



# YALE ALUMNI SERVICE CORPS



## The Africa Project

A PROGRAM OF THE ASSOCIATION OF YALE ALUMNI

YAMORANSA AND ACCRA, GHANA

July 27 – August 7, 2012 (Extension to August 10 – North Ghana)

## Half NEWSLETTER

June 2012

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### Fun stuff

The purpose of this Newsletter is to let you know that if you are in town, sometime within the next week you should receive your package of travel goodies from AYA. It should contain:

- A hat
- A tourbook
- A Participant Directory
- A bag
- Two Luggage Tags
- And a Packing List



Please bring all the items except the packing list with you on the trip – naturally the luggage tags should be put to their proper use right away. If you have not received the package by July 1, please contact Joao at [joao.aleixo@yale.edu](mailto:joao.aleixo@yale.edu) to let him know.

### Hard Work

Thank you to all of those, which is most of you, who have been working so hard to prepare for your projects. Today I received a long list of students – this will be amazing. I will send the list to the education and athletics groups as I soon as I know from Kwame whether we make the class sections or if they will do that. If I haven't heard by tomorrow, I will send it as is (don't be overwhelmed – this is opportunity!)

Keep those emails flying...

## Chow Time!

What kind of food will you be eating in Ghana? Wikipedia can tell you all about it with some small annotations from us...

There are diverse traditional dishes from each ethnic group, tribe and clan from the north to the south and from the east to west. Foods also vary according to the season, time of the day, and occasion. The typical Ghanaian staples in the south include cassava and plantain. In the northern parts of the country, their main staples include millet and sorghum. Yam, maize and beans are used across the country as staple foods. Crops such as peanuts and cocoyam are also important in the local cuisine. With the advent of modernization and colonialism, imported crops such as rice and wheat have been increasingly incorporated in Ghanaian cuisine. Ghanaian main dishes are organized around these starchy staples prepared in a variety of ways such as fufu, banku/etew, kenkey/dokonu, tuozaafi, dzidzii, akplidzii, yakeyake, eto, akyeke, etc. with which a sauce or soup saturated with fish, snails, meat or mushrooms is served. The Business Consulting group will have first hand knowledge of the production of kenkey.

So what are some of these staple dishes?

- Fufu – pounded cassava and plantain or pounded yam and plantain, or pounded cocoyam/taro
- *Banku/Akple* – cooked fermented corn dough and cassava dough
- Kenkey/Dokonu – fermented corn dough, wrapped in corn or plantain leaves and cooked into a consistent solid balls
- Tuo Zaaafi – a maize dish from Northern Ghana
- Fonfom – a maize dish of the Ahanta and Nzema people in Southern Ghana
- Konkonte – from cassava powder
- Gari – made from cassava
- Omo Tuo – pounded rice staple of Northern origins
- Waakye – rice and beans
- Jollof rice
- And, for the less adventurous, plain rice



Jollof rice

Tilapia, fried whitebait (chinam), smoked fish and crayfish are all common components of Ghanaian dishes. The cornmeal based staples, banku and kenkey are usually accompanied by some form of fried fish (chinam) or grilled tilapia and a very spicy condiment made from raw red and green chillies, onions and tomatoes. Banku and tilapia is a very popular combo served in most Ghanaian restaurants.



Woman preparing Fante [kenkey](#) (boiled maize dough)

Other popular dishes include ampesie (boiled yam and unripe plantain) which is usually accompanied with kontomire, groundnut (peanut) soup, or nyadowa (garden egg<sup>1</sup> stew).

An alternative to the starch and stew combination is "Red Red", a very popular and easy to find dish. It is a bean stew served with fried ripe plantain. It earns its name from the palm oil that tints the stew and the bright orange color of the fried plantain. This is my favorite...

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<sup>1</sup> Eggplant to you...



## *Soups and stews*

Most Ghanaian dishes are served with a stew or soup. Ghanaian stews and soups are quite sophisticated with liberal and adventurous use of exotic ingredients and a wide variety of flavors, spices and textures. Spices such as thyme, garlic, ginger and bay leaf are combined with vegetables such as wild mushroom, and garden eggs. Get ready – for the protein, it can be beef, pork, goat, sheep, chicken, smoked meat, fish, crab, shrimp, periwinkles, octopus; bushmeat, snails, and duck, offal, trotters and cow skin.

Palm oil, coconut oil, shea butter, palm kernel oil and peanut oil are important local oils used for cooking and frying. In certain stews, palm oil is the preferred oil for preparing it. Classic examples are okro stew, *fante fante*, *red red*, egusi stew and *mpihu/ mpotompoto* (taro porridge). Coconut oil, palm kernel oil and shea butter were used for frying most local fried foods. However with the introduction of refined oils and negative media adverts targeted at these local oils, their use have become less popular. They are mostly used in few traditional homes, for soap making and by commercial food vendors to cut down cost on using the refined vegetable oils.

The most popular soups are groundnut soup, light (tomato) soup, *kontomire* (taro leaves) soup, palmnut soup, and okra soup. Tomato stew or gravy is a popular stew which is often served with rice. Other vegetable stews are made with *kontomire*, garden eggs, egusi (pumpkin seeds), spinach, okra, etc., mixed with any protein of one's choice.

Usually rice is served with a soup or stew, kenkey is served with fried fish and hot pepper while *banku* is usually served with okra stew or soup and occasionally with tilapia. Fufu, *akeple*, and *konkonte* are served with soup.

## *Savory foods*

There are many savory local foods which have been marginalized due to their demand and preparation process. Ghanaian savory foods may be fried, barbecued, boiled, roasted, baked or steamed.

Some popular fried savoury foods include cubed and spiced ripe plantain (*kelewele*)<sup>2</sup> sometimes served with peanuts. Koose (also called Acarajé or akara), *maasa*, *pinkaaso*,<sup>1</sup> *atsomo* and *bofrot* (made from wheat flour); kuli-kuli, *zowey* and *nkate* cake (made from peanuts); *krakro* and *tatale* (ripe plantain fritters); *kebe* cake and *kebe* toffee (made from coconut); *bankye krakro*, *gari* biscuit, and *krakye ayusu* (made from cassava); condensed milk, toffee, plantain chips and *magashi* (fried farmer's cheese) are all fried local savory foods which are popular in some areas.

Kebabs are also popular barbecues and can be made from beef, goat, pork, soy flour, sausages and guinea fowl. Mark and Kathy were served “grass cutter” kebabs by the Chief in Yamoransa on their last visit. It was quite interesting and definitely a bit different! Other roasted savoury foods include roasted plantain, maize, yam and cocoyam.

Steamed fresh maize, *Abolo*, *Yakeyake*, *Kafa*, *Akyeke*, *tubani*/moimoi (bean cake), *emo dokonu* (rice cake) and *esikyire dokonu* (sweetened kenkey) are all examples of steamed and boiled foods whilst sweet bread, *epitsi* (plantain cake), *ayigbe biscuit*, and meat pie similar to Jamaican patties or the empanada are baked savoury foods.

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<sup>2</sup> Kelewele is a huge treat – and it is pretty good at Coconut Grove. This should be a crowd pleaser.

*Aprapransa, eto* (mashed yam) and *atadve* milk (tiger nut juice) are other savory foods which may undergo a combination of processes.

## Beverages

Ghana has a wide variety of local beverages which pertain to various communities. In the south, local drinks such as *asaana* (made from fermented maize) are common. In the Volta and Ashanti regions, palm wine extracted from the palm tree can be found, but it spoils quickly. It is almost like a light soda. You will definitely have a chance to try it. When it spoils it basically gets more and more alcoholic even during the day it is bought. It is much easier to find *akpeteshie*, a local gin distilled from palm wine, as it is nonperishable and highly potent. In addition, a beverage can be made from kenkey and refrigerated into what is locally known as *iced kenkey*. Among northern communities, *fula*, *bokina*, *bisaab/sorrel*, *toose* and *lamujee* (a spicy sweetened drink) are common non-alcoholic beverages whereas *pitoo* (a local gin made of fermented millet) is a very popular alcoholic beverage.



Palm wine

Well, now you know a lot about the cuisine and you can think about how much snack food you would like to bring. Note that Ghana is a chocolate producing country however it is basically all for export. We will try to provide an opportunity for you to try the seed from the cocoa plant which is delicious. The message is to bring your own chocolate.

## Action items or What You Need to Do Now!

GET YOUR VISA (use the Embassy in DC rather than the Consulate in NYC if possible.)

BUY PROJECT SUPPLIES

MAKE FLIGHT RESERVATIONS

**And let Joao know if you do not receive your package of goodies by July 1.**

As always, feel free to get in touch with us if you have any questions or concerns – [kathy@edersheim.net](mailto:kathy@edersheim.net) or [mark.dollhopf@yale.edu](mailto:mark.dollhopf@yale.edu) or [joao.aleixo@yale.edu](mailto:joao.aleixo@yale.edu)

See you in Accra,

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