

Tanzania April 2016

Tanzania Customs and Cuisine

Tanzania is located on the east coast of Africa and is known for its tropical beaches, great lakes, huge game areas, and majestic snow-capped Kilimanjaro. The native language spoken there is Swahili. "Hakuna Matata," anyone? Popularized by the Lion King, it's the English translation is, "no problem," or "don't worry, be happy."

Food throughout much of East Africa is similar, but if a dish contains coconut or bananas you can be sure it is of Tanzanian origin. Ugali, a type of cornmeal porridge is the major staple. The Ugali is used as a "spoon" to scoop up other components of the meal. Food is consumed using the right hand, and hands are washed before and after the meal. Your meal is taken seated upon a mat, so loose, comfortable clothing would be appropriate.

Tanzania sits at the crossroads of the spice trade routes from India. You may have heard of the Spice Islands, well that would be the island of Zanzibar and other smaller islands just off the coast of Tanzania. In particular, the islands produce cloves, nutmeg, cinnamon, and black pepper. Pilau masala is a unique spice blend that combines the above-mentioned spices, and is used in many rice and stew recipes, giving Tanzanian dishes a distinctive flavor.

Dessert is always a fresh fruit of the region, and honey and coconut are often consumed with fruit, especially with pineapple or mango.

The outdoor market of Dar Es Salaam is quite the experience. Vendors crouch beside their stands selling all manner of fruits and vegetables, chickens, live pigeons, fish, and spices. You will also find many mysterious potions for sale, ranging from those that claim to be a cure for snake bite to those that get rid of an unwanted lover. OR, if the opposite effect is intended, you can buy brightly colored powders which you would sprinkle on your lover's Ugali in order to make them more amorous!

The people of Tanzania are friendly and hospitable, and a guest is shown great honor. It's hard to leave Dar, and when the time comes you say regretfully, "Kwa heri ya kuonana." (Farewell, 'til we meet again.)

Sources: www.africa.upenn.edu and www.tasteoftanzania.com



Prawns in Coconut Sauce (Kamba wa nazi) (Tested)
Serves 4 to 6

This recipe for “Kamba” or prawns comes from Miriam Kinunda, author of the “Taste of Tanzania” blog. She also has a video that accompanies the recipe if you’d like to see how she makes the dish firsthand. Just click on the link at the end of the recipe. Miriam is also adamant that you don’t use coconut milk from a can, she’d rather you try to make your own.

Ingredients

1 pound prawns/shrimp, peeled and deveined (15-20 size large, or 21-25 size medium)
2 tbsp. vegetable oil
1 cup diced onions
1 tbsp. chopped garlic
1 tbsp. chopped ginger
½ tsp. black pepper
½ tsp. turmeric
1 tbsp. tomato paste
1 cup diced bell peppers (red, yellow, green, or combination)
1 to 1 ½ cups diced fresh tomatoes
1 tsp. kosher salt
1 cup coconut milk (or see recipe)
fresh herbs of your choice for garnish, cilantro, basil, or parsley

Directions

Heat oil in a large fry pan, add onions, and fry at medium heat until translucent or light brown. Add garlic and ginger, continue to cook for another minute.

Add black pepper and turmeric, stir for half a minute; add tomato paste and stir for one minute.

Toss in bell peppers and cook for about a minute, add tomatoes and salt. Cover the pan and continue to cook until the tomatoes are dissolved and the peppers have softened, about 10 more minutes.

Remove the lid from the pan and pour in the coconut milk, bring to a simmer. Add prawns, in a single layer if your pan allows that, and simmer for 3 minutes; turn prawns over and continue to simmer about 2 more minutes. The prawns will be pink and you shouldn't see any grey coloration in the middle. Add more coconut milk or water if you need to increase the amount of sauce.

Garnish with herbs of our choice and serve with [Ugali](#), Tanzanian Rice, or your favorite vegetables.

Adapted from: <http://tasteoftanzania.com/blog/prawn-in-coconut-sauce-kamba-wa-nazi/>
Photo credit: [Lummmmy](#) from Flickr.com, via [Creative Commons](#) Attribution No Derivs 2.0
Generic.



Tanzanian Rice (Pilau) (Tested) **Serves 4 to 6**

Pilau originates from India. The taste and look of Tanzanian pilau is very different from the Indian version as Tanzanian rice uses more spices than Indian pilau. This has become a favorite Tanzanian rice dish.

Ingredients

- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- 1 cup basmati rice
- ¼ cup diced onions
- 1 tbsp. chopped garlic
- 1 tbsp. chopped fresh ginger
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 to 1 ½ tbsp. pilau masala (recipe follows)
- ½ cup coconut milk (or see recipe)
- 2 to 3 cups chicken broth, simmering

Spice Mixture (Pilau Masala)

Combine these spices:

1 ½ tbsp. ground cumin

1 tbsp. ground cardamom

½ tsp. ground black pepper

½ tsp. ground cinnamon

½ tsp. ground cloves

Directions

In a medium saucepan, heat oil on medium heat, add rice and onions. Stir until the rice loses some of its translucency and starts to turn white.

Add garlic, ginger, salt, and pilau masala. Keep stirring for one more minute.

Add ½ cup of the hot broth and ½ cup of coconut milk. Stir, cover the pot, and turn heat to the lowest settings. Ladle in additional broth ½ cup at a time until the rice is cooked. Check on the rice after 5 minutes to see if more liquid is needed, and check every five minutes thereafter.

A recommended accompaniment to pilau is [Kachumbari](#). The recipe for this simple cabbage salad is in Dining for Women's recipe archives.

To see photos of how to cook this dish:

<https://worldcupoffood.wordpress.com/2013/07/12/tanzanian-cuisine-pilau-and-kachumbari/>

Recipe and photo credit with permission from Miriam Kinunda:

<http://tasteoftanzania.com/blog/plain-pilau/>



Tanzanian Winter Squash (Futari Ya Maboga)

Serves 6

This winter squash dish caught my attention when I discovered a very interesting blog, “Immigrant Kitchens,” by Lindsay Sterling. I think her concept is brilliant, in that she works side-by-side with immigrants who teach her how to make the foods of their country. In other words, her recipes are the real deal! Please visit her website by clicking on the link at the end of this recipe to learn more about the origins of this dish, as well as find foods from all over the

world that she has cooked and prepared with others.

Ingredients

2 tbsp. oil
1/2 small onion, medium dice
1/2 inch fresh ginger, peeled and grated or finely chopped
1 tsp. cardamom powder or 3 whole black/brown cardamom pods
1/2 tsp. salt
1 14-ounce can coconut milk (or see recipe)
1 1/2 pounds butternut squash (or kabocha or hubbard), peeled and seeded, and sliced into rectangular planks 1/2" inch by 2" inches
1/2 tsp. turmeric
dash cinnamon to taste

Directions

Heat oil in large pot and sauté onion until just starting to brown. Add ginger and cardamom, stir for one minute, add coconut milk and salt. Stir and bring to a boil.

Add squash and turmeric. Once liquid boils again, check the level and add additional water if you think it is too dry, up to 1 cup. (The amount of water you add really depends on how much sauce you want with your squash.) Cover pan and turn heat to low, continue to simmer until squash is tender.

If you want nice large pieces of squash, try not to stir or bump the squash as it simmers. Once the squash is tender, remove cardamom pods if you used them. Serve pieces of squash with sauce. Sprinkle cinnamon on top of each dish to taste.

Recipe and photo credit with permission from Lindsay Sterling at:

<http://www.immigrantkitchens.com/search/label/Tanzanian%20winter%20squash>

As cooked with Iman Lipumba from Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, in Portland, Maine, 2014.

Adapted from A Taste of Tanzania, by Miriam R. Kinunda.