

CARTHA 2024
SINCERE FUN

Jollof rice with caramelized peach toppings garnished with pistachios

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Exploring queerness in design as a process rather than an identity, we delve into a more expansive definition encompassing a fluid and open approach to life. This perspective advocates for embracing diversity and differences, particularly in the context of art and design spaces. As we become more aware of the challenges, stereotypes and notions of 'otherness' faced by black/African immigrants in the West, it becomes increasingly important to foster inclusive and welcoming environments. In this setting, a variation of West African cuisine, known as Jollof rice, is used as a cultural unifier to demonstrate the power of openness and the potential for different cultures and communities to unite.

Jollof rice is a dish that has gained popularity for its rich and delicious nature and sparked a friendly debate among West African countries about who prepares it best. This debate, while sometimes causing division, also serves as a reminder of our shared cultural heritage and the power of food to unite us. By taking the traditional Nigerian method and infusing it with the sweetness of candied fruits and nuts, a new dynamic has been introduced to the dish. This innovative twist, a blend of savoury and sweet, invites us to reconsider our notions of tradition and innovation, sparking the question: "Why can't 'traditional' art/design spaces be as open and inclusive as this variation of Jollof rice?"

As academics, creators and designers, we are responsible for pushing the boundaries of what is possible and challenging the status quo. By embracing queerness as openness and using food as a tool for discussion, we can create a more open and inclusive society that celebrates diversity and values the unique experiences of every individual.



Image courtesy Gimi Totori via Freepik

Jollof Rice

Type: Entrée
Servings: 6
Cooking Time: 2hours 20mins

A Variation of West African "Smokey Party-Style Jollof Rice" with a Sweet Twist

A popular rice dish cooked in a tomato sauce, typically served with plantain, vegetables and a meat option (chicken, lamb, beef, goat or fish).

Versatile, Smokey, Spiced Sweetness, Fun, typically "hot" and likely to cause disagreement.

Ingredients:

- ¼-cup olive oil
- 3 ½ -cups of parboiled long grain/ converted rice
- 1 large red bell pepper
- 1 scotch bonnet (deseeded to reduce heat)
- 1 medium red onion
- 4 cloves garlic
- Pinky finger length ginger + half this length
- 1 large tomato
- 4 tbs. Tomato paste
- 1 tsp. Curry Powder
- ½ tsp. Coriander
- ½ tsp. Cinnamon
- ½ tsp. Cumin
- ¼ tsp. Cameroonian Pepper
- 2 ½ tsp. Thyme (dry or fresh) Chicken bouillon powder
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 ½ tsp thyme

Method Chicken Broth:

Boil 6 chicken drumsticks in a small saucepan filled with about 1/3 cup of water, along with spices: half a pinky finger length of ginger (grated), 1 tsp salt, 1 tsp. Thyme, 1 tsp. Curry Powder, ½ tsp. Coriander, ½ tsp. Cinnamon, ½ tsp. Cumin, ¼ tsp. Cameroonian pepper, ½ tsp garlic powder or 2 cloves of garlic (grated), 2 tsp. Chicken bouillon powder.

Cook for about 20- 30 minutes until chicken is cooked through but not dry, and separate chicken from broth.

Jollof Sauce:

Preheat oven to 400 F (fan oven) or 430 F (non-fan)
To begin, make the jollof sauce – this will later be used to cook the rice. Roast tomato, bell pepper, scotch bonnet, garlic, and half an onion in the oven at 400 or 450 F for about 15-20mins until lightly charred and blistered (do not let the garlic burn as it will become bitter).

Set aside to cool for a few minutes and blend roasted ingredients with a pinky-finger length of ginger into a sauce/paste.

Roughly chop up the remaining half-red onion. Add a generous amount of olive oil (¼ cup should be fine) to a hot pot and fry chopped onions with 1 ½ tsp thyme in hot oil for about 1-2 minutes. Add tomato paste (4 tbs.) and fry for about 5 minutes.

Add blended sauce and leave the tomato paste and blended sauce to sizzle in the oil for several minutes (10-15 minutes), allowing them to slightly burn and smoke on the bottom. Turn over after 5 minutes and continue to cook on a medium heat until reduced and broken down. Add ¼ cup of water to reduced sauce and spices: 1 ½ tsp. Salt, 2 tsps. Chicken bouillon powder. Cook for 2-5 minutes.

Wash the rice well, then drain. Place in large pan/ pot with jollof sauce, chicken broth and a bit of water (about 1/3 cup or less – ensure water/ broth are just slightly above rice level). You may add a ½ tsp of salt.

Bring to a boil—after about 3-5 minutes, reduce heat to low/medium and simmer until cooked through.

OR skip these steps and order on Uber Eats or Doordash from these spots: Chef on Demand or Jollof Life Restaurant.

Caramelized Peach Topping:

- 3 peaches
- 2 tsbs. Of unsalted butter
- ¼ cup brown sugar (light or dark) Pinch of cinnamon
- Pinch of cardamom
- 1 tsp lemon zest and 1 tbs. Lemon juice

Method:

Cut peaches into slices and discard pits
Mix peaches with brown sugar, lemon zest, lemon juice, cinnamon and cardamom.
Melt butter in a pan and add peach mixture.
Cook, stirring occasionally, until caramelized, about 5-6 minutes.

Garnish:

Put a slice or two of caramelized peach on top of Jollof rice and decorate with pistachios. You may also grate pistachios into a powder and sprinkle over.

DISCLAIMER— traditionally, it is never eaten or served like this

Opposite image: Mercedes E - Maduka, Akum E - Maduka, Ekene Emeka-Maduka, image presented at "Brown Bags" exhibition and event at Architecture 2 Gallery in Winnipeg, Canada, on March 18, 2024.

