

Sierra Leonean Recipes **Compiled by Deirdre Edwards**

Spinach Plasas

2 packages frozen chopped spinach
1/2 pound smoked fish, flaked
1 large onion, chopped
1/4 cup groundnut paste (peanut butter)
3 cups water
1-1/2 cups palm oil
2 hot peppers or 1 tsp. cayenne pepper
1 pound meat, stewing or chuck roast

Cut meat. Put in saucepan with two cups of water, salt, onion and pepper. Bring to boil and add palm oil. Continue cooking partly covered. Cook for 1-1/2 hours over medium heat. Add spinach (previously thawed and drained), flaked fish and groundnut paste mixed with water. Stir, cover and simmer for 10 minutes. Serve with steamed rice.

Koso Weller

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Groundnut Stew

1 pound stewing meat
2 large tomatoes, diced
1/2 cup oil
1/4 cup groundnut paste (peanut butter)
1/2 tsp. "Mrs. Dash" seasoning
1 large onion, chopped or sliced
1 large pepper, finely chopped
1/2 tsp. cayenne pepper, optional
salt to taste

Preparation:

Season meat with Mrs. Dash. Let it absorb for three hours. Brown meat in oil. Add some water and simmer until tender. Remove and set aside. In the same oil, sauté pepper and onions. Add tomatoes and stir briskly. Mix groundnut paste with 1/2 cup water to form a thin paste and add to stew. Stir, add meat, salt to taste and let simmer 15 minutes over low heat. Serve with rice, boiled yam, cassava and green vegetable.

Koso Weller

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Egusi Soup

500 grams meat
150 grams ground egusi
1 maggi cube (beef bouillon cube)
200 grams stockfish (optional)
100 ml. palm oil
200 g. smoked fish
200 g. tomatoes
10 g. (chili) pepper
25 g. onion
Salt to taste
250 g. vegetable leaves (optional, but if you can lay your hands on washed and ready bitter leaves or "shakpa" (sorrel leaves or flowers) they will do just fine.

Contributed by Dennis Deen-Sie Sawaneh
Author of "Sierra Leone Cookbook"

Preparation:

1. Season and boil the meat and the stockfish (if used, has to soaked in hot water and allowed to stand for at least a day/overnight) for about 45 minutes, or until tender. Remove and put aside.
2. Blend/grind the pepper, tomatoes and onion.
3. Heat the palm oil, and add meat, stockfish and the ground/blended ingredients. Cook for about 25 minutes (less without stockfish).
4. Add the ground egusi, maggi cube and fish, and cook for another 10 minutes.
5. Add the vegetable leaves (optional) to the soup.
6. Cook for about 5-10 minutes on low heat. Stir and taste for salt.
7. This sauce can be eaten either with fufu, rice or root vegetables like yam and cassava. For lunch, a very cold Bud. or Heineken to wash the throat is recommended. For dinner, chilled white wine is recommended.

Meat Stew

750 grams meat (depending on number of persons)
1 large onion
6 garden eggs/aubergines (eggplant)
20 grams tomato purée
1.5 liters water
3 fresh tomatoes
Salt and (chili) pepper to taste

Contributed by Dennis Deen-Sie Sawaneh
Author of "Sierra Leone Cookbook"

Preparation:

1. Trim, wash, and cut the meat into small pieces, and put in a pot.
2. Add water, some salt, and allow to boil for about 5-8 minutes, stirring occasionally.
3. Add the garden and pepper. Cook on low heat until vegetables are tender.
4. Slice the onion and the tomatoes into small pieces and add to the soup. Allow to simmer.
5. Remove and grind/blend the cooked vegetables, mix with water and strain.
6. Return the vegetables to the soup, and add the tomato purée. Allow the soup to simmer on low heat until meat is tender.
7. Serve with rice or root vegetables like cassava, yam, and potatoes (sweet or "Irish").

Abala

Servings 6 - 8 persons

3 Cups of Rice Flour
1 Large Onion
2 Small Peppers
1 Cup Cooked Shrimp or Flaked Fish
1 Cup Palmoil
Salt to taste
Water

Preparation:

1. Chop onions finely and grind together with pepper
2. Mix rice flour with water in a bowl to form a thick paste
3. Add the ground onions and pepper to this mixture and mix thoroughly
4. Add salt to taste
5. Add shrimps or flaked fish
6. Wrap tablespoonfuls of mixture in greased banana leaves which have been cut into squares and wilted by heating over, to make it pliable , or wrap in squares in aluminum foil
7. Steam for about one hour until the rice granules are cooked

Cassava Leaves

Servings 6 - 8 persons

2 Bundles of Cassava Leaves

1 lb. Meat

2 Dried Fish

1 Cup Cooked Beans

1 /2 Pint Palmoil

1/2 Cup Groundnut Paste

1 Large Onion

2 Red Peppers

2 Cups Water

Preparation:

1. Cut up the meat and put in a saucepan with salt, ground pepper and onions and water. Cook for about 15 minutes
2. Wash leaves, beat in a mortar until finely ground
3. Add the ground leaves to the ingredients in the saucepan and simmer for about 10 minutes
4. Add palmoil and simmer again for about 10 minutes or until the meat is tender
5. Mix groundnut paste with little water and add to the sauce, stirring frequently to prevent burning
6. Flake fish and add together with cooked beans to the sauce
7. Season with salt, cover and simmer gently until most of the water has been evaporated
8. Serve with rice

Okra Leaves

Servings 6 - 8 persons

2 Bundles Okra Leaves

1/2 Pint Palmoil

2 Dried Fish

1 lb. Beef

1/2 Cup Cockle or Shrimps (dried)

2 Red Peppers

1 Large Onion

3 Cups Water

1/2 Teaspoon Cooking Soda

Salt to taste

Preparation:

1. Cut meat into 1-inch cubes and put into a saucepan with water, cockle, or shrimps. Cook at a moderate heat
2. Grind onion and pepper and add to meat. Simmer until the meat is tender
3. Add palmoil and cook for about 10 minutes
4. Wash and shred leaves into large pieces and add to the sauce
5. Add cooking soda and cook gently
6. Flake fish and add to the sauce. Cook for 5 to 10 minutes until the desired consistency is reached
7. Add salt to taste
8. Serve with foofoo or rice

Jollof Rice

Serves 10

5 cups of rice

Onions

3 lbs of meat

1 piece chicken

3 tins of tomato paste

4 cups groundnut oil

Seasonal vegetables

6 beef cubes

Salt and pepper to taste

Seed tomatoes

Bay leaves

Preparing the Stew

1. Season the chicken and meat.
2. Pour the oil into an empty pot and heat for 5 minutes. Add the chicken and meat, and deep-fry, then set aside.
3. Blend the pepper, onions and seed tomatoes, then fry with the soup cubes.
4. Add the fried chicken, meat and a small amount of water, season, and add salt to taste. Cook until all the water is absorbed, and then set aside to cool.

Preparing the Rice

1. Wash the rice, season and leave until all water is absorbed.
2. Boil water with small quantity of stew. Pour in rice, tomato paste, bay leaves and salt, cook until all water is absorbed.
3. Serve the rice and stew separately, with boiled vegetables (cabbage, carrot, peas).

Oleleh

Ingredients:

2 Cup Black-Eyed
1 Cup Palm oil
1/2 Cup Flaked Dried Fish
3 Tablespoons Water
1 Small Onion

1 Red Pepper
Salt to taste
Banana Leaves or Aluminum Foil Squares

Preparation:

1. Soak beans remove the skins and grind into a smooth paste
2. Grind onions and pepper and add to the bean mixture
3. Add water and mix thoroughly
4. Remove all bones from the fish and add to the mixture with salt and palmoil
5. Wrap spoonfuls of the mixture in banana leaves or aluminum foil squares. Or pour into pudding bowls, or custard cups all covered tightly with cellophane papers

Cover in a steamer until pudding is firm

Remove from the wrapper or container and serve hot

Foorah

Ingredients:

2 Cups Rice Flour

1 Cup Sugar

3 Cups Water

Steps:

1. Mix the rice flour in a bowl with about 1 cup of water saving about 1 table spoonful of the flour for coating the balls
2. Bring the rest of the water to boil in a saucepan. Add the sugar and stir until dissolved
3. Pour the flour paste gradually into the simmering water and cook, stirring all the time until it forms a thick paste as the rice granules swell
4. When the rice is thoroughly cooked and contains no raw flavor, allow to cool slightly, and remove tablespoonful of the mixture. Form them into balls and coat with the rest of the rice flour
5. Serve cold
6. Milk may be added to the paste during cooking to improve the food value

Meat Stew

750 grams meat (depending on number of persons)

1 large onion

6 garden eggs/aubergines (eggplant)

20 grams tomato purée

1.5 liters water

3 fresh tomatoes

Salt and (chili) pepper to taste

Preparation:

1. Trim, wash, and cut the meat into small pieces, and put in a pot.
2. Add water, some salt, and allow to boil for about 5-8 minutes, stirring occasionally.
3. Add the garden and pepper. Cook on low heat until vegetables are tender.
4. Slice the onion and the tomatoes into small pieces and add to the soup. Allow to simmer.
5. Remove and grind/blend the cooked vegetables, mix with water and strain.
6. Return the vegetables to the soup, and add the tomato purée. Allow the soup to simmer on low heat until meat is tender.
7. Serve with rice or root vegetables like cassava, yam, potatoes (sweet or "Irish").

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Author of "Sierra Leone Cookbook"

Egusi Soup

500 grams meat
150 grams ground egusi
1 maggi cube (beef bouillon cube)
200 grams stockfish (optional)
100 ml. palm oil
200 g. smoked fish
200 g. tomatoes
10 g. (chili) pepper
25 g. onion
Salt to taste
250 g. vegetable leaves (optional, but if you can lay your hands on washed and ready bitter leaves or "shakpa" (sorrel leaves or flowers) they will do just fine.

Preparation:

1. Season and boil the meat and the stockfish (if used, has to soaked in hot water and allowed to stand for at least a day/overnight) for about 45 minutes, or until tender. Remove and put aside.
2. Blend/grind the pepper, tomatoes and onion.
3. Heat the palm oil, and add meat, stockfish and the ground/blended ingredients. Cook for about 25 minutes (less without stockfish).
4. Add the ground egusi, maggi cube and fish, and cook for another 10 minutes.
5. Add the vegetable leaves (optional) to the soup.
6. Cook for about 5-10 minutes on low heat. Stir and taste for salt.
7. This sauce can be eaten either with fufu, rice or root vegetables like yam and cassava. For lunch, a very cold Bud. or Heineken to wash the throat is recommended. For dinner, chilled white wine is recommended.

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Chicken Stew

2 pounds stewing chicken
1 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. black pepper
1/2 tsp. poultry seasoning
1 tsp. "Mrs. Dash" seasoning
1 tsp. garlic powder
2 cups oil
1 large pepper, chopped
2 large onions
4 oz. tomato paste
2 tbsp. lemon juice (juice of 1/2 lemon)
1 large tomato, chopped or diced

Skin and trim fat from chicken. Cut 8 to 10 pieces. Rub in lemon juice. Rinse and drain chicken. Add spices and rub into chicken. Refrigerate for 10 hours. Heat oil and brown chicken. Sauté onions and pepper for 1/2 hour; add tomato and tomato paste. Stir to distribute evenly. Add salt to taste. Add chicken and 1/2 cup water. Simmer over low heat 10-15 minutes until chicken is tender.

Koso Weller
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W

Spinach Plasas

2 packages frozen chopped spinach
1/2 pound smoked fish, flaked
1 large onion, chopped
1/4 cup groundnut paste (peanut butter)
3 cups water
1-1/2 cups palm oil
2 hot peppers or 1 tsp. cayenne pepper
1 pound meat, stewing or chuck roast

Cut meat. Put in saucepan with two cups of water, salt, onion and pepper. Bring to boil and add palm oil. Continue cooking partly covered. Cook for 1-1/2 hours over medium heat. Add spinach (previously thawed and drained), flaked fish and groundnut paste mixed with water. Stir, cover and simmer for 10 minutes. Serve with steamed rice.

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W

Binch Akara

1 pound black-eyed beans
2 tsp. salt
1 small onion, very finely chopped
2 cups oil

Pour dry beans in a blender with a cup of water. Chop for one minute. Pour in large bowl and add water. Stir until skins float. Strain into colander; allow all skin and eyes to flow out. Blend beans, onion and pepper. Pour in a bowl, add salt, and stir with a wooden spoon for two minutes. Heat oil until moderately hot. Drop mixture into oil with spoon. Fry until golden brown. Drain on absorbent paper. Small balls can be served with toothpicks.

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<http://www.achildsdesire.org/sierraleoneanfood.htm>

Palmnut (Banga) Soup

Ingredients:

60 - 100 Fresh Palm Nuts	1 Large Onion
2 Large Dried Fish	2 Red Peppers
1 lb. Meat	Salt to taste
4 Large Tomatoes	Water
6 Whole Okra	Boiled Eggs (optional)
1 Cup Shrimps or 6 Crabs (optional)	

Steps:

1. Wash the palmnuts, put in a saucepan of water to boil
2. Cut the meat into cubes and cook in a saucepan of salted water until tender
3. Chop onion and pepper, add to the cooked meat and simmer slowly
4. When nuts are soft, remove from the water and pound in a mortar to remove and crush the red outer layer. Remove and put in a large bowl, pour boiling water and stir to extract the oil
5. Strain through a sieve and keep the liquid
6. Repeat 4 and 5 until all the oil has been extracted
7. Add the extracted liquid to the meat in the saucepan and cook slowly until most of the water has been extracted and all ingredients are soft
8. Peel and add whole soft boiled eggs, shrimps or crabs as desired

9. Skim of the surplus oil and save for the future

10. Serve with foofoo, rice or boiled yam

West African Lemony Chicken and Okra Soup

1 large broiler chicken, cut into pieces
½ teaspoon cayenne pepper
Juice from 2 large lemons
2 teaspoons salt
6 cups chicken broth or water
½ cup uncooked long-grain rice
3 tomatoes, peeled and chopped
¼ teaspoon pepper and 1 teaspoon ground turmeric
1 can tomato paste
2 cups sliced okra, fresh or frozen*
1 large onion, peeled, chopped and browned in a little oil

Rub pieces of chicken with juice from lemons. You can remove skin from the pieces if you prefer less fat. Put the pieces in a covered container in the refrigerator to marinate for no more than 30 minutes.

While chicken is marinating, saute the onion in a little oil to make the flavor milder. Set aside. Remove the chicken from the refrigerator. Place the chicken in a large kettle with the chicken broth or water. Bring to a boil, lower the heat and cook slowly, covered, for 12 minutes.

Add onions, tomatoes, tomato paste, rice, spices and salt and pepper. Cook for 30 minutes, until the chicken and rice are tender.

(*An okra note - if you have never cooked with okra, you are in for a new experience. Most recipes, especially West African ones, would call for the okra to be added at this point, as it serves as an excellent thickener for the stew. Some people would prefer to add it at the next step because okra can have a somewhat slimy texture after it stews, although it is usually not too apparent in a dish like this. So add either add it with everything else, or add it in the next step when you return the chicken to the pot. On a linguistic/historical note, the word gumbo, which in the U.S. is a wonderful African inspired creole dish often associated with Louisiana and containing okra, comes from the Angolan word ngombo, meaning okra. The Twi people of Ghana call okra nkuruman)

Remove chicken pieces and debone as soon as they are cool enough to handle. Return the chicken to the kettle (along with the sliced okra if you waited) and stir until everything is well mixed (and the okra is tender). Serve over additional rice, with some fresh fruit for dessert.

Abala

Servings 6 - 8 persons

3 Cups of Rice Flour
1 Large Onion
2 Small Peppers
1 Cup Cooked Shrimp or Flaked Fish
1 Cup Palmoil
Salt to taste
Water

Steps:

1. Chop onions finely and grind together with pepper
2. Mix rice flour with water in a bowl to form a thick paste
3. Add the ground onions and pepper to this mixture and mix thoroughly
4. Add salt to taste
5. Add shrimps or flaked fish
6. Wrap tablespoonfuls of mixture in greased banana leaves which have been cut into squares and wilted by heating over, to make it pliable , or wrap in squares in aluminum foil
7. Steam for about one hour until the rice granules are cooked

Cassava Leaves

Servings 6 - 8 persons

2 Bundles of Cassava Leaves
1 lb. Meat
2 Dried Fish
1 Cup Cooked Beans
1 /2 Pint Palmoil
1/2 Cup Groundnut Paste
1 Large Onion
2 Red Peppers
2 Cups Water

1. Cut up the meat and put in a saucepan with salt, ground pepper and onions and water. Cook for about 15 minutes
2. Wash leaves, beat in a mortar until finely ground
3. Add the ground leaves to the ingredients in the saucepan and simmer for about 10 minutes
4. Add palmoil and simmer again for about 10 minutes or until the meat is tender
5. Mix groundnut paste with little water and add to the sauce, stirring frequently to prevent burning
6. Flake fish and add together with cooked beans to the sauce
7. Season with salt, cover and simmer gently until most of the water has been evaporated
8. Serve with rice

Okra Leaves

Servings 6 - 8 persons

2 Bundles Okra Leaves
1/2 Pint Palmoil
2 Dried Fish
1 lb. Beef
1/2 Cup Cockle or Shrimps (dried)
2 Red Peppers
1 Large Onion
3 Cups Water
1/2 Teaspoon Cooking Soda
Salt to taste

Steps:

1. Cut meat into 1-inch cubes and put into a saucepan with water, cockle, or shrimps. Cook at a moderate heat
2. Grind onion and pepper and add to meat. Simmer until the meat is tender
3. Add palmoil and cook for about 10 minutes
4. Wash and shred leaves into large pieces and add to the sauce
5. Add cooking soda and cook gently
6. Flake fish and add to the sauce. Cook for 5 to 10 minutes until the desired consistency is reached
7. Add salt to taste
8. Serve with foofoo or rice

Jollof Rice

Ingredients:

3 Cups Long Grain Rice	Salt to taste
Meat or Chicken Stew	6 Cups Water
2 Small Tin Tomato Puree	

Steps:

1. Prepare meat or chicken stew
2. Put water, salt, tomato puree in a saucepan and bring to boil
3. Add half the meat stew and bring to boil again
4. Clean and wash the rice. Add to the boiling liquid. Cover and boil rapidly, stirring occasionally as the grains swell
5. Cook until the rice is soft and the tomato and gravy are evenly distributed throughout
6. Serve with the rest of the meat or chicken stew and some boiled cabbage or other green vegetable

Foorah

Ingredients:

2 Cups Rice Flour
1 Cup Sugar
3 Cups Water

Steps:

1. Mix the rice flour in a bowl with about 1 cup of water saving about 1 table spoonful of the flour for coating the balls
2. Bring the rest of the water to boil in a saucepan. Add the sugar and stir until dissolved
3. Pour the flour paste gradually into the simmering water and cook, stirring all the time until it forms a thick paste as the rice granules swell
4. When the rice is thoroughly cooked and contains no raw flavor, allow to cool slightly, and remove tablespoonful of the mixture. Form them into balls and coat with the rest of the rice flour
5. Serve cold
6. Milk may be added to the paste during cooking to improve the food value

Fried Plantains

For this recipe, you need 3-4 plantains. You can usually find plantains in supermarkets in larger cities or in Caribbean or Central American markets. They look like large green bananas.

These fried treats are found for sale as snack foods in markets throughout sub-Saharan Africa.. Usually they are just sprinkled with salt and hot sauce (Tabasco works!), but sometimes they are coated with powdered ginger and/or cayenne before frying and then salted. If you prefer a sweet taste, you can sprinkle them with sugar and cinnamon.

Use either peanut, soybean or safflower oil to deep-fry, as they have a high smoking temperature. If you have a cooking thermometer, keep the oil around 350E. Heat the oil in a heavy saucepan. Slice the peeled plantains into ¼-inch rounds. Fry the slices a few at a time until they are golden and crisp on the outside but still soft on the inside. If fried too long, the inside will toughen, so try a couple to get the best timing. Remove them from the oil with a slotted spoon and drain on paper towels or newspaper.