

African Recipes

Traditional African food is organic plant-based, with a little meat or fish often added for flavour. These are foods that can be easily produced in the local region. Processed food is unknown to many on the continent.

Most are gluten-free, unrefined natural foods, including whole grains, legumes, roots and tubers and a variety of fruits, seeds, nuts and vegetables. These plant-based foods are usually the focal point of almost every meal, and not meat, fish or poultry.

Popular foods are cassava, yam, cocoyam, rice, beans, maize, sorghum, millet, groundnut, coconut, plantain, melons, seafood, poultry, beef, goat meat, bush meat, palm oil, potatoes, lentil, vegetables and vegetable oils. Many parts of Africa have been influenced by immigration from the Indian sub-continent and as a result the recipes use a wide selection of spices and herbs.

For desserts, fruits like mangoes, pawpaw, bananas, oranges, pineapple, watermelon and a host of others serve as snacks or desserts.

Tanzanian *Poisson aux coco* (coconut fish)

Serves 4

2 tbsp freshly grated ginger
1 chilli
8 garlic cloves
salt, to taste
1kg fish fillets
700ml coconut milk
tamarind paste, to taste
1 tsp curry powder
cayenne pepper, to taste

Grind together the ginger, chilli, garlic, and salt in a pestle and mortar until it forms a paste (or blend in a small blender). Rub this mixture all over the fish, cover and leave to marinate for at least 30 minutes.

Meanwhile stir together the coconut milk, tamarind, curry powder, salt and cayenne pepper in a saucepan. Bring to a simmer over low heat.

Begin cooking the fish on a preheated griddle pan. Griddle very slowly until it's

halfway done. Then remove and finish in the sauce that has been simmering. Turn every 3 minutes or so, and spoon more sauce over the top each time you turn.

Continue cooking for about 10 minutes, or until the fish is cooked through. Then serve.

Tanzanian *Futari* (sweet potato & pumpkin in coconut milk) – [V]

Serves 4

1 tbsp groundnut oil
3 tbsp onion, finely chopped
380g pumpkin, peeled and cubed
400g sweet potatoes, cubed
juice of ½ lemon
½ tsp cloves
1 tsp salt
360ml coconut milk
1 tsp cinnamon

Pour the oil into a pan and fry the onion until golden. Add the pumpkin and sweet potatoes and then the lemon juice, cloves, salt and 240ml of the coconut milk. Cover and simmer for 10 minutes.

Add the cinnamon and stir gently. Cook for a further 20 minutes, adding more coconut milk as required.

Kenyan Biryani

Serves 6

500g Chicken, cut into pieces
salt to taste
3 garlic cloves
oil or ghee
1 medium onion, sliced
1 tbs ginger paste
8 small illaichi (green cardamom)
1 tbsp garlic paste
100 g plain yoghurt

5 cloves
500g basmati rice
Yellow food colour - two drops
Sugar, a pinch

Add chicken, salt and garlic cloves to a pan with enough water to cover. Cook on a low flame till the meat is tender and most of the water has evaporated.

Heat 4-5 tbsp of oil and fry the onion until it is light brown. Add the rest of the spices, yoghurt, and fry for one minute.

Boil the rice until half cooked, drain the water and set aside.

Add the cooked meat to the sautéed onions to make the masala and cook uncovered for a few minutes to evaporate excess water. When most of the water has evaporated, transfer a little rice to a pot, and on top of that add some of the meat/masala combo, continuing in layers.

Sprinkle on yellow food colour and a pinch of sugar. Cover, and put on a low flame until the rice is done. Keep the pot tightly closed - you are trying to steam cook the rice.

When the rice is done, the biryani is ready.

Chapati (Round Flat Bread) – [V] ***to serve with Kenyan Biryani.***

6 servings

125g whole wheat flour
100g white flour
2 tbsp oil or ghee
200 – 230ml warm water
Salt to taste

Mix the flour in a bowl and add salt and oil. You can mix with clean hands, or use a mixer or food processor. Add a little bit of water at a time and knead well for about 10 minutes until you have a stiff and smooth dough. Cover the dough and let it stand for at least 30 minutes - up to two hours.

Knead the dough well again and divide it into egg-sized balls. Dust each ball

with extra flour. Flatten each ball and roll out thinly into sizeable circles.

Heat an ungreased, heavy skillet or griddle over a medium flame. Lightly grease the pan and slowly heat the first chapati. Cook on one side for about 1 minute or until lightly brown, then flip and brown the other side. Press the sides of the chapati with a spoon until it puffs. Remove the chapati from the skillet into a warm dish or foil paper and wrap it to keep it warm.

Repeat this process for every chapati, wiping the pan with greased paper every time a new chapati is to be cooked.

Serve the chapatis warm with a meat stew and/or cooked vegetables. Chapatis can also be served with hot milk or *chai*.

Ghanaian Fish Stew

Serves 4

450g firm white fish, cubed
1 lime juice, zest and juice
1 garlic clove, crushed
1 tbsp freshly grated ginger
2 red chillies, blended to a paste
Salt to taste
Vegetable oil, for frying
4 medium onions, finely sliced
4 tomatoes, blended to a paste
3 tbsp shrimp paste
2 tbsp tomato purée
300ml water

Marinate the fish in lime, garlic, ginger, chillies and salt. Set aside for 30 minutes.

Heat a little oil in a pan and fry the onions and tomatoes for about 5 minutes. Add the shrimp paste and tomato purée and allow to simmer for 10 minutes. Add the water and marinated fish along with any remaining marinade. Simmer gently for 10-15 minutes until the fish is cooked.

Serve hot on a bed of rice or boiled yams.

West African Chicken Stew

Serves 6

1 tbsp vegetable oil
1kg boneless chicken, cubed into 2cm pieces
1 large onion, chopped
5 medium potatoes, peeled and cubed
2 cloves garlic, crushed
black pepper
salt
1 tsp ground coriander
1 tsp ground cumin
1 tsp crushed red pepper flakes
250ml water
250ml chicken stock
150ml peanut butter, optional
500g fresh spinach, chopped

Heat the oil in a large heavy frying pan over a medium heat. Cook the chicken until completely brown 5-7 mins. Set aside. Add the onion, potatoes, garlic, pepper, salt, coriander, cumin and red pepper flakes. Cook until the onions soften, about 5 minutes.

Stir in the water, chicken stock and optional peanut butter. Return the chicken to the pan and top with spinach. Cover and simmer for about 20 minutes or until the potatoes are cooked through.

Spicy African Yam Soup – [V]

Gabanzo beans used here are actually chickpeas in the UK

Serves 4

1 tsp of vegetable oil
1 small onion, chopped
1 large sweet potato, peeled and diced
1 garlic clove, crushed
200g rice
1 litre of chicken stock
1 tsp dried thyme
½ tsp ground cumin
4 tomatoes, peeled and chopped

1 can Gabanzo beans – (chickpeas)
2 courgettes, finely diced
2 tbsp, peanut butter

Heat the oil in a large saucepan over a medium heat. Sauté the onion, sweet potato and garlic until the onion is soft. Add the rice and stir to coat. Add the chicken stock, thyme and cumin. Bring to the boil. Cover and simmer for 15 minutes.

Stir in tomatoes, beans and courgettes. Simmer until tender for about 5-10 minutes. Stir in the peanut butter if using.

Ugandan Chicken with Tomato Sauce

Serves 4.

1 Chicken, cut into pieces
3 tbsp oil
1 onion, thinly sliced
3 large tomatoes, mashed
2 stalks of celery, cut into thin rounds
1 tsp salt
1 hot pimento or chili pepper

Fry the Chicken in hot oil until golden. Remove the chicken pieces and cook onions in the same pot. When they, too, are golden brown, return chicken pieces to the pot and add tomatoes, celery, salt and hot pepper. Reduce heat and simmer until Chicken is tender. Then serve.

Ugandan Smoked Fish Stew

Serves 4

1 tbsp vegetable oil
2 cloves crushed garlic
1 finely chopped Onion
2-3 ripe tomatoes, diced
2 tbsp tomato paste
1 tsp curry powder
a pinch of dill
water

1 medium sized smoked fish (without bones - shredded or cut into cubes)

Heat the oil in a pan. Cook the onions and garlic in oil until translucent. Add the diced tomatoes and cook until soft. Stir in tomato paste, curry powder and dill. Allow the mixture to simmer for 5-10 minutes. Add a bit of water if it becomes too thick. Add the smoked fish at the last minute, just cooking it long enough to warm. Garnish with a sprinkle of dill.

Serve over rice or Pasta.