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Yams

Yams were the most important vegetable for many Aboriginal people before the coming of non-Aboriginals. They are found in different sizes all over Australia. They are still a very popular food today.

They are the enlarged roots of several different plants growing below the ground, like a potato or carrot. They can be very small or as large as two fists. Above the ground the only sign the yam is there, is the flowering vine, often growing at the base of a tree. Aboriginal women are very skilled at recognising the right sort of vines. The women use their digging stick to dig up the yams. Most yams can be eaten raw or cooked in the ashes of the fire. A few need special treatment to get rid of poisons before they can be eaten.

Answer these questions in your book:

1. *How do Aboriginal women find and gather yams?*
2. *How are yams cooked in traditional Aboriginal communities?*
3. *What other ways could yams be cooked in modern stoves?*



