A TOUR OF AFRICAN GASTRONOMY

NIGERIA
Nigeria’s gastronomy stems from its rich and promising agriculture, a variety of cuisines and delicacies, some of which are native, and others, foreign to the soil. Nigeria is enriched with two hundred and fifty tribes, each with unique cuisines and recipes. However, the combination of ingredients (foods, spices, and flavours from each tribe), makes up the unique Nigerian cuisine which portrays its exquisite taste and rich culture. Before the European explorers and traders arrived, Nigeria already boasted some major exotic foods like ogi/akamu (pap/crushed millet), vegetables & fruits, and varieties of pepper soup. These traders introduced cassava, maize, beans, and hot spices into the Nigerian fare. Nowadays, the Nigerian cuisine is mainly made up of major staple foods like rice, beans, yam, meat, fish, and pepper. In fact, every Nigerian household cannot do without these ingredients at least once daily. Due to this culinary culture, the business of feeding people is the most common entrepreneurial skill across Nigeria – there will always be someone around your vicinity ready to sell you something to eat or munch on. Because each culture has its own unique cuisine, every restaurant has on its menu, a dish representative of a region. For example, a restaurant located in Ibadan (Southwest, Nigeria) would definitely include Abula (Amala paired with Gbegiri & Ewedu soup) on the menu. Some other exclusive Nigerian treats you wouldn’t dare to miss are suya or steak – grilled cow meat seasoned with pepper and other spices, boli – roasted plantain paired with groundnuts/peanuts, and the local drink emu/gya/mmanya/ which is the Nigerian palm wine that has a unique taste.

A TASTE OF NIGERIA’S GASTRONOMY

A NATION’S GASTRONOMY IS ITS BEST AMBASSADOR

Named by Flora Shaw, the territory of Nigeria was first discovered in 1472 by four Portuguese researchers who were exploring and seeking a route to Asia through sea. The diversity of the Nigerian culture is illustrated in its food.
TAKE YOUR PALATE ON A TOUR
SPICE UP YOUR LIFE WITH PRODUCTS FROM NIGERIA

CRAYFISH
It is a common crustacean that is eaten all over the world. It is mostly used as an ingredient for food and soups in Nigeria because of the exceptional flavour it adds to dishes.

OIL PALM FRUIT
Elaeis Guineensis, is cultivated in Nigeria and the smooth and creamy oil extracted from it (palm oil) is a necessary condiment for many soups, and stews. The kernel, bang is also a delicacy in some parts of the country.

PLANTAIN
Musa sp, is grown and eaten all over the world. It is a staple food across Nigeria, a major ingredient for various meals like porridge. When fried, it can accompany dishes like beans and rice.

GARRI
Cassava Flour, made from processed cassava is indigenous to all tribes in Nigeria, the most famous being garri ijebu. It can be soaked for drinking, taken with beans, made as eba (swallow paste derived from garri soaked in boiling water), or chewed as is.

GOAT MEAT
Ogunfe (southwest Nigeria), is used to prepare delicious soups and stews across Nigeria. It is widely known for the distinct flavour that it lends to dishes. In eastern Nigeria, the goat head (isi ewu) is usually used to prepare steamy pepper soups.

WANT TO BRING SOME BACK HOME?
Local Nigerian Spices are the treasures you should fill your box with. Spices like Cayenne pepper, Uziza leaves & seeds, Iyere, Kanafuru, Oghono seeds, Ata ijosi, and Yaji. The amazing fact is that Nigeria is filled with many easy-to-reach local markets, so you are sure to find these spices within your vicinity without stress.
TOP 5 LOCAL BITES TO SAMPLE

JOLLOF RICE
A popular rice dish in many West African countries. It is a widely accepted dish amongst all two hundred and fifty tribes in Nigeria. In fact, there’s no occasion without Jollof rice and so far, the Nigerian Jollof is still rated the best in Africa. It can best be enjoyed with plantain, salad, fish, beef, chicken, peppered snails, eggs, gizzard, or any other form of meat.

TUWO SHINKAFA
A swallow food common in Northern Nigeria. Tuwo is made from rice flour/mashed rice and can be served with a variety of Nigerian soups.

AMALA
The most common swallow meal in Nigeria. It is made from Yam flour (ground dried yam). It is, however, peculiar to the southern part of Nigeria and is usually paired with gbegiri (beans soup) & ewedu, okra/ogbono/efo riro soups, amongst others.

FISHERMAN SOUP
Popular within the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. It is made with different types of fish and other seafood. It is usually thickened with cocoyam/pounded yam and can be taken alone or with any swallow of choice.

ROASTED PLANTAIN AND PEPPERED FISH
A very filling dish common to all tribes. The peppered fish is grilled as a whole and so is the plantain. A sauce dish is usually added to make the roasted plantain tastier.

DID YOU KNOW?
Before the advent of seasoning cubes into the Nigerian cuisine, the aromatic local iru/ogiri (locust beans) was the major ingredient, alongside salt, used to season dishes and soups. Till date, most Nigerian soups and stews seem incomplete without the pungent taste of ogiri.
Chef Semira was born in Lagos, Nigeria. After her studies, she attended culinary school in Dubai to expand her knowledge and love for cooking. She currently consults, create menus, and trains staff for individual clients and restaurants.

«Nigerian cuisine consists of cultural foods from various ethnic groups like the Yorubas, Igbos, Hausas, Urobos, Efiks, Fulani and other tribes. It is important for the world to understand the rich varieties of food that can be found in Nigeria».

She grew up surrounded by a family who enjoyed cooking. Her father and aunts used to cook different meals ranging from Egusi Ijebu, Ikokore, Eforiro, and smoked fish stew to continental dishes. She loves cooking Egusi Ijebu, because it reminds her of her father and the weekends they used to spend cooking together.

The diversity of the Nigerian cuisine has led to the annual talent showcase, cultural shows, and food festivals in some parts of the country, particularly Lagos, the commercial hub of Africa. These events are aimed at promoting the food culture of each locality so much so that you are reminded of a particular place when you taste the Nigerian cuisines.

Returning home, after working alongside prominent chefs in Dubai, Chef Semira started infusing the exquisite middle-eastern flavour and the distinct Nigerian flavour to produce a notable Nigerian cuisine for her clients. Preserving the uniqueness of Nigeria’s culinary offering is desideratum and this is why ‘I will continue to tirelessly champion the Nigerian cuisine by inventing and trying out new recipes. I plan to also start consulting for hotels and companies as these are where the bulk of tourists and foreign investors emanate from, and what better way to make known the peerless Nigerian gastronomy”.
INGREDIENTS

• 1 cup of egusi/melon seed
• 1/8 cup dry chilli pepper
• ¼ cup of palm oil
• 1½ cup beef stock
• 1 tablespoon ogiri
• 300g beef 100g shaki 100g cow leg
• 2 pieces of stockfish
• 2 pieces of smoked catfish
• Salt to taste

STEP BY STEP

1. In a non-stick pan, toast the melon seeds over medium heat until golden brown.
2. Blend the toasted egusi with onions and pepper to a smooth consistency.
3. In another pot, add the beef, shaki, cow leg, stock fish, onions, salt, and seasoning cubes (if desired) and cook until tender.
4. Add the blended egusi to a sauce pot and cook on low heat.
5. Add the palm oil, ogiri (flavouring made of fermented oil seeds, such as sesame seeds or egusi seeds) and beef stock into the egusi and cook for 5 minutes.
6. Add the beef, shaki, cow leg and stock fish. Cook for 10 minutes and check the seasoning.
7. Add the smoked fish and cook for 2 minutes.
8. Serve with hot ‘eba’. (Eba is one of the most common ‘swallow foods’ (fufu) in Nigeria. It is made from processed cassava called garri. There are different types of garri; depending on where it is processed and how it is pressed.)
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