

## YAM BALLS

### WEST AFRICA

Yams are a staple and versatile food in West Africa. The African yam is a tubular root up to three feet long with white to pale-yellow flesh and brownish skin. When steamed or boiled it is remarkably similar in taste and texture to boiled white potatoes. Cassava or white potatoes can be substituted for the yams in this recipe.

4 cups yams, cooked	2 teaspoon salt
1 large onion, finely chopped	1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
3 medium tomatoes	2 eggs, beaten
¼ cup peanut oil	Flour
2 teaspoon dried thyme	12 cups peanut oil

In a large bowl, mash the yams until smooth; set aside. Fry half the onions and half the tomatoes in ¼ cup oil until onions are limp. Add thyme, salt, and cayenne pepper and mix well. Pour cooked onion and tomato mixture over yams and add remaining onions, tomatoes, and beaten eggs. Mix thoroughly. Turn mixture out onto a floured surface. With greased hands, shape yam mixture into one-inch balls. Heat 12 cups oil to 350°-375° F and fry until golden brown, about four or five minutes. Drain on absorbent towels and serve immediately. If you wish to avoid the additional fat, balls can be baked on a greased baking sheet until golden brown. Serves 6 to 8.

## COCONUT RICE

### CAMEROON

4 tablespoons oil	2 teaspoons thyme
1 large onion, chopped	1 teaspoon mixed spices
4 tablespoons tomato puree	2 fresh green chilies, seeded and diced
5 cups coconut milk	3 cups long-grain rice
4 carrots, chopped	Salt to taste
2 yellow peppers, seeded and chopped	Shredded coconut

Heat oil and onion in a saucepan for two minutes. Add tomato puree and cook over moderate heat for five minutes, stirring constantly. Add coconut milk, stir well, and bring to a boil. Add carrots, pepper, seasonings, chilies, and rice to onion mixture. Salt to taste, and bring to a boil. Cover and cook over low heat until rice has absorbed most of the liquid (about 20 minutes). Garnish with shredded coconut and serve hot. Serves 8.

# BANANA FRITTERS

## WEST AFRICA

12 cups flour	1 cup milk
3 tablespoons sugar (optional)	5 to 6 medium-sized ripe bananas, mashed
¼ teaspoon ground ginger	1 cup peanuts (optional)
2 teaspoon ground cinnamon	oil for frying
2 or 3 eggs	confectioners' sugar (optional)

In a large mixing bowl combine flour, sugar, ginger, and cinnamon. Beat in the eggs, one at a time, with a sturdy wire whisk. Gradually add milk, continuing to beat until batter is smooth and satiny, about 5 minutes. Stir in the bananas and peanuts and let mixture sit for 10 to 15 minutes.

Heat oil to 350-375°F. Pour about ¼ cup of batter quickly into the hot oil. Let it brown 2 to 3 minutes, then turn with a slotted spoon. Remove fritters when they are a rich golden brown and drain on absorbent cloth. Continue frying until all batter is used. Sprinkle with confectioners' sugar and serve while still hot. Makes about 20 fritters.

## SIMPLE FUFU

### WEST AFRICA

Fufu is traditionally made from cassava, yam, or any similar starchy vegetable, and is work intensive. Try this simple recipe to give your children a quick and easy taste experience that is remarkably similar to the traditional taste.

¼ cup dehydrated potatoes      2 cups water

Mix the dehydrated potatoes and half of the water in a small pan until it forms a smooth paste. Cook over a low heat, stirring constantly. As it boils, add additional water until the paste becomes thick and gooey. Cook for five minutes, stirring to prevent sticking. Let cool slightly then serve each child a spoonful along with a zesty sauce or use a jar of spaghetti sauce for a quick sauce.

Encourage children to pick up a teaspoon of the fufu paste with the fingers of their right hand and form it into a ball. Dip the ball into a small amount of sauce and eat directly from the fingers.