

Garifuna Cuisine From Honduras

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The first “memorable meal” I had in Tornabé, Honduras consisted of a large serving of *machuca* (pounded green plantain with a single ripe one) accompanied by a single whole plantain (a bread substitute) and a bowl of hot coconut soup with a large piece of boiled king fish floating in it. Although I also tried *machuca* in Sambo Creek, Honduras this particular dish prepared by Guillermita (the owner of the lodging where I stayed) tasted somewhat different and was truly delicious.

Indeed, during my stay in Tornabé, Guillermita prepared a number of traditional Garifuna (i.e. Black Carib) plates for me including: a) *hiyú*; b) *hudutu*; c) *alabúndiga*., and d) *tapao*. When I asked her to tell me how each of these dishes was prepared, she generously responded to my query by providing me with the following four recipes:

(a)

Hiyú

[A refreshing drink]

Ingredients – *chingaste* (*life* in Garífuna) – i.e. the part of the cassava or yucca flower that does not pass through the sifter.

Preparation – wash the yucca; then peel, wash, and grate it; place this in the *ruguma* squeezer and squeeze out the liquid; allow to dry for one day; when dry sift it through the *híbise* (Garífuna sifter). The material that does not pass through the sifter is called the *life* [from English “leavings”?]; roast the *life*; let it cool; break into pieces when cold; wash one or two sweet potatoes and then peel, wash, and grate them; stir this with the roasted *life* in warm water with salt; then place the concoction in a *hana* (mortar); cover and let sit for 2 days [for alcoholic drink]. After that the brew is ready to drink. Strain it to get the juice, add sugar and ice and drink as an alcoholic or non-alcoholic beverage. The longer it stays in the mortar the more alcoholic it becomes. This drink is usually made for a *misa* (mass) or *dügü* (a ceremony for a deceased ancestor) and is served with *casave* (unleavened Garífuna bread).

(b)

Hudutu / Machuca

[A mouth watering dish for which see photo collage]

Ingredients – Three green plantains, one ripe plantain (*maduro*), celery (*ápío*), sweet chili pepper, garlic, black pepper, salt, one coconut, and fish.

Preparation – Cook green plantains and the *maduro* in a pot. Mash the plantain in the wooden mortar with pestle. Grate a coconut, add water to the grated coconut and squeeze it to extract the milk and then add spices to it. Cook this for 15 minutes in a separate pot. Add fish and cook for 10 more minutes; then serve the fish, soup, and *machuca* in three separate plates. Eat *machuca* in small spoonfuls dipped in the coconut soup.

(c)

Alabúndiga

Ingredients – Guineo (a kind of plantain), coconut, pepper, chili, garlic, celery, salt, fish.

Preparation – Grate the coconut; extract its milk by adding water and squeezing; add pepper, chili, garlic, celery, and salt to the milk; peel, wash, and grate the *guineo* and make it into a number of balls; boil the coconut soup; add the balls of *guineo* to the soup [the *guineo* balls will come together in the soup]; cook for 25 minutes; clean fish and season with salt and pepper [you can also pre-fry this fish] and add fish to pot; cook together for 10 more minutes; remove fish from top and serve separately. This dish can also be served with rice.

(d)

Tapao

Ingredients – One coconut, 5 *guineos* (a type of plantain), a half pound of king fish or other fish (salted fish may be used if fresh fish not available), salt, pepper, *apio* (celery), sweet chili peppers, and *albahaca de monte*.

Preparation – grate the coconut; add water to the grated coconut and squeeze it to extract its milk; peel and wash the *guineos*; cook the *guineos* with the coconut milk and spices for 15 minutes; wash the fish and season it with salt and pepper; place the fish in the pot on top of the *guineos* and cook for an additional 10 minutes; serve with optional dish of rice.

After this sumptuous evening meal I retired to my beach-side bungalow where I breathed in the refreshing cool salty air and was lulled into a restful slumber by the rhythmic sound of waves washing upon the nearby shore. For more about the Garífuna and their meals (i.e. *gurentu*, *daraza*, *letu*, *pulali*, *bimecaguile*, *fem*, *ereba*, *maramaruti*, *pincuntri*, *fobulo*, *durudilla*, *dani* etc.) see my [Lore of the Caribbean Book I: The Black Caribs](#).