

Some Traditional Dishes from Swaziland

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Although my most “memorable Swazi meal” was a goat meat and crumble pap dish prepared by Daniel’s mother at their rural home, I did not have the foresight to ask for the recipe and so – unless you go to Swaziland – you’ll never know how it was prepared. Don’t fret though, because there are many cooks and dishes in Swaziland and I will expose you the preparations of **Duduzile Masuku** in the paragraphs that follow.

Duduzile Masuku was born in 1973 in Vusweni and , having worked at the Mkhaya Game Reserve in Swaziland as well as Cuckoo's Nest in KwaZulu-Natal, has been employed as a professional cook since 1994. From 1998 to 1999 she studied computing and catering in Manzini and when I met her was engaged in cooking and cleaning as well as helping in management at *Swaziland Backpackers*.

With respect to her cooking, Duduzile – who was at that time still single - said she can cook anything; but her Swazi specialties are:

- (1) *Sinkwa Sembila* - a kind of mealie bread (i.e. corn bread) which is cooked in corn leaves. To make this bread, she first must get hold of green corn. She then peels off the skin, grates it, and mixes this with ground nuts and salt. Then she wraps the above in leaves and places it in boiling water on top of corn cobs. She then cooks it for from 45 to 60 minutes. Instead of corn she says she can use self-rising flour (but in greater quantity than corn meal), margarine, sugar, salt, eggs, and some cooking oil and prepare it in the same way;
- (2) *Sintjangabamu* – her preparation of this dish is similar to her mashed potatoes; but made by mixing new maize with peanuts and yams;
- (3) *Lipalishi* - commonly known as pap;
- (4) *Sishibo* - a kind of stew which is made with onions, potatoes, green beans, green peppers, tomatoes, salt and either chicken (in which case it is called *Sishibo senkhukhu*) or beef (where it is called *Sishibo senkomo*);
- (5) *Sidudu selitsanga* - here pumpkin is cooked and mashed, then mixed with mealie meal and sugar and then cooked until ready. This dish is served with either beef stew or milk;
- (6) *Emasi lavutiwe* - a dish eaten by senior citizens in which sour milk is added to crumbled pap or cooked mealies or ground cooked dry sorghum;
- (7) *Sitambu* - commonly known as samp. This dish is made in Swaziland by wetting dry corn and pounding it in a mortar. This mash is then soaked and cooked for 4 hours with oil and salt over a low heat. Duduzile cooks it with beans and / or meat with bones. Sitambu can be served with anything;

(8) *emahewu* – She makes this by cooking pap (thin porridge) until it is a bit viscous and then puts it in a bucket. She then adds sugar and cake flour and stirs. This – she says - is a drink which is consumed only on the following day [c.f. South African *amahewu*];

(9) *incwancwa* – She first grinds and then sifts the mealies. Then she washes and soaks the resulting flour in warm water. Following this, she removes the flour from the water and grinds it again until it is fine. Then she sieves the water and brings it to a boil. She then takes clean water and mixes it with the dough that she was grinding and brings it to a boil while stirring. She then allows it to boil for 15 or 20 minutes and mixes with sugar before serving; and

(10) *lipalishi lemumbila lomusha* - Here she takes some green corn, peels off the skin, grates it and then mixes it with salt. She then puts it in a pot on the stove. After that, she takes the stem of the corn and cuts it into equal sizes (about one foot long). She then lays the stems down in the pot together, pours water on top and then lets it boil. When the water is boiling gently she puts in the dough. She then covers the pot and cooks the contents of the pot for 45 minutes. Then she takes a wooden spoon and removes some stems from one side of the pot. She cooks again and then removes stems from the other side of pot. After that, she cooks it for 15 more minutes and it is then ready to eat. This dish is something like pap – she says - but is different.

It should be noted that the basic Swazi diet consists of *tinhlavu* (grains) and *tibhidvo* (vegetables) rather than *inyama* (meat) dishes. On special occasions, however, Swazis prepare delicious goat stew, roast leg of goat, stuffed and roasted free range chicken, and other mouth-watering delicacies. For much more about Swazi and Zulu cuisine and many photos see my [Lore of Africa Part I: Three Northern Nguni Nations](#).