

HOW DO I CONSERVE FOOD AND WATER?

In 38°C heat you can usually survive:

- five days without water
- a week with five litres of water
- a fortnight with 25 litres of water

How to avoid dehydration

- Don't exert yourself.
- Drink as little as possible during the heat of the day and keep flies away from food.
- Conserve water in tanks by burying it, and your food rations, in a hole underneath your vehicle. This will keep your supplies relatively cool.
- Lessen your salt intake because salt causes the body to lose water and dehydrate. Salt should only be replaced if you are stranded for a long period of time, say for about 10 days, and have little food but plenty of water.
- Sugar is also a valuable emergency item to carry in the outback. As food supply decreases, more water is lost from the body - consuming sugar produces more water and combats this loss.

Can I find drinking water in the outback?

You can construct a desert still.

- You'll need
- 1m (square) of clear plastic sheeting
- a clear plastic container, preferably with a pouring lip

How to create the still

- Dig a hole in the earth or sand, place the container in the middle of the hole and surround it with shrubs, leaves and roots. Roughen the underside of the plastic sheet and cover the hole with it, then cover the edges with dirt to hold it in place and make it airtight.
- Place a small stone in the middle of the sheet to depress it above the container. In a day you can expect to make about 1.5 litres of water from condensation. Each morning, the hole should be enlarged and fresh green material added.

What bush food can I eat?

Available foods may include:

- native birds
- fish
- animals including snakes, lizards and frogs (eat only the hind legs)
- bamboo shoots
- wild fruit
- witchetty grubs
- bottle tree seeds
- orchid bulbs
- pandanus seeds

Cook items first if possible. If native plants taste of bitter almonds, it probably means they are toxic.