Let's Cook

UGALI (PORRIDGE)

Across eastern Africa people eat a thick porridge. Some people call it *ugali* [ooh-GAH-lee], and others call it *sadza* [SAHD-zah]. They eat it for breakfast or for dinner. It is usually cooked without salt or sugar and is eaten with fingers by rolling a small amount into a ball and dipping it into the juice of vegetables or stew for flavor.

12 cups water
4 cups cornmeal or regular Cream of Wheat cereal
butter (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

Heat the water in a large saucepan until just warm. Mix half the cornmeal a little at a time, with the warm water, stirring with a wooden spoon to make sure it doesn't lump. Bring mixture to a boil, stirring constantly, then lower the heat and let it boil gently for a few minutes. The mixture will look like thin transparent porridge. Sprinkle the remaining cornmeal over the liquid mixture, a little at a time, stirring constantly to avoid lumps, until the desired consistency is reached. Keep stirring until the mixture is smooth and well cooked. Stir in a little butter if desired. Serve in a bowl with a sauce such as spaghetti sauce or a well-seasoned vegetable stew.

MATOKE (FRIED PLANTAINS)

Plantains are a variety of bananas that are larger than eating bananas and usually green. They are not meant for eating raw, but are often used in cooked dishes.

4 medium plantains, peeled
oil for frying
salt to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

Peel plantains and slice diagonally into ¼-inch slices. Drop carefully into hot oil and fry until golden brown. Drain and sprinkle with salt. Serve warm.