



**In This Month's Recipes:**

- ♀ Tanzanian Etiquette, Customs & Cuisine
- ♀ Menu & Recipes

**Tanzanian Cuisine**

- ☛ The earliest known inhabitants in Tanzania's past were primarily hunter-gatherers.
  - ☛ In the first five hundred years A.D., vegetables, millet, and sorghum, and fruits and fish were mostly eaten. By 800 A.D. Muslim Arabs established trade routes and introduced citrus fruits, cotton plants, and *pilau* and *biriani* (spicy rice and meat dishes).
  - ☛ The number of East African slaves who were bought to work Tanzania's plantations increased as the result of the discovery of clove, a key spice in the country's cuisine.
  - ☛ The British introduced tea and boiled vegetables. The Germans established coffee and cotton plantations.
- Excerpted from [Food by Country](#)



**Tanzanian Etiquette**

Guests are polite and respectful when visiting a Tanzanian home. Loose-fitted clothing is appropriate attire, since most meals are served to diners seated around a floor mat or low table.



Prior to the meal, a bowl of water and a towel may be passed around to the diners to wash their hands. The bowl is passed to the next person with the right hand, as the left one is considered unclean. The right hand should also be used to dip into the *ugali*, which is commonly served in a communal bowl before the main meal.

The midday meal is usually the largest, consisting of *ugali*, spinach, *kisamuru* (cassava leaves), and stew, though *kiamshakinywa* (breakfast) is seldom forgotten. Spiced milk tea and freshly baked bread are popular in the morning.

Men and women in Muslim households (about one-third of Tanzanians) often eat separately. Taboos may also prohibit men from entering the kitchen at all.

--Excerpted from: [Food by Country](#)

## Recipes

Our thanks to Carolyn Mayers for providing most of the following recipes. Questions about the following recipes? e-mail Carolyn at [crmayers@mac.com](mailto:crmayers@mac.com)

### **Recipes for August – Something different**

You will notice that the recipes this month are NOT from Tanzania or even East Africa! Don't panic. I have provided you with ample links to great East African recipes if you are so inclined. Since we have supported a number of programs in, and will be supporting even more programs in East Africa this year, it seemed possible to me that you might get bored with that cuisine. And since food is centerpiece of many of our meetings, that was not an acceptable scenario to me as your provider of delicious recipes! So, just to mix things up a little, I am offering you some of my very favorite recipes. Mostly summer-themed, many including ingredients that are commonly used in East African cooking. I hope you enjoy this little detour into my kitchen as much as I have enjoyed putting it together for you. As always I welcome your questions and comments at [crmayers@mac.com](mailto:crmayers@mac.com).

 Link to webpage with many great looking Tanzanian recipes:  
<http://www.foodbycountry.com/Spain-to-Zimbabwe-Cumulative-Index/Tanzania.html>

 Links to previous issues of Food for Thought with East African recipes:  
<http://diningforwomen.org/sites/default/files/documents/AugustFFT.pdf>  
<http://diningforwomen.org/sites/default/files/documents/BOMAFFTNov2010v3.pdf>

### **Fig and Gorgonzola Crostini**

---

Adapted from [epicurious](http://epicurious.com)

This photo is of the HUGE fig tree we have in our yard (see wheelbarrow for perspective) and the figs just started coming in. I couldn't help but include this delicious hors d'oeuvre which pairs them with gorgonzola – a match made in heaven! Couldn't be easier, especially if you use prepared plain crostini, which is how I make them. I prefer them to be bite sized. You can also make them with toasted baguette slices as the original recipe calls for. How many it makes depends on how big your crostini are. If you have any of the cheese mixture leftover, yum! It is delicious all by itself on crackers.

Makes 10– 12, or more if your crostini are very small

10 – 12, 1/3-inch thick baguette slices, lightly toasted, or packaged crostini

Scant ½ c gorgonzola cheese, at room temperature

2T butter, at room temperature

1t port wine (optional but recommended)

4 large or 6 medium-sized fresh figs, sliced



Our giant fig tree

Mash together the gorgonzola and butter, and port wine if you are using it, with a fork in a small bowl. Makes sure they are well combined. Spread about 1 teaspoon of the gorgonzola mixture on top of each crostini, more if your crostini/baguette slices are large. Top each with a slice or two of fig. Put another little dab of the cheese mixture on top of the figs. Preheat broiler. Place prepared crostini on a cookie sheet or broiler pan and broil for 2 – 3 minutes or until the cheese is bubbling around the edges. Allow to cool slightly before serving warm.

### ***Kyuri no Sumomi (Japanese Sliced Cucumber Pickle)***

---

*This is a recipe Tom's Mother learned from her Japanese friends while she was in Japan with Tom's Dad, who was in the Navy during the Korean War. Tom was born in Japan, and has a special place in his heart for Japanese foods and culture. This recipe that is really like cucumber salad) is super easy and so refreshing on a hot summer day. We have an abundance of cucumbers coming in from the garden and this is a great way to use them. The finished product keeps for at least a week in the refrigerator. We pack it into canning jars and cover it with the vinegar solution.*

*Serves 4*

8 – 12 pickling cucumbers, depending on size, very thinly sliced

Salt

1c rice vinegar

¼ - 1/3 c sugar



Cucumber layers

Place a layer of cucumber slices in a medium-sized bowl. Sprinkle this layer with salt. Repeat with all remaining cucumber slices, alternating layers of cucumbers and then salt. Use a fair amount of salt – you will be rinsing it off. Allow to sit for one hour to allow the salt to draw moisture out of the cucumbers. Place the cucumber slices in the bowl of a salad spinner or in a colander. Rinse very well with cold water to remove the salt. They will still taste a little salty. Dry bowl, and place a kitchen towel in the bottom. Place the cucumber slices in the bowl on the towel, fold the towel over the cucumbers and press to squeeze out excess moisture. Mix vinegar and sugar, stirring well to dissolve sugar completely. Taste and add more sugar if necessary. You should be able to taste the sweetness of the sugar over the sourness of the vinegar. Add vinegar mixture to cucumbers and toss well. Chill for at least one hour before serving as a salad or condiment.

### ***Warm Asparagus (or snap bean) Salad with Crispy Prosciutto***

---

Adapted from <http://www.epicurious.com/recipes/food/views/Warm-Asparagus-and-Prosciutto-Salad-103249>

*This is a spring and summer standard in our home, using asparagus in spring and snap beans in summer. Once you have tried prosciutto this way you will find lots of uses for it – sometimes we even put it out in big pieces for company as “prosciutto chips”. You may either leave the asparagus/beans whole, or cut into bite-sized pieces. Also, you may omit the anchovy and add in a little bit of fine lemon zest.*

*Serves 6*

4 oz. VERY thinly sliced prosciutto

1 ¼ lbs. asparagus or snap beans, or both! - trimmed

3T plus 1/3 cup olive oil

2 anchovy fillets, chopped, or 1t anchovy paste

3 cloves garlic, thinly sliced or chopped, your choice

¼ t red pepper flakes

¼ c fresh lemon juice

1 - 5-ounce package mixed baby greens (about 10 cups) or arugula

Preheat oven to 275°F. Line baking sheet with parchment paper. Place prosciutto slices in single layer on parchment. Watch this as it may smoke if your oven runs hot. Bake until crisp, about 18 minutes. Cool. Break prosciutto into bite-sized pieces and set aside. Meanwhile, cook asparagus or beans in heavy large



Warm Asparagus and Prosciutto Salad

pot of boiling salted water until crisp-tender, about 3 minutes. Drain and place in ice water bath to stop the cooking process. Drain thoroughly. Heat 3 tablespoons olive oil in large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add chopped anchovies and garlic and sauté about 1 minute. Add asparagus or beans, red pepper flakes and half of prosciutto and sauté until heated through, about 2- 4 minutes. Add fresh lemon juice and remaining 1/3 cup olive oil (you may use less of both – this makes a lot of dressing) and simmer 1 minute. Remove from heat. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Allow to cool slightly. Divide greens among 6 plates. Top with asparagus mixture, dividing equally. Pour dressing from skillet over each serving. Garnish with remaining prosciutto.

### ***“Perry Dinner” (Tomato, Goat Cheese, Basil and Garlic Pasta)***

*This is our own recipe. About 8 years ago Tom and I vacationed up in St. Michael’s, MD and had something like this dish at a restaurant the name of which escapes me. I DO remember, though, that the chef who originated this dish was named Perry, thus the name of the recipe. It can either be tossed with any short pasta, or served either as a first course or a light summer dinner with some excellent crusty bread for soaking up the delectable sauce. We had this at our Program Selection retreat last year it is was a huge hit! YUM! Right now we are loaded with tomatoes, as you can see from this photo – yes, those are all from the garden!! We make many variations, sometimes including chopped eggplant and/or squash to the mix, and sometimes using oregano and feta instead of basil and goat cheese for a more Greek feel. I hope you enjoy it as much and as often as we do! Easy and so good! Also excellent at room temperature.*

*Serves 6*



*A kitchen full of tomatoes in July for Perry Dinner!*

2 ½ lbs. fresh plum/paste /sauce tomatoes (slicing tomatoes are too watery)

6 cloves garlic, or more to taste, minced

1 - 4oz. log fresh goat cheese (or more if you want it really cheesy), or crumbled goat cheese (makes it easier but usually a lower quality cheese)

Salt (about ¼ t and freshly ground black pepper)

¼ c olive oil, approximately

½ c or more chopped fresh basil (in a pinch you could use pesto, just reduce the garlic)

Small pasta, cooked, about ¾ lb., (we use penne) OR a good crusty loaf of bread

Grated fresh parmesan (gilding the lily in my opinion, but Tom likes it this way)

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Chop the tomatoes coarsely. Place in greased, non- reactive baking pan. Sprinkle minced garlic over the tomatoes. Open the package of goat cheese and run the tines of a fork back and forth across the surface to crumble it over the tomatoes and garlic (this is easier if the goat cheese has been stuck in the freezer for 15 minutes or so). Sprinkle with salt and a generous amount of black pepper. Drizzle the olive oil over all. Place in oven and bake for approximately 25 minutes. Remove from oven and allow to cool slightly. Sprinkle chopped basil over the cooked tomato mixture. If using

pasta, toss the mixture with just cooked pasta and serve hot. Pass freshly grated parmesan. If using bread, serve in shallow bowls with warm crusty bread.

### **Not your Grandmother's Creamed Spinach**

---

*Adapted from recipe by Sarah Leah Chase of Silver Palate fame, originally published in Kitchen Garden Magazine, April/May, 1997 issue.*

*Now I know creamed spinach is not generally thought of as a summer food, but I decided to include it here because spinach is so popular in Tanzania. You will never make creamed spinach any other way once you have tried this. ALWAYS gets compliments from company.*

Serves 6

2T butter  
6 scallions, minced  
1 clove garlic, minced  
1 – 5.2oz. package of Boursin garlic and herb cheese, at room temperature  
2 – 10 oz. packages frozen chopped spinach, thawed and drained  
3T heavy cream, light cream or half and half, or more to reach desired consistency  
¼ t ground nutmeg  
Salt  
Freshly ground black pepper



*Creamed Spinach*

*Melt butter in medium-sized skillet over medium heat. Add scallions and cook until softened, about 3 minutes. Add garlic and cook 1 minute. Add Boursin cheese, breaking into chunks and stirring until it melts. Add the spinach and cook 5 minutes. Reduce heat to low. Add cream, nutmeg and salt and pepper to taste. Serve warm.*

### **Olive-Oil Poached Halibut Nuggets With Garlic and Mint**

---

*Adapted from <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/04/dining/041arex.html>*

*Another standard in our house year round. In fact, we're having it tonight for dinnier! VERY easy, takes no time at all to cook, and everyone loves it. Excellent over steamed, sliced new potatoes, rice or our favorite couscous from Canaan Fair Trade. It is, as the name says, Fair Trade, organic and hand-rolled by a women's cooperative in Palestine. You have to try it to believe it. You can buy it here: <https://www.canaanusa.com/shop/dried-foods/>. Try sautéing it in olive oil before cooking it in boiling water to give it a toasty flavor. They also have fabulous olive oil and other food products.*

Serves 4 - 6



*Olive-oil poached Halibut*

2lbs. halibut fillet, cut into 1¼ cubes  
½ t fine sea salt  
½ t freshly ground black pepper, more to taste  
¼ c extra virgin olive oil  
1 medium-sized rosemary sprig  
1t, rounded dried mint or oregano  
4 garlic cloves, minced  
Fresh lemon juice, to taste (optional)  
Chopped fresh mint, or parsley for garnish.

Season halibut all over with salt. In a medium-size skillet just large enough to hold fish cubes in a single layer, heat oil over low heat. Add fish, rosemary sprig and dried mint or oregano, and let cook slowly until fish begins to turn opaque, about 3 - 4 minutes. Stir in garlic and salt and pepper, and cook until garlic is fragrant and fish is just cooked through, another 3 minutes or so (heat should be low enough so as not to brown the garlic or fish but high enough to gently cook everything; the cooking time will vary widely with your stove). Taste and add more salt and pepper and a few drops of lemon juice if desired. Stir in the fresh mint or parsley and serve, using a slotted spoon if you want to leave the poaching oil in pan; it is delicious over couscous or potatoes.

## **“Squashburgers”**

---

*Anyone who has ever had a vegetable garden knows that mid-summer brings an abundance of summer squash and zucchini. We came up with this main course that is cooked almost entirely on the grill, so as not to heat up the kitchen too much during these steamy, hot days. A friend of ours makes them for her kids and calls them squashburgers. It is a great use of fresh summer veggies and will remind you a little bit of pizza, without the tomato sauce, sort of. The quantities of vegetables are infinitely flexible, as are the herbs you use. Make them your own. Also excellent picnic food, just let them come up to room temperature a little bit before you eat them. And pack extra napkins! Serves about 4 - 6, but varies widely depending on how thick you like your “burgers”*

¼ c olive oil, plus 2T  
1 large or 2 medium onions, thinly sliced  
2 sweet peppers, seeded and thinly sliced  
1 jalapeno, seeded and minced (optional, recommended)  
1T dried oregano  
1t fresh thyme leaves, or ½ t dried  
1T prepared basil pesto or minced fresh basil  
4 cloves garlic, minced  
2lbs. assorted summer squash or zucchini, sliced lengthwise into 1/3 to ½ -inch thick slices, or on the diagonal if your squash are large  
1 medium eggplant, sliced into 1/3-inch slices (optional, or more squash)  
½ t salt, approximately  
Generous amount of ground black pepper  
8oz. or more sharp cheddar, mozzarella or pepper jack for a spicier version, sliced  
4 – 6 (or more) hamburger rolls, or Kaiser rolls, or even a loaf of Italian bread, sliced in half to form a top and a bottom  
Cooking spray



Heat 2T olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add onions and cook, stirring occasionally, for about 6 minutes. Add peppers, including jalapeno if using, and cook 5 minutes more, stirring occasionally. Reduce heat to low, cover skillet and cook for another 10 minutes or so, until onions and peppers are very soft. Preheat grill to medium-low heat. In a small bowl, mix together the ¼ cup of olive oil (you may need more) and any combination of the herbs listed, and the garlic. Stir to combine. Brush the vegetables with the oil and herb mixture. Sprinkle generously with salt and pepper. Grill approximately 5 –6 minutes per side until they are soft but not falling apart. Leave grill on, turning off center burner if you have that type of grill, as you will be baking the sandwiches over indirect heat in a moment. To make the “burgers”, place a slice of cheese on top on the bottom of the roll, or several slices if using Italian bread. Top with grilled vegetable slices, one or two layers or more if your slices are on the thin side. Top

that with the onion and pepper mixture, and finish with another slice or slices of cheese. Place top on roll and wrap in heavy-duty aluminum foil, preferably non-stick, or spray it with cooking spray to prevent the cheese from sticking. Repeat for remaining burgers. Turn grill up to medium. Place in center of grill and cook for 5 – 8 minutes to melt cheese, longer if your vegetables are not still hot. Allow to cool about 5 minutes before serving. Corn on the cob is an excellent accompaniment.

## Jumbleberry Pie

Adapted from <http://www.epicurious.com/recipes/food/views/Jumbleberry-Pie-Summer-Berry-Pie-12349>

*The BEST pie recipe in the world! How convenient that the berries are in season now. We have been making this recipe for years and it is always a big crowd pleaser! Serve with good vanilla ice cream, or, even better, homemade whipped cream! You may use any combination of berries you like, just keep in mind that blackberries and raspberries are juicier than blueberries and so you will need to add another tablespoon or more of flour. Serves about 10 -- 12*

1 package prepared piecrust for 2-crust pie, or your own recipe  
3c blackberries, picked over and rinsed  
3c blueberries, picked over and rinsed  
2 ½ c raspberries or other summer berries such as red currants or boysenberries picked and rinsed  
1/3 cup cornstarch  
1T flour  
1-1/4 cups sugar plus additional for sprinkling the pie  
1/4 cup fresh lemon juice  
1/8 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg  
1/8 teaspoon cinnamon  
1 tablespoon unsalted butter, cut into bits  
1/4 cup half-and-half



*Jumbleberry Pie*

Roll out half the dough (you will even have to do this with the pre-packaged crust to make it big enough) about 1/8-inch thick on a lightly floured surface, fit it into a 9-inch deep-dish (1 quart) pie plate, and trim the edge, leaving a 1/2-inch overhang. Chill the shell while making the filling. In a large bowl toss together the berries, the cornstarch, flour, 1-1/4 cups of the sugar, the lemon juice, the nutmeg, and the cinnamon until the mixture is combined well, mound the filling in the shell, and dot it with the butter bits. It will be VERY full. Roll out the remaining dough into a 13- to 14-inch round on a lightly floured surface, drape it over the filling, and trim it, leaving a 1-inch overhang. Fold the overhang under the bottom crust, pressing the edge to seal it, and crimp the edge decoratively, or press the tines of a fork into it all the way around. Brush the crust with the half-and-half, make slits in the top crust, forming steam vents, and sprinkle the pie lightly with the additional sugar. Bake the pie on a large baking sheet in the middle (not too close to the top or it will burn before it is cooked) of a preheated 425°F. oven for 20 minutes, reduce the heat to 375°F, and bake the pie for 35 to 40 minutes more, or until the crust is golden and filling is bubbling. Allow to cool for an hour before serving.

## Watermelon Slushies

---



*Pureed fruit drinks, called “squashes”, are very popular in Tanzania. This recipe is for a drink that is something like a frozen watermelon daiquiri, if you choose to add the rum. It is almost as good if you don’t. Because there is no ice in it it doesn’t get watered down. Watermelons are just about ready to come in from the garden, and we are anxiously awaiting our first batch of the season of this very refreshing and festive summer beverage. We freeze lots of watermelon cubes and have these through the warm days of fall. Serves 6, more or less*  
*NOTE: Allow at least 2 hours to freeze the chunks of watermelon before starting*

3c watermelon, seeded and cut into about  $\frac{3}{4}$  -inch chunks, frozen  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  c orange juice  
2T fresh lime juice  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  c light rum, or to taste (optional, recommended)  
Sugar to taste (optional)

### *Watermelon slushies*

Place all ingredients into blender or food processor (you may have to make it in batches). Puree thoroughly, stopping periodically to scrape down any wayward chunks. Sometimes we also add a little Sprite or seltzer to give it a little fizz. Serve ice cold and be prepared for your guests to ask for more!

— Changing the world one dinner at a time