

Traditional Vegetables

Recipes from Cameroon

**Amaranth, African Eggplant,
Jute Mallow, Nightshade
and Okra**

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AVRDC - The World Vegetable Center is an international nonprofit institute committed to alleviating poverty and malnutrition through the increased production and consumption of nutritious, health-promoting vegetables. The Center's improved vegetable lines and technologies help small-scale farmers boost yields, increase their incomes, and safely grow nutritious vegetables for their families and communities.

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Foreword

The UN Millennium Development Goals include reducing the proportion of people who suffer from hunger and poverty. To contribute to this noble cause, Conseil Ouest et Centre Africain Pour la Recherche et le Développement Agricoles / West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF/WECARD) has funded a project entitled Enhancing Productivity, Competitiveness and Marketing of Traditional African (Leafy) Vegetables for Improved Income and Nutrition in West and Central Africa (TAVs for Income and Nutrition in WCA).

Traditional African leafy vegetables have several values and properties that make them useful plants to the community. These vegetables have high nutritive values with regard to micronutrients and in certain cases, their nutritional content supersedes that of exotic crops. They are culturally accepted as dietary complements to staples, but their potential for increased household income and nutrition is insufficiently exploited. The project aims to increase production and consumption of traditional African leafy vegetables by overcoming constraints such as low productivity of current cultivars and landraces, lack of good quality seeds, limited knowledge of postharvest and processing options and opportunities, poorly developed value chains and a lack of awareness of nutritional benefits. Despite their value, these vegetables have been neglected by stakeholders in terms of research, extension, education and utilization.

Childhood malnutrition in sub-Saharan Africa is widespread, and forecast to increase by 13% to 42 million in 2020. Much of the micronutrient malnutrition can be attributed to the lack of diversity in local diets, and to the poor quality or unsuitable preparation methods of some foods. For good health, at least 400 g/day of fruit and vegetables should be consumed, but only 56% of the recommended amount is consumed on average throughout Africa. These statistics may be worse for West and Central Africa, where most countries rank among the top 20 worst affected countries globally with respect to the proportion of chronically undernourished children. Appropriate combinations of foods can make the consumption of traditional vegetables a pleasant experience, and optimize the intake of essential nutrients. This book seeks to contribute to balanced diets and alleviate malnutrition by promoting tasty recipes to increase the consumption of nutritious traditional vegetables.

-- Regine Kamga
AVRDC Research Associate and Assistant Project Manager



Cameroon is divided into 10 regions. The three northern regions are the Far North, North and Adamawa. Directly south are the Centre and East. The South region lies on the Gulf of Guinea and the southern border. Cameroon's western area is split into four smaller regions: The Littoral and Southwest regions are on the coast, and the Northwest and West regions are in the western grassfields. The Northwest and Southwest were once part of British Cameroon; the other regions were in French Cameroun. (Source: Wikipedia)

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Introduction

Increasing the consumption of vegetables is an important contribution to addressing malnutrition in the developing world. Vegetables are rich in pro-vitamin A and vitamin C, several mineral micronutrients, and health-promoting phytochemicals with antioxidant, antibiotic, anticancer and other nutraceutical properties (Yang and Keding 2009). Thus their presentation, preparation, flavor and texture can be important issues for increasing consumption, particularly by vulnerable groups including children. The development of recipes incorporating vegetables in tasty and attractive meals is an extremely important and neglected research area (Keatinge et al. 2012). Appropriate combinations of different ingredients can make the consumption of vegetables a pleasant experience and also optimize the supply of essential nutrients.

Cameroon is often referred to as “Africa in miniature” because of its cultural, ethnic, ecological and geographic diversity. It is Africa’s melting pot, where cultures from West and Central Africa meet. This diversity also extends to the Cameroonian kitchen, where a great variety of dishes can be found. Cameroon has many different tribes and almost all of these tribes have their own traditional dishes.

This book celebrates the knowledge and ingeniousness of Cameroonians in the preparation of vegetables. It focuses on amaranth, nightshade, African eggplant, jute mallow, and okra—five vegetables that are among the most consumed vegetables in Cameroon, and the most nutritious as well (Kamga et al. 2009).

The authors are pleased to present you with this collection of traditional Cameroonian recipes that have been passed on from generation to generation. Cameroon is a bilingual country; we have taken some popular dishes from English-speaking regions and others from French-speaking regions.

We are grateful to Ms. Bernadette Metoh, Mrs. Monique Tegantchouang, Mr. Benoit Bidjo, Ms. Guebediang Sorèle, Ms. Esther Pegalepo, Mr. Chendjou Ronald, Mr. Achu Adeh, Ms. Ann-Kathrin Soellner and Ms. Natascha Brückmann for their great contributions in collecting the information gathered in this book. Our gratitude also goes to Dr. Klaus Fleissner, whose useful comments improved the document, and Ms. Vanna Liu for the graphic design of this booklet.





Traditional treasures

(clockwise from top left)

Nightshade

Okra

Jute mallow

Amaranth

African eggplant



We hope these recipes will help you become more familiar with traditional vegetables as well as with the regions of Cameroon. Enjoy your meal, and appreciate the valuable nutrients in traditional vegetables!

-- Takemore Chagomoka, Regine Kamga, Abdou Tenkouano, Maureen Mecozzi

Dedicated to all people who work to improve the nutrition and health of the people of Cameroon.



About the recipes

Serving size

All recipes provide **six servings**.

Ingredients

Many of the recipes call for **limestone**, to help rapidly soften vegetables and preserve their green color. Limestone can be purchased in whole pieces or ground to a powder. The whole pieces should be ground with a mortar and pestle before using.

Seasonings

Seasonings include salt, pepper and stock cubes or granules. Use according to your taste!

Measurements

Where possible, measurements are given in grams:

Liquid

1 tsp = 6 ml

1 tbsp = 15 ml

1 cup = 240 ml

Dry

1 tsp = 5 g

1 tbsp = 15 g

1 cup = 200 g



Accompaniments

Fufu (Cassava flour)

Boil water in a pot, pour in cassava flour, and then stir until the paste is cooked. Shape into balls and serve.

Fufu garri (Processed cassava)

Measure the amount of garri you want to cook. In a pot, add three times the water as the amount of garri and bring the water to a boil. When the water is boiling, add the garri and stir for a minute. Immediately drain the water. Make balls and serve.

Fufu corn (Cornflour or cornmeal)

In a large pot, bring 5 liters of water to the boil. Sieve 1 kg cornflour, then wash it in a small dish with cold water. Add the cornflour to the boiling water and stir. Cover and cook for 10 minutes, stirring from time to time to prevent the cornflour from sticking to the pot. Pound the cornflour with a pestle for 20 minutes, then cover and cook for 20-30 minutes. Remove the pot from the fire. Using a wooden spoon, remove spoonfuls of the cornflour and wrap it in banana leaves or plastic wrap.

Ekwang (Grated cocoyam)

Peel cocoyams, clean with cold water, and grate. Put in a pot, add water and stir to obtain a smooth paste. Add salt and palm oil to taste; mix. Clean banana leaves, then soften them by moving back and forth over a flame. Put small quantities of the paste on each banana leaf, depending on the size of the leaf, and then wrap to make a flat package. In a pot, lay down several banana leaves. Put all the packages on top of the banana leaves, add water, cover, and cook for 2 hours. You can also add grated cassava tubers to the grated cocoyam paste for a stickier texture.

Achu (Pounded cocoyam)

Wash and boil cocoyam with the skin on for 2 to 3 hours. When cooked, peel and pound cocoyam with a pestle while the pot is still on the fire. Have a small dish of water near the pot so when you are pounding you can dip the pestle into the water to prevent the cocoyam from sticking.



AMARANTH

Scientific names: *Amaranthus cruentus* L., *A. lividus*, *A. dubius*

Common names: Amaranth, pigweed, green

Local names: Kumkum (Bafia), Ndjap mekat (Bagangté), Feufe (Dschang), Teue (Bamoun), Po'oga (Bassa), Folong (Bulu, Ewondo), Biwolè (Douala), Agnaka/Hakondjam (Fulfudé), Gagnorwa (Haoussa), Kumkuma (Eton)



Amaranth leaves with pumpkin kernels

Ingredients

- 3 bunches amaranth leaves
- 1 g limestone
- 3 cups (600 g) pumpkin kernels
- 6 smoked fish or 1 kg meat
- 2 large onions
- 1 large leek
- 1 stalk celery
- Dried shrimps (optional)
- 1/4 liter refined vegetable oil
- 1 clove garlic, 1 small piece ginger, 2 yellow peppers
- 15 - 20 grains white pepper
- Seasoning (stock cubes, salt, pepper)



Preparation

Sort, wash and cut the amaranth leaves into small pieces. Dilute the 1 g of limestone in a cup of hot water and pour through a filter to avoid grit in the vegetables. In a pot, heat 1.5 – 2 liters of water, pour in the limestone liquid, and add the amaranth leaves. Cook until the leaves soften, stirring from time to time. When the leaves are sufficiently soft, remove from the fire, drain in a strainer and rinse with cool water. Squeeze out the water and shape the leaves into balls. Soak smoked fish in hot water, remove the bones and clean the flesh. Slice onions, chop leeks and celery. Peel the ginger and garlic, clean the peppers, and crush together. Chop shrimps. Grind pumpkin kernels to a powder.

Cooking

Heat 1/8 liter of vegetable oil in a pan and cook one sliced onion until it begins to brown. Add leeks and cook three to five minutes more. Add celery, let cook a few minutes without covering, then add the crushed garlic, ginger and peppers, the fish, and a half-glass of water. Simmer for ten minutes. Add amaranth and salt, stir well. Add a glass of water and cover the pan. When the vegetables are boiling, add the pumpkin seed powder, but do not stir. Simmer for ten minutes, then mix. Heat the remaining 1/8 liter of vegetable oil in a frying pan. Quickly brown the chopped shrimps for five to ten seconds with the remaining sliced onion, then pour over the cooked vegetables, to add shine and a delicious taste. Immediately close the pan to let vegetables absorb the aroma. Let it boil a few minutes, then add a teaspoon of ground white pepper and adjust the flavor using the seasonings.

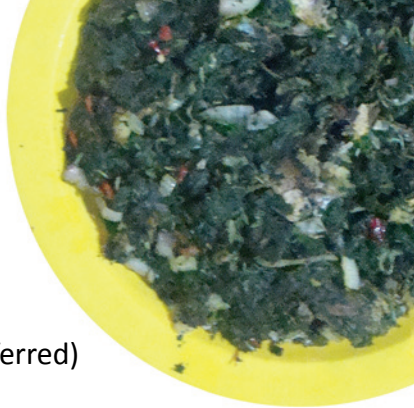
Serve with cassava sticks, plantain or yams.



Sautéed amaranth leaves

Ingredients

- 4 bunches amaranth leaves
- 1 g limestone
- 2 large onions
- 3 large smoked fish (cod or herring preferred)
- Dried shrimps (optional)
- 1/4 liter refined vegetable oil
- 4 – 5 large tomatoes
- 2 cloves garlic, 1 large leek (white part)
- Seasoning (stock cubes, salt, pepper)



Preparation

Sort, wash and cut the amaranth leaves into small pieces. Dilute the 1 g of limestone in a cup of hot water and filter to avoid grit in the vegetables. In a pot, heat 1.5 – 2 liters of water, pour in the limestone liquid, and add the amaranth leaves. Cook until the leaves soften, stirring from time to time. When the leaves are sufficiently soft, remove from the fire, drain in a strainer and rinse with cool water. Squeeze out the water and shape the leaves into balls. Chop onions and tomato. Crush together garlic and leek. Soak smoked fish and dried shrimps in water to soften.

Cooking

Heat the vegetable oil in a pan. Add onions and cook until they begin to brown. Add tomatoes, then season with salt and seasonings. When the tomato has cooked down, add crushed garlic and leek, then gradually add amaranth while mixing well. Simmer a few minutes, taste and adjust seasoning. Optional: Add carrots, French beans, or sweet pepper. The amaranth also can be fried with meat or dried shrimps.

Serve with plantains, cocoyam, yams or cassava.



Amaranth leaves with roasted groundnuts

Ingredients

- 2 bunches amaranth leaves
- 1 g limestone
- 2 cups groundnuts (400 g)
- 1/8 liter refined vegetable oil
- 4 smoked fish or 1 kg meat
- Dried shrimps (optional)
- 1 large onion
- 1 clove garlic, 1 small piece ginger, 1 large leek, 2 yellow peppers
- Seasoning (stock cubes, salt, pepper)

Preparation

Sort, wash and cut the amaranth leaves into small pieces. Dilute the 1 g of limestone in a cup of hot water and filter to avoid grit in the vegetables. In a pot, heat 1.5 – 2 liters of water, pour in the limestone liquid, and add the amaranth leaves. Cook until the leaves soften, stirring from time to time. When the leaves are soft, remove from the fire, drain in a strainer and rinse with cool water. Squeeze out the water and shape the leaves into balls. Roast groundnuts for approximately 30 minutes, then cool and crush into a paste. Clean smoked fish by removing the bones. Crush together the garlic, ginger, leek and peppers.

Cooking

Pour 1 liter of water into a pot and add the crushed garlic mixture, salt and half of the onion. Add meat, if you are using it. Bring to a boil. Add the smoked fish and groundnut paste after water boils. Cover and simmer about 30 minutes, stirring from time to time, until you have a thick sauce. Add amaranth and cook about 10 minutes more. Stir vigorously to obtain a homogeneous mixture. Adjust seasoning and cook on a gentle fire for 10 minutes. Pour the vegetable oil over the mixture, and serve with plantain, cocoyams, yams or cassava.



Amaranth leaves with fresh groundnuts

Ingredients

- 3 large bunches amaranth leaves
- 1 g of limestone
- 3 cups (600 g) groundnuts
- 1 kg meat
- Dried shrimps (optional)
- 1/4 liter refined vegetable oil
- 2 large onions, 2 large cloves garlic, 1 small piece ginger, 1 large leek, 2 yellow peppers
- 15 – 20 grains of white pepper
- Seasoning (stock cubes, salt, pepper)

Preparation

Sort, wash and cut the amaranth leaves into small pieces. Dilute the 1 g of limestone in a cup of hot water and filter to avoid grit in the vegetables. In a pot, heat 1.5 – 2 liters of water, pour in the limestone liquid, and add the amaranth leaves. Cook until the leaves soften, stirring from time to time. When the leaves are sufficiently soft, remove from the fire, drain in a strainer and rinse with cool water. Squeeze out the water and shape the leaves into balls. Slightly warm groundnuts in a frying pan; remove nuts, soak in hot water for 5 to 10 minutes, and rinse them. Crush together one onion, the leek, ginger, garlic, peppers, white pepper and the groundnuts.

Cooking

In a pot, heat a little vegetable oil and add the meat, salt, pepper and one onion. When the meat is tender, add the mixture of fresh groundnut paste, cover with water, cover and let simmer for 20 minutes, stirring from time to time to prevent the paste from sticking to the bottom of the pan. Add vegetables, cover the pot, and boil for about 15 minutes. In a frying pan, heat the 1/4 liter vegetable oil; add the remaining onion chopped into small pieces and quickly brown together with the dry shrimps. Pour over the vegetables for shine and a delicious taste. Let boil a few minutes more, then stir and adjust the seasoning. Serve with plantain, cocoyam, yams or cassava.





NIGHTSHADE

Scientific names: *Solanum scabrum*; *S. villosum*

Common names: Nightshade, garden huckleberry

Local names: Zom (Bulu, Ewondo), Njap lah (Bamiléké), ba'am (bassa), Bitosso (bafia), Djap tchuen (Bamoun), Koumbi/Hakondjam (Fufuldé), kolinski (Haoussa), Jamajama (Bamenda)



Nightshade leaves with fresh groundnuts

Ingredients

- 3 large bunch nightshade leaves
- 1 g of limestone
- 3 cup (600 g) groundnuts
- 1 kg meat
- Dried shrimps (optional)
- 1/4 liter refined vegetable oil
- 2 large onions, 2 large cloves garlic, 1 small piece ginger, 1 big leek, two yellow peppers
- 15-20 grains of white pepper
- Seasoning (stock cubes, salt, pepper)





Preparation

Sort, wash and cut the nightshade leaves into small pieces. Dilute the 1 g of limestone in a cup of hot water and filter to avoid grit in the vegetables. In a pot, heat 1.5 – 2 liters of water, pour in the limestone liquid, and add the nightshade leaves. Cook until the leaves soften, stirring from time to time. When the leaves are sufficiently soft, remove from the fire, drain in a strainer and rinse with cool water. Squeeze out the water and shape the leaves into balls. Slightly warm groundnuts in a frying pan. Remove nuts, soak in hot water for 5 to 10 minutes and wash them. Chop one onion, leeks, ginger, garlic, peppers, and white pepper, and crush together with groundnuts.

Cooking

In a pot, heat a little vegetable oil and add the meat, salt, pepper and half an onion. When the meat is tender, add the mixture of fresh groundnut paste, cover with water, cover the pot and simmer for 20 minutes, stirring from time to time to prevent the paste from sticking to the bottom of the pot. Add vegetables and mix; cover and let boil about 15 minutes. Heat the vegetable oil in a frying pan, then add the remaining onion chopped into small pieces and quickly brown together with the dry shrimps. Pour over the vegetables for shine and a delicious taste. Let it boil a few minutes more, then stir and adjust the seasonings. Serve with tubers of your choice.



Nightshade leaves with roasted groundnuts

Ingredients

- 2 bunches nightshade leaves
- 1 g limestone
- 2 cups (400 g) groundnuts
- 1/8 liter refined vegetable oil
- 4 smoked fish or 1 kg meat
- Dried shrimps (optional)
- 1 large onion
- 1 clove garlic, 1 small piece ginger, 1 large leek, two yellow peppers
- Seasoning (stock cubes, salt, pepper)

Preparation

Sort, wash and cut the nightshade leaves into small pieces. Dilute the 1 g of limestone in a cup of hot water and filter to avoid grit in the vegetables. In a pot, heat 1.5 – 2 liters of water, pour in the limestone liquid, and add the nightshade leaves. Cook until the leaves soften, stirring from time to time. When the leaves are sufficiently soft, remove from the fire, drain in a strainer and rinse with cool water. Squeeze out the water and shape the leaves into balls. Roast groundnuts for 30 minutes. When cool, remove nuts and crush into a paste. Clean smoked fish by removing the bones. Crush together garlic, ginger, leek and peppers.



Cooking

In a pot, combine 1 liter of water with the mixture of garlic, ginger, leeks and peppers, some salt and half of the onion. Add meat, if you want to use it. When the liquid comes to a boil, add the smoked fish and groundnut paste. Cover and simmer about 30 minutes, stirring from time to time, until you have a thick sauce. Add nightshade and cook about 15 minutes more. Stir vigorously to obtain a homogeneous mixture. Adjust the seasoning and cook for 10 minutes over a gentle fire. Heat the vegetable oil in a frying pan, then add the remaining onion chopped into small pieces and quickly brown together with the dry shrimps. Pour over the vegetables for shine and a delicious taste. Serve with plantain, cocoyam, yams or cassava.



Sautéed nightshade leaves

Ingredients

- 4 bunches nightshade leaves
- 1 g of limestone
- 2 large onions
- 3 large smoked fish (cod or herring preferred) or ½ kg meat
- Dried shrimps (optional)
- 1/4 liter refined vegetable oil
- 4 or 5 large tomatoes
- 2 cloves garlic, 1 leek (white part only)
- Seasoning (stock cubes, salt, pepper)



Preparation

Sort, wash and cut the nightshade leaves into small pieces. Dilute the 1 g of limestone in a cup of hot water and filter to avoid grit in the vegetables. In a pot, heat 1.5 – 2 liters of water, pour in the limestone liquid, and add the nightshade leaves. Cook until the leaves soften, stirring from time to time. When the leaves are sufficiently soft, remove from the fire, drain in a strainer and rinse with cool water. Squeeze out the water and shape the leaves into balls. Chop onions and tomato. Crush together garlic and leek. Soak smoked fish and dried shrimps in water to soften.

Cooking

Heat a few spoonfuls of vegetable oil in a pan and brown the onions. Add tomatoes and seasoning. When the tomato is cooked, add crushed garlic and leek, then gradually add nightshade leaves while mixing well. Simmer a few minutes more. Taste and adjust seasoning. You can add carrots, French beans, or sweet pepper. Accompany your dish with plantains, cocoyam, yams or cassava.

Note: The Bamilèkés people from the West Region of Cameroon use this sautéed nightshade dish to accompany the delicacy called “Nkui and Fufu Corn,” which is prepared for women who have just given birth. It is believed that Nkui (*Triumphetta cordifolia*) washes the womb. Like okra, Nkui has a slippery texture that thickens soups and stews.



Nightshade leaves with pumpkin seeds

Ingredients

- 3 bunches nightshade leaves
- 1 g limestone
- 3 cups (600 g) pumpkin kernels
- 6 smoked fish or 1 kg meat
- Dried shrimps (optional)
- 1/4 liter refined vegetable oil
- 1 clove garlic, 1 small piece of ginger, 2 large onions, 1 large leek, 1 stalk celery, 2 yellow peppers
- 15 - 20 grains of white pepper
- Seasoning (stock cubes, salt, pepper)

Preparation

Sort, wash and cut the nightshade leaves into small pieces. Dilute the 1 g of limestone in a cup of hot water and filter to avoid grit in the vegetables. In a pot, heat 1.5 – 2 liters of water, pour in the limestone liquid, and add the nightshade leaves. Cook until the leaves soften, stirring from time to time. When the leaves are sufficiently soft, remove from the fire, drain in a strainer and rinse with cool water. Squeeze out the water and shape the leaves into balls. In a pot, add about 1 liter of water and boil together the meat, cut onions, leeks and celery. Peel the ginger and garlic, clean peppers and crush them together. Chop shrimps and grind pumpkin kernels.



Cooking

Heat 1/8 liter of vegetable oil in a frying pan and brown onions. Add leeks and cook for three to five minutes more. Add celery and cook for a few minutes without covering. Add the mixture of garlic, ginger and peppers, salt, the meat and vegetables, the nightshade leaves, and a half-glass of water; mix well, cover and simmer for 10 minutes. When the mixture is boiling, add the pumpkin kernel powder, but do not stir. Simmer for 10 minutes, then stir to combine. Heat remaining vegetable oil and brown the chopped shrimps for five to ten seconds; pour over the vegetables for shine and a delicious taste. Immediately cover the pan to let vegetables absorb the aroma. Let it boil a few minutes. Add a teaspoon of ground white pepper and adjust the seasonings to taste. Serve with tubers of your choice or fufu corn (see page 11).



Sanga/Suga/Nsôk

This is a traditional recipe of people from the South and Centre regions of Cameroon.

Ingredients

- 3 bunches nightshade leaves
- 2 kg fresh corn grains
- 2 – 2.5 kg palm nuts

Preparation and Cooking

Sort, wash and cut leaves into small pieces. Put the sliced leaves in a pan with 1.5 liter of water and bring to a boil. Add the corn grains, cover with water, and let boil for 30 minutes, or until dry. In another pan, boil the palm nuts in water; crush them gently to obtain the pulp. Put the pulp in a container with warm water, knead it with your hands, and pour it through a sieve to extract the juice. Add the palm oil juice to the vegetables and stir vigorously to obtain a homogeneous mixture. Cook for 20-30 minutes, stirring up from time to time to prevent the mixture from sticking to the pan. When the mixture becomes thick, remove the pan from fire and serve. You can add sugar to taste.



Kwa'Ndzap

This is a typical dish of the Dschang people, a Bamiléké ethnic group from west region of Cameroon. It is made of pounded cocoyam and sautéed nightshade leaves. This traditional meal is eaten with the fingers. Kwa'Ndzap also can be served with sautéed cabbage.



Ingredients

- cocoyam tubers
- 4 bunches nightshade leaves
- 1 g of limestone
- 4 – 5 large tomatoes
- 2 large onions
- 1 clove garlic, 1 small piece ginger, 2 yellow peppers
- 1 large leek
- 1 basil branch
- 1/4 liter refined vegetable oil
- 15 - 20 grains white pepper
- Dried shrimps
- Seasoning (stock cubes, salt, pepper)

Preparation and Cooking

Peel the cocoyam tubers, place in a pot with water and boil for 30 – 45 minutes. Pound the cooked cocoyam immediately in a mortar to make a smooth paste. Use a spatula to make small balls of paste. These balls are known as Kwa'a.

Sort, wash and cut nightshade leaves into small pieces. Put the sliced leaves in a pan with 1.5 liter of water and the limestone and bring to a boil. Remove from the fire, drain in a strainer and rinse with cool water. Cut tomatoes, onions, garlic, ginger, peppers, leeks, and basil into very small pieces. Put oil in the pan, and fry for 5 minutes, and then stir-fry together with cooked leaves. Add salt and white pepper to taste. Crush dried shrimps and add a little in the mixture. Simmer on low heat for 20 minutes and adjust the flavor using the seasonings. This mixture is known as N'dzap.



Nightshade leaves with African eggplant

This delicacy is a traditional recipe of the Béti people from the Centre and South regions of Cameroon. The dish is most appreciated by the elderly.

Ingredients

- 3 bunches nightshade leaves
- 1.5 - 2 kg palm nuts
- 10 African eggplant fruits

Preparation and cooking

Sort, wash and cut nightshade leaves into small pieces. Put the sliced leaves in a pan, add the African eggplant fruits and water, cover and boil for 20-30 minutes. Remove from the fire. Wash the palm nuts and boil them in another pan for approximately 15-20 minutes. Remove from fire, drain, pour in the mortar and crush until the pulp separates from the nuts. Put the pulp in a container, add warm water, knead with your hands, and pour through a sieve to collect the juice. You can also remove the tender African eggplant from the pan, remove the skin and crush the pulp before returning to the pan. Place the pan of nightshade on the fire, then add the palm nut juice, and stir vigorously. Boil for approximately 15 minutes while stirring from time to time so the mixture does not stick to the bottom of the pan. Simmer under low heat for 15-20 minutes until thick. Serve with cassava or yams.





Nightshade/JamaJama and Fufu corn

This is a traditional recipe from the North West Region of Cameroon. Some tribes serve it with chicken roasted in palm oil; it is called 'kaati kaati'. This dish is eaten with the fingers. The nightshade used here is the small leaf variety with a bitter taste.

Ingredients

- 2 kg of nightshade/jamajama leaves
- 1 kg of dried crushed corn (cornflour)
- 1/4 bottle red palm oil
- Seasoning (stock cubes)

Preparation and cooking

Remove the tough stems and the flowers of the nightshade. Wash and slice the green leaves and juicy stem parts into small pieces. Put in a pot on the fire; stir the vegetables after 15 minutes. Add oil and stock cubes, cover, and cook for another 15 minutes. Mix after 5 minutes and remove the pot from the fire. Serve with fufu corn (see page 11).





AFRICAN EGGPLANT (fruit)

Scientific names: *Solanum aethiopicum* L.

Common names: African eggplant, garden eggs, scarlet eggplant

Local names: Djagaturu (Bakossi), Nyoh (Bagangté), Cheuche (Dschang), Zong (Eton, Ewondo, Bulu), Nga (Bamoun), Hisingui (Bassa), Gaouta (Haoussa)



African eggplant sauce

Ingredients

- 1 kg African eggplant
- 1 kg chopped meat or crumbled smoked fish
- 2 large onions
- 1/4 liter refined vegetable oil
- 2 large tomatoes
- 3 tablespoons mayonnaise
- 1 clove garlic, 1 stalk celery, 1 large leek, two yellow peppers
- Seasoning (stock cubes, salt, pepper)





Preparation

Wash the African eggplant, soak for few minutes in hot water and remove the skin. Cut each fruit into four pieces. Crush together garlic, celery, leeks, peppers and tomatoes. Finely slice onions.

Cooking

Place a pan on the fire, add the vegetable oil, and heat. Brown the sliced onions in the oil. Add the crushed garlic, celery, leeks, peppers and tomatoes and simmer. After 3-5 minutes, add the meat or fish, and cook until done. Add African eggplant fruit and cook for about 30 minutes to reduce the amount of water. Add mayonnaise, salt and simmer to obtain the consistency you prefer. Adjust the seasoning. Serve with rice or tubers of your choice.

Efirge Zong

This is a purée of African eggplant fruits, a traditional recipe of the Béti ethnic group from the central and south regions of Cameroon.

Ingredients

- 5 liters African eggplant fruits
- 1.5 – 2 kg groundnuts
- 4 to 6 smoked fish or 1 cup (150 g) dry shrimps
- Seasoning (stock cubes, salt, pepper)

Preparation

Wash the African eggplant, boil them in water, and remove the skin. Roast groundnuts and grind into a paste.

Cooking

Put two liters of water in a pot, add the smoked fish or shrimps, and bring to the boil. Remove half a liter of water from the pot and set it aside, then add the groundnuts and African eggplant. Stir until the mixture becomes a homogeneous paste. Adjust the thickness of the paste with the reserved hot water, then adjust the seasoning. Serve with tubers of your choice.





Mendim me zoan (African eggplant fruit juice)

This delicacy is highly appreciated in Southern Cameroon, particularly by the Bulu group. It is offered to special guests to welcome them and express friendship. Mendim me zoan is also consumed during lengthy discussion sessions, or palavers. This eggplant juice is also given to women who have just given birth, to help cleanse the womb.

Ingredients

- African eggplants (as much as you want)
- Water
- Plantains

Preparation and Cooking

Wash the African eggplant well and put in a pot. Add water to the desired quantity and bring to the boil. When the eggplants are cooked, crush them into the liquid. Remove from the fire and serve warm with pounded plantain paste: Peel the plantains, boil them in a pot, and when they are cooked, pound into a paste. Serve the Mendim me Zoan warm with the pounded plantain.





Yellow soup with African eggplant

This is a traditional recipe from the North West and West Regions of Cameroon. It is eaten with the fingers.

Ingredients

- 1 kg African eggplant
- 1 liter palm oil
- 6 large smoked fish or 1 kg meat
- 1 g limestone
- Yellow soup spices (fruit of aidon tree: *Tetrapleura tetraptera*; calabash nutmeg: *Monodora myristica*; tuberous root: *Echinops giganteus*; fruit of garlic tree: *Afrotyrax lepidophyllus*; bird pepper: *Capsicum frutescens*; odoriferous grape: *Fagara leprerii*; open mouth: *Fagara xanthoxyloides*; white liana: *Pentadiplandra brazzeana*; bush pepper: *Piper guineense*)
- Seasoning (stock cubes, salt, pepper)

Preparation and Cooking

Wash meat or fish and cut into pieces. Place in a pot with some water, season with salt and boil until cooked. Wash the African eggplant, add to the pot and cook for 15-20 minutes. Remove eggplant from the pot, rinse under cold water, drain, remove pulp and set aside. Wash and grind yellow soup spices. When the meat is ready, put another pot on the fire and pour in palm oil. Heat for about three minutes and remove from the fire. Completely dilute limestone in water, the filter to remove any stone or grit. Pour the limestone solution bit by bit into the oil until you get a yellow mixture. Pour the meat and fish from the other pot into the yellow mixture. Stir well and add the yellow soup spices and eggplant pulp, season to taste, and serve. Serve with Achu (see page 11).





Kwem (Cassava leaves with African eggplant)

This food is a traditional dish of the Béti ethnic group from the Centre and South regions of Cameroon, and is much appreciated by the elderly.

Ingredients

- 3 bunches cassava leaves (Kwem)
- 1.5 kg palm nuts
- 15 – 20 African eggplant fruits

Preparation and Cooking

In a mortar, crush the cassava leaves until they become tender. Put the paste in a pan, add a little water, cover and boil for 45 minutes to an hour until the cassava aroma disappears. Remove from the fire.

About 15-20 minutes before the cassava leaves are fully cooked, add some African eggplant fruit to the pot and let cook.

Wash the palm nuts and boil them in another pan for approximately 30 minutes. Remove from the fire, drain, and pound in a mortar until the pulp separates from the nuts; remove the pulp, put in a container, add warm water and mix to obtain a homogeneous juice. Sieve to collect the juice.

If you do not want whole eggplant in the dish, remove the cooked African eggplant from the pan, remove the peel, crush the pulp and return to the pot.

Place the pan of kwem back on the flame, add the palm nut juice, and stir vigorously. Boil for approximately 20 minutes, stirring up from time to time so that the mixture does not stick to the bottom of the pan. Simmer under low heat for 15-20 minutes until thick. Note: You can add some cassava powder to the paste, if you like a sticky texture. Serve with cassava or yams.





AFRICAN EGGPLANT (leaves)

Scientific names:

Solanum macrocarpon L.

Common names: African eggplant, big nightshade, gboma eggplant, ornamental eggplant

Local names: Ndjap kieh (Bangangté), Nyeng baa bitodo (Bassa), Etoé (Bulu), Nkéa (Douala), Ntondo (Eton), Anguko (fufuldé), Ngago (Haoussa)



African eggplant leaves with pumpkin kernels

Ingredients

- 3 bunches African eggplant leaves
- 1 g limestone
- 4 cups (800 g) of pumpkin kernels/seeds
- 1 kg meat
- Dried shrimps (optional)
- 1/4 refined vegetable oil
- 1 clove of garlic, 1 small piece of ginger, 2 large onions, 1 large leek, 1 stalk celery, two yellow peppers
- 15 - 20 grains white pepper
- Seasoning (stock cubes, salt, pepper)



Preparation

Sort, wash and cut the African eggplant leaves into small pieces. Dilute the 1 g of limestone in a cup of hot water and filter to avoid grit in the vegetables. In a pot, heat 1.5 – 2 liters of water, pour in the limestone liquid, and add the leaves. Cook until the leaves soften, stirring from time to time. When the leaves are sufficiently soft, remove from the fire, drain in a strainer and rinse with cool water. Squeeze out the water and shape the leaves into balls. Boil the meat and slice the onions, leeks and celery. Peel the ginger and garlic, clean peppers and crush together. Chop shrimps and grind pumpkin kernel/seeds.

Cooking

Heat a few spoonfuls of vegetable oil in a pan and brown onions. Add leeks and let cook for three to five minutes, Add celery and let cook a few minutes more. Add the mixture of garlic, ginger and peppers, the boiled meat, and a half a glass of water. Simmer for ten minutes. Add vegetables and stir, then add a glass of water and cover the pot. When the vegetables are boiling, add the pumpkin powder and simmer for ten minutes without stirring. Stir the pumpkin powder into the vegetables. Place another frying pan on the hearth and heat two spoonfuls of vegetable oil. Brown the chopped shrimps for five to ten seconds and pour over the vegetables, for the shine and delicious taste. Immediately cover the pan to let vegetables absorb the aroma. Boil a few minutes. Add a teaspoon of ground white pepper and adjust the seasoning to taste. Serve with tubers of your choice.



OKRA

Scientific names: *Abelmoschus callei*, *Abelmoschus esculentus*

Common names: Okra

Local names: Pès (Eton), Bitétam (Bulu, Ewondo), Akro (Bamilekes), Gbarack à budun (Bafia), Ha (Bamoun), Bascodé (Fufuldé), Koyè (Bassa), Kigang (Douala), koubeowa (Haoussa)



Yellow soup with okra

This food is a traditional recipe of the Bamilékés people: *Chi na' a*

Ingredients

- 1 kg of okra
- 6 smoked fish or 1 kg meat
- ½ liter palm oil
- Spices (calabash nutmeg: *Monodora myristica*; fruit of the garlic tree: *Afrostryax lepidophyllus*; bird pepper (*Capsicum frutescens*)
- 1 g limestone
- Seasoning (stock cubes, salt, pepper)



Preparation and cooking

Remove the okra seeds, wash the okra and chop the pods. Soak smoked fish in hot water, remove the bones. Crush the spices. Dissolve limestone in hot water, let cool and filter. Place okra and fish in a pan, add salt, stock cubes, and a glass of water; cook until okra is tender, then let cool. Heat the palm oil until foam disappears, mix with water and stir up to obtain a yellow frothy liquid. Then add three to four spoonfuls of limestone water and stir up. Add crushed spices, salt the okra and the smoked fish, then stir vigorously to obtaining a homogeneous mixture. Adjust the seasoning to taste. Serve with fufu corn (see page 11).



Okra soup

Ingredients

- 1 kg tender okra pods
- 5 large tomatoes
- 1 large onion
- 6 smoked fish (cod or silurid preferred) or 1 kg meat
- 1 clove garlic, 1 small piece ginger, 2 large onions, 1 large leek, 1 stalk celery, two yellow peppers
- 0.5 g limestone
- Seasoning (stock cubes, salt, pepper)

Preparation

Wash, remove the seeds, and crush the okra pods. Clean and crush together leeks, celery, ginger, garlic, tomatoes and peppers. Soak smoked fish in hot water, remove the bones and clean. Dissolve the limestone in a little water, filter it, and combine the filtered water and crushed okra.

Cooking

Place a pan on the fire, pour in a little oil and let heat. Brown the finely cut onion. Add fish and the crushed mixture of leek, celery, tomato, ginger, peppers and simmer for few minutes. Add water and the crushed okra. Let the soup boil for 15 minutes without covering the pot, stirring often to prevent the okra from sticking. Adjust seasonings to taste. Serve with fufu corn fufu or fufu garri (see page 11).

Variations: Try adding roasted groundnut paste or ground pumpkin seeds, or using well-cooked beef instead of the smoked fish.





Assok bitetam

This okra cake is a traditional delicacy of the Béti community from the Centre and South regions of Cameroon.

Ingredients

- 1 kg tender okra pods
- 1 kg smoked fish or fresh meat
- 3 large onions
- Banana leaves
- 1 basil branch
- ¼ liter palm oil
- Seasoning (salt, pepper)

Preparation

Clean the meat and cook it in salted water. Cut the okra thinly into rounds. Divide the three onions into two parts; chop one part and crush the other. Clean the banana leaves, then soften them by moving the quickly above the flame. Cover a soup plate with the banana leaves; make sure they overlap so liquid cannot enter. Put all the remaining ingredients in a container and mix well. Put the ingredients in the center of the banana leaves and wrap the sides of the leaves around the ingredients, to make a tight package. Secure with a strand of fiber pulled from the banana trunk.

Cooking

Cover the bottom of the pan with some banana leaves from which you have removed the central veins. Cook the cake in the pot for 1 hour. Remove the pot from the fire, remove the cake, and dry it over low heat. Serve with pounded plantain.





Gbarak a Tien

Okra leaves, a traditional recipe of the Mbamoua people.

Ingredients

- 2 bunches soft okra leaves
- 2 cups (400 g) pumpkin seeds
- 2 cups (400 g) groundnuts
- 6 smoked fish (herring preferred)
- Dried shrimps (optional)
- 0.5 g limestone
- ½ glass palm oil
- Seasoning (salt, yellow pepper)

Preparation

Divide large leaves with the hand and slice them finely. Crush pumpkin seeds and groundnuts.

Cooking

Put the sliced okra leaves in a pot with the limestone, the crushed pumpkin seeds and groundnuts. Add salt, smoked fish and smoked shrimps and a half-glass of palm oil. Add water and cook. Add the pepper a few minutes before cooking is done. Serve with fufu corn (see page 11).



JUTE MALLOW

Scientific names: *Corchorus olitorius* L., *C. tridens* L., *C. trilobularis* L.

Common names: Jute mallow

Local names: Tegue (Bulu, Ewondo); Gbarack (Bafia), Teuere messi (Bamoun), Django (Bassa); Lalo (Fufuldé, Haoussa), Nkelang (Bamilékés), Keleng keleng (Douala)



Jute mallow with roasted groundnut

Ingredients

- 1 bundle jute mallow leaves
- 2 cups (400 g) groundnuts
- 6 smoked fish
- 2 tomatoes
- 1 large onion, 1 clove garlic, two yellow peppers
- 1 spoonful refined vegetable oil
- Seasoning (salt, yellow pepper)

Preparation

Wash and slice the jute mallow leaves finely. Roast groundnuts until crispy. Let cool, then remove the nuts and grind to a paste. Finely chop the onion. Clean the clove of garlic and crush with the tomatoes and peppers.

Cooking

In a pan, heat some oil and brown the finely chopped onion. Add the sliced leaves. Simmer for ten minutes, then add the paste of garlic, pepper and tomatoes. Season with salt. Let cook a few minutes, add fish and water, then cover. When the pot is boiling, add the groundnut paste, reduce the heat, and let cook uncovered, until the soup thickens. Remove the pot from the fire and season to taste. Serve with grated cocoyam or fufu (see page 11).



White soup with jute mallow

Ingredients

- 1 bundle jute mallow leaves
- 3 cups (600 g) groundnuts
- 6 smoked fish (sole preferred)
- 1 spoonful (125 ml) refined vegetable oil
- 1 large onion
- 2 large tomatoes
- 1 clove of garlic, 1 small piece of ginger, 1 leek, 1 stalk celery, two yellow peppers
- 0.5 g limestone
- Seasoning (salt, pepper, stock cubes)

Preparation

Wash and slice the jute mallow leaves finely. Soak the groundnuts for 30 minutes, then rinse and drain. Clean and crush together add leek, celery, ginger, garlic, tomatoes and peppers. Soak the smoked fish in hot water, remove the bones and clean the flesh. Dissolve limestone in water; filter to remove grit. Heat limestone water in a pan.

Cooking

Place a pan on the fire; add the oil and heat. Brown the chopped onion, then add the fish and simmer for a few minutes. Add the fresh groundnut paste diluted in one liter of water, cover and simmer for 20 minutes, stirring from time to time to prevent the paste from sticking to the bottom of the pot. Mix the sliced jute mallow leaves with a tablespoonful of boiling limestone liquid and stir; pour the mixture into the pan with the groundnuts and mix vigorously. Cover and simmer for ten minutes; adjust the seasoning and serve with grated cocoyam or fufu (see page 11).



Jute mallow with pumpkin seeds

Ingredients

- 1 bunch jute mallow
- 1 kg meat
- 6 smoked fish (cod preferred)
- 2 cups (400 g) pumpkin seeds
- 2 tomatoes
- 1 clove garlic, 1 piece of ginger
- 1/4 liter refined vegetable oil
- 1 large onion
- Seasoning (salt, pepper, stock cubes)

Preparation

Wash and slice the leaves of jute mallow finely, boil in water with salt and drain. Crush together tomato, garlic and ginger. Grind pumpkin seeds and mix with water.

Cooking

Cook the meat with water and salt. Heat a spoonful of vegetable oil and brown the finely chopped onion. Add the crushed tomato, garlic, and ginger. Add the cooked meat and crumbled fish. Simmer. Add the jute mallow and boil 15 minutes. Gradually add pumpkin seed powder. Cover the pot and cook for 20-30 minutes. Adjust the seasonings and remove from fire. Serve with fufu corn, fufu, yam, plantain or cassava stick (see page 11).





Sautéed jute mallow

Ingredients

- 3 bunch jute mallow
- 1 kg beef
- 1 large onion
- 1/4 liter refined vegetable oil
- Seasoning (salt, pepper, stock cubes)

Preparation

Wash and slice the leaves of jute mallow finely. Cut and wash the meat and chop the onion.

Cooking

Heat oil in a pot and brown the onions with salted meat. Add water and let the meat cook. When the meat is cooked, add the jute mallow. Simmer and adjust seasonings to taste.



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