

CHAPTER 05
ANALYSIS OF NIGERIA INDIGENOUS DISHES

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INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is positioned in West Africa and to a great extent the famous country on the Africa continent with above 200 million inhabitants. Nigeria is known for its diverse culture, natural resources and economic potential. In this chapter, I will discuss Nigeria's history, geography, demography, culture, and food peculiar to each geographical zone.

History

Nigeria has a rich chronicle that dates back to ancient times. The Nok culture, which existed between 500 BC and 200 AD, is known for its terracotta sculptures. The Sokoto Caliphate, which was established in the 19th century, was a major Islamic empire that helped to unify the different ethnic groups in Nigeria. Nigeria became a British colony in 1901 and gained self-government in 1960. Since then, Nigeria has experienced periods of military rule and democratic governance.

Geography

Nigeria is positioned in West Africa and is bordered by Niger to the north, Chad to the northeast, Cameroon to the east, Benin to the west, and the Atlantic Ocean to the south. Nigeria has a total landmass of 923,768 square kilometers and is sectionalized into 36 states and one Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Nigeria's landscape is diverse, with savannah grasslands in the north and tropical rainforests in the south. Nigeria is also home to several rivers, including the Niger and the Benue, which intersect in the center of the country.

Demography

The population is made up of above 250 tribes, far-reaching the Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba, and Igbo. The national language is English, but there are over 500 indigenous dialects spoken in Nigeria. Nigeria is also home to one of the largest Muslim citizens in the world, with over 50% of the population being Muslim, while the remaining are Christians and adherents of traditional African religions.

Culture

Nigeria has a rich cultural diversity, with above 250 tribes each with its distinctive language, heritage, and food.

Food

Nigerian cookery is well-known for its bold flavours and use of spices. Nigerian food is influenced by the country's diverse ethnic groups and its history of trade with other countries such as Portugal, the Netherlands, and Britain. Nigerian food is characterized by its use of ingredients such as yams, cassava, plantains, beans, and rice. Nigerian cuisine also includes a variety of soups and stews, which are usually accompanied by a staple such as fufu, pounded yam, or eba.

Nigerian cuisine is a rich and diverse blend of different flavours and influences, reflecting the country's cultural heritage and history. With over 250 ethnic groups, Nigerian cuisine is incredibly varied, and each region has its own unique dishes and cooking style. Nigeria as a country has six geopolitical zones, and each zone has its own indigenous food, method of preparation, and service.

GEOGRAPHICAL ZONES IN NIGERIA

A geopolitical zone is a geographical entity used in the “sectionalization” of Nigeria. The six sections were established during the reign of late Head of State, General Sanni Abacha. The six geographical zones consist of states with close topographical locales, indistinguishable heritage, tribes, customs, and political beliefs.

The six geopolitical zones in Nigeria and the states that make up each of the geopolitical zone:

- South West: comprising of Ekiti state, Lagos state, Ogun state, Ondo state and Oyo state.
- North Central: (also known as Middle Belt): made up of the following states, Benue state, Kogi state, Kwara state, Nasarawa, Niger State, Plateau state and Federal Capital Territory.
- North East: comprising of the following states: Adamawa state, Bauchi state, Borno state, Gombe state, Taraba state and Yobe state.
- North West: comprising of the following states: Jigawa state, Kaduna state, Kano state, Katsina state, Kebbi state, Sokoto state and Zamfara state.
- South East: comprising of the following states: Abia state, Anambra state, Ebonyi state, Enugu state and Imo state.
- South South: (also known as Niger Delta region) comprising of the following states: Akwa-Ibom state, Bayelsa state, Cross River state, Rivers state, Delta state and Edo state.

Indigenous Food

The eating heritage of every tribe and custom is the outcome of renaissances of history. Geographical locality and atmospheric conditions play a principal role in the growing, harvesting and availability of food products, modifying the food habits of the ethnic populations. Foods preparation ways are numerous and linked to the cultural traits of an ethnic group. The racial backdrops determine what shall be consumed as well as when and how it shall be consumed.

All ethnic groups have their own distinctive cooking style, develop its own choice of ingredients and blend flavours, constituting an interesting collection of ideas, skill and dish methods; dietary habits as well as preparatory methods differ from place to place. Generally, the sensory attributes of the same delicacy differ from place to place due to accustomed way of production.

Indigenous food is also regarded as native foods that have been eaten from time immemorial and cut across ages. Indigenous cuisines are conventional in nature and may have a historical paradigm in national dishes of a particular region. Indigenous foods can also be defined as foods that can be traced back to their origin and are eaten traditionally by the inhabitants of a

locality as against imported foods that have been introduced from other regions of the world. Indigenous foods are rich sources of macro and micro nutrients for the indigenous population of Nigeria.

Types of Indigenous Food Systems

There are two kinds of indigenous food.

The first kind are those eaten where they are grown as conventional dietary staples, for example cassava, yam, cocoyam, sweet potato (*Ipomoea Batatas*), plantains (*Musa Paradisiaca*) and maize.

The second kind consists of those eaten as a constituent of an accompaniment. These include oil seeds, fruits and vegetables.

There are numerous potential benefits of indigenous food to mention, but few:

1. Indigenous food is environmentally friendly as it does not have to travel miles before arriving on one's plate.
2. It prospers the immediate economy by supporting local farmers and other producers.
3. It encourages sustainable agriculture and facilitates tracking the supply chain back to the point of origin to evaluate ecological practices.
4. Indigenous food is more nutritious because of the short duration between harvest and your table, and it is less likely that the nutrient value has depreciated.
5. Eating indigenous food is eating seasonally.

Nigeria as a country has six geopolitical zones, and each zone has its own indigenous food, method of preparation, and service. Since food preparation is generally occurring, a comprehensive way of transmission is required to keep the mastery of recipes.

Indigenous Food Peculiar to Each Geopolitical Zone

Food commonly prepared in the Southwest.

Southwest is one of the geographical sections; it consists of six states, namely Ekiti State, Ondo State, Oyo State, Osun State, Ogun State, and Lagos State. Each section has its own indigenous cuisine.

Examples of Indigenous Foods Consumed in South West Nigeria

Ogun State, as one of the southwestern states, is divided into four divisions, namely Remo, Ijebu, Yewa, and Egba.

REMO AND IJEBU: The indigenous foods commonly consumed by the Remos and Ijebus are Ofada rice, Ikokore (water yam pottage), Ebiripo (cocoyam pudding), Eba with Egusi (melon soup), etc.

YEWA OR EGBADOS (Egun, Anago): The indigenous foods commonly consumed by the Yewas are Ota and Eko, Fufu and Posu soup, Ofada rice, etc.

EGBA: The indigenous foods commonly consumed by the Egbas is Ofada rice, Lafun (cassava flour) with gbure (water leaf soup), etc.

EKITI AND ONDO STATE: These two states are merged because of their proximity. The indigenous foods commonly consumed by these states are Iyan (pounded yam and Egusi soup), Ofada rice, etc.

OSUN AND OYO STATE: The indigenous foods commonly consumed by these two states are Sweet potato potage, Moin moin (bean pudding), Akara (bean cake), and Ekuru (plain bean pudding), Abari (maize pudding), Elubo (Yam flour), and pounded yam with varying accompaniments.

LAGOS STATE: Lagos is the center for commerce and industry in Nigeria. People from different backgrounds, origins, and localities converge in Lagos State to take part in business and other activities. They also bring their foods with them, while Lagos is predominantly a Yoruba state; Yoruba foods as well as foods by other ethnic groups are made and served in Lagos restaurants and eateries. The cultural food of Lagos State is Amala and Ewedu soup, Eba and okro and stew (i.e. cook okra and fried stew individually and combine it together when both are ready), Ofada rice, Ewa Agoyin eaten with Agege bread, Akara (bean cake) combined with Agidi, Efo riro and pounded yam, etc.

NORTH WEST GEOPOLITICAL ZONES

The North West topographical zones is made of seven states, namely Jigawa state, Kaduna State, Kano state, Katsina state, Kebbi state, Sokoto State and Zamfara state. It covers a land mass of 216,065 sq km or 25.75 per cent of the country's total land mass. Its major tribes are the Hausa and Fulani, who share strong ethnic knots and are very much connected, with other smaller groups especially in Kaduna state.

EXAMPLES OF INDIGENOUS FOODS CONSUMED IN NORTH WEST NIGERIA

1. SOKOTO STATE: Tuwo shinkafa and Miyan taushe. Tuwo shinkafa is a Northern Nigerian dish. It is a thick pudding made out of local rice, millet or maize. Miyan Taushe is a pumpkin soup of northern origin. It is most commonly eaten among the northern people of Nigeria: the Hausas and Fulani.

2. KEBBI AND KASTINA STATE: These two states are merged together because of their close proximity. The indigenous foods commonly consumed by these states are Waina (masa). Waina is a simple meal that is also known as Masa. It is a dish that can be prepared with soaked white Maize or local Rice. It is mostly prepared in the Northern part of Nigeria and is eaten with Miyan Waina/Taushe or groundnut soup if prepared plain or it can be sweetened with sugar.

3. ZAMFARA / JIGAWA / KANO / KADUNA STATE: Pete, Burabisco, Gwate (Maize Grits Pudding) are delicious meals popularly known and eaten by the northerners,

EXAMPLES OF INDIGENOUS FOODS CONSUMED IN SOUTH EAST

South East Nigeria consists of five states, namely Enugu state, Imo state, Ebonyi state, Abia state and Anambra State.

1. ENUGU STATE: The indigenous foods of Enugu State are Okpa, Abacha, Nkwobi, Fiofio, Ofe Akwu, Ofe Onugbu and Akpu.

2. EBONYI STATE: Esesa Soup, Akparata Soup, Egburuegbu Soup and Ohe shara (nsala soup).

3. ABIA STATE: Ofe Achara, Oto, Ofe Okazi, Esusu (Asusu) and Okazi Agwolu.

4. ANAMBRA STATE: Ofe Onugbu, Ofe Akwa, Nkwobi, Abacha, and Ukwa

EXAMPLES OF INDIGENOUS FOODS CONSUMED IN NORTH EAST

North East geographical zone consists of the following states: Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe. It occupies slightly less than one-third of Nigeria's total area and had a projected population for 2011 of 23,558,674 or 13.5% of the country's population.

Indigenous foods in North East Nigeria are listed below:

Waina, Margi Soup, Fura da nono, and Dandahu are some of the most famous foods eaten mostly by the Kanuri people of Borno State; couscous, which is a traditional food in (Gombe) is made up of small balls of durum wheat or semolina flour, and Miyan Taushe Recipe is commonly eaten with fufu/swallow, rice, and even Naan bread.

EXAMPLES OF INDIGENOUS FOODS CONSUMED IN NORTH CENTRAL

The North Central (also known as Middle Belt) consists of the following states: Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau, and Federal Capital Territory.

NASARAWA STATE: Plantain Mosa, Tuwo Shinkafa with Northern Nigerian soups: Miyan Kuka, Miyan Taushe. It can also be served with any Nigerian soup.

NIGER STATE: Madidi is a thick porridge, gel-like fermented starchy food item made from millet, served with Djerma stew (peanut chicken stew).

BENUE STATE: Foods popularly eaten in Benue State: Okoho soup and Pocho

KOGI STATE: Apapa, Ogidigbo, Ijobu, Oro_Egbe, Omaid, Afame soup.

KWARA STATE: Awara (soy cheese), Ekuru (Plain bean pudding)

EXAMPLES OF INDIGENOUS FOODS CONSUMED IN SOUTH SOUTH

South-South consists of six states, namely Bayelsa State, Akwa Ibom State, Edo State, Rivers state, Cross River State, and Delta State.

BAYELSA STATE: Bole and fish, Kiri Igina, Onunu, Opuru Fulou (prawn soup)

AKWA IBOM AND CROSS RIVER STATES: Ekpang Nkwukwo, Edikang ikong soup, Abak atam soup, Eru soup.

EDO AND DELTA STATE: Black Soup, Ofe Ojuju, Keke Fieye, Owo soup, okro pepper

soup and yellow eba, Egusi pepper soup and Starch

RIVERS, AKWA IBOM, CROSS RIVER, DELTA AND BAYELSA STATE:

Fisherman's soup. This soup cuts across all the South-South states.

THE MAJOR FOOD INGREDIENTS IN INDIGENOUS FOOD FORMULATION

INGREDIENT: Means one of the substances present in a mixture especially food.

FOOD INGREDIENT: This is any substance that is added to food for the desired effect or grown for consumption by humans and is eaten for its taste or nutritional value. Examples of food ingredients that can be used in food formulation and enrichment are all the foods present under the major food groups for instance, wheat which is a cereal, is an ingredient for making bread together with yeast, sugar, salt, egg, fat (margarine or butter). Maize an ingredient for making corn flour, custard, pap and cassava; yam and cocoyam used in making yam flour, laundry starch, tapioca, and chips etc.

THE SPECIFIC IMPORTANCE OF SOME INGREDIENTS IN INDIGENOUS FOOD

i.) **Ginger:** Has a recognized ability to quell feelings of nausea. The root of ginger is used for curries pickles, stir-fry dishes and sauces.

ii.) **Garlic:** Helps the body to fight free radicals and lowers blood pressure.

iii.) **Locust beans:** The African locust bean has a sweet taste indicating the presence of natural sugars and thus a probable energy source. It is rich in phyto-nutrients, perhaps carotenoids, which are essential predecessors of retinol (vitamin A). Locust beans have a sour taste indicating the existence of ascorbic acid (vitamin C). It is also used as a constituent in the production of various stews, soups and sauces as an accompaniment of cereals.

iv.) **Turmeric:** Used in colouring curry powder, also used in pickles, relishes and for colouring cakes.

v.) **Pepper:** Pepper comes in a beautiful array of colours and shapes; it adds flavour and colour to many low-calorie dishes. All fresh pepper is an excellent sources of vitamin A, (carotenoids) C, K and flavonoids. The antioxidants it contains help to fight free radicals and prevent cell damage.

vi.) **Bay leaves:** Useful for flavouring many soups, sauces, stews fish and vegetable dishes.

vii.) **Salt:** Essential for stabilizing body fluids and preventing muscular cramp.

viii.) **Melon:** Melon seeds are key s ingredients used to thicken soups. It is made up of vitamin C and B2, minerals, riboflavin, fat, protein and carbohydrate.

RECIPE

A recipe is an instruction for making food dishes. A recipe can also be likened to a blueprint; it's also a set of instructions or procedures that must be followed in a stepwise order. Another recipe word is a technical preparation file.

A "functioning" recipe must be easily read and usable. Certain instructions for combining

ingredients, panning and portioning the product, and key information or precautions should be as briefly stated as clarity will permit.

Standard recipe

A standard recipe has been tried out, evaluated, and altered for use by a particular food service institution and has been established to yield a compatible grade and portion every time when the precise procedures, equipment, and ingredients are employed.

Standardized Recipe

A Standardized Recipe as defined by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is one that "has been attempted, modified, and retried many times for use by a named food service institution and has been established to yield the compatible grade and portion each time when the precise methods are used with the same kind of equipment and the same quantity and quality of ingredients.

In easier terms, a **standardized recipe** is a perfect, distinct set of written injunctions for cooks to make consistent, high-grade recipes each time.

The Merits / Advantages of Using Standardized Recipes

The following are the benefits of using a standardized recipe

1. Steady Food Grade: Prescribed recipes help ensure that the best possible food items are made every time.
2. Anticipated Return: Having foreknowledge of how much of an item the recipe will yield aids in preventing food waste and shortages when serving to kids.
3. Correct Nutrient Composition: Prescribed recipes aid in ensuring that the best possible food items are made each time. Diligent food and ingredient procurement are also important.
4. Food Price Benchmark: Whenever the same ingredients and quantities are used each time the recipe is prepared, the cost per serving remains unchanging.
5. Systematic Buying: The amount of ingredients needed for production can be easily premeditated based on the information provided on the recipe.

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