Ugandan Cuisine
The basis of Ugandan cuisine is traditional with some Arabic and British influences seen in preparation methods and ingredients. The foundation of the food includes plantain and banana dishes, stews, pastes and local fruit.

“The staple of the Ugandan diet is Matooke, a stew made from plantains boiled in a sauce made from peanuts, fresh fish along with meat and/or tripe. Fish forms a significant part in the Ugandan diet and may be fresh, smoked or salted and dried. There are many unique and truly authentic recipes in the cuisine of Uganda. Most of the Ugandan recipes have main ingredients such as fresh fruits, vegetables and a few pieces of meat in them.” --http://www.uganda-visit-and-travel-guide.com/uganda-recipes.html

Most of the dishes in the Ugandan cuisine require steaming, so pressure pots and steamers are very handy. “Most of the Ugandan cuisines are not time-consuming, therefore preparing for them and enjoying cooking them is a joyful experience. Make sure that you use fresh fruits and fresh vegetables while cooking and preparing your Ugandan cuisine as it adds the true authentic flavor to your meals.” --http://recipes.wikia.com/wiki/Ugandan_Cuisine

If you intend to serve your Ugandan meal in the true Ugandan traditional manner, then wooden bowls are a great choice.
Ugandan Etiquette & Customs

Women greeting Women: A handshake and/or nod of acknowledgment is appropriate in most situations. If you would like to show great respect you may also place your left hand over your right elbow or forearm when handshaking.

When a meal is ready, all the members of the household wash their hands and sit on floor mats.

Wooden bowls are traditionally used at mealtime.

Visitors and neighbors who drop in are expected to join the family at a meal.

Don't leave the table until everyone is finished eating

Read more: Culture of Uganda - traditional, history, people, clothing, women, beliefs, food, family, social
http://www.everyculture.com/To-Z/Uganda.html#ixzz1Eztll5O5

Uganda Recipes

Our thanks to Carolyn Mayers for providing recipes.

Links to previous East African recipes:


http://diningforwomen.org/sites/default/files/mcvillenMundfeb07.pdf

Questions? e-mail Carolyn at crmayers@mac.com

East African Curry Powder


A delicious, sweet blend and different from Indian curry powders in that it does not include cumin. You will use this in the beef and chicken recipes that follow.

1t ground cardamom
1t ground turmeric
1t cinnamon powder
½t ground cayenne

Mix ingredients together and place in small jar. The mix also sometimes includes ginger, which you will use when you prepare recipe.
Choroko Sauce (Mung Bean Sauce)
Adapted from [http://recipes.wikia.com/wiki/Choroko_Sauce](http://recipes.wikia.com/wiki/Choroko_Sauce)

An easy vegetarian main course, and if you serve it with chapattis or over rice, this Ugandan comfort food can double as a side dish. Not the most beautiful dish you will ever create, but yummy!
Serves 8

**NOTE:** Allow at least 6 hours for mung beans to soak. May substitute green split peas (they only need about 3 hours of soaking) in a pinch but it will have a somewhat gritty texture.

1½ c dry whole mung beans or green split peas
3T vegetable oil
1 large onion, chopped
4 cloves garlic, minced
½ t ground coriander
1/8 t ground cayenne
1 – 14oz. can diced tomatoes
¼ t salt (or more to taste – I used closer to ½ t)
a good grind of black pepper
water

Rinse mung beans and remove any stones. Place in a bowl and cover with plenty of water. Allow to soak at least 6 hours or overnight. Drain and set aside.

Place soaked beans and water to cover by at least 2 inches in a medium-large saucepan and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and cook, partially covered, until beans are soft, about 20 – 30 minutes, or longer for old beans.

While the beans are cooking, heat oil over medium heat in a large skillet (large enough to accommodate beans) and add onion. Saute onion until softened, about 6 minutes, then add garlic, coriander and cayenne and cook for one minute. Add tomatoes, salt and pepper and stir well. Reduce heat to low and cook, covered, for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.

When beans are tender drain excess water, leaving a bit of water in the pot to facilitate mashing. With a potato masher, mash the beans in the pot until they are fairly well pulverized. Add the beans to the onion and tomato mixture, along with ¼ to ½ cup of water, depending on how wet your beans are, and stir well.

Simmer uncovered, about 10 or 15 more minutes or until thickened, and serve hot over rice or with chapattis or any flat bread.
Bunyoro Stew (Ugandan Beef and Onion Stew)

DELICIOUS! This recipe is simple, has only a few ingredients and practically cooks itself. Serve over rice. I cooked the rice I served with this using the balance of the stock leftover from cooking the meat. YUM!

Serves 6 - 8

2lbs. beef stew meat, cut into 1-inch cubes
1 – 26oz. container low sodium beef stock
4T butter or ghee
3 medium onions, chopped
2T fresh ginger, minced
1T East African Curry Powder or more to taste
1T flour
1 plus ½ - 14 oz. cans diced or ground tomatoes
1T tomato paste
½ - ½ t salt
Ground black pepper

Add the meat to a large heavy stewing pot and add enough stock to just cover it. Turn heat to high and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and cook, partially covered, about 30 minutes or until meat is nearly tender. Remove from heat and allow to cool slightly. Drain meat carefully, RESERVING STOCK. Set meat and stock aside. Return the stewing pot to the stove and turn heat to medium. Add butter or ghee and allow to melt, then add the onions and cook, stirring, about 6 minutes. Add the ginger and E.A. Curry powder and cook one minute. Add flour and cook one more minute. Return the meat to the pan and stir well. Add the tomatoes, tomato paste, and about half of the reserved beef stock and stir well. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to low and simmer, stirring occasionally, partially covered, for about 15 more minutes or until the sauce is thickened and the meat is very tender. Taste and add salt and pepper as desired. Serve over rice or with ugali (cornmeal mush – grits are a fine substitute) and a vegetable.

East African Braised Chicken
Adapted from http://www.food.com/recipe/east-african-braised-chicken-55013

Another easy dish, and the flavors a just different enough to make it fairly unique among the East African recipes, using dates to slightly sweeten the stew. This may also be made with chicken parts, but you will have to adjust the cooking time to cook them all the way through, and it will be significantly oilier. May be served with any of the starches suggested above.
Serves 8

3 lbs. boneless, skinless chicken thighs
½ t salt
½ t ground black pepper
3T ghee or vegetable oil
3c onions, halved then thinly sliced
2T fresh ginger, minced  
1T (rounded) East African Curry powder  
3 cloves garlic, minced  
1T (rounded) flour  
1½ - 2c low-sodium chicken stock  
3T lemon juice  
1/3c pitted dates, chopped

Season the chicken with salt and pepper. Heat 2T oil or ghee in a large heavy pot over medium-high heat. Add chicken and brown approximately 4 minutes per side. You may need to do this in batches so as to not crowd the pieces. Set chicken aside. Add remaining 1T of oil or ghee to pot and reduce heat to medium-low. Add onions and cook for 8 minutes, stirring. Add ginger, curry powder and garlic, stir and cook 1 minute. Stir in flour and cook one minute more. Return chicken to pot and pour in 1½ c stock. Add dates and stir well. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to medium-low to low and simmer, partially covered, for about 20 minutes for boneless thighs, up to an hour for parts. Stir occasionally. If it appears too dry, add a little more stock. If to wet, remove the cover. Serve hot.

Uganda Spicy French Green Beans

Over the years it has been difficult to find any green vegetable recipes other than greens or spinach among the recipes for East Africa, and Uganda in particular. But persistence has finally paid off and here is a delightful green bean recipe for a nice break from the typical East African fare.

Serves 8, at least

3T vegetable oil  
3T whole cumin seeds  
3T fresh ginger, minced  
8 cloves garlic, minced  
2t ground coriander  
½ c canned diced tomatoes  
2lb. fresh green beans, washed and cut into 2-inch lengths  
water  
¼ - ½ t salt  
Ground black pepper  
1T lemon juice

Heat oil in a large skillet or wok over medium heat. Add cumin seeds and cook for a few seconds. Add the ginger and garlic and cook for about 1 minute. Stir in the coriander, then the tomatoes, mashing the tomatoes a bit with the back of the spoon. Cook 2 minutes. Add the beans, salt and about ¼ c water, maybe a bit less, and turn heat up to medium-high. Stir, cover and cook about 5 - 7 minutes, or until the beans are almost as tender as you like them. Remove the cover and add the lemon juice and a generous grind of black pepper. Turn heat to high and cook off a bit of the liquid, stirring. Serve hot or at room temperature.
Ugandan Curried Potatoes
Adapted from http://www.fairtradecookbook.org.uk/recipes/curried_potatoes.htm

Using a slightly different curry blend, this is a spicy, beautiful red – orange dish. I imagine in Uganda this would probably be made with under-ripe plantains but how wonderful to find a recipe that uses potatoes!! This one may become a regular addition to your dinners. If you like things less spicy, reduce the amount of cayenne.

Serves 8, at least.

2lbs. red potatoes, washed, cut into ½ inch cubes, and parboiled in salted water till almost, but not quite tender (Boil water, add potatoes, cook about 4 minutes, drain, rinse with cold water)
4T vegetable oil
1 medium onion, chopped
1 large clove garlic, minced
½ t ground turmeric
1/8 t ground cayenne
¼ t ground cinnamon
½ t ground coriander
1T tomato paste
2t lemon juice
4T fresh parsley, minced
Salt to taste

Heat oil in large skillet over medium heat. Add onions and sauté for 6 – 8 minutes or until golden. Add garlic and cook 30 seconds. Add the turmeric, cayenne, cinnamon and coriander and stir well. Add the tomato paste and lemon juice and stir again to combine everything. Add the potatoes and about ¼ t salt and stir again. Add enough water to cover the bottom of the pan. Cook, uncovered, for about 10 minutes or until the potatoes are completely tender and the juices in the pan are thickened and coating the potatoes. Add the parsley near the end of cooking time and stir well. Serve hot as a colorful side dish.

Chewy Coconut Cookies (Or Americanized Kashata)
Adapted from http://allrecipes.com/Search/Recipes.aspx?WithTerm=Chewy%20Coconut%20Cookies

Kashata is an East African Candy/Cookie that is a popular snack. The recipes for it did not look particularly user-friendly so I endeavored to find a suitable substitute for you and this is one good cookie! Quite sweet, since they are supposed to be a stand-in for a candy/cookie. My husband Tom, confirmed coconut avoider, LOVED these, as did my friends. I hope you do, too.

CAUTION: These will burn on the bottom if you oven temperature is too high, since they are very high in sugar. And if you cook them for too long they will be very hard. Still delicious, but hard.
Makes about 40.

1¼c all purpose flour
1/8 t ground cardamom
¼ t baking soda
¼ t baking powder
¼ t salt
½c unsalted butter, softened
½c light brown sugar, packed
½c sugar
1 large egg, beaten
1 1/3 c flaked, unsweetened coconut

Preheat oven to 350. Combine the flour, cardamom, soda, powder and salt and set aside. In a medium bowl, cream the butter and sugars until smooth. Beat in the egg until light and fluffy. Gradually blend in the flour mixture, stirring until well combined.

Add coconut and stir until distributed. This is a fairly stiff dough. There are two ways to proceed. Since the dough is stiff, I chose to roll the dough into approximately 1¼ inch balls, no larger, and placed them 3 inches apart on an ungreased, non-stick cookie sheet. Flatten each slightly with your thumb. If your dough is not the right consistency for this technique, fear not! Just place teaspoonfuls of the dough on the cookie sheet.

Baked for 8 – 11 minutes, watching carefully. As soon as they begin to brown even slightly, remove them from the oven. Allow to cool for a moment before removing to a rack to cool completely.

Store in an airtight container. These do not keep well.

Sources:

http://recipes.wikia.com/wiki/Ugandan_Cuisine
Culture of Uganda - traditional, history, people, clothing, women, beliefs, food, family, social http://www.everyculture.com/To-Z/Uganda.html#!ixzz1EztII50S
Photo: sydneyfoodieblog.com
Photo: Foodnetwork.co.uk