In This Month’s Recipes:

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Ethiopian Cuisine

Unlike most African countries, Ethiopia was relatively uninfluenced by neighboring countries and their invasions over the centuries. Since the fifteenth century, traders introduced a small amount of non-indigenous ingredients that have added to what is now considered authentic Ethiopian cuisine: chile peppers from Portugal, ginger from Asia, and a range of spices from India.

Ethiopia has been described as the land of bread and honey. Grains including sorghum, millet and wheat grow well in the temperate climate. Honey, collected by ancient beekeeping techniques, is used in everyday meals. Coffee is Ethiopia’s main commodity.

Ethiopian Etiquette & Customs

- Eating from individual plates strikes most in Ethiopia “as hilarious, bizarre, and wasteful. Food is always shared from a single plate without the use of cutlery. Greed is considered uncivilized,” so diners should take their time eating.
- Expect a small earthenware or metal jug to be brought to the table before the meal is served. Extend your hands over the basin while water is poured over them.
- Only use the right hand for eating.
- Hierarchy dictates that the eldest person is the first to take food from the communal plate.

Before meals, hands are extended over a basin while water is poured over them.
• Guests are often served tasty morsels by another guest in a process called "gursa". Using his hands, the person places the morsel in the other person's mouth. Since this is done out of respect, it is a good idea to smile and accept the offering.
• The meal ends with ritual hand-washing and coffee.
• You will always be offered a cup of coffee. It is considered impolite to refuse.
• After a close personal relationship has been established people of the same sex may kiss three times on the cheeks.
• Guests invited for a formal coffee are seated on pillows or a grass and flower-strewn floor with incense burning in the background.
• Fresh beans are roasted on the open fire, then ground by hand with a wooden pestle and mortar.

Coffee is a national drink in Ethiopia. Serving coffee is a ritualized process that generally takes at least an hour.

### Menu
- **Berberé** (Essential Ethiopian Spice Blend)
- **Dabo Kolo** (Ethiopian Snack)
- **Simple Injera** (Easy Ethiopian Flat Bread)
- **Fossolia** (Green Bean and Carrot Medley)
- **Ethiopian Cucumber and Tomato Salad**
- **Ethiopian Potato Salad**
- **Ethiopian Eggplant Relish**
- **Ethiopian Eggplant Salad**
- **Doro Wat** (Spicy Chicken Stew)
- **Grilled Steak Ethiopian Style**
- **Key Wet or Tsebhi Sga** (Ethiopian/Eritrean Beef Stew)
- **Mesir Wat** (Ethiopian red lentil puree)
- **Chocolate Rum Cake with Cinnamon Whipped Cream**
- **Coffee**

### Ethiopian Recipes
*Our thanks to Carolyn Mayers for providing most of the following recipes.*

We had loads of fun with the recipes this month and I hope you enjoy them. To give you even more choices, in addition to the recipes I tested this month, we have included some recipes from the last time we supported Fistula Foundation (which are marked with a *), so you have many great choices! You can see the rest of them, including a recipe for Niter Kibbeh (Ethiopian Spiced Butter) and shopping resources for berbere spice and injera, at [http://diningforwomen.org/sites/default/files/fistulafoundation2-08ethiopia.pdf](http://diningforwomen.org/sites/default/files/fistulafoundation2-08ethiopia.pdf). If you have any questions at all, comments, or need help in the middle of your injera or anything else, drop me a line at crmayers@mac.com.

### Berberé (Essential Ethiopian Spice Blend)*

Berberé is a spicy blend that flavors much of Ethiopian cooking. Each cook’s mix is slightly different, so you should feel free to vary too—especially when it comes to the heat. Ethiopians like it hot, but do adjust if you wish (substitute more sweet paprika for the dried chilies). The combination of fenugreek and red pepper is a must—if you don’t have some of the others, don’t worry. It’s best to start with whole spices, roast them just until fragrant, and then grind them together.
I give the quick version here using pre-ground spices, but amounts would be the same. You may omit the onion and garlic powder if you wish, but then you will need to remember to add onion and garlic to your recipe.

Mix together the following and store in a jar in a dark cupboard:

1 t ground fenugreek (found in Indian stores. If you can only find whole seed, grind them in a coffee or spice grinder)
1/2 c ground dried chilies (cayenne—ouch! or ancho—much milder, etc)
1/2 c paprika (or more, with less cayenne to make it milder)
2 T salt
2 t ground ginger
2 t onion powder
1 t ground cardamom
1 t ground nutmeg
1/2 t garlic powder
1/4t ground cloves
1/4 t ground cinnamon
1/4 t ground allspice

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**Dabo Kolo***
Adapted from [http://www.congocookbook.com/snack_recipes/dabo_kolo.html](http://www.congocookbook.com/snack_recipes/dabo_kolo.html).

This is Ethiopian snack food: crunchy, spicy, like popcorn, like peanuts, like pretzel balls. Bet you can’t eat just one! Try them as an appetizer when members arrive. These keep well (if you can keep away from them).

2c flour (all-purpose unbleached or use 50% whole wheat)
1-2T Berberé (2 is really spicy)
1T sugar
1/2 t salt
1/2 c water
4T softened (room temperature) butter

Preheat oven to 350° F. Mix together dry ingredients (flour, berberé, sugar, and salt). Slowly add the water and mix so to form a thick paste. Remove the mixture from the bowl and knead it on a lightly-floured surface for a few minutes to form a thick dough. Add the softened butter and knead for an additional five minutes. Let the dough rest in a cool place for ten minutes. (You could also do this in your mixer or food processor.) Divide the dough into handful-size pieces and roll these into long "pencils" not quite as thick as your small finger. Cut these rolls into pieces, each piece no longer than finger-width. Place on a greased baking sheet. Bake 20 - 30 minutes, stirring or shaking the pan a few times to prevent sticking, and checking to make sure they aren’t burning. When done, remove from oven and allow to cool completely. Store in a dry airtight container.
Simple Injera (Easy Ethiopian Flat Bread)

WE LOVE INJERA! I know you will love it, too. The first time I made injera years ago it was a total disaster and I swore I would never try it again. Well, apparently time has healed me, because I ventured back into this forbidden territory this week and, voila’, injera is easy!! Please be prepared for it to take a little getting used to, and the first one of the batch is never any good, just like when you make crepes. But stick with it and you will be happy you did. I made it not once but twice to enjoy with our Ethiopian meals and both times were equally great! Once you have the hang of it, it takes less than an hour from start to finish. And if all else fails, you can get great injera from your local Ethiopian restaurant if you are lucky enough to have one! But TRY it!

Serves 8 – 12, depending on how big your injera, (and your appetites!) are

1-1/2c whole wheat flour, preferably a fine grind like chapatti flour
1-1/2c all purpose flour
1-1/2t baking soda
3-1/2 - 3-3/4c seltzer or club soda, unopened until just before use
1/2 t salt (less is OK)
2/3c yogurt
1-2T lemon juice

Prepare a large flat preferably non-stick skillet (mine was 12” across) or round griddle by very lightly coating it with oil (I used a paper towel for this – I almost melted my pastry brush first though!) and heating over medium-low heat. You will need a cover to fit this pan. Combine dry ingredients in a large bowl. Whisk to distribute. Mix seltzer/club soda, yogurt and lemon juice in a large measuring cup or another bowl. Add to dry ingredients, stirring with a whisk to combine. The batter should be thicker than crepe batter but thinner than pancake batter. Turn heat under skillet up to medium as soon as you are ready to cook. Using a ladle or measuring cup, pour about 1/3 cup of batter into pan in a circle or spiral staring in the middle of the pan. Quickly tilt the griddle to spread the batter and fill any holes – it should be fairly thin, but thick enough not to tear too easily. They are supposed to be round like giant thin pancakes, but don’t worry about making them perfect. This first one will fall apart anyway. Cook 20 to 30 seconds uncovered, then cover and cook another 40 – 50 seconds until fairly dry and spongy. Remove to platter by trying to just lift and edge and slide it out. Eat or throw out if it is a total wreck. Fear not, this next one and the ones following it will be better. Re-oil the pan with your oily paper towel and repeat the process – batter in circle, tilt pan to fill holes and spread batter, and cook. Slide onto platter. Soon you will have a nice stack of them. See? Better, right? USE LESS BATTER PER INJERA IF YOU HAVE A SMALLER PAN or they will be too thick and take much longer to cook. They may be kept warm but must be wrapped somehow to keep them from drying out. And they are GREAT leftover!
Fossolia (Green Bean and Carrot Medley)
Adapted from recipe at this GREAT site. There are MANY more to try! The Injera Chips are a great way to use leftover injera, if you have any! http://theberberediaries.wordpress.com/tag/ethiopian-recipes/

Easy, delicious and very pretty! You may just find yourself having this one anytime, not just with Ethiopian meals since it doesn’t contain any special spices. Very versatile, and also good at room temperature.
Serves 6 – 8

3T oil of choice
2 medium onions, chopped
1T fresh ginger, minced
4 cloves garlic, minced
a few heaping tablespoons of tomato paste (about half a small can)
4 – 5c green beans, cut into 2-inch lengths
3 carrots, peeled or well-scrubbed and cut into matchsticks
1/2 - 14 oz.can diced tomatoes
salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Heat oil in a large skillet or wok over medium heat. Add onions and cook, stirring, for about 8 minutes. Add ginger and garlic and cook 1 minute. Add tomato paste and tomatoes, stir well and cook for 2 minutes. Add green beans, carrots and 1T water and stir well. Cover and cook for 10 minutes or so, stirring occasionally and adding a little water if needed. Remove cover and cook another few minutes, stirring occasionally, until vegetables are tender.

Ethiopian Cucumber and Tomato Salad
Adapted from http://www.food.com/recipe/ethiopian-tomato-cucumber-salad-454644

Super easy and another one you may find yourself turning to time and again. Kind of like solid gazpacho. Yum! Very refreshing!

Serves 4 or more

2 – 2-1/2c chopped fresh tomatoes
1-1/2c cucumbers, scrubbed and chopped
1/4c sweet onion or scallions, minced
1 jalapeno, seeded and minced
4t lemon juice
2t balsamic vinegar
1/4t salt
1/4t freshly ground black pepper
1T extra virgin olive oil

Place tomatoes through jalapeno in medium bowl. Sprinkle lemon juice and balsamic vinegar over all. Toss lightly. Add salt and pepper and toss lightly again. Finally, add olive oil and toss to combine. Serve cold, immediately if possible.
**Ethiopian Potato Salad**
Adapted from [http://www.food.com/recipe/ethiopian-potato-salad-123119](http://www.food.com/recipe/ethiopian-potato-salad-123119)

This one is from the Meskerem Ethiopian Restaurant in DC – a place now on my hit list of places to eat! A light potato salad – almost a contradiction but it’s true! AND, a great picnic recipe, whether your picnic is Ethiopian themed or not.

- 1 lb. white or red potatoes, cut into 1 ½-inch cubes
- 3 T lemon juice
- 3 T oil of choice
- 1/2 c chopped scallions, mostly greens
- 2 T fresh Italian parsley, chopped
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 1 jalapeno, seeded and minced (I used a red one – pretty!)

Bring a pot of lightly salted water to a boil and add the potatoes. Cook about 8-10 minutes or until just tender. Drain, rinse in cold water to stop the cooking process, and set aside. In a bowl large enough to accommodate the salad, combine the remaining ingredients. Add the potatoes to the bowl and toss well. Taste for seasonings and adjust lemon juice, oil, salt, pepper as necessary. Cover and refrigerate at least 1 hour before serving. Look pretty garnished with additional chopped parsley and a pinch of paprika.

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**Ethiopian Eggplant Relish**
Adapted from [http://www.spicebazaar.com/recipe?id=73](http://www.spicebazaar.com/recipe?id=73)

Some interesting recipes on this site from all over the world. This eggplant relish is like an Ethiopian version of the Italian Caponata. More of an accent than a side dish, could be served with appetizers or dinner, your choice. Sweet/sour.

Makes about 4 cups

- 1 large or 2 medium eggplant, cut into tiny dice, about ½-inch
- 1/4 c olive oil
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/2 c celery, diced
- 1 – 8 oz. can tomato sauce
- 1 T sugar or more to taste
- 3 T red wine vinegar
- 1 t berbere spice blend
- 1/4 t salt or to taste
- 1/4 c parsley, chopped

Heat oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add eggplant and sauté, stirring, for about 5 minutes or until tender and lightly browned. Add all other ingredients except parsley and stir. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer, covered, for about 8 minutes. Uncover and simmer another 10 minutes or until sauce is thick. Stir in parsley. May be served hot or at room temperature.
Ethiopian Eggplant Salad  
Adapted from [http://www.food.com/recipe/ethiopian-eggplant-salad-278482](http://www.food.com/recipe/ethiopian-eggplant-salad-278482)

Can you tell we had a lot of eggplant coming in from the garden this month? The original recipe called for using raw eggplant! Now, I am an adventurous cook and consumer of exotic foods, but that did not sound at all appealing so I “fixed” it. I hope you enjoy the result. This was one of our favorites and could be a very satisfying vegan main course.

Serves 10

2 medium eggplants, diced as in the recipe above (the recipe said to peel them – I didn’t and it was fine)  
1/4c olive oil, plus one T  
3 cloves garlic, minced  
3c cooked black-eyed peas (about 1¼ c dry, more or less)  
3T lemon juice  
2t sugar or more to taste  
Salt to taste (it takes a fair amount)  
Freshly ground black pepper

Heat 1/4c oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Saute the eggplant, stirring, for about 8 minutes. Add the garlic and cook for 1 minute. Add all the other ingredients, including 1T additional oil, and reduce heat to medium-low. Cook for a couple of minutes to combine flavors. Taste and adjust seasonings. Remove from heat and allow to cool for at least an hour before serving at room temperature or cold.

Doro Wat*  
Adapted from Marcus Samuelsson, The Soul of a New Cuisine: A Discovery of the Foods and Flavors of Africa

This spicy chicken stew is the national dish of Ethiopia. The sauce is thin— all the better to soak into injera. I’ve modified the recipe for potluck ease to use boneless chicken thighs. A cut-up whole chicken would be more authentic. Serves 8.

2 med. red onions, diced  
Salt  
1/4 c Niter Kebbeh (spiced butter) or ghee  
1/4 ground cardamom—freshly ground if possible  
1/4 t black pepper  
3 whole cloves  
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped  
1 ½-inch piece ginger, peeled and chopped  
1 T berberé (adjust as you please up or down the heat scale)  
2 1/2 c chicken stock, divided  
3lb boneless chicken thighs, cut in half  
1/4 c dry red wine  
juice of 1 lime  
4 hard-boiled eggs, peeled
Dry and salt the chicken thighs and set aside. Combine the onions, a pinch of salt, and half of the butter or ghee in a Dutch oven over low heat. Cook, stirring occasionally until the onions are golden, 15 minutes. Add the rest of the butter, and the spices. Cook about 10 more minutes until the onions are meltingly soft and take on the color of the spices. Add 2 c stock and the chicken, bring to a simmer and simmer for 15 minutes. Add the remaining ½ c stock and the wine, simmer again for 10 minutes. When the chicken is done, gently stir in the lime juice and eggs and simmer another 5 minutes. Adjust the sauce for salt. You can make this ahead and reheat it.

**Grilled Steak, Ethiopian Style**
I just made this one up and it came out absolutely wonderfully! VERY easy! You could probably use any meat you like, including chicken! Obviously, cooking times will very with other meats.

Serves 4 – 6

3T olive oil
3T lemon juice
2t sugar
1/2 t salt
1T fresh ginger, minced
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 – 2t Berbere spice blend
1 -1/2- 2 lb. London broil, or a couple of flank steaks

Combine all marinade ingredients in a small bowl and stir until everything is well combined. Place marinade and meat in a leak proof plastic bag and seal. Smoosh the meat around in the marinade to distribute evenly. Allow meat to marinate in the refrigerator for at least 2 hours, preferably for up to 8 hours. Remove meat from refrigerator 45 minutes before cooking. Preheat grill to direct medium heat. Place meat on preheated grill and cook, for approximately 6 - 8 minutes per side for medium-rare for London broil, about 4 minutes per side for flank steaks. Cooking times are approximate as all grills differ.

**Key Wet or Tsebhi Sga (Ethiopian/Eritrean Beef Stew)**
Adapted from [http://www.food.com/recipe/eritrean-ethiopian-beef-stew-tsebhi-sga-or-key-wet-106194](http://www.food.com/recipe/eritrean-ethiopian-beef-stew-tsebhi-sga-or-key-wet-106194)

Another recipe that demonstrates how easy Ethiopian cuisine can be! A spicy stew to be sure. Reduce the berbere if you wish to make it milder. Thick and satisfying.

Serves 6 – 8

2 large onions, diced (the food processor makes this a snap)
6 T ghee, butter or niter kibbeh, divided
4 cloves garlic, minced
1T fresh ginger, minced
2T berbere spice blend
1 – 14oz. can diced tomatoes
2lbs. beef stew meat, cut into 1-inch cubes
water
Heat ghee or other butter in a heavy large pot over medium heat. Add 3T of the ghee or other butter and allow to melt. Add onions and cook, stirring regularly, about 15 minutes or until the onions are quite soft. Add the garlic, ginger and berbere spice and stir. Add 2T water, stir and cook a minute or two. Add tomatoes, stir and reduce heat to medium-low. Partially cover pot and cook for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add meat and bring to a boil. Reduce heat back down to medium-low, stir and simmer, partially covered, stirring occasionally, for about 30 minutes or until meat is tender. Longer is better if you have time, but you may need to add a little water to keep it from sticking. Before serving, add the rest of the ghee or spiced butter (you may omit this step but it is yummy!) and cook a few more minutes. It should be quite thick. Serve hot with injera.

Mesir Wat (Ethiopian red lentil puree)
Adapted from http://www.whats4eats.com/vegetables/mesir-wat-recipe

Standard Ethiopian fare and a beautiful color! Some versions add tomato paste to make it an even more vibrant shade of orange red. There are many different types of “wat” or wot”, which basically means stew or curry. ALL of them are delicious but this was our favorite! Try with whatever you have on hand, including yellow split peas, which will take longer to cook but are at least as good. You may soak them for an hour to speed up the cooking process and ease digestion as well.
Serves 8, at least

2 onions, chopped
3 cloves garlic, crushed
1T ginger, chopped
1/4c niter kibbeh, ghee or butter (if you don’t’ use niter kibbeh, add 1t berbere)
1T Paprika
1t Turmeric
1/8t Cayenne (more or less, depending on whether or not you use berbere)
1lb split red red lentils, rinsed
4c low-sodium chicken stock or water
salt
Freshly ground black pepper

Puree the onion, garlic and ginger in a food processor or blender. Heat niter kebbeh or other butter in a large, heavy-bottomed saucepan over medium heat. Add berbere, if using, turmeric, paprika and cayenne pepper and stir rapidly to color oil and cook spices through, about 30 seconds. Add the onion puree and sauté until excess moisture evaporates and onion loses its raw aroma, about 8-10 minutes. Do not burn; lower heat or add a little water if necessary. Add lentils and broth or water. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to low, and simmer, partially covered, till lentils are cooked through and fall apart, about 30-40 minutes. Add water or stock if necessary to keep from drying out, and stir occasionally. Stir in salt (it may take more than you think it will) and pepper to taste and serve warm.
Chocolate Rum Cake with Cinnamon Whipped Cream*
Adapted from Marcus Samuelsson, The Soul of a New Cuisine: A Discovery of the Foods and Flavors of Africa (John Wiley and Sons, 2006)

Ethiopians don’t really do dessert, but they do like cakes for celebrations, love coffee after a meal, and (unless forbidden by religious tradition) enjoy a heady imbibe on occasion. This cake covers it all. Chef Samuelsson was especially inspired by the spicy aromas of Ethiopian cooking to create this simple chocolate cake. Miriam though it needed a little punch—a rum punch, to be exact. She added a soaking syrup that turns this simple cake into a moist, potent dessert. Go either way with it. Serves 16

For the cake:
4 oz semisweet chocolate, chopped
3/4 lb (3 sticks) unsalted butter, cut in pieces
1/4 c strong brewed coffee
1/4 c dark rum
2 c sugar
3 large eggs
2 c flour pinch salt
1 t ground cinnamon
1/8 t ground cloves
1 t baking powder
1/2 t baking soda
1/2 c buttermilk
1 t vanilla

For Miriam’s Rum Soaking Syrup:
1/2c rum
2T butter
1/4c sugar

For Whipped Cream:
1 t ground cinnamon
1 c heavy cream
1/4 confectioner’s sugar
1 t vanilla
2 T dark rum

Preheat oven to 350. Butter and flour 2 - 8” round pans (or try 1 13x9). Combine the flour, spices, salt, baking soda and powder and blend well. Set aside. Melt chocolate and butter in the top of a double boiler (or in the microwave, stirring and watching carefully). When melted, stir in the rum, coffee, sugar. Stir until the sugar dissolves. Transfer to a large bowl. Beat the eggs into the
chocolate mixture. Stir in the reserved dry mix. Add the buttermilk and vanilla and mix until combined well and slightly thickened. Pour in prepared pan(s). Bake about 30 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the middle comes out clean. WITHOUT THE SOAKER: Remove and cool in pan about 20 minutes on a rack. Then unmold and cool completely. Top with whipped cream when serving. WITH THE RUM SOAKER: Just before the cake is done, heat the rum, sugar, and butter until the sugar and butter melt and all is blended well. When the cake is done, place it on a rack. Pour the soaker over it (you can poke a few holes in the cake with a fork if you like to facilitate the soak). Allow the cake to cool. Unmolding may be difficult, so serve slices right from the pan and top with whipped cream. For the whipped cream: toast cinnamon in a small pan over medium heat until fragrant, 30-60 seconds. Cool. Combine cream, sugar, and vanilla and beat to semi-stiff peaks. Fold in cinnamon and rum. The cake freezes well.

Sources

1 Ethiopia: Background & History http://www.globalgourmet.com/destinations/ethiopia/ethiback.html#ixzz1VmDr1LvN
2 Ibid