peas from a pod) after flash roasting in the hot coals. (Tasteaustralia.biz)

## Reference resources:

<http://worldwidewattle.com/imagegallery/image.php?p=0&l=c&id=3272&o=2>

[https://anfab.org.au/main.asp?\\_Wattleseed](https://anfab.org.au/main.asp?_Wattleseed)

<https://education.abc.net.au/home#!/digibook/3122184/bruce-pascoe-aboriginal-agriculture-technology-and-ingenuity>

## Nutritional Values\*:

(per 100gm dry weight)

Energy	1183kj
H2O	1.7g
Protein	20.3g
Fat	6.1g
Carbs	10.5g
Sugar	-
Fibre	54.2g
Ca	434mg
Cu	0.84mg
Fe	10.9mg
Mg	255mg
P	227mg
K	1147mg
Na	43.9mg
Zn	3.1mg
Se	31.7mg

Source: anfab.org.au

