

# local flavours

The Far North has an abundance of mouth-watering food.

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We've all heard about global warming and sustainability. There is an emerging global push to produce and consume food locally. Consider the carbon emissions on using imported cheese for example. We will all need to shift our purchasing to Australian and local produce. This will take a little time but the more demanding we are as customers the more suppliers and retailers will take note.

Here are two recipes that use a cross section of locally produced food.

With the change in fishing regulations – it is becoming harder to buy fresh-caught fish – I have been watching with interest over many years the development of aquaculture. One quality local product is blue water barramundi, located 20 minutes' boat ride south of Cardwell in the pristine waters of the Hinchinbrook Channel. These fish, being sea farmed, have a natural saltiness and with the cages large enough for fish to freely swim they develop good muscle tone which gives the fillet a firmness which is sometimes lacking in farmed fish. The best thing about this product is the consistent supply, always fresh and available and, of course, the purity of the water it comes from. Check with your fishmonger and if they aren't stocking it demand they should be.

An award-winning local product made here is Cairns is Vanella Cheese recently picking up three medals at the Sydney Royal Show. The buffalo mozzarella (using Tablelands' buffalo milk) won the top five Australian platter cheeses award and two silvers for its buffalo feta and stracchino – an Italian style brie.

I have been using Vanella Buffalo mozzarella at the restaurant since it became available and this is one dish on our current menu which showcases its beautiful creamy texture. Teamed with fresh chicken farmed at Mareeba, local prosciutto, fresh herbs and tomatoes, this is regional cuisine at its best. 



Craig Squire is the chef and director of Ochre Restaurant and Catering. View his recipes at [www.ochrerestaurant.com.au/recipe.html](http://www.ochrerestaurant.com.au/recipe.html)

## Crispy skin sea-farmed barramundi fillet – coconut and lemon myrtle rice – sweet and sour beetroot glaze

### Serves 4

4 x 200g skin on but scaled barramundi fillets (skin requires scoring in lattice pattern about 1 inch apart – ask your fishmonger to help, but be careful not to cut too deep into fillet)

100g potato starch  
150g Jasmine rice  
2 fresh lemon myrtle leaves  
50ml coconut milk  
80ml vegetable oil

### Sauce

1 x large beetroot, boil until cooked, about 1.5 hours. Use plenty of water, but do not allow to boil dry  
50g castor sugar  
120ml tomato sauce  
50ml sweet chilli sauce  
40ml rice wine vinegar  
10ml light soya sauce  
10ml sesame oil  
50ml beetroot cooking water  
10g fine julienne fresh ginger  
Mix all ingredients for sauce at room temperature, taste and set aside. Cooked beetroot cut into batons

### To prepare

Cook rice with coconut milk, lemon myrtle, a little salt and sugar and suitable amount of water.

Pre-heat oven to 180°C.

Place oil in fry pan on low flame, dust fillets with potato starch, place fresh side in pan for one minute to cook slightly, turn over to skin side, place in oven for eight minutes. Put pan back on to moderate flame and allow skin to crisp up, takes about one minute. Place fish on to paper towel to absorb excess oil. Warm sauce to simmer.

### To serve

Place rice on plate.

Place fish skin side up.

Spoon sauce around plate, arranging beetroot neatly.

Garnish with fresh coriander.

