



## Recipes, Customs and Cuisine of Rwanda September 2013

### Cuisine

The cuisine of Rwanda is based on local staple foods produced by traditional subsistence-level agriculture and has historically varied between the country's different ethnic groups.

Rwandan staples include bananas, plantains, pulses (edible seeds), sweet potatoes, beans, and cassava (manioc). Historically this is particularly true of the Twa and the Hutus who hunted and farmed. Their diet was high in vegetables, supplemented with limited meats. The Tutsis were traditionally pastoralists and consumed a higher amount of milk and dairy products. Many Rwandans do not eat meat more than a few times a month. For those who live near lakes and have access to fish, tilapia is popular. The potato, thought to have been introduced to Rwanda by German and Belgian colonists, is now very popular.

Read More: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rwandan\\_cuisine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rwandan_cuisine)

### Customs - provided by Foundation Rwanda staff

#### **Traditions:**

The last Saturday of each month is *Umuganda*, a national day of community service. Normal services are closed from 7am-12pm so that all citizens can organize within their communities to do neighborhood chores such as clean-up and meeting together to discuss neighborhood issues.

#### **Greetings:**

Almost every contact is initiated with a handshake and holding hands is maintained through the greetings. If you are speaking while walking it is common to hold hands. This usually occurs within the same sex, but occasionally happens between men and women.

#### **Names in a Family:**

Surnames can be different among immediate family members, as parents frequently choose unique surnames for each child, and women keep their maiden names when married.

#### **Child Naming Ceremony:**

Child naming in Rwanda is a tradition that stems back to the ancestral period. The ceremony is held some weeks after the birth of the baby, sufficient time for the family to be confident in its health. During the ceremony suggestions of names come from the father, clan members, friends and other well-wishers. It is traditionally called '*Kwita Izina*' which is translated as 'Child naming'.

## Recipes

### Rwanda Fruit Salad

**Ingredients:**

banana  
pineapple  
avocado  
mango  
papaya  
passion fruit

**Directions:**

Simply peel, slice, and cube the fruit. Toss together and enjoy.



Recipe source:

<http://globaltableadventure.com/2012/11/11/recipe-rwandian-fruit-salad/>

## Rwanda Beef Stew

### Ingredients:

2 pounds stewing beef, cut into 1/2- inch pieces  
1 medium onion, chopped  
2 tablespoons peanut oil  
3 large green plantains, peeled  
and cut into 1 1/2-inch slices  
4 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice  
1 large tomato, peeled, seeded and coarsely  
chopped  
1 teaspoon salt  
1/2 teaspoon poultry seasoning  
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper



### Directions:

In a heavy casserole dish, brown the beef and onion in oil. Rub the plantain slices with lemon juice and add them to the browned beef and onions. Cook for 5 minutes over low heat, stirring constantly to make sure they do not stick. Add the remaining ingredients and water to cover them.

Cover the casserole and cook over low heat for 1 1/2 to 2 hours. Add more water if needed, and stir occasionally so that the ingredients do not stick.

## Isombe

### Ingredients:

1 pound cassava leaves, washed and chopped  
(or other greens such as kale, collard greens)  
6 spring onions, chopped  
2 medium eggplants, cubed  
500g spinach, washed and chopped  
2 green bell peppers, sliced into pieces  
3 tablespoons palm oil  
3 tablespoons peanut butter

### Directions:

Add the cassava leaves (or other greens) to salted water and boil until tender. Add the chopped onions, eggplant, spinach and green bell peppers then cook on medium heat for 10 minutes. Add the palm oil and peanut butter and stir to form a smooth paste. Simmer for about 10 minutes, or until the sauce thickens. Serve with rice and bread.



Recipe source: <http://www.celtnet.org.uk/recipes/miscellaneous/fetch-recipe.php?rid=misc-isombe>

## Ugali (African Cornmeal Mush)

### Ingredients:

4 cups water  
2 teaspoons salt  
2 cups white cornmeal, finely ground (or substitute hominy grits)

### Directions:

Bring the water and salt to a boil in a heavy-bottomed saucepan. Stir in the cornmeal slowly, letting it fall through the fingers of your hand.

Reduce heat to medium-low and continue stirring regularly, smashing any lumps with a spoon, until the mush pulls away from the sides of the pot and becomes very thick, about 10 minutes. Remove from heat and allow to cool somewhat.

### Variations:

White cornmeal is the most commonly used grain for ugali. But you can substitute sorghum, millet or coarse cassava flour or even hominy grits. More or less water can be added to achieve the consistency you prefer. Stir in a little butter if you like for a richer flavor.



### Notes:

Ugali is usually served as an accompaniment to meat or vegetable stews, greens or soured milk. To eat ugali, pull off a small ball of mush with your fingers. Form an indentation with your thumb, and use it to scoop up accompanying stews and other dishes. Or you can form larger balls with your hands or an ice cream scoop, place them in individual serving bowls and spoon stew around them.

## Kachumbari

### Ingredients:

5 tomatoes, thinly sliced  
2 small onions, very thinly sliced  
1 avocado cut into small cubes (optional)  
1 red chili, cut length-wise into 5 strips  
Handful fresh coriander, finely chopped  
Juice of 1 lemon  
3 tablespoons olive oil  
Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste  
Cayenne pepper to decorate



### Directions:

Layer the tomatoes, sliced onions, chili and coriander in a large serving bowl. Mix the lemon juice and olive oil together and toss this mixture through the salad. Season with salt and pepper. Sprinkle some cayenne pepper over the top and serve.

Recipe source: <http://joyunspeakableinkenya.blogspot.com/2012/05/kachumbari-kenyan-salad.html>