

# GHANAIAN RECIPES

Ghana is situated on the southern coast of the West African bulge and is bordered to the east by Togo, to the west by the Ivory Coast, to the south by the Atlantic Ocean and to the north and northwest by Burkina Fasso.



## **People & Culture**

### **PEOPLE**

Ghanians come from six main ethnic groups: the Akan (Ashanti and Fanti), the Ewe, the Ga-Adangbe, the Mole-Dagbani, the Guan, and the Gurma.

### **Ashanti Tribe**

The Ashanti tribe of the Akan are the largest tribe in Ghana and one of the few matrilineal societies in West Africa. Once renowned for the splendour and wealth of their rulers, they are most famous today for their craft work, particularly their hand-carved stools and fertility dolls and their colourful kente cloth. Kente cloth is woven in bright, narrow strips with complex patterns; it's usually made from cotton and is always woven outdoors, exclusively by men.

The village is a social as well as an economic unit. Everyone participates in the major ceremonies, the most frequent of which are funeral celebrations which typically last several days. Attendance at funerals is normally expected from everyone in the village and expenditure on funerals is a substantial part of the household budget.

The Ashanti are noted for their expertise in a variety of specialized crafts. These include weaving, wood carving, ceramics, and metallurgy. Of these crafts, only pottery-making is primarily a female activity; the others are restricted to male specialists. Even in the case of pottery-making, only men are allowed to fashion pots or pipes representing anthropomorphic or zoomorphic figures.

### **All about Society-Twi-(Ashanti)**

#### **Ewé**

The Ewé have over 600 deities to turn to in times of need. Many village celebrations and ceremonies take place in honour of one or more deities. They also weave kente cloth, and their more geometrical patterns contain symbolic designs handed down through the ages.

The Ewe occupy southeastern Ghana and the southern parts of neighboring Togo and Benin. Most Ewe were farmers who kept some livestock, and there was some craft specialization. On the coast and immediately inland, fishing was important, and local variations in economic activities permitted a great deal of trade between one community and another, carried out chiefly by women

### **Fanti Tribe**

The Fanti tribe are mainly located in the coastal areas of Ghana

### **Ga-Adangbe Tribe**

The Ga-Adangbe people inhabit the Accra Plains. The Adangbe are found to the east, the Ga groups, to the west of the Accra coastlands. Although both languages are derived from a common proto-Ga-Adangbe ancestral language, modern Ga and Adangbe are mutually unintelligible. The modern Adangbe include the people of Shai, La, Ningo, Kpone, Osudoku, Krobo, Gbugble, and Ada, who speak different dialects. The Ga also include the Ga-Mashie groups occupying neighborhoods in the central part of Accra, and other Gaspeakers who migrated from Akwamu, Anecho in Togo, Akwapim, and surrounding areas.

### **Gaun Tribe**

The Guan are believed to have begun to migrate from the Mossi region of modern Burkina around A.D. 1000. Moving gradually through the Volta valley in a southerly direction, they created settlements along the Black Volta, throughout the Afram Plains, in the Volta Gorge, and in the Akwapim Hills before moving farther south onto the coastal plains. Some scholars postulate that the wide distribution of the Guan suggests that they were the Neolithic population of the region. Later migrations by other groups such as the Akan, Ewe, and Ga-Adangbe into Guan-settled areas would then have led to the development of Guan-speaking enclaves along the Volta and within the coastal plains.

## **LANGUAGES**

The major languages spoken are Twi, Fante, Ga, Hausa, Dagbani, Ewe and Nzema. English is the official language of Ghana.

The Ashante are part of the Akan tribes who speak various dialects of Twi. The language is very rich in proverbs, the use of which is taken to be a sign of wisdom. Euphemisms are very common, especially about events connected with death

Ghanaian cuisine has diverse traditional dishes from each ethnic group, tribe and clan from the north to the south and from the east to west. Generally, most Ghanaian recipe dishes are made up of a starchy portion (rice, fufu, banku, tuo, gigi, akplidzii, yekeyeke, etew, ato etc) and a sauce or soup saturated with fish, snails, meat or mushrooms.

**Some of the main starchy Ghanaian recipe dishes are:**

- \* Cooked rice**
- \* Waakye – rice and beans**
- \* Fufu – pounded cassava and plantain or pounded yam and plantain, or pounded cocoyam**
- \* Banku/Akple – cooked fermented corn dough and cassava dough**
- \* Kenkey/Dokonu – fermented corn and cassava dough, wrapped in corn or banana leaves and cooked into a consistent solid paste**
- \* Kokonte – from dried cassava chips**
- \* Gari – made from cassava**

Most Ghanaian dishes are usually served with a stew (often based on tomato with other protein cooked in it) or soup. The most popular soups are groundnut soup, light soup, and palmnut soup. Okra soup and stew are also popular. Usually rice and kenkey are served with soup or stew, while banku, fufu, akple and konkonte are served with soup.

A popular side dish in Ghana is kelewele. It is sometimes served with rice and stew, and sometimes eaten alone as a dessert.

Another popular dish is kontomire which is mashed up taro (cocoyam) leaves. It is often mixed with bits of tuna and egusi (pumpkin seeds) and dressed with palm oil.

An alternative to the starch and stew combination is “Red Red”, a very popular and easy to find dish. It is made up of a mashed bean stew served with fried plantain. It earns its name from the red spices that tint both the stew and plantain.

Other popular dishes are ampesi (boiled yam and unripe plantain) which is usually accompanied with kontomire, groundnut soup, usually made with chicken, gari foto, nyadowa (garden egg stew) Tilapia, fried whitebait (chinam), smoked fish and crayfish are a common component of Ghanaian dishes. The cornmeal based starch dishes, banku and kenkey are usually accompanied by some form of fried fish (chinam) or grilled tilapia and a very spicy salsa like condiment made from raw red and green chillies, onions, tomatoes. Banku and tilapia is a very popular combo served in most Ghanaian restaurants.

Ghanaian cuisine is quite sophisticated with liberal and adventurous use of exotic ingredients and a wide variety of tastes, spices, textures. Herbs such as thyme, bay, vegetables such as wild mushrooms, garden eggs (similar to egg plant) various types of pulses, ginger, garlic, smoked meat and fish, crab, trotters, duck all feature in Ghanaian cuisine.

The stew is, together with the soup, the most traditional meal. Stews are made of chicken, beef or fish as the main meats and some of the most famous are: the kontomire stew, the chicken and the fish stew. There is a famous dressing in Ghana: the peanut dressing, sweetened with cinnamon, spiced with chili powder and salt and fresh chives for garnish and added mostly on ripe and firm chopped avocados, but also on other kinds of salads. The groundnut soup, which is very exotic, the mushrooms and snail soup or the greens soups are specific to different the Ghanaian regions. The plantain, fried or boiled is served as a main course and as a vegetarian dish. The tatale, or the Ghanaian plantain cakes are made of ripe plantains, chopped or grated onion, flour, palm oil and salt is served hot as the main vegetarian course. The gari foto is another vegetarian dish, which is also a side dish for stew. The Ghanaian desserts are almost all based on the local fruit, the banana.

For all of you home cooks out there, please make sure you try and make this at home, it is THE BEST soup you will have ever tasted I promise you!! As you can certainly tell this is my favorite dish and in my opinion is one of the most amazing Ghanaian recipes out there. This Ghanaian recipe of peanut soup appears on the menu in many African countries. This smooth, creamy version thickened with both peanuts and peanut butter gets its sweetness from yam. A warm reddish brown, the soup is fragrant with sweet spices, intensely flavored, earthy and piquant. Europeans brought peanuts from South America to Africa in the early 1500's where they caught on quickly because of their similarity to the native African bambarra groundnut. In the U.S. it has become traditional to serve this soup when celebrating the seven days of Kwanzaa. Substitute vegetable stock for a deliciously rich vegetarian soup

Well here goes.... I'm about to give you the instructions on how to make the Ghanaian recipe of Groundnut / peanut soup.



### Ingredients

- # salt and pepper, to taste
- # 2 large onions, finely chopped
- # 4 large very ripe tomatoes or
- # 13 ounces canned tomatoes
- # 6 1/2 ounces creamy peanut butter

# 3 1/2 pints boiling water

# red chilies, to taste

# 4–8 mushrooms

# Meat – Any meat of your choice, pork, beef, fish or chicken.

## **Directions**

1. Blanch the tomatoes in boiling water, peel off the skin and blend the flesh to a smooth juice. If using canned tomatoes, blend. Cut the meat into small pieces, wash and season with salt, garlic and chopped shallots. Add a little water, put it on the fire and allow to boil for about 10 minutes.

2. Put the peanut butter into a big bowl, add 3/4 pt. of the boiling water and use a wooden spoon or a blender to blend the peanut butter and water carefully together to form a creamy, smooth sauce.

3. Mix together the tomatoes, peanut butter mixture, red chilies and mushrooms.

4. Continue to simmer, stirring only occasionally to prevent the food sticking to the bottom of the pan. This is now the basic soup.

5. Pour the rest of the boiling water into the soup and simmer slowly on medium heat for 20 mins or so.

This Ghanaian recipe soup is usually served with FUFU, an Akan dumpling made from yams, plantinas, cassava or even processed potato flakes. The FuFu should sit like an island in a sea of soup. This is a dish that is traditionally eaten with your fingers – even the soup!!

Enjoy more recipes to follow!

Groundnut Soup and Fufu

Fufu and Groundnut Soup Served in traditional Ghanaian Pot.

## **AFRICAN MANGO SALAD**

### **Ingredients**

1. 2 mangoes, cubes
2. 1/2 pineapple, fresh, cubed
3. 1/2 cup lemon juice
4. 1 cup apricot nectar or orange juice
5. lettuce
6. strawberries, for garnish

### **Directions**

1. In a 2-quart bowl: Add the pineapple to the mango.
2. Blend the juices separately and then pour over the mango.
3. Serve on lettuce cups either individually or in a bowl.
4. Garnish with fresh strawberries.





## **AVOCADO WITH GROUNDNUT DRESSING**

### **Description**

A very simple to make salad from Ghana with really complex flavors. Make it as spicy as you like by using hot instead of sweet paprika and upping the Cayenne.

### **Ingredients**

1. 2 avocados, ripe
2. 1 tablespoon lemon juice, fresh
3. 2 tablespoons peanuts
4. 1/2 teaspoon paprika (sweet or hot(to taste))
5. 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
6. Cayenne (to taste)
7. salt (to taste)
8. chives, fresh, as a garnish

### **Directions**

Peel the avocados, remove the pit and cube the flesh. Place in a bowl with lemon juice. Grind the peanuts so you have small chunks. Sprinkle the nuts and spices over the avocado and toss gently. Garnish with chopped chives.

Serves:4

## COUS-COUS SALAD

### Ingredients

1. 1 16-oz Box of Cous-Cous
2. 1 can of black beans
3. 1 can of whole kernel corn
4. 1-2 tomatoes, diced
5. 1 Tbsp. cilantro
6. 1/4 c. lime juice



### Directions

Cook cous-cous as directed. Transfer cous-cous into a large bowl. Add remaining ingredients and mix together. Ingredients can vary in amounts based on individual taste. Put into refrigerator for two hours. Serve chilled.

## **BEET SALADS**

### **Ingredients**

1. 1 pound beets
2. 1 tablespoon granulated sugar
3. Juice of 1 lemon
4. 1 tablespoon olive oil
5. Large pinch of cinnamon
6. 1 tablespoon chopped parsley
7. salt to taste



### **Directions**

Wash the beets well, being careful not to break their skins. Cut off the tops, leaving a stalk of about 1 1/2 inches. Boil, covered, until tender.

Allow the water to cool, then slip off the skins, trim off the tops, and cut into bite-sized pieces.

Mix the remaining ingredients and pour over beets. Let marinate 1 hour before serving. Makes about 2 cups.

### **Beet Salad II**

Prepare as described above, but add 1 teaspoon orange flower water, 1/8 teaspoon cumin, a pinch of paprika, and a little water to the sauce.

## KELEWELE



### Method

1. Wash plantain, cut ends and peel
2. Cut peeled plantain in half, lengthwise and slice, about half an inch thick
3. Marinate with chilli and ginger, and salt to taste.
4. Deep fry in hot oil at 160 C until golden brown
5. Serve hot. Can be served with roasted peanuts and finger food or black-eye beans stem.



Preparation Time: 20 mins

Cooking Time: 5 mins

Yields 2–3 servings

## Ingredients

- \* 2 fingers of plantain
- \* 1-teaspoon ground ginger
- \* 1-teaspoon ground chilli
- \* 1-teaspoon ground or grated ginger
- \* Vegetable oil for deep-frying

## SAUCES (Palaver 'Sauce')



Old editions of Webster's Dictionary define "palaver" as "a parley between European explorers and representatives of local populations, especially in Africa" or "In Africa, a parley with the natives; a talk; hence, a public conference and deliberation; a debate".

The word "palaver" comes from the Portuguese language. In the 1400's the Portuguese were the first to sail around Africa from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean (Portuguese navigator Bartolomeu Dias rounded the Cape of Good Hope in 1488); Portuguese traders were the first Europeans to establish a presence along the sub-Saharan African coasts.

Though they were later largely displaced by the English and French, the word "palaver" became a part of the lingua franca along the Atlantic coast of Africa. What "palaver" has to do with Palaver Sauce (or Palava Sauce)—an African stew made from greens and meat—is not

clear. In Ghana, this dish is also called Kontonmire, Kentumere, or Nkontommire, named for the leaf of the cocoyam (taro) plant which is used for the greens. See also: Plasas.

## Method

- \* If you are using dried or fresh bitterleaf: Wash it in cold water, rinsing several times, and allow it to soak for at least a few hours, then chop it into pieces.

- \* If you are using spinach leaves: Clean and chop them immediately before cooking the soup. If you are using any other greens (such as kale or collard greens): Clean, chop, and parboil them briefly before cooking the soup. ·

- \* If you are using dried/salted fish: Soak it in water for an hour or two, then cut the fish into pieces and remove any skin or bones. ·

- \* Heat the oil in a large dutch oven or covered pot. Fry the meat until it is partially done, and then add a few cups of broth, stock, or water. Reduce heat. Simmer.

- \* Add the bitterleaf (or greens, or spinach) to the pot. Stir and simmer for several minutes more.

- \* Add the fish to the pot, along with the onion and tomatoes, and any hot chile pepper, salt, and red or black pepper you like. Cover the pot and continue to cook over low heat. ·

- \* When the greens seem tender, add the remaining ingredients. (Egusi or okra help it to thicken. The egusi, pumpkin seeds, or sesame seeds should be crushed or ground before they are added.)

- \* Cook over low heat, stirring often (do not add any more liquid) until it is a thick sauce-like consistency.



\* Serve with Banku, Kenkey, Fufu, or Rice.

Palaver 'Sauce' is a good example of the English word "sauce" used to describe something that is more like a soup or stew. Platto, bologie, and bitterleaf all appear in various Palaver 'Sauce' recipes– whether these African greens are one and the same is uncertain. (See also: Ndole Soup.)

Spinach is usually substituted outside of Africa.

### **NKANTENKWAN (GROUNDNUT SOUP 2)**



### **Method**

Put groundnut paste in a cooking pot, add 1 pint of water, and mix until smooth and pouring.

Bring to the boil, stir occasionally until it coats the back of the wooden spoon and oil collects at the top.

Cut meat into pieces, wash and put into a cooking pot. Season with salt, chopped shallots and garlic. Add a little water, bring to the boil. Allow to simmer for 10 minutes.



Mix the cooked groundnut paste with the rest of the water and add to the meat.

Add washed vegetables (tomatoes, pepper and onions) and cook until soft. Prepare and add the fish.

Remove the vegetables from soup, grind and return the paste to soup. Allow to simmer for about 1 hour.

Serve hot with boiled yam, rice, fufu, etc.



### Ingredient

- \* 1 cup groundnut paste
- \* 8oz smoked fish
- \* 1lb meat
- \* 3 medium sized tomatoes
- \* 6 chopped shallots
- \* 3 garden eggs (optional)
- \* 2 medium sized onions
- \* 4pts cold water
- \* 1 clove garlic, ground
- \* pepper and salt to taste

## BEEF KEBABS



### Ingredients

1. 3 pounds lean Beef, cut into 1 1/2-inch cubes
2. Crushed hot red pepper (optional) or Kyinkyinga powder\*
3. 4 slices liver, cut into 1 1/2 inch cubes
4. 1 teaspoon powdered ginger or freshly grated ginger
5. 2 tablespoons lemon juice
6. salt to taste
7. 2 tablespoons grated Onion
8. 1 1/2 cups finely ground roasted peanuts (optional)
9. Dash of tenderizer (optional)
10. Dash of paprika
11. Dash of garlic powder
12. 1/3 cup margarine or melted fat
13. Dash of Ac'cent (optional)

### Directions

With Beef and liver in separate bowls, season Beef with lemon juice, onions, tenderizer, garlic, Ac'cent, and crushed pepper. Let stand for at least 30 minutes. (Better flavor is obtained when meat is seasoned overnight.) Season liver with ginger and a little salt. Alternate cubes of Beef and liver on long skewers, dust with crushed peanuts, and sprinkle with paprika. Arrange skewers of meat on a rack, with a tray underneath, spray with drops of melted margarine, and broil slowly about 6 inches away from direct heat until meat is cooked and lightly browned. Turn when necessary.

Serve hot. Serves 4 to 6 Cooking time: 1 1/2 hour

### **GHANA MEATBALL STEW**



**Ingredients**

## **MEATBALL**

1. 2lb Ground Beef
2. 1tsp Tenderizer
3. 1tsp lemon juice
4. 1lrg egg, Slightly Beaten
5. 1cup onions, Finely Chopped
6. 1tsp salt
7. 1tsp Black or cayenne pepper
8. 1dsh garlic powder
9. 1tsp Ground nutmeg
10. 1/2tbl all-purpose flour
11. 1/2cup Cooking oil

## **GRAVY**

1. 1med Onion, Sliced
2. 1cup tomato Sauce
3. 1med tomato, Peeled and Sliced
4. 1Green pepper, Sliced

## **Directions**

In a large mixing bowl combine ground Beef with tenderizer, lemon juice, egg, onions, salt, choice of pepper, garlic, and nutmeg. Cover and let stand for 30 minutes to set and permit seasonings to mingle.

Form about a dozen tablespoon-size balls of the seasoned Beef. Spread flour on a plate and roll each ball in flour to coat.

Meanwhile, heat oil in a large skillet over medium heat. When oil is ready a toothpick or bread crumb dropped into the skillet will quickly sizzle and begin to brown. Brown all sides of meatballs evenly while using a metal spoon for turning. When meat is finished browning, remove from the skillet with a slotted metal spoon. Place on paper towel to remove excess oil and reserve both meatballs and cooking oil.

To prepare gravy return remaining cooking oil to a large, clean skillet and brown all remaining flour. Add onions, tomato sauce, sliced tomato, and green pepper. Cook for 10-minutes over medium heat. Slowly stir in water and thoroughly combine sauce mixture. Add reserved browned meat balls, cover and reduce heat to a simmer. Continue to simmer for approximately 30-minutes, stirring occasionally until gravy is well blended throughout the meatball mixture. Serve hot over rice. Stew goes well with sweet potatoes, yams or pineapple slices.

## **ABENKWAN (Palm nut Soup)**



### **Method**

Clean, cut meat into pieces and wash.

Put meat in a saucepan, season with salt, chopped shallots, garlic and a little ginger. Add enough water and boil for 10 minutes.

Add the palm liquid to meat with washed vegetables (tomatoes, onions, garden eggs) and ground pepper. Cook until vegetables are soft.

Remove tomatoes and onions, grind and return to soup. Remove garden eggs, seed and strain, return to soup. Simmer for about 1 hour.

Serve with fufu, banku, kenkey, etc.

### **Ingredients**

\* 1 tin Ghanaian palm liquid

- \* 1 1/2 lb meat
- \* 2 medium sized onions
- \* 3 tomatoes
- \* 4 garden eggs
- \* 2 teaspn. ground pepper
- \* 1 clove garlic, ground
- \* 2 dsrts pn. smoked dried shrimp, ground
- \* salt to taste

## **AQUSHI SOUP**

### **Method**

Grind agushi with onions into a smooth paste.

Add a little stock to ground pepper, some of the onions, fish or meat and salt. Place the cooking pot on the fire and simmer gently.

Mould agushi paste into small balls and drop into soup.

Add the rest of the stock. Add the chopped bitter leaves and cook for another 2 minutes. Add the ground dried shrimp and allow to simmer for 1 minute.

Serve hot with Eba.

### **Ingredients**

- \* 4oz agushi

- \* 8oz smoked fish or cooked meat
- \* 10 dried shrimp, ground
- \* 2 medium sized tomatoes
- \* 1/4pt meat stock
- \* 1/2pt palm oil
- \* 1 large onion
- \* 8 – 10oz bitter leaves, chopped
- \* 1 clove garlic, ground
- \* salt and pepper to taste

## **PLAIN SOUP**

### **Method**

Peel and wash onions and put it into a saucepan. Wash tomatoes, pepper and garden eggs, add to the onions and cover with cold water. Bring to the boil, cook till soft.

Cut the meat into small pieces, wash and season with salt, garlic and chopped shallots. Add a little water, put it on the fire and allow to boil for about 10 minutes.

Grind the cooked vegetables (tomatoes, pepper and onions) and add to the beef on the fire. Add remaining the water.

Allow soup to simmer until meat is tender. Remove seeds and skin from the gardens eggs and serve separately

Serve hot with fufu.

### **Ingredients**



- \* 1lb beef, smoked fish or chicken
- \* 6 shallots, chopped
- \* 3 tomatoes
- \* 4 garden eggs
- \* 4pts cold water
- \* 1 teaspn. salt
- \* 1 teaspn. red pepper
- \* 1 clove garlic
- \* 2 medium sized onions

## **KONTOMIRE STEW**

### **Method**

Cut meat into pieces, wash and season with a bit of salt, garlic and ginger. Place in a cooking pot and put it on the fire, bring to the boil and cook till tender. Grind pepper and tomatoes and slice the onions. Pick, wash and chop the kontomire or spinach leaves.

Heat oil in a saucepan. Fry onions and pepper for 2 minutes, add dried ground shrimps and tomatoes. Cook for another 10 minutes.

Add meat with the stock. Prepare and add fish, stir and allow to simmer for a few minutes. Add the agushi mix with water and kpakpo shito.

Add the chopped leaves when the agushi is cooked and simmer for about 5 minutes.

Serve hot with boiled plantain, yam, rice, coco yam, etc.

## Ingredients

- \* 2 bundles of coco yam leaves (kontomire) or spinach
- \* 4 medium sized tomatoes
- \* 2 large onions
- \* 1lb meat or tripe, cooked
- \* 8oz smoked fish
- \* 8oz agushi
- \* 1/4pt palm oil
- \* 2 dessertspn. dried ground shrimp
- \* 1 clove garlic salt, pepper and ginger to taste
- \* kpakpo shito

## **GARDEN EGG STEW**

### **Method**

Cut, wash and season meat with garlic, salt and a little ginger. Cook meat until tender.

Was and boil garden eggs till they are soft. Prepare tomatoes and onions.

Heat oil in saucepan, add the sliced onions and fry for 2 minutes. Add the ground pepper, cook for a few minutes then add the ground dried shrimps and ground tomatoes and cook for about 10 minutes.

Add the meat and stock, simmer for about 5 minutes. Remove skin and seeds of garden eggs, chop and add to the stew.

Serve with hot boiled yam, plantain, rice, etc.

### **Ingredients**

- \* 10 garden eggs
- \* 3 tomatoes
- \* 2 medium sized onions
- \* 4 red peppers, ground
- \* 6 medium sized dried herrings
- \* 8oz meat
- \* 1 dsrtspn. dried shrimps, ground
- \* 1/4pt palm oil
- \* 1 clove garlic, ground
- \* salt to taste

