

THIRD WORLD COOKBOOK

Africa
S/19
Aug - Sept.
1964

Mozambican
women at a
communal
village pounding
grain.



E. Moura-Gamma

Mozambican Cuisine

The people of Mozambique have developed their cuisine and their culinary skills over the course of centuries. Varying from region to region, according to agricultural and breeding practices, the art of Mozambican cuisine has not remained isolated from outside influences. Instead, it has been enriched by contributions of the thousands of foreigners—notably Arabs, Indians and later Portuguese—who settled mainly on the coast.

With their earthen pots, pestles and the “benga” (the Tsonga word for “bowl”), Mozambicans managed to blend their traditional, indigenous cookery with culinary customs from other lands. In the interior of the country, however, the cuisine has remained more authentic, that is, more “African.”

Mozambican cuisine is based principally on maize, tuberous vegetables and manioc leaves, and the “nhemba” (a kind of small African bean) and its leaves. Also important are rice, the two grains “napira” and “mexoeira” (millet), squash leaves, peanuts, vegetable oils and a wide range of distinctly African vegetables varying in taste from sweet to very bitter.

The extraordinary variety of fruits which grow wild in Mozambique cannot be overlooked, as they are used not only in desserts but in the preparation of main courses as well. Serving this dual purpose are bananas, coconuts and cashews.

Certainly the most widely used condiment in Mozambique is “pili pili,” the dried red pepper added to various sauces,

including the “achares,” a hot sauce made from lemons and green mangoes.

SHRIMP SAUCE WITH COCONUT

Ingredients: three small (or two large) coconuts, one kilogram of large shrimp, three large onions, half a kilo of tomatoes, salt to taste.

Grate the coconut very fine. Using hot water, make a paste by pressing it through a fine sieve. One litre should be obtained. Clean, shell and de-vein the shrimp. Place everything in a casserole with the onions, finely chopped, the salt and the tomatoes, if possible pressed and liquified. Place the casserole on the stove. When it begins to boil, add the coconut juice. Stir constantly for 30 minutes to prevent separation. When the sauce has thickened a bit, serve with white rice.

ZAMBEZIAN CHICKEN

Ingredients: four chickens, 10 cloves of garlic, two or three ripe dried red peppers (according to taste), lemon juice, coconut juice.

Open the chickens half way and season with the garlic, finely chopped, salt, pili pili (the dried red peppers), and lemon juice. Let the chickens marinate for about one hour. The juice should be as thick as possible.

Prepare a charcoal fire and place the chickens on the grill. While they are roasting, using a chicken feather, baste the chickens with the marinade and then the coconut juice. Serve with salad, coconut rice, or fried potatoes and lemon slices.