

DINNER WITH MAI

INTRODUCTION



Maimuna Zubairu-Burnette,
Author of *Cooking with Mai*:
Easy-to
Prepare West African
Recipes
and Host of *Dinner with Mai*
www.dinnerwithmai.com

West Africa is made up of 16 countries. Some of the countries in the sub-region include, Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Gambia, Liberia and Guinea. The complex history of the sub-region plays a significant role in the cuisine. Interactions with the Arabs and Europeans introduced spices, vegetables, and grains that are used in many of the staple dishes, such as tomatoes, turmeric and cous cous.

While local cuisines differ throughout West Africa, depending on the tribe or country, the base of many dishes is a combination of tomatoes, onions, and hot peppers. Palm oil, a red oil that adds texture and flavor to dishes, is also commonly used in the sub-region. Other staples in West African cuisine include okra, black-eyed-peas, sesame seeds, peanuts, ginger and rice. In Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Cameroon, green leafy vegetables (Cassava leaves, sweet potato leaves, bitter leaves, and spinach) are used in many dishes. Guinea, Mali, Senegal and Gambia use less of the green leafy vegetables in their dishes and cook mostly soups and stews.



SHRIMP STEW

INGREDIENTS

- 1 CUP VEGETABLE OIL
- 1 YELLOW ONION, SLICED
- 1/2 GREEN BELL PEPPER, SLICED
- 1/2 RED BELL PEPPER, SLICED
- HABANERO PEPPERS TO TASTE
- 3 CLOVES GARLIC, SLICED
- SALT AND PEPPER TO TASTE
- 2 CHICKEN BOUILLON CUBES
- 1 TABLESPOON OF CURRY POWDER
- 1/2 TEASPOON TURMERIC
- 1/2 TEASPOON THYME
- 2 BAY LEAVES
- 1 TEASPOON TOMATO PASTE
- 2 POUNDS SHRIMP

DIRECTIONS

1. HEAT OIL IN MEDIUM SAUCEPAN. ADD ONIONS, BELL PEPPERS, HABANERO PEPPERS AND GARLIC. STIR AND SAUTÉ OVER MEDIUM-LOW HEAT FOR 5 MINUTES.
2. ADD SALT, BLACK PEPPER, CHICKEN BOUILLON CUBES, CURRY, TURMERIC, THYME, BAY LEAVES, AND TOMATO PASTE. STIR AND COOK FOR 5 MINUTES.
3. ADD SHRIMP, STIR, AND SIMMER OVER LOW HEAT FOR 10 MINUTES.



CHICKEN DISH

INGREDIENTS

- 3 POUNDS CHICKEN (CUT INTO PIECES)
- 2 CUPS VEGETABLE OIL
- 4 YELLOW ONIONS (3 SLICED)
- 1 GREEN BELL PEPPER, SLICED
- 1 ORANGE BELL PEPPER, SLICED
- 2 TOMATOES, SLICED
- 4 CLOVES GARLIC, CHOPPED
- SALT AND BLACK PEPPER TO TASTE
- 4 CHICKEN BOUILLON CUBES
- 1/2 TEASPOON TURMERIC
- 1/2 TEASPOON THYME
- 4 BAY LEAVES
- HABANERO PEPPERS TO TASTE
- 2 TABLESPOONS TOMATO PASTE

DIRECTIONS

1. SEASON CHICKEN WITH SALT AND BLACK PEPPER. HEAT OIL IN A MEDIUM SAUCEPAN AND FRY CHICKEN UNTIL LIGHT BROWN. REMOVE CHICKEN FROM SAUCEPAN AND SET ASIDE IN A BOWL.
2. ADD SLICED ONIONS, BELL PEPPERS, TOMATOES, AND GARLIC. STIR AND SAUTÉ OVER MEDIUM-LOW HEAT FOR 5 MINUTES.
3. ADD SALT, BLACK PEPPER, CHICKEN BOUILLON CUBES, TURMERIC, THYME, AND BAY LEAVES. STIR AND COOK OVER MEDIUM-LOW HEAT FOR 5 MINUTES, OR UNTIL VEGETABLES ARE SOFT.
4. BLEND REMAINING ONION AND HABANERO PEPPERS WITH 1 CUP OF WATER AND POUR INTO SAUCEPAN. ADD TOMATO PASTE, STIR AND COOK FOR 10 MINUTES.
5. ADD CHICKEN, THEN ADD 1 CUP OF WATER. STIR AND SIMMER ON MEDIUM-LOW HEAT FOR 20 MINUTES, OR UNTIL THERE IS NO LONGER WATER BUBBLING IN THE STEW.