

**MUMU: A TRADITIONAL METHOD OF COOKING ROOT CROPS IN
PAPUA NEW GUINEA**

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Abstract

Taro (*Colocasia esculenta*), sweet potatoes (*Ipomoea batatas*), yams (*Dioscorea esculenta*), and cassava (*Manihot esculenta*) are widely grown in Papua New Guinea, and are traditionally cooked in many ways before eaten. *Mumu* is a traditional technique that uses hot stones to produce an ovenlike environment in which root crops and other foods are cooked. Four types of *mumu* are described and their differences discussed. The temperature distributions in two selected types are presented and compared with a conventional oven. Temperature progressively dropped during cooking in the *mumu*, unlike the fairly constant temperature profile in the conventional oven. Cassava was used as a test material, and cyanide analysis was carried out, using an acid hydrolysis method. A substantial reduction in cyanide content was found, whether measured in the *mumu* or in the conventional oven. To minimize the use of heat, an improved *mumu* is proposed.

Note: This manuscript was incomplete (copies of the figures were mislaid)

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