

Win A Recipe Feature In Red And Cookbook Deal With HarperCollins



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Entries representing Western Central Africa -

Cameroon



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Bio & Contact details



Julienne Hortense Nguepnang-Ntepndie, Born December 1975

I am Julienne Hortense Nguepnang-Ntepndie. Cameroon is my heart, I love Paris and home is Croydon.

I was born in Yaoundé, Cameroon and lived in France from my teens.

I have been living in Croydon for the last 15 years and it is a town that I really love.

I didn't go too far with my education, but I am a qualified accountant having done a vocational study of the profession. I did try a first year in University, but my need for earning was much stronger. So I started in a call centre, then worked temporary at the Conservatoire de Paris where I picked up a thing for classical music being an invigilator for students taking their music exams.

I then worked as a part time chef assistant when the first Brioche Doree opened in the Champs Elysees (Paris). I was doing it because I loved playing with food, but it became a passion and I picked up few tips especially for the salads. Since my jobs were not much of a carrier, I decided to move to England. By this time, I had thrown out of my head any intension of being an accountant. Though I was really good at it, I had by now discovered creativity in hairdressing, cooking, graphic design, music and there was no way that I would want to go back to the grey world of accountancy.

Since arriving in London in 2001, I've been a dinner lady, worked in a pub, been a hairdresser and a barber. For most of those I just blagued my way in and I worked hard for them. I did not leave my family and comfort to come here, to seat down and daydream.

My first proper job came when I dared to apply for a job at Mailboxes Etc... in Croydon Yes, I blagued my way in and was ready to have a salary free trial as I was working in a pub in the evening, it wasn't costing much to do that. Fortunately, they gave me the job. And for the next 3 years, I learnt graphic design from clients who came in for printing jobs, I improved my English; I told those who had become regular customers to correct me when I used words incorrectly. I stayed away from French speaking people as I was determined to lose the accent.

I was getting better in English as I grew, I had desires for better jobs and higher salaries... London is a very expensive place when to decide to settle down and have your own place. With that desire to grow, I became an International Auctions Coordinator 3 years, then, an Events Coordinator in the last 7 years for large media company.

My passion for cooking came from my adoptive father and my stint in Brioché Dorée kitchens. I LOVE food and am often obsessed about finding faults if it is cooked by somebody else. So, I have to cook most of my food and spend my quite time trying on random stuff... am a single woman so, I've got time to play. I once bought about 5gks worth of clementine's (citrus fruit), about half way through them, I thought I was wasting the peels so, I dried them to use in some of my dishes... few weeks down the line. I walked in an Indian shop and saw that, dried orange peels were on sale. I was baffled. In the same way once I decided to caramelize my citrus peels and found them in a sweet box later... I wasn't reinventing the wheel but was on my way to. That's how much I love food. I don't waste much.

Being in this country, we are not given much meat wise. I love things like rabbit, cow tongue, kidney, geysers and such. In France they are readily available. But here, it is chicken everywhere... I have grown to kind of dislike chicken and other meats. So I eat very little of them... This has forced me to be more creative with my vegetables.

This love of playing with food has led me to become a blogger and author of The Bank Cook, a recipes collection especially created for foodbanks' users. The recipes collection is free to download and donate to local foodbanks. Anyone can download the book, add their logo to it and get it printed professionally. See www.hortensejulienne.com

THE COMPETITION:

The reason I entered this competition is because it gave me a good reason to challenge myself and an excuse to promote Cameroonian (Central **West Africa**) food which, of course I think is one of the best.

The dishes I've submitted are my "got-to" dishes including the yam & sweet potato stew made with the yellow sweet potato which remains firm even stewed. I also wanted to show off the Djangang a spice that grows exclusively in Cameroon. The taste of this particular spice is simply indescribable.

For all my dishes, I've tried to be as authentic as possible using most ingredients which are easily accessible here in the UK. I have made use of the Palm Oil which is very very traditional in most parts of Africa. I have also made use of the groundnut oil as well as the 70g tinned puree tomato.

Should I win this competition, I will have to take a research trip to Cameroon as being in Europe, due to the lack of time, we tend to reach out to the cook-in-15-minutes type dishes while African cooking means time and love.

For us Africans, cooking for someone means a lot more than just feeding a guest. Some dishes denote the profound appreciation for the person the dish is being cooked for. The Yam and lamb for example take much more effort than a rice and peanut sauce which is basic.

African food means conviviality, care, love and appreciation; I hope all this shows in the dishes that I have prepared for this competition.

Djangsang Sauce



Djangsang Sauce



Descriptive:

The Djangsang or Djangsa is a very particular spice grown only in Cameroon. I entered this dish simply because of the rarity of this special spice.

The dish I have presented would be a celebratory or Sunday meal.

The indescribable aroma of the Djangsang quietens the smell of the moist fish and produces a very particularly tasty combination with the simple rice which almost always forms the bed of this sauce. The sweet boil-in-the skin yellow plantain is never far away from a Djangsang sauce. The simply steamed green beans were just added to bring a much needed lightness.

Serves 6

Prep: 30 minutes

Cooking: 30 minutes if multitasking or 1hr if cooking in stages.

3 whole Tilapia fishes (300g each) cleaned and halved
50g Djangsang/ Djangsa
6 fresh medium tomatoes
Hand full whole pepper corns.
50g flat parsley
20g celery heart
1 big white onion
5 big garlic cloves
3 Maggi cubes
3 Thyme springs
Groundnut oil
500g long grains white & wild rice
200g green beans
3 ripe yellow plantain.

Method:

Put the Djangsang to soak for about an hour before crushing it in a pestle & mortar with the peppercorns and Maggi cubes. These will then be put in the food processor with tomato, flat parsley, celery, half of the onion and garlic. Blend the condiments with 50ml water until fine, but not smooth. Set aside.

Finely chop the other half of the onion, add the thyme to it and set aside.

Remove the fish fins and cut each fish in half. Wash under running water making sure that inside the head and belly are clean of blood or other surprises. Place the fishes in a bowl, salt and cover with the blended condiments. Mix well making sure that the condiments enter all the orifices of the fish. Set aside.

Cut the plantain in half and place them in a pan covered in cold water.

Cut the tails of the fresh beans and rinse them. Now that all the prep is done we will be cooking from 3

pans at once.

In a large no stick sauce pan with a lid, heat 60ml groundnut oil, fry in it the onion and thyme until soften. Over the bed for of onion and thyme, deposit the fish pieces one by one avoiding spittings from the oil. Then carefully lift the onion from the bottom of the pan to recover the fishes before covering the whole content of the pan with the rest of the condiments from the bowl. Check from time to time that the sauce is not burning and by the time this is ready, all the other elements should be too.

Lift the fishes once again from the bottom of the pan. Taste and adjust the seasoning before shaking the pan gently to even out its content. Cover and leave to simmer for 20 minutes.

Meanwhile place the rice in a pan and cover it with a lot water. Bring it to boil for 10 minutes. Now remove the rice from the stove and rinse out the starch under clean water before returning it to finish cooking with steam for another 10 minutes.

Before putting the lid on the rice, spread over it the green beans so they will both be ready together. Once the beans are tender, remove them from the rice to stop them over cooking and sprinkle on them dry herbs salt and a drizzle of vegetable oil.

On another stove, bring the yellow plantain to boil for 25 minutes, then remove the skin and scrape the thin fluffy inner skin before returning it in clean boiled water to keep it warm before serving.



Tamdeuh Beuh



Tamdeuh Beuh



Yam stew with Supermalt, lamb & ground Crayfish

Descriptive:

The Tamdeuh Beuh is a very traditional Bamiléké dish. Cooking it to welcome someone who has announced their arrival will betray the extent of the love of the host towards the incoming guest.

This is my signature Cameroonian dish. The senses are awakened as the eater tries to guess what has just been chewed on. It is my way of introducing few ingredients to my western born friends. The dish contains sweet potatoes that surprises against the almost taste free yam. The eater also chews on lamb while detecting the taste shell fish... It is a dish full of surprises.

Serves 6

Prep: 30 minutes

Cooking: 1h40.

1,5kg lamb neck
1kg yam
500g sweet potato
150g onion
15g garlic
500ml Supermalt drink
100g leek
4 medium tomatoes
25g curly parsley
20g dry ground Crayfish
Sea salt
Ground pepper
Thyme
Chilli flakes

Method:

Remove some of the fat around the meat, wash and place in a bowl.

Chop half the onion and add to the lamb then season with sea salt, ground pepper and leaves from the thyme. Toss to combine. Set aside.

Peel the yam and sweet potato. Cut the yam in 2cm x 2cm squares and cut the sweet potato differently. Wash and put in a water bath to void them darkening.

In the food processor, add the peeled garlic, washed tomato, leftover onion, washed leek and washed curly parsley. Blend until almost smooth. Set aside.

In a large pan, heat 60ml vegetable oil and seal the meat cuts for 2 minutes on each side before adding the liquid from the seasoning in the pan and cover for 30 minutes. The aim is that by the time the dish is

ready, the meat will be falling off the bone without too much effort.

So cover the pan for 30 minutes. The meat will stew in its own juices before the pan dries out again. At that stage, add to the meat the blended condiments, stir and cover the pan to simmer this time for 20 minutes. This way the meat will absorb the flavours brought in by the condiments. Allow the liquid from the condiments too to dry before adding in the yam, 1 teaspoon chilli flakes and 500ml Supermalt. Stir and cover for 20 minutes. After that, stir in the sweet potato and crayfish. Stir, taste or adjust seasoning before covering for a further 20 minutes.

By this time the meat should be easily detachable from the bones, the yam should be firm, but still soft as should the sweet potato which takes less time to cook through.

You might have to add water in the pan if the liquid evaporates too quickly...

Serve hot.



Sideuh Bahana



Sideuh Bahana



Green banana pepper soup with dry catfish

Descriptive:

Sideuh Bahana's very much a villager's meal usually cooked on wood fire. The villager who's a field-worker soaks the fish while away working the ground. At sunset, the family returns to find the fish softer and ready to use.

This dish reminds me of simpler pleasures, full of taste and uncomplicated. Made in villager's style the dish absorbs the smokiness of wood fire, combined with the nuttiness of palm oil, sweetness of tinned tomato and peppers. My recipe's minus smokiness but, the other tastes are very present. The eater might be fooled into thinking they're eating a type of potato.

Serves 6

Prep: 10 minutes

Cooking: 45 minutes

6 green banana (1.2kg)
2 sweet peppers (200g)
4 garden eggs (200g)
100g red onion
3 garlic cloves
2 scotch bonnet chillies
70g tomato paste
100g dried catfish - soaked for 4 hours
2 Maggi cubes
Salt and ground black pepper
Palm oil (or groundnut oil)

Served with pre-made palm oil & grilled peanut bread.

Method:

The prep for this simple dishes is fuss free. Simply wash the sweet peppers and cut each in 8 pieces. Quarter the garden eggs. Cut the onion roughly, dice the garlic and pull apart the fish once it has soften after being soaked for 4 hours. The scotch bonnets must remain whole as the intention is to remove them before serving.

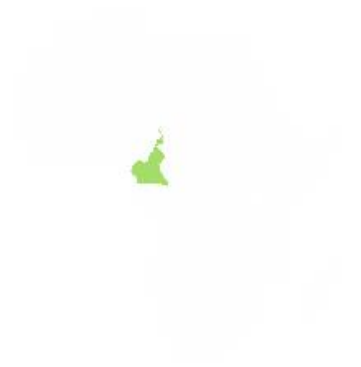
As for the banana, it must be peeled and each quartered before being cut in very small pieces almost as diced. About 1cm on each side and as thin as a £1 coin. Once the banana is prepared place in a bowl with cold water to avoid it darkening.

In a large pan with a lid, heat 60ml palm oil. Now be careful as the palm oil can be very very smoky. This is a normal stage before the oil clarifies.

Once the oil has heated & clarified up, toss in the onion and fish, stir fry for 2 minutes, then add the garden eggs, garlic, salt & pepper. Also add the (whole tin) tomato puree, stir fry for 3 minutes and add the banana. Stir all, add the two whole scotch bonnets and pour 1L water. Leave to simmer for 30 minutes.

Now add the sweet peppers and the crushed Maggi cubes. Stir taste, adjust the seasoning and cover to simmer for another 15 minutes before serving hot with bread on the side.

Remember to pull out the whole scotch bonnets before plating.



Leek salad (vegetarian/Vegan)



Leek salad (vegetarian/Vegan)



Leek salad with ginger kidney beans & crushed palm oil rice crackers.

Vegetarian/ Vegan Salad

Descriptive:

This warm salad is inspired by my favourite fried plantain and beans starter. Here, the leek leaf is a major player.

Each mouthful feels like the whole taste of Cameroon has been thrown in every element of this colourful salad. The cracker on its own fills the senses with the very taste of the nutty palm oil, then comes the gingery softness from the kidney beans. The carrot balances all this excitement with its soft, slightly sweet and almost water-like calming effect. The lemon juices brings the touch of acidity that reminds the eater that this... is still a salad.

Serves 3 as a light lunch

Prep: 10 minutes

Cooking time 30 - 50 minutes if excl. overnight soakings.

For the rice crackers

100g wild rice soaked overnight
Chilli flakes
Freshly grinded peppercorn
3 tbsp palm oil
Salt.

For the rest of the salad

100 dry kidney beans soaked overnight
1 garlic clove
10g fresh ginger
50g onion
3 fresh thyme sprigs
Vegetable oil.
150g green leeks leaves
100g carrot
1 lemon

Method:

Preheat the oven at 180°C.

The rice soaked overnight will almost double in weight. Wash the starch out of the soaked rice and pour

the grains in the food processor with 2 tablespoons of water then mix until obtaining a fine paste. Remove the rice paste from the food processor and place in a bowl where the dough will be mixed with the ground peppercorns, palm oil, salt and chilli flakes.

Mix well until all the elements are evenly spread in the dough. Set aside.

Prepare an oven tray and line it with greaseproof paper. Also prepare a little bowl with lukewarm water and a tea spoon.

Verify that the oven is hot.

Dip the teaspoon in the lukewarm water, measure up a heap of the cracker dough and place it on the tray. Dip the spoon in the water again and flatten the dough evenly to make it as thin as possible. Dipping the spoon in the water prevents the dough from sticking to the spoon.

Repeat the process until the tray is full. Place the crackers in the oven and bake for 25 minutes until it dries up. Remove the tray from the oven and set aside to cool down.

And if there's dough left after the baking tray is full, cover the bowl containing the rest of the dough with



Double coco cream & exotic fruits ice



Double coco cream & exotic fruits ice



Served with caramelised pineapple
Vegetarian/ Vegan dessert

Descriptive:

This dessert is intentionally vegan and was inspired by a fruits bowl. It's simply a combination of fruits grown in Cameroon and easily found in the UK. All bring their own creaminess to the dessert rendering the creation of the ice-cream almost effortless.

The ice cream itself isn't overly sweet and can almost be abused on its own. Adding the bitter coco biscuit and caramelised pineapple brings to the dessert contrary tastes; bitter vs sweet like ying and yang. Combining all these in a mouthful, an unaware eater will surprise his pallet as bitterness is very much unexpected in desserts.

For 900ml icecream /serves 10

Total Prep time: 40 minutes incl. pineapple prep.

Freezing time 4 hours

For the ice cream

400g mango once peeled will be 300g
400g red papaya
300g ripe banana
200g cream from coconut milk tin
50g pure creamed coconut
100g cane sugar
1tbsp black sesame seeds

For the pineapple

800g pineapple
100g caster sugar
75g salted Sunflower butter
1 lemon zest

Readymade Bitter cocoa-coconut biscuit to serve.

Method:

Start by opening the tin of coconut milk without shaking it. As you open it slowly you will realise that all the cream is at the top and all the liquid at the bottom. Once the tin is opened, lowly scoop the cream and discard the water. Place the cream in a small pan and add the pure creamed coconut solid as well as 100g cane sugar.

Place the pan over a very low heat to allow the creams to dissolve slowly along with the sugar. Once all is dissolve, set aside to completely cool down.

Meanwhile, peel and cut into small pieces the banana, mango and papaya (without the seeds). Rinse all the prepared fruits together then pour them in a food processor along with the now cooled creamed mix to blend until as smooth as the original coconut mix.

Once satisfied of the consistency, pour in a plastic container with a lid and place in the middle part of the freezer for 1 hour, then bring it out and, using a hand blender, break all the crystals that have begun to form ice-cream. Return the container in the freezer another hour for the slush to congeal again. Repeat the process with the hand blender and, just before returning the Ice cream in the freezer, fold in the black sesame seeds. Leave to set for at least 2 hours before serving.

Meanwhile, prepare the caramelised Pineapple.

Peel the pineapple and cut into 10 slices. Now remove and discard the core, cut each slice in half, rinse then set aside.

In a large pan with a lid, heat the butter and caster sugar until both start to have a golden colour. This should take about 5 minutes. Vegan butter contains water and will take longer to brown. Gently add the



Extra recipes suggestions

1 - The Ndole

Ndole with rice and fried plantain or cooked cassava. This is made of bitter leaves cleaned with Kaun Potash until it becomes bitter less. Ndole's a speciality of the Littoral part of Cameroon, cooked with rehydrated peanut & peanut milk, smoked fish or beef, its most luxurious version is often finished with king prawns fried onion.

2 - Sauce pistache au gombo (ladies fingers)

Gombo sauce made with pumpkin seeds. Usually served with fresh fufu.

This one is very much from the Bamiléké country, western Cameroon. The fufu is cooked at its fermentation stage and still has that little acidity from fermented cassava. The only other way to obtain that taste would be to replace the fufu with the gari which, is widely available in the UK. Sauce also can be made with smoked fish, dry fish or any kind of meat.

3 - Peanut sauce

The sauce is cooked with homemade peanut butter and served with steamed cocoyam, boil in the skin green plantain.

This dish is one of the most common dishes in Cameroon and in the olden days it wasn't uncommon to find it made with smoked monkey meat or hedgehog.

4 - Poulet DG

This is a chicken stew made out of vegetables including green beans, carrots and fried plantain. A great mix of sweet and salty one-pot dish.

5 - Pumpkin seeds loaf called **Met de Pistache**. The dry seeds are grounded and turned into a paste. Added to it pulled meat, then seasoned and wrapped in plantain leaves can cook au bain-Marie. Then Serve with a variety of root vegetables which are very common in Cameroon.

