

Recipes and Cuisine of Haiti February 2013

Cuisine

Haiti's cuisine is famous for its robust, spicy, full pungent flavor that will leave you asking for more after the very first bite.

Haitian Cuisine is an amazing blending of tropical tastes and multicultural influences. The result of a mixture of different culinary styles from the various ethnic group that populated Haiti; French, African, and Taino/Arawak, are the most notable culinary techniques implemented, but its evolution throughout centuries, and also a touch from the new waves of immigrants in the early 20th Century from the Middle-East; namely Lebanon and Syria, set Haiti's cooking styles apart from its' neighbors, in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Rice and beans (*diri ak pwa*) are a staple. Vegetable and meat stews are popular too. Goat, beef, chicken and fish are complemented with plantains, cabbage, tomatoes and peppers. Fiery Scotch bonnet peppers lend their punch to many dishes, and to *pikliz*, a popular pickled vegetable condiment.

Haitian cooking involves the extensive use of staples condiments. Spices and herbs that are very easy to find throughout the country are scallion, garlic, thyme, parsley, onions, and cloves. Black pepper and red pepper are extensively used, rendering dishes mildly spicy; unlike Cuban and Jamaican cooking styles which are known to be "hot" due to liberal use of peppers.

The national dish of Haiti is a very simple one: yellow rice and red beans with meat, usually chicken, is served alongside. It might be simple, but it is the taste that really counts and it's delicious.

Read more: <http://www.hougansydney.com/haitian-cuisine.php>

Spices of Haiti

Haiti has a diverse cuisine, but a few spices are central to Haitian food. There is a well-recognized spice mix that consists of green onions (scallions), garlic, parsley and bell peppers. Other ingredients are sometimes added to this, like cilantro (coriander), cloves, thyme and celery stalks. The mix forms the base for many Haitian dishes.





Scallions

Scallions are another name for green onions, which are a form of onion that lack a fully developed bulb. The name can, however, also refer to immature onions and shallots. They have a milder taste than normal onions, and are often served raw in salads, especially in parts of Asia. In Haiti, they are fried as part of a spice mixture; the inclusion of scallions gives the mixture an onion flavor without being overpowering.

Parsley

Parsley is a versatile herb used around the world. It was originally native to the Mediterranean. It comes in two main varieties, curly and Italian, or flat-leafed. The form favored in Haitian cuisine is flat-leaf, because it has a stronger flavor and is a more resilient plant. Parsley is often used as a garnish, but it can also be used in a spice mixture as well.

Bell Peppers

Bell peppers, or sweet peppers, come in a variety of different colors. Red, yellow and orange are the most commonly used, while green peppers, the unripe form, are also popular. Bell peppers are part of the same family as chili peppers, but lack the ability to produce capsaicin, the chemical that generates chili heat. In Haitian cuisine, they are fried with other spices to soften them up, releasing flavor and breaking the vegetable down.

Garlic

Garlic is one of the most commonly used flavorings in the world. It comes in the form of a bulb, which consists of a number of cloves. The cloves have a pungent, heady flavor and smell, which grows milder during cooking. They are a common ingredient in many dishes and often form the base of sauces. They work particularly well with onions, which is why they are paired with scallions in the Haitian spice mix.

Read more: http://www.ehow.com/info_8131624_haitian-spices.html

Recipes

Haitian Pate (Beef Patties)

Haitian beef patties, better known as pate, are a must-have in Haiti. They have a flaky pastry and are filled with a beef filling.

Ingredients

Filling

1 lb. ground beef
1 medium onion, diced
3 garlic cloves, minced
1 medium shallot, diced
1 tsp. lime juice
1 tsp. Adobo seasoning salt
1/2 scotch bonnet pepper, chopped
1/4 tsp. thyme
1/4 tsp. rosemary
1 T. tomato paste
2 tsp. olive oil



Dough

2 c. of all-purpose flour
1 tsp. salt
1 c. water
1 c. lard or margarine

Directions

Combine salt, water and flour in a large bowl. Mix well using your hands. Generously dust surface area. Knead until dough is firm and slightly sticky. Roll the pastry into a ball. Pack it up in a plastic wrap. Set aside for 15 minutes.

Over medium heat, heat oil in a skillet or saucepan. Add onions, garlic, shallot, peppers and seasoning mixture. Stir-fry for 1 minute until softened. Add the meat and simmer with water until meat is tender and water is absorbed. Add tomato paste and stir well until medium brown.

On a clean surface area, dust with flour generously to prevent dough from sticking. Using a rolling pin, flatten the dough and stretch in a rectangular circle. Roll dough front to back and back to front until 1/8 inch thick. Spread the lard or shortening mix generously.

Fold in the flaps to cover over coated areas. Sprinkle the dough with flour and roll out evenly. Form into a ball and set aside for 15 minutes.

Repeat the steps to flatten and fold the dough. Wrap the dough ball in plastic and let refrigerate overnight.

Preheat oven at 375° and prepare to bring out the dough. Unwrap dough and roll out evenly. Divide into disc like shapes. Roll disc dough, as thin as possible. Place disc dough in the palm of your hands and extend pieces with fingers. Add filling. Fold dough and seal edges. Bake at 300° until golden brown. Serve warm.

http://www.haitian-recipes.com/recipes/96_haitian-pate-beef-patties.html

Haitian Potato Salad

Ingredients

4 medium beets, leaves and stems removed, roots rinsed and wrapped individually in heavy duty foil
2 lbs. red bliss or new potatoes (about 6 medium or 18 new)
2 T. red wine vinegar
1 tsp. kosher salt or 1/2 tsp. table salt
1/2 tsp. ground black pepper
2 to 3 scallions, sliced thin (about 1/2 c.)
1/2 c. frozen green peas, thawed
1/2 c., plus 1 T. mayonnaise



Directions

Adjust oven rack to lower-middle position and heat oven to 400 degrees. Set beets in a small pan; roast until just tender about 1 hour. Let beets cool and then remove foil and skins (they slip off easily). Cut into medium dice and set aside.

Meanwhile, place potatoes in a 4 to 6 quart pot; cover with water. Bring to a boil, cover, and simmer, stirring once or twice to ensure even cooking, until a thin-bladed paring knife or a metal cake tester inserted into the potato can be removed with no resistance, 25 to 30 minutes for medium potatoes and 15 to 20 minutes for new potatoes. Cool potatoes slightly, then cut them with a serrated knife, layering them in a medium bowl and lightly sprinkling with the 2 tablespoons vinegar and salt and pepper as you go.

Mix in scallions, peas, and mayonnaise; toss to coat. Lightly fold in beets. Serve or refrigerate until ready to serve.

<http://threemanycooks.com/recipes/salads-and-sides/haitian-potato-salad/>

Du Riz Cole (Rice and Beans)

Rice is by far one of the most popular dishes in Haiti. It's eaten on a daily basis practically anytime of the day. It's a must-have with any meat dish. This type of rice dish is an all-time favorite

Ingredients

1 bag of pink beans
4 c. of Jasmine Elephant Rice
2-3 tsp. of Adobo seasoning salt
2 chicken bouillon cubes
1 tsp. of black pepper
4 sprigs of fresh thyme
10 whole cloves
2 tsp. of garlic powder
2 bay leaves
1 c. of olive oil



Directions

Add one bag of pink beans to a pot of water. Let boil over high heat for 15-20 minutes. Add 8 more cups of water as the beans begin to surface to the top. Let it cook until beans are softened. Drain the beans and reserve the liquid. In a separate pot, add 1 cup of oil over high heat. Add the cooked beans into the pot. Mix in the spices and seasonings. Stir-fry the beans for about 5 minutes. Add in the fresh thyme and bay leaves. Pour in the reserved liquid. Add rice and stir occasionally over high heat. Keep uncovered and continue to stir as needed. Reduce heat and let it cook until all the liquid is absorbed. Cover over low heat. Remove bay leaves and thyme.

http://www.haitian-recipes.com/recipes/114_du-riz-cole-rice-and-beans.html

Poule en Sauce (Stewed Chicken)

This stew chicken goes great with any staple food. Accompanied with any combination of rice, pasta, plantains, or potatoes and it will make for a delicious meal.

Ingredients

1 lb. boneless chicken breasts
1/2 shallot, diced
2 tsp. of garlic, minced
1 T. of lime juice
4 sprigs of fresh parsley
4 sprigs of fresh thyme
1 tsp. black pepper
1/2 scotch bonnet pepper, cut in julienne slices
1/2 red pepper, cut in julienne slices
1 chicken bouillon cube
1 T. of Adobo or seasoning salt

Sauce

1 1/2 tsp. tomato paste
1/2 c. of olive oil
1/2 an onion, diced



Directions

Clean the chicken with lemon or sour orange juice. Rinse in hot water. Season chicken with garlic, shallot, parsley, thyme, black pepper, chicken cube, and seasoning salt. Marinate for 4 hours or overnight to allow flavors to meld.

In a cooking pot, add the chicken pieces and bring 4 cups of water to a boil over high heat. Let it cook for about 25-30 minutes. In a saucepan, add a half of a cup of oil and transfer the chicken over; brown each side of the chicken. Stir in onions, peppers, tomato paste, and add a cup of water. Reduce heat and let it cook for 15 minutes; simmering in the sauce.

http://www.haitian-recipes.com/recipes/232_poule-en-sauce-stewed-chicken.html

Tablet Cocoye

Tablet cocoye is a popular sweet in Haiti made from shredded coconuts.

Ingredients

2 coconuts
1/2 c. freshly grated ginger root
3/4 gallon of water
4 cinnamon sticks
1 T. ground cinnamon
3 c. of white sugar
1 lemon zest
1/4 tsp. of salt
6 small bay leaves
1/4 tsp. vanilla extract



Directions

To get started, crack open the coconuts and scrape the white meat within the shell. Using a food processor or hand grater, grate the white coconut meat into thick shreds. In a pot, combine the grated coconut with ginger and add water. Bring to a boil over high heat. Stir in the cinnamon sticks, cinnamon powder, and sugar. Add lemon zest, salt, and bay leaves. Reduce the heat to medium high and stir occasionally. (After an hour, increase the heat.) As the consistency begins to thicken, remove the bay leaves and cinnamon sticks. Stir constantly as it becomes stickier. Add vanilla extract. After a total of 2 hours, the consistency should be very thick and sticky. Turn off the heat. Using a large spoon, transfer the desired size onto a baking sheet.

Let it cool down for 30 minutes before serving.

http://www.haitian-recipes.com/recipes/395_tablet-cocoye.html

Bonbon Sirop

Ingredients

2 c. of butter
3 eggs
1 c. of brown sugar
1/2 T. of grated ginger
1/2 T. of ground cinnamon
1 tsp. of nutmeg
1/2 c. of molasses
1/2 tsp. of vanilla extract
1 tsp. of baking soda
4 c. of all-purpose flour

Glaze (optional)

1/3 c. of water
1 c. of sugar
1 c. of butter
1 T. of rum
1 tsp. of orange zest
1 tsp. of lemon zest

Directions

Preheat oven to 300 degrees. Whisk butter, eggs, and brown sugar together. Combine all of the ingredients in a mixer and beat into a thick dough-like paste. Spread the paste onto a pre-greased baking dish and bake for approximately 45 minutes. Set aside and prepare the glaze (optional).

Glaze:

In a saucepan, pour water, sugar, butter, lemon zest, and orange zest over high heat. Stir constantly for 10 minutes until caramelized into a semi-thick syrup. Remove from heat. Add rum. Drizzle the glaze over the Bonbon Sirop dessert.



Recipe: http://www.haitian-recipes.com/recipes/281_bonbon-sirop.html