



Global Give Back Circle

Our Favorite Kenyan Recipes

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*Asmahan Pogol, Global Give Back Circle Private Sector Engagement Coordinator
Photo taken in 2006 when Asmahan was a student at Starehe Girls' Centre*

Chapati

Chapati is unleavened flat bread adopted from the Indian Rotti. It was first introduced to Kenya during colonial times as the Indian laborers constructed the railroads throughout East Africa. For many Kenyans at the time, *Chapati* was seen as part of a desirable modern meal. After decades of integration, Kenyan *Chapati* has become a more layered and thicker version of Indian Rotti. Today, Kenyans prepare *Chapati* as part of a celebratory meal or to welcome special guests.

Ingredients

- 3 cups wheat flour
- 1½ cups warm water
- 2 teaspoon salt
- 5-6 tablespoons vegetable oil
- The rind of one lemon - grated
- Vegetable oil, for frying

Preparation

- In a large bowl add flour and salt. Incorporate the grated lemon rind to the flour, followed by 3 tablespoons of vegetable oil and mix well.
- Make a hole in the middle of the flour mixture; add the warm water and start kneading until the water has been absorbed.
- Knead the mixture for 5-10 minutes and add flour if needed, until the dough is non-sticky on your bowl and hands.
- Add 2-3 tablespoons of vegetable oil and continue kneading until the oil mixes well and the dough feels soft.
- Cover the dough and leave it to rest for 20-30 minutes.





- On a smooth flat surface, roll out the kneaded dough using a rolling pin (make sure the surface is dusted with flour)
- After completely stretching it out, divide it into 8 straight strips using a sharp knife. Coil each of the strips to form a ball-like shape.
- Dust the flat surface with more flour and take one of the balls and roll it out using a rolling pin to a flat circular shape.
- Repeat this process to the rest of the remaining balls.
- On a hot pan, place the rolled out circular Chapati and fry (using medium heat) each side with a little bit of vegetable oil until its golden brown. Place your cooked Chapati on a flat plate and cover with aluminum foil or store them in a hot pot. Repeat this step with the rest of the remaining coiled dough.

Mahamri

Mahamri is a type of doughnut incorporating special ingredients such as coconut milk and cardamom. This authentic type of snack originated from the Swahili coastal regions of Kenya and Tanzania and is still very popular in both regions. Normally, it is eaten at breakfast, accompanied by Kenyan *Chai* (milk tea).

Ingredients

- 3 cups of wheat flour
- 8 -10 tablespoons of raw sugar (depending on desired sweetness)
- 1 teaspoon of instant yeast
- 1 teaspoon of cardamom
- 1 teaspoon of butter or margarine
- 1 medium egg – (optional)
- 1 cup of coconut milk for kneading the dough
- Vegetable oil for deep frying

Preparation

- In a mixing bowl add flour, sugar, yeast and Cardamom, butter/margarine, and the egg. Mix the ingredients together with either clean hands or a spatula. Slowly add coconut milk, a little at a time, as you knead the dough.
- Knead the dough, for a minimum of 15-20 minutes until it is soft, smooth and not sticky in either your hands or the mixing bowl



- Place the dough in a container and cover it with either a lid or a clean cloth. Let it rest and rise for at least 3-4 hours at room temperature. (You can choose to leave it overnight, the dough should double in size)
- Using a dough cutter or knife, divide the dough into 4-5 equal balls and coat each of the dough with flour, cover them again with a clean cloth for 15 minutes and let them rise.
- Sprinkle some flour on a clean flat surface and using a rolling pin, roll each ball of dough into a circle of about 6 inches. Use more flour to dust the rolling surface to prevent the dough from sticking on the surface and on the rolling pin
- Cut each of the dough circles into 4 pieces.
- Heat the vegetable oil in a frying pan or a wok.
- Test your oil by gently dropping a small piece of dough into the oil. If the dough stays at the bottom for a couple of seconds then rises to the surface, your oil is ready for frying. If it rises up immediately, then your oil is too hot and you will need to reduce the heat to avoid burning your Mahamris and having the inside undercooked.
- Fry 4 Mahamris at a time (depending on the size of your pan or wok). Use your metal strainer to splash oil over the top of the Mahamris to help them puff up. As soon as you see the bottom side of the Mahamris has turned light-gold brown, turn them over.
- Keep turning the Mahamris until they have a nice golden-brown color on both sides. Remove them from the hot oil and place them in a serving plate lined with paper towels to absorb any excess oil.
- Repeat this process until all the dough pieces have been fried
- Allow them to cool for a few minutes and enjoy!!



Tea (Chai)

In Kenya, any time is considered 'Tea Time'. *Chai* is a beverage guaranteed to be in any Kenyan family's menu. Like coffee in the United States, *Chai* is the most common beverage enjoyed by Kenyans for breakfast. It is also the first beverage most Kenyan households offer their visiting guests. The accompaniments taken with *Chai* include bread, Mahamri or Mandazi, boiled sweet potatoes or arrow roots.

Ingredients

- 1 cup milk
- 2 teaspoons chopped tea leaves
- 1/4 cup water
- 3 teaspoons sugar

Preparation

- Boil water in a saucepan.
- Add sugar and tea and boil for 3-4 minutes on medium flame.
- Add milk and boil it over medium flame for 6-7 minutes or until bubbles start to rise. You will see the change in color of the tea from milky shade to brown color when it is ready.
- Turn off the gas and strain the tea in cups.
- Serve with cookies, Mahamri, Bread or Chapati



Dawa

The *Dawa* (medicine) cocktail, invented in Nairobi, was inspired by the Brazilian 'Caipirinha' drink. *Dawa* is commonly prepared when fighting a cold or sore throat. Today *Dawa* is a very popular drink and found at tables and cafes throughout Kenya. It is loved for its strong ginger aroma.

Ingredients

- 1 piece ginger root, grated
- 1 tablespoon of root turmeric (preferably)
you can substitute 1/2 tablespoon ground turmeric
- The juice of 1 lemon
- Honey to sweeten (optional)



Preparation

- In a pot, add 2 glasses of water, ginger, and turmeric. Once it boils, reduce heat and simmer for 3-4 minutes.
- Remove from heat and settle for 1-2 minutes.
- Strain, add honey, and serve.
- Dawa can either be served chilled or hot. In the summer, it is lovely over ice with fresh mint. Mixing it with Prosecco will impress your guests!

Ugali

Ugali is the most common staple food in Kenya. It is a polenta-like dish, made from maize, millet or sorghum flour, added to boiling water and cooked until it becomes a dense block. It is usually eaten with meat stew, *Nyama Choma* (Roasted beef or mutton) or most commonly with *Sukuma Wiki* (cooked kale). It is a well-known energy-giving and body-building food.

Ingredients (Serves 2 people or more)

- 1 cup maize (corn) flour
- 2 cups water

Preparation

- Boil water until it bubbles. The water should be very hot. This ensures the Ugali will cook perfectly
- Add a cup of maize flour into the water. Let it cook a few seconds until water starts to cover the flour
- Use a wooden spoon to quickly start mixing the flour and water
- Add a handful of flour and continue to mix the water and flour it will start to come together
- Reduce heat to medium and keep turning the Ugali as it continues to stick together
- Gather the Ugali and press it onto the side of the Cooking pot



- Place the wooden spoon under the Ugali and form into a ball in the middle of the cooking pot
- Repeat pressing the Ugali on the side of the cooking pot and turning it to the middle
- Once the Ugali has become firm, turn it once more and smoothen it into a round. You will know your Ugali is ready once you start to smell the aroma clearly
- Place the cooked Ugali over onto a plate
- Dip the wooden spoon into water and use it to smooth the Ugali into a ball on the plate
- Serve the Ugali whole or sliced. Enjoy with your favorite stew, meat, veggies, fish and more.



Sukuma Wiki

Sukuma Wiki is a Swahili phrase meaning *push the week*. What is really being *pushed* is the family food budget to stretch a bit longer. *Sukuma wiki* is a mixture of kale, meat, spices and at times spinach to make a savory dish. It can also be prepared without meat and be just as tasty. In such a case, it is flavored with beef bouillon cubes. It is a very popular meal among Kenyan families because of its simplicity and affordability. *Sukuma Wiki* is commonly served alongside *Ugali*.

Ingredients

- 1 bunch of both kale and spinach
- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil
- A pinch of salt
- 2 tomatoes
- 2 beef bouillon cubes
- 1 large onion

Preparation

- Remove the stalks from the vegetable.
- Shred them into your desired size using a sharp knife.
- In a saucepan, heat oil then brown the onions.
- Chop the tomatoes and add them into the light brown onions.
- Add salt and crushed the bouillon cubes and cook for 1 min.
- Add the cut vegetables and cook for 3 mins.
- Remove from fire and serve



Pilau

A wedding in Kenya without *Pilau* is a big 'No-No'. *Pilau* is a traditional meal among the coastal people of Kenya and Tanzania. It is a fragrant rice dish cooked using whole organic spices, beef, chicken or mutton, and is commonly served with *Kachumbari* – the Kenya version of Salsa.

Ingredients

- 2 cup long grain basmati rice
- 4 cups water
- 1 onion, sliced
- ½ chicken, sliced into bite-size pieces
- Vegetable oil
- 4 cloves, whole
- 2 cinnamon sticks, whole
- 5 cardamoms, whole (lightly smash for stronger smell and taste)
- 9 black peppercorns, whole
- 1 teaspoon cumin seeds
- 1 teaspoon of each ginger and garlic, crushed
- 2 peeled potatoes (optional)
- Salt to taste



Preparation

- In a cooking pot, add onions and vegetable oil and cook until the onions start to brown.
- Add all whole spices and fry for 1 minute.
- Add chicken and fry for 6 minutes.
- Add potatoes (optional) and water and bring it to boil.
- Add salt to taste
- Once the water boils, add rice and simmer until the rice is a little wet, not completely dry.
- Place the cooking pan in an oven, cover it and let it cook in a little water so it doesn't become completely dry.
- Serve hot with salad, gravy, chili or *Kachumabri*.



Kachumbari

For Kenyans, a *Pilau* dish is not complete without a side dish of *Kachumbari*. *Kachumbari* is a popular accompaniment for main dishes like *Pilau* and *Nyama Choma* (roasted beef or mutton) and *Ugali*

Ingredients

- 4 large tomatoes
- 2 medium onions
- 1 bunch of coriander
- 2 lemons
- Salt
- Vinegar (optional)
- Chili pepper(optional)



Preparation

- Clean the tomatoes and chop into small pieces and set aside. Dice the onions, finely chop the coriander and slice the lemons into halves.
- Kachumbari recipe step 1 (see photo)
- Place the ingredients in one bowl and gently mix. Squeeze the lemon juice into your kachumbari and mix again adding a pinch of salt and the vinegar to taste.
- Leave to set for 10 minutes.

Matoke

Matoke is a dish originating from Uganda and a very popular dish among Kenyans. Though the original recipe from Uganda uses unripe bananas as the main ingredient, Kenyans have their own version with an addition of the readily available potatoes and sometimes with arrow roots. It is a quick fix for when you do not have a lot of time to cook.

Ingredients

- 8 medium size bananas (not quite ripe yet)
- 4 potatoes
- 2 pounds of beef, chopped
- 3 tomatoes, chopped
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 carrots, cubed
- small bunch of coriander, chopped
- 1 tablespoon of salt
- 1 tablespoon curry powder
- Vegetable oil



Preparation

- Prepare the ingredients by covering your hands with cooking oil, then peel the unripe bananas - The oil helps your hands from getting sticky from the bananas.
- Peel the potatoes and cut them into even wedges
- Put the beef in a cooking pot with a pinch of salt and add one cup of water, then place on heat and cover. Let it boil for 30 minutes till the meat is tender.
- Drain the broth that is remaining and put aside, preserve it for soup later. Add oil to the meat and heat for a few minutes as you stir to mix, then add the onion. Let the onions fry with the meat for 3 minutes then add tomatoes and carrots, stir to mix, then cover and simmer until the tomatoes have softened.
- Add the bananas and the potato wedges to beef and stir. Then add the preserved meat broth from the initial boil for soup, if not enough, add additional water as desired.
- Add coriander and curry powder. Cover then let it simmer for 15 minutes or until the bananas and potatoes are soft.
- Remove from heat and serve



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