Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

From land and water

Recipes from women pastoralists, producers, fishers and farmers





INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE WOMAN FARMER
INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF RANGELANDS AND PASTORALISTS
2026





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From land and water

Recipes from women pastoralists, producers, fishers and farmers

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Rome, 2026

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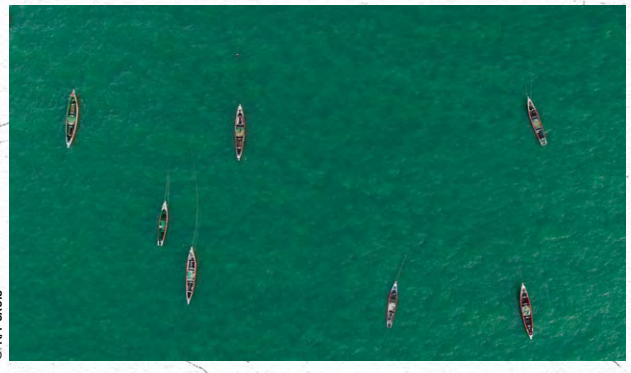
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This cookbook exists because of the women, families and communities who opened their kitchens, shared their recipes and trusted us with their stories. We are grateful to each contributor named in these pages, and to the many more whose knowledge and labour sustain food systems around the world every day, often without recognition.

Our thanks go to the national and local partner organizations that helped identify contributors, facilitate interviews, translate recipes and verify cultural and culinary details. This collection draws on the work of farmer field schools, fisherfolk associations, pastoralist groups, women's cooperatives and agricultural extension networks across every region represented here. Their ongoing work to support women in agrifood systems is the foundation of this publication.

We are also grateful to the photographers, writers, translators and editors who travelled and listened in order to render these stories and recipes faithfully, and to the colleagues across FAO who coordinated this project across regions, languages and time zones.

This cookbook is one contribution to a much larger effort, carried forward by practitioners, researchers and advocates working towards gender equality in agriculture, fisheries, forestry and pastoral systems.

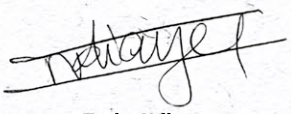
Foreword

Food connects us to the land, to the water, and to each other. This cookbook is published as part of the International Year of the Woman Farmer and the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists, two global observances that invite us to look more closely at who grows, raises, catches, processes and prepares the food we eat, and to recognize the contributions of women across agrifood systems.

Across every continent, women are custodians of seeds and soils, herders and milk processors, fishers and fish traders, cooks and knowledge-keepers. They manage rangelands, tend crops, harvest from rivers and seas, and pass down techniques refined over generations. Their work underpins food security, nutrition and the resilience of rural communities, yet it remains frequently invisible, undervalued and underpaid. Despite their important contributions to agrifood systems, women are often underrepresented in decision-making.

This collection brings together recipes and stories from women and women's groups working across land, pasture and water systems in every region of the world. Each dish offers a window into a livelihood, a landscape and a set of relationships: between people and animals, people and plants, and people and each other.

We hope this cookbook will be read, cooked from and shared. It is offered both as a celebration and as an invitation to continue building food systems shaped by the women who sustain them.



Tacko Ndiaye
Gender Team Leader at the Rural Transformation and Gender Equality Division
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
International Year of the Woman Farmer


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INTRODUCTION

Across the world's farms, rangelands, rivers, lakes and coastlines, women are at work. They plant and harvest. They herd and process milk. They fish, farm fish and trade what they catch. They hold knowledge about seed varieties, grazing patterns and seasonal cycles that has been built over generations, often passed from mother to daughter.

The International Year of the Woman Farmer and the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists offer an opportunity to recognize this work in its full breadth. Women are central to how agriculture, livestock-keeping and fisheries function, adapt and endure. They manage household food production and market-oriented enterprises. They are often among the first to notice environmental change and to adjust practices in response, frequently while facing unequal access to land, credit, training, markets and decision-making spaces.

WOMEN, FOOD SYSTEMS AND THE WORK OF FAO

Open the books at FAO and a simple fact comes into view: women are not a side note in agriculture, pastoralism and fisheries. They make up 41 percent of the agricultural workforce worldwide, and in many countries considerably more. They are the hands behind seed selection and crop care, the people who herd animals to water and back, the ones who gut, salt, smoke and sell the catch before it ever reaches a market stall. And yet, across nearly every measure, from land ownership to credit, training, wages and a seat at the table where decisions get made, women face a gap that men in the same roles do not.

This gap has a name in development circles: the gender gap in agrifood systems. It is well documented, persistent, and expensive. Closing it would not only change individual lives. It would strengthen food security, improve nutrition outcomes for whole households, and make rural economies more resilient to shocks, whether those shocks come from markets, conflict or a changing climate.

In 2026, two international observances put this gap, and the people working to close it, at the centre of the global conversation. The International Year of the Woman Farmer, designated by the United Nations General Assembly, spotlights the roles women play across the full span of agrifood value chains, from production and processing to trade and decision-making, and calls for policy reform and investment that turns recognition into measurable change. Alongside it, the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists draws attention to the ecosystems that cover roughly half the Earth's land surface and to the estimated 1 billion animals herded across them by pastoralist communities present in more than three-quarters of the world's countries.

These two Years are connected by more than a shared calendar. Rangelands and pastoral systems are also food systems, and within them, as on cropland and at the water's edge, women's labour and knowledge are foundational, if frequently uncounted. A herder moving animals to fresh grazing, a processor turning milk into cheese that will keep through a dry season, a fish trader who knows exactly which buyer will pay fairly for today's catch: each is contributing to outcomes that matter for the Sustainable Development Goals on hunger, nutrition, gender equality, climate action and life on land and below water.

FAO's role across both observances is to convene, to coordinate with governments, producer organizations and UN partners, and to translate awareness into the kind of structural change that outlasts a single calendar year: secured access to land and resources, stronger extension and financial services, fairer value chains, and a stronger voice for women and pastoralist communities in the policies that affect them.

This cookbook sits inside that effort in a small but deliberate way. Every recipe in these pages is traceable to a place, a system and a woman or women's group whose work sustains it. Read together, they offer a kind of evidence: of skill, of adaptation, of knowledge passed down and put to use every day, in kitchens and on rangelands and at the water's edge, around the world.

ACROSS LAND, PASTURE AND WATER

This cookbook is organized around three systems in which women's work is central.

Land brings together stories of women farming staple crops, vegetables, legumes, grains and tree crops, from cassava and fonio to olives and rice, and of the cooperatives, field schools and seed-saving networks through which they organize and share knowledge.

© FAO/Luis Tato



Pasture turns to rangelands and pastoral systems, where mobility, seasonality and close relationships with livestock shape both livelihoods and landscapes. Here, women's roles as herders, milk processors and holders of rangeland knowledge come into view, often in contexts where pastoralism itself is poorly understood by outside observers.

Water gathers stories from fisheries and aquaculture, freshwater and marine, inland and coastal, where women fish, farm fish, harvest shellfish and seaweed, process catches, and run the trading networks that move food from water to table.

Within each section, recipes and stories sit side by side, reflecting the reality that food, land, water and livelihoods are bound together.

WHY A COOKBOOK

A cookbook is an unusual format for a publication about agricultural policy and rural livelihoods, so it is worth explaining the choice.

The recipe here is a starting point, not the subject. Each dish in this collection is the visible result of work that often goes unseen: the seed selected and saved, the field tended through a season, the herd moved to new grazing, the catch brought in and processed, the knowledge of how to combine, ferment or preserve. A bowl of soup or a loaf of bread carries within it months of labour and decision-making that statistics struggle to convey.

There is a longer history here worth acknowledging. Cooking has always been more than provision. It is how communities maintain themselves, how knowledge circulates between generations, how people sustain the conditions that make everything else, including collective action, resilience to hardship, and the strength to keep going, possible. The women's cooperatives, field schools and community groups represented in this book know this. Food is not a byproduct of their work; it is the medium through which knowledge is shared, solidarity practised, and community held together.

By tracing each recipe back to the women and women's groups who grow, raise, catch or gather its ingredients, this cookbook offers a way into stories that might otherwise stay abstract. Food gives readers a shared point of reference across very different contexts, from high-altitude pastures to mangrove coastlines, from rice terraces to reindeer camps.

HOW THIS COOKBOOK WAS MADE

Each recipe in this collection is paired with a story about a woman, a family or a women's group, told in their own context and, where possible, in their own words. These stories were gathered through partnerships with local organizations, cooperatives, field schools and community groups, with care taken to represent each contributor's work and knowledge accurately.

The recipes have been tested and adapted for a global kitchen by our cookbook author, a cook, teacher and recipe writer, working closely with the person who shared each recipe – who is not always the woman or group featured in the accompanying story – to preserve its local ingredients, techniques and traditions, alongside the context needed to understand where it comes from.

HOW TO USE **THIS BOOK**

This cookbook is organized into three sections: Land, Pasture and Water, reflecting the systems introduced above. Within each section, recipes are arranged by country, moving across regions to give a sense of the breadth and diversity of women's work in agriculture, pastoralism and fisheries worldwide.

Each recipe begins with a story: about a woman or a women's group, their work, and the landscape, livestock or waters they depend on. The recipe itself follows, adapted for cooks anywhere while staying true to its origins. Together, the story and the recipe are meant to be read as one, the dish as an outcome of the work described.

At the back of the book, an extended acknowledgements section lists, recipe by recipe, the individuals, cooperatives, projects and partner organizations who contributed to each story and recipe. Readers wishing to learn more, or to support this work directly, are encouraged to start there.

LAND

Start with a seed. Somewhere behind every dish in this section is a decision about which seed to plant, made long before any pot reached the stove. In the highlands of Ecuador, in the cassava fields of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in olive groves and rice paddies and millet fields across Africa, Asia, the Caucasus and the Pacific, that decision has, for generations, fallen disproportionately to women.

Land brings together stories of women growing the staple crops, vegetables, legumes, grains and tree crops that anchor diets and economies: cassava, fonio, teff, rice, beans, moringa, olives, taro, fava beans, herbs and honey. Some of these crops are ancient, cultivated for millennia in forms barely changed. Others are being adapted in real time, as farmers experiment with new varieties, new techniques and new ways of organizing their work to cope with shifting rainfall, degraded soils and volatile markets.

What runs through these stories is not only cultivation but stewardship. Many of the women featured here are not working alone. They are members of cooperatives that pool land, labour, equipment and risk. They are graduates of farmer field schools, where new techniques are tested on a small plot before being adopted more widely. They are custodians of agrobiodiversity, the often-overlooked variety of crop types and varieties that keeps food systems flexible in the face of pests, disease and climate stress. A single woman's choice to keep growing an old variety of bean or grain, even as markets push towards a handful of commercial varieties, can matter for food systems far beyond her own field.

Access remains the throughline. Across the countries represented in this section, women farmers are less likely than men to hold formal title to the land they work, less likely to access credit on the same terms, and less likely to receive the extension services and training that would let them adopt new techniques more quickly. The recipes that follow are a way of seeing past those statistics to the work itself: the planting, the weeding, the harvesting, the saving of seed for next season, and the cooking that turns all of it into a meal.

PASTURE

Rangelands do not look like farmland, and pastoralism does not look like farming, at least not at first glance. There are no neat rows, no fixed plots, and often there are no fences at all. What there is, instead, is movement: herds following grass and water across seasons, sometimes across borders, in patterns refined over centuries to match the rhythms of land that could not sustain settled agriculture in any other way.

Rangelands cover roughly half of the Earth's land surface, spanning grasslands, savannas, shrublands, deserts, wetlands and high mountain pastures. Pastoralist communities, present in more than three-quarters of the world's countries, manage an estimated 1 billion animals across these landscapes, turning vegetation that humans cannot eat into milk, meat and other foods that sustain millions of people. In doing so, they also maintain ecosystems that store carbon, regulate water and support biodiversity found nowhere else.

Within pastoralist communities, women's roles are the least visible, although they often carry heavier workloads due to high levels of unpaid and invisible work. In many cases, women milk the animals, process that milk into butter, cheese, yoghurt or other products that can be stored, traded or carried on the move. They hold detailed knowledge of which plants are good medicinal plants, how a herd's condition reflects the health of the land it has grazed, and hold important ethnoveterinary knowledge that they pass on to future generations.





The stories in this section, from high mountain pastures to Arctic reindeer-herding communities, from East African rangelands to the Arabian Peninsula, are united less by geography than by this shared relationship between people, animals and land. Mobility, often viewed from outside as a problem to be solved, is in fact the mechanism that makes these systems work: it is how pastoralists avoid overgrazing any single area, how herds find fresh pasture as seasons change, and how communities adapt to a climate that is, in many of these regions, becoming harder to predict. Recognizing women's role within these systems means recognizing pastoralism itself, on its own terms, as a sophisticated and adaptive way of producing food.

WATER

Fish does not wait. From the moment it leaves the water, a clock starts running, and what happens in the hours that follow, who cleans it, salts it, smokes it, dries it, carries it to market, sells it, often determines whether a catch becomes income and food or becomes waste. Across the freshwater and marine fisheries represented in this section, that work, the work that happens after the catch, is overwhelmingly done by women.

Water gathers stories from inland rivers and lakes, from mangrove coastlines and open ocean, from the Amazon basin to the Pacific islands, from West Africa to East Asia and the Middle East. Some of the women featured here fish themselves, diving or wading for shellfish and seaweed in traditions passed down through generations. Others farm fish in ponds and cages, harvest oysters from mangrove shallows, or run the small-scale processing and trading operations that move fish from boat to plate, often across considerable distances and through informal networks built on trust and reputation.

Fish and aquatic foods are a major source of animal protein and essential micronutrients for billions of people, particularly in coastal and riverine communities where alternatives may be limited or costly. Aquaculture now supplies over half of the fish consumed globally, easing some pressure on wild stocks alongside continued efforts towards sustainability and equitable access. In both capture fisheries and aquaculture, women's contributions – as fishers, farmers, processors and traders – are essential to how food moves from water to table, even though women are frequently underrepresented in the data, in fisheries management bodies, and in the policies that govern access to fishing grounds and water resources.

Part of the reason women's work in fisheries remains undercounted is that so much of it happens after the boat comes in. Gutting, salting, smoking, drying, fermenting, packing and selling are not glamorous tasks, and they take place at the margins of what tends to be measured and valued in fisheries statistics. But without this work, a catch does not become food. It is skilled, time-consuming and often physically demanding, and it is the step that determines whether a family has income that week, whether a community has protein through a lean season, and whether traditional preservation techniques survive to the next generation.



The recipes in this section reflect what is done with fish and other aquatic foods once they reach a kitchen: stewed, dried, fermented, smoked, curried, wrapped in leaves, served raw. Behind each dish is a longer chain of decisions and labour, about where to fish, how to process a catch before it spoils, and how to get it to someone willing to buy it. Seeing that chain is part of what this section offers.



© Bruno Portier

CONCLUSION

The recipes and stories gathered in this collection span continents, climates and culinary traditions, from herb-filled pastries in Azerbaijan to smoked reindeer in Norway, from oyster harvests on the Gambian coast to seaweed curries in the United Republic of Tanzania. What connects them is a simple truth: in every one of these places, women's knowledge and labour are central to how food reaches the table.

Published as part of the International Year of the Woman Farmer and the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists, this cookbook celebrates that contribution across land, where women farm staple crops, manage agrobiodiversity and lead cooperatives; across pasture, where women herd livestock, process milk and hold deep knowledge of rangeland systems; and across water, where women fish, farm fish, harvest, process and trade.

These two International Years call on governments, organizations and communities to strengthen the conditions under which women farmers and pastoralists work, improving access to land, resources, services, markets and decision-making. The stories in this cookbook put faces, names and places to that call, and are a reminder that the work behind every meal deserves recognition well beyond the kitchen.

Readers are invited to cook these recipes, share them, and carry their stories forward.

And everyone – governments, institutions, communities and individuals alike – is invited to take up the spirit of these two International Years: to recognize and invest in the women whose work sustains food systems around the world.

For more information on the International Year of the Woman Farmer, the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists, and related events and initiatives, please visit the official campaign pages.



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PART 1
Land

Azerbaijan

AGE-OLD FARMING TRADITIONS IMPROVE WOMEN'S LIVES

Irada Asadova grew up in a small family farm and learned the value of hard work at an early age. After losing her husband, all the responsibilities fell on her shoulders, and she and her daughter worked tirelessly to develop the farm.

In Garakhanli village in Tovuz, she brought together a group of local women who cultivated potatoes and grain to form a collective. Using their harvest, they started producing flour and opened a small bakery, creating employment opportunities for several women.

The FAO project "Improved food security and rural livelihoods through women s economic empowerment" positively transformed the lives of Irada and her cooperative members, both socially and economically. By participating in FAO training programmes, they gained new knowledge and practical experience, including how to use modern irrigation systems. As a result, their work became easier, they saved water, and productivity increased.

Today, as the first woman-led cooperative group operating in the region, Irada and her group are expanding their activities, increasing production, and exploring new areas of work.

Their cooperative cultivates potatoes and grain crops, continuing a farming tradition passed down through generations. Potatoes are grown both for local consumption and for commercial markets, providing one of the main sources of income for agricultural cooperatives such as Irada's.

Fortunately, the cooperative faces no major environmental challenges. The land is fertile, and the group consists of experienced and hardworking women farmers. However, the main challenge is preserving their harvest. During the hot summer months, potatoes and other agricultural products spoil quickly. Limited access to cold storage facilities and suitable warehouse facilities makes it difficult to store the harvest. To overcome this, the cooperative works to bring its products to market as quickly as possible.

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Women farmers, beneficiaries of the Women Empowerment Project, stand together in a wheat field.



© FAO/Javid Gurbanov

Irada and her cooperative – the first woman-led one in the region – continue a farming tradition passed down through generations.



AZERBAIJAN

QUTAB

GREEN HERB QUTAB

This recipe was passed down to the women in Irada's cooperative by their grandmothers. It is prepared by filling the dough with various herbs and greens and cooking it on a *saj*, a traditional metal cooking pan. The result is a delicious, nutritious and vitamin-rich traditional dish.

Qutab can be prepared throughout the year, but the women cook it more often in spring when fresh wild herbs are plentiful. The herbs used in its preparation are high in nutritional value for both children and adults. It is often specially prepared for guests and loved ones visiting from the city. It is both the centrepiece of the local table and a filling, healthy part of meals. In cities and towns, *qutab* is also a popular street food.

In winter, the ingredients are adapted to use those available during the season. The recipe mainly uses greenhouse-grown greens and vegetables such as spinach, coriander, dill, parsley and spring onions.



© Taliye Masimova

FOR
6+ QUTAB
YOU WILL NEED

- **1 kg** flour
- **3 g** yeast
- **1 tablespoon** of salt (heaping)
- **300 g** water
- **Mixed** greens/herbs (wild mountain coriander, cincilim – wild edible herbs/greens –, wild spinach, plantain leaf, mallow, coriander, dill, beet greens, spinach, green onions)
- **250 g** cheese
- **200 g** butter/oil

PREPARATION

1 First, the greens are carefully selected, cleaned and thoroughly washed with plenty of water. After washing, they are wrapped in a cloth to remove excess moisture and left to dry completely. This step is very important, as damp greens can affect the quality of the dough.

2 Meanwhile, the dough is prepared, kneading it until becomes soft and elastic. Divide it into small portions of approximately 150 g each, shape each portion into a ball, cover them, and leave them to rest.

3 Once the greens have dried, they are finely chopped. The cheese is either grated or finely chopped and mixed with the greens to prepare the filling.

4 The oven is preheated so that the baking process is even. The rested dough balls are rolled out into thin oval shapes. The prepared mixture of greens and cheese is then placed in the centre of each piece of rolled dough.

5 Then, the dough is folded over the filling and cooked on a *saj* or in the oven. It is baked until both sides turn golden brown.

6 Once cooked, the *qutab* are placed on a large tray and brushed with butter while still hot. This enhances their flavour, giving them a softer texture. Serve hot.





All photos: © Taliye Masimova

Democratic Republic of the Congo

TWO HARVESTS: HOW CASSAVA FEEDS FAMILIES TWICE

In the rolling hills around Mbanza-Ngungu, in Kongo-Central, women are often in their cassava fields before the sun is fully up. As their mothers and grandmothers did before them, they grow cassava (*Manihot esculenta*) for both harvests: the tubers that fill the family pot, and the tender young leaves they pick by hand, tied into bundles and carried to market, or pounded at home into *pondu* for the evening meal.

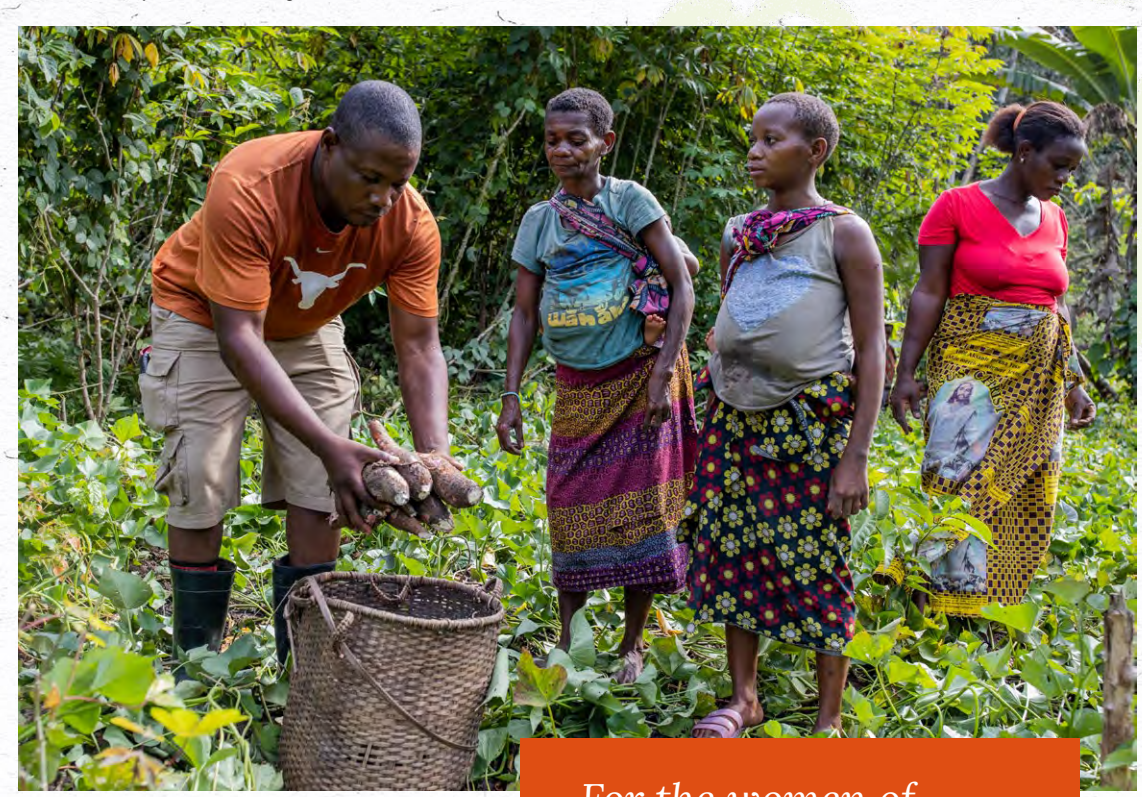
In recent years, the work has become less predictable. The rains do not come as they once did, and the soil does not always give back what it used to do. Still, the women continue to adapt, drawing on the knowledge handed down through generations. They stagger their planting, save what they can against a poor season, and read the land in the ways they were taught.

When money is needed – for school fees, seeds or the long trip to market – many turn to their village savings and credit associations. There, neighbours pool small amounts each week and lend to one another when the need arises. It is a community-led system, built on trust and sustained by women's commitment to supporting one another.

For the women of Mbanza-Ngungu, cassava feeds a family twice: once through its roots, and once through its leaves. And each time a mother pounds *pondu* with her daughter beside her, she passes on something else too: the recipe, the skill and the memory of how to keep going.

© Alice Adams Carosi

Mandefu Akwanza Dieudonné (left) and his workers harvest cassava in Bapukeli village, Okapi Wildlife Reserve, Democratic Republic of the Congo.



© FAO/Thomas Nicolon

For the women of Mbanza-Ngungu, cassava feeds a family twice: once through its roots, and once through its leaves.



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

PONDU/SAKA-SAKA

CASSAVA LEAVES AND PALM OIL

This traditional Congolese recipe can be prepared in different ways. It can be served as a daily meal with rice or *fufu* (semolina), or as part of a meal for special occasions with a meat or fish stew. It is a recipe that has been passed down from generation to generation, from mother to daughter: an integral part of families' culinary heritage.

The names *pondu* and *saka saka* are virtually interchangeable. They are also used to describe the bright green-coloured paste of cooked and pounded cassava leaves, which are processed in order to be sold further afield.



© Alice Adams Carosi

TO FEED
4 PEOPLE
YOU WILL NEED

- **800 g** cassava leaves
- **2 cloves** of garlic, minced
- **1 medium-sized** onion, chopped
- **1 bell** pepper, roughly chopped
- **Handful of** chives or spring onions, chopped
- **1 eggplant,** diced
- **1 cup** ground peanuts
  (or 3 tablespoons peanut paste)
- **4 tablespoons** palm oil
- **Water**

PREPARATION

1. Remove the cassava leaves from the stalk. Boil them briefly (at least 15–20 minutes) in hot water to remove the cyanogenic compounds. Wash them thoroughly 2–3 times and drain well.

2. Clean the pestle and mortar. Put the leaves in the mortar and pound until you obtain a uniform green paste.

3. Add the garlic, onion, bell pepper, chives and eggplant. Mix while continuing to pound lightly. This is the *pondu* mix.

4. Put 2 tablespoons of palm oil into a cooking pot, add the *pondu* mix and a couple of pinches of salt.

5. Add 1 litre of water and cook over medium heat for 20–30 minutes.

6. Add the ground peanuts, another 2 tablespoons of palm oil and continue cooking for 30–45 minutes, until you obtain a creamy texture.

7. Stir to thoroughly incorporate the oil and peanuts.

8. Remove from heat and serve hot with rice or *fufu*. Add spring onions and/or peanuts to garnish (optional).







All photos: © FAO/Olivier Asselin

Ecuador

SEED GUARDIAN COMBATS CLIMATE CHANGE



Magdalena Laine is a farmer from the Kichwa Indigenous Peoples living in the Ecuadorian Andes. Together with her family, she farms heritage maize varieties at altitudes over 2 500 metres. Their farms are locally known as *chakra*, a biodiverse agricultural system recognized in 2023 by FAO as a Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System. In addition to nutrition, food security and income, *chakra* provide Kichwa People with medicine, fuel and fodder.

Every Sunday, Magdalena and her daughters rise early to participate in La Pachamama nos alimenta (Mother Earth feeds us), an agroecological market where some 300 Kichwa women gather weekly to sell their produce. At the market, Magdalena and her daughters sell fresh vegetables, grains and eggs, as well as maize flour and bags of native varieties of maize kernels.

Right after the harvest, Magdalena and her family store the varieties of maize and select the healthiest, cleanest kernels to be preserved for the next planting season. Her daughter Verónica calls her mother a "seed guardian": she preserves many native varieties of maize seeds, and teaches the younger generations the value of these seeds.

The plateaus of the Andes offer different altitudes and microclimate variations, and the local *chakra* hold the secrets to the large array of crops that Kichwa families produce and enjoy. However, extreme weather events related to climate change, like droughts and floods, are now threatening this system, with changing temperatures affecting the crops grown at given altitudes. These changes may also erode the knowledge that Kichwa women pass down to new generations, for instance when a certain crop needs to be planted.

With the financial and technical support of FAO, farmers' organizations like the Unión de Organizaciones Campesinas Indígenas »

According to Verónica, "women are the ones with the initiative... When I have my own family, I will have to sow as my mother did, the same way she taught me. Everything she taught me will stay with me, and I should continue this wisdom."

Magdalena Laine, a Kichwa farmer and seed guardian, holds heritage maize grown on her family's *chakra* in the Ecuadorian Andes.



» de Cotacachi (UNORCAC) are implementing several initiatives to strengthen the climate resilience of Kichwa communities, for example diversifying food production through the use and exchange of native seeds.

Indeed, saving heritage grains is part of a strategy to transform the agrifood sector with a vision of inclusive rural development. Verónica is confident that the ancestral knowledge passed to her by her mother will help her – and future generations – overcome the challenges of climate change.

In this effort, women are key. According to Verónica, "women are the ones with the initiative... When I have my own family, I have to sow as my mother did, the same way she taught me. Everything she taught me will stay with me, and I should continue this wisdom."

All photos: © FAO Ecuador

ECUADOR

SOPA DE CHUCHUCA

TRADITIONAL ANDEAN CHUCHUCA SOUP

This traditional recipe is a true reflection of the *chakra* system. The protagonist of this dish is *chuchuca*, a partially matured maize that undergoes an ancestral preservation technique of sun-drying and milling. This recipe, shared by Magdalena Laine with the support of the UNORCAC Women's Committee, perfectly illustrates the nutritional wisdom of Andean women farmers. The dish combines the complex carbohydrates of preserved maize with the plant-based protein of fresh beans and the rich collagen of meat broth, creating a deeply nourishing and comforting meal that has fed generations.



© FAO Ecuador





© FAO Ecuador

Magdalena serves the traditional maize dish, cooked over an open fire in her home.

TO FEED **4-6 PEOPLE** YOU WILL NEED

- **450 g *chuchuca*** (sun-dried, semi-cooked Andean maize)
- **2 units** pork trotters (can be substituted with other pork or beef cuts for a rich broth)
- **3 cloves** garlic
- **1 medium** red onion
- **Approx. 450 g** of fresh beans
- **5 medium** potatoes
- **1 bunch** watercress
- **1 chopped** cabbage
- **1 carrot**
- **1 green** and **1** red bell pepper
- **1 pinch** salt (to taste)
- **225 g** *tostado* (traditional Andean toasted corn) for garnish

PREPARATION

1. To prepare the *chuchuca*, an ancestral maize preservation technique is applied. First, select mature, slightly starchy maize (locally known as *choclo cao*) and remove the kernels from the cob.

2. In a large pot, bring water to boil, add the corn kernels, and cook until they are tender.

3. Drain the kernels and spread them on a cloth under the sun to dry for 3 days, or until they are completely dehydrated.

4. Using a traditional hand mill, process the dried kernels to a medium texture (neither too fine nor too coarse) to ensure the perfect consistency for the soup. Store in portions for future use.

5. Thoroughly wash the required amount of ground *chuchuca* to ensure no small impurities remain.

6. To start cooking the *chuchuca* soup, in a large pot, bring water to a boil, add the clean *chuchuca*, and cook until it softens.

7. In a separate pot, cook the pork trotters with the cloves of garlic and half of the red onion until the meat is very tender.

8. To the main *chuchuca* pot, add the fresh tender beans, halved potatoes, and the watercress (and/or chopped cabbage).

9. Introduce the cooked pork trotters along with some of their rich cooking broth to deepen the flavour of the soup. Continue to simmer until the beans and potatoes are soft to the touch.

10. In a separate skillet, prepare a traditional *refrito* (soffritto base) by sautéing the finely diced carrot, the remaining half of the red onion, garlic and bell peppers. Stir this fragrant base into the simmering soup and cook for an additional 5 minutes to fuse the flavours. Adjust the salt to taste.

11. Serve the soup piping hot, accompanied by a generous handful of crunchy *tostado* on top.

Native maize kernels are poured into a clay pot over an open fire. (Top)

Maize cobs are husked and sorted by hand for preserving. (Bottom)



Magdalena raises freshly harvested maize in the field.





All photos: © FAO Ecuador

Egypt

THE FAVA BEAN: A STAPLE FOR EVERY TABLE

Fava beans *(Vicia faba)* are a traditional and well-established crop in many Egyptian provinces, and represent one of Egypt's most important legume staples. Aswan and Upper Egypt have been cultivating fava for generations. Like in other regions, fava are tied closely to local food culture.

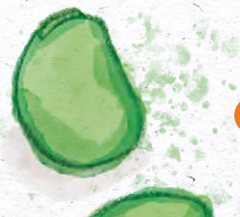
Fava beans are mainly consumed as food, especially in common traditional forms such as *ful medames*, *ta'ameya* (Egyptian green falafel) and other home-cooked dishes. Many farming households traditionally keep part of the harvest for their own consumption throughout the year.

Fava also enable Egyptian women to turn food preparation into a livelihood: female entrepreneurship – highlighted as a regional priority – has seen many turn their *ta'ameya* making skills into micro-businesses, selling sandwiches in village markets or catering stalls.

Beyond food use, farmers traditionally value fava beans for their role in improving soil fertility and reducing the need for fertilizer in cereal-based rotations, which helps maintain soil productivity in the hot and dry conditions of Upper Egypt.

There are various environmental and economic challenges involved in fava bean cultivation. FAO farmer field schools help farmers to use practical climate-smart practices, including improved irrigation scheduling, weed management and regular field monitoring with integrated pest management.

At the farmer field schools, farmers engage in hands-on learning and experimentation throughout the season, which allows them to see tangible benefits. Thus, many farmers have adopted these practices on their own fields, and some have begun sharing knowledge and techniques with neighbours. This shows how farmer field schools can effectively transform traditional practices into more productive, resilient and sustainable systems.



Women learn the recipe for ta'ameya *by helping in the kitchen from a young age – not from written recipes. This makes the* ta'ameya *a special space for storytelling.*



A woman in Aswan presents freshly made *ta'ameya*, Egyptian fava bean falafel.

All photos: © Ahmed Elshemy

EGYPT

TA'AMEYA

GREEN FAVA BEAN PATTIES (EGYPTIAN FALAFEL)

Ta'ameya is a traditional Egyptian recipe made using fava beans, herbs and simple spices. In most families, the recipe is passed down from mother to daughter. Women learn it by helping in the kitchen from a young age – not from written recipes but through practice and memory, thus making the *ta'ameya* a special space for storytelling.

Ta'ameya is still very popular in both rural and urban areas today. What makes Egyptian *ta'ameya* special are the fava beans themselves, which give them a soft fluffy texture, and the use of abundant aromatic herbs that give them their distinctive green colour. If fava beans are not available, chickpeas can be used, but this changes the recipe into Levant-style falafels, which are different in taste, colour and texture.



© Ahmed Elshemy



FOR **20+ TA'AMEYA** YOU WILL NEED

- **500 g** peeled dried fava beans (soaked overnight)
- **1 medium** onion or 1 cup chopped Egyptian leek (spring onion)
- **3–4 garlic** cloves
- **2–3 cups** of roughly chopped fresh coriander, parsley and dill (optional)
- **3 teaspoons** fine salt
- **1 teaspoon** black pepper
- **1 ½** tablespoons ground cumin
- **1 tablespoons** ground coriander
- **½ teaspoon** baking soda
- **1–2 eggs**
- **2 tablespoons** sesame seeds (optional)
- **Vegetable oil** for frying

NOTES: Soak the fava beans well, if possible overnight, to make them soft and easy to grind. There is no need to cook the beans for the mixture.

Grind the mixture very finely so that the *ta'ameya* will become light and fluffy. The oil to fry the *ta'ameya* should be hot, but not too hot, so that the *ta'ameya* cooks inside without burning outside. For a healthier option, *ta'ameya* can also be baked in the oven or cooked in an air fryer instead of fried.

PREPARATION

1. Rinse the dry fava beans well and soak them in water for 8 hours or overnight. Change the water every 2–4 hours if possible. In hot weather, keep the beans in the fridge while soaking.

2. Drain the beans. Add part of the beans to the food processor with chopped onion, garlic and herbs. Grind well. Since most food processors grind coarsely, transfer the mixture to a bowl and repeat in batches until all ingredients are processed. Combine everything and grind once more for a more even texture. If the mixture seems too dry, add a few tablespoons of water.

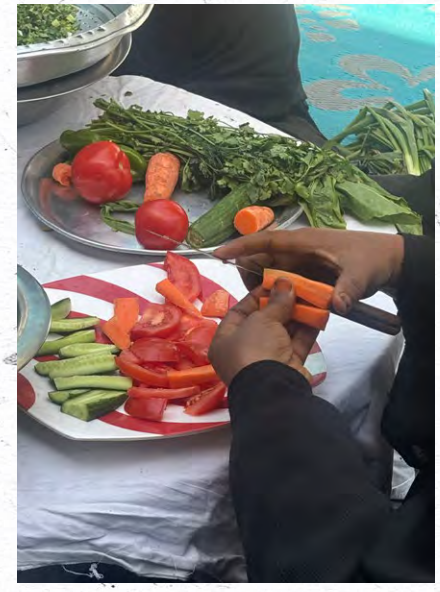
3. At this stage, you can divide the mixture into portions (about 1 cup each), place them in bags and freeze. When needed, thaw at room temperature.

4. Just before frying, add the eggs, ground coriander, salt, black pepper and baking soda. Mix by hand to get a smooth but not watery texture. Add sesame seeds now, or press each patty into sesame seeds before frying (optional).

5. Beat the batter well using your hands or a spoon, as this helps make the *ta'ameya* light and fluffy. If the mixture seems too wet, add some fava bean or chickpea flour.

6. Heat oil over medium-high heat. Using a wet tablespoon, scoop the batter and shape into flat patties. Keep your fingers wet so the mixture does non-stick. Drop carefully into the hot oil. When they start to turn golden, flip to cook evenly. Fry for about 3 minutes until crispy and cooked through. Do not let them burn.

7. Serve hot with flatbread, green salad, tahini and pickles (*torshi*).







All photos: © Ahmed Elshemy

Farmers harvest fava beans in a field in Upper Egypt.





All photos: © Ahmed Elshemy

Freshly harvested fava plants are gathered and carried from the field.

Ethiopia

INJERA: SYMBOL OF IDENTITY, POWERHOUSE FOR HEALTH

Teff, Ethiopia's ancient staple grain, is a cornerstone of the country's culinary heritage, passed down through generations as the main ingredient in *injera*. Teff is highly valued for its exceptional nutritional profile: it is naturally gluten-free and is rich in fibre, iron, calcium and essential amino acids, making it one of the most nutrient-dense grains in the world.

The name teff comes from the Amharic word for "lost", because its small size historically made it hard to handle. However, its nutritional value and adaptability to harsh conditions have recently sparked global interest in the crop as a resilient, gluten-free superfood.

Teff (*Eragrostis teff*) can grow well in moisture-stressed and waterlogged conditions, better than other cereals. It is mainly cultivated in the central and northwest highland areas: the Central Ethiopia Regional State and the South Ethiopia Regional State; Amhara; and Tigray, in that order. Six-and-a-half million smallholder farmers grow teff, and it is indispensable to the livelihoods of many Ethiopians. Although the proportion may vary between individual farmers, generally 70 to 80 percent of the crops production is for farmers' own use, while the rest is sold.

In the Tigray region, 35-year-old Tsigie Yemane is an example of a woman farmer rebuilding her livelihood with new skills, confidence, and hope with the support of the FAO–Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) project, the "Project for Promoting Climate-Resilient Agricultural Management through the Establishment of Farmer Field Schools in Conflict Affected Communities in Tigray." Through the programme, Tsigie received improved Bosset teff seeds to establish a 0.25 hectare learning plot. Each week, she participated in farmer field school (FFS) training sessions that helped her to observe and analyse crop »

» performance, apply recommended practices and make informed, evidence-based decisions in all seasons. Tsigie was selected as one of the farmers to host a community field day, during which fellow FFS members, neighbouring farmers and development partners visited her plot to see the results firsthand. Standing proudly beside her neatly stacked teff, she explained how improved seed, guided decision-making, and the FFS approach transformed her farming practices and restored her confidence.

Today, Tsigie is recognized as a promising seed producer and an emerging leader among women farmers in Adwa Woreda. Her journey demonstrates the transformative impact of FFS-based interventions: empowering women to adopt improved practices, rebuild productive assets, strengthen household food security, and contribute to community recovery.

Her story is one of resilience, knowledge, and hope, made possible through the support of FAO, JICA and partners committed to restoring livelihoods in conflict-affected Tigray.

A woman farmer harvesting a teff crop in Ethiopia.



Today, Tsigie is recognized as a promising seed producer and an emerging leader among women farmers in Adwa Woreda.

All photos: © FAO/Giulio Napolitano

ETHIOPIA

INJERA

FERMENTED TEFF FLATBREAD

Injera, a fermented flatbread made with teff, is Ethiopia's iconic staple food. More than a meal, it is a cultural tradition passed down through generations. Made primarily from teff flour, *injera* is a soft, spongy flatbread that serves as both plate and utensil in Ethiopian cuisine. Given teff's exceptional nutritional profile, *injera* is a powerhouse for health. The classic recipe for *injera* involves fermenting teff flour batter for 2–3 days to achieve its signature tangy flavour and airy texture.

Injera is more than food, as it is a symbol of Ethiopian identity that connects families and communities through shared meals and tradition.



© FAO/Eduardo Soteras

FOR **5–8 PIECES OF INJERA** YOU WILL NEED

- **2 cups** of teff flour (brown or ivory; brown is the more traditional version)
- **3 cups** of lukewarm water (adjust as needed)
- ***Absit*** (cooked teff paste – instructions below)
- **Pinch of** salt to taste (added only at the end)
- **2–3 tablespoons** of *ersho* (fermented liquid saved from previous *injera* batter, if available)

NOTES:
Ferment longer in cool climates (up to 4 days).
Use 100 percent teff (no wheat or barley).

If the *injera* does not bubble:
- Check if the batter is too thin. In this case, add teff flour.
- If the batter is too cold, move it to a warm room.
- If you skipped the *absit*, bubbles will not form.

Sourness control:
- If the *injera* is mild, cook it sooner.
- If it lacks the traditional sourness, ferment the batter longer.

Storage (traditional method)
- Stack the *injera* and wrap them in cloth.
- Store at room temperature for 1 day.
- Refrigerate for up to 3 days.
- *Injera* can be frozen for up to 1 month.

TERMINOLOGY

- ***Ersho*: fermented** starter culture, liquid
- ***Absit*: cooked** teff paste
- ***Mitad*: traditional** cooking pan; you can also use a good non-stick pan
- **When teff** is scarce, substitutes like sorghum, barley or a mix of wheat and teff can be used, though this slightly alters taste and nutrition.

3/4 DAYS TOTAL PREPARATION TIME

Day 1:

Prepare the batter and start fermentation

1 Mix the 2 cups of teff and 3 cups of lukewarm water in a large glass or clay bowl. Add a little *ersho* (if available). Whisk until smooth.

2 Use a clean tea towel to cover loosely and do not seal.

3 Leave at room temperature (20–25 °C / 68–77 °F) for 2–3 days.

Days 2–3

Allow fermentation to happen

4 Ethiopian chefs look for bubbles forming and a slightly sour smell during fermentation. The mixture should separate into layers: liquid on top, and batter at the bottom. Do not stir during fermentation.

Day 3

Baking

5 First drain of the excess water – pour off the thin water on the top, but not all of it.

6 Make the absit. This step is what gives *injera* its signature eyes (holes).

7 To make the *absit*, boil 1 cup of water in a small saucepan. Add ½ cup of the batter and mix into the boiling water, stirring continuously until it becomes a thick porridge with no lumps. Cook for 1–2 minutes on low heat until it becomes slightly thick and gelatinous, then let it cool slightly.

8 Add the warm (but not hot) *absit* to the fermented batter. Mix gently but thoroughly. Add a pinch of salt (optional). Cover and rest again for 30–60 minutes to activate bubbling again.

8 The batter should now be slightly thick but pourable; not too thick and not watery.

9 Cook the *injera* on a mitad or wide non-stick skillet on medium heat. Very lightly wipe pan with vegetable oil, just once.

10 Stir batter gently and pour batter in a spiral from outside to centre; the batter should spread to form a large thin circle. Cover immediately with a lid and cook for 1–2 minutes only. The *injera* is done when the surface is full of holes (“eyes”), the top is dry and the bottom is cooked but not too brown. Never flip *injera*. Remove the *injera* from the pan and place on a clean cloth or basket (*mesob*).

11 As a final step, taste salt, and if needed dissolve ½ tsp salt in 1 tbsp water and gently fold into the remaining batter.

Ghana

SMALL GRAIN, STRONG ROOTS: HOW FONIO BUILDS RESILIENCE FOR WOMEN

For Christabel Kwasi, a 29-year-old farmer and mother of three, fonio (*Digitaria exilis*) is both a crop and a source of confidence. Seeing her children enjoy the rich, nourishing porridge she prepares from the grain she grows is a reminder of what her work makes possible: healthy food on the table, and the satisfaction of knowing that her harvest helps sustain her family.

Fonio is an ancient indigenous West African cereal, and is traditionally cultivated by women farmers. In the Chereponi region of Northern Ghana, it is a staple food for farmers like Christabel. Once boiled, fonio resembles couscous. It can be consumed as such, or made into porridge. It can even be turned into flour for baking. It is a versatile crop that generations have relied on, for both food and livelihoods.

"I realized that my family likes fonio, and they depend on fonio more than any other food crop," says Christabel. "Fonio is the type [of crop where] if you don't even have money to buy chemicals [fertilizers], you can still farm it, feed on it."

Until as recently as a year ago, Christabel thought she had to wait for periods of rainfall and rely on arduous traditional methods of cultivation to grow fonio, which often left her family with little to no harvest during the dry season.

However, a project recently implemented by FAO, in collaboration with Chef Fatmata Binta, renowned for bringing African gastronomy to the global scene, is giving Christabel and other farmers the knowledge needed to grow fonio year-round. Together with Ghana's Ministry of Food and Agriculture, the project aims to support women fonio producers in Ghana to enhance their cultivation skills and boost productivity and income. »

» The good collaboration between FAO, Chef Binta and Ghana's Ministry of Food and Agriculture has shown how fonio is an effective resilience-building crop. Through training sessions on better production and post-harvest techniques, women fonio producers learned to increase their yields and properly store their grains to prevent food loss.

In Ghana, also the manual methods of post-harvest handling and processing – mostly undertaken by women – are exhausting processes impacting their yields. The methods require manually pounding the grains by hand for threshing, winnowing and then also manually drying. To minimize this time- and labour-intensive process, Chef Binta is providing processing machines, enabling women fonio producers to process their fonio achieving better quality and greater quantities.

Christabel has become one of the farmers that helps teach other women farmers.

Chereponi, North-East Region, Ghana. Christabel Kwasi, a woman farmer, inspects fonio plants in a fonio field.



With fonio, says Christabel, "I will not teach people to have food for one day. I will teach them to have food always".

All photos: © FAO/Fanjan Combrink

GHANA

GROUNDNUT SOUP WITH FONIO

Groundnut soup is a staple of the West African kitchen, that can be made with chicken, beef or smoked fish. This recipe was developed by Chef Binta as part of her ongoing work with the women fonio farmers, and the promotion of fonio as a mighty ancient grain feeding the future.



© FAO/Fanjan Combrink

TO FEED
4-6 PEOPLE
YOU WILL NEED

For the groundnut soup

- **1 kg** chicken pieces, bone-in
- **1** large onion, peeled and quartered
- **2 tablespoons** tomato paste
- **150 g** natural groundnut (peanut) paste
- **2–3 whole** Scotch bonnet peppers
- **2** garden eggs (African eggplants), whole
- **2 tablespoons** dried okra powder
- **1.5 litres** water
- **Salt**, to taste

For the fonio

- **250 g** fonio
- **500 ml** water
- **½ tsp** salt



© FAO/Fanjan Combrink

Chereponi, North-East Region, Ghana. Chef Fatama Binta adds salt to the groundnut chicken stew cooking over an open fire, assisted by local women farmers.

PREPARATION

1. To prepare the groundnut soup, place the chicken, onion, garden eggs and Scotch bonnet peppers into a large saucepan. Add 1 litre of water and season lightly with salt.

2. Bring to a gentle boil, then reduce the heat and simmer for approximately 30 minutes, or until the chicken is tender and the vegetables are softened.

3. Remove the onion and garden eggs from the stock. Blend or mash until smooth, then return the mixture to the pot to enrich the soup's body and flavour.

4. Stir in the tomato paste and allow it to cook for 2–3 minutes.

5. In a separate bowl, loosen the groundnut paste with a little warm water, whisking until smooth. Gradually add this mixture to the soup, stirring continuously to prevent lumps from forming.

6. Add the dried okra and the remaining water. Simmer gently for a further 20–30 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the soup thickens and the characteristic groundnut oil begins to rise to the surface.

7. Taste and adjust with salt as required.

8. To cook the fonio, rinse it thoroughly under cold running water.

9. Bring the water and salt to a boil in a saucepan. Stir in the fonio, cover and reduce the heat to low.

10. Cook for 5 minutes, then remove from the heat and allow to steam, covered, for a further 5 minutes.

11. Fluff gently with a fork before serving.

12. To serve, ladle the hot groundnut soup into warmed bowls, ensuring each portion contains generous pieces of chicken. Serve alongside the steamed fonio, allowing guests to enjoy the rich, nutty broth with the light, delicate grains.

GHANA

Chereponi, North-East Region, Ghana. Women farmers wash their hands before sitting down to eat groundnut stew with fonio porridge outdoors, prepared by Chef Fatama Binta. (Top)

Women farmers enjoying a groundnut stew with fonio porridge prepared with the help from Chef Fatama Binta. (Bottom)

Chereponi, North-East Region, Ghana. A groundnut chicken stew, served alongside a stiff fonio porridge. (Right)







All photos: © FAO/Fanjan Combrink

Jordan

CULTIVATING KNOWLEDGE, HARVESTING TRADITION: WOMEN AND THE FUTURE OF OLIVE OIL

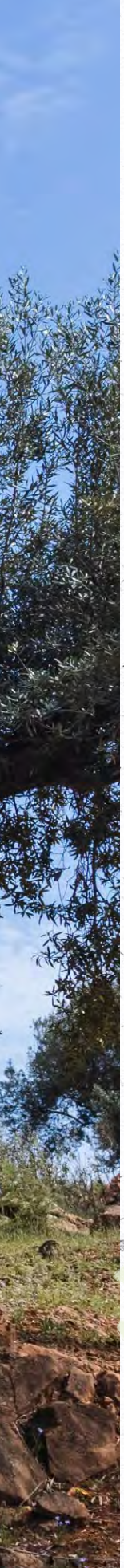
Feryal Al-Kofahi began her story as a small-scale farmer, cultivating olive trees, among other crops. After joining the Jordanian Women's Olive Oil Network, she participated in many training programmes and workshops focused on good agricultural practices. These interventions led to a significant increase in her olive and olive oil productivity and a marked improvement in quality.

The olive (*Olea europaea*) is a shrub tree native to the Mediterranean Basin, of which the first historical records date back to the sixth century BCE. The olive tree is believed to have originated in what are today known as the Syrian Arab Republic, Palestine, Lebanon and Jordan; from here, it spread to the rest of the world.

Jordan is home to some of the world's oldest olive trees, as revealed by excavations in the Wadi Rum area, in the valley of Sabt: carbon analysis of charred wood indicate that the region has been growing olives since 5400 BCE.

Beyond farming, Feryal has excelled in the culinary arts. Through her participation in various local and international festivals and exhibitions – including the cooking show at the launch of the International Year of the Woman Farmer 2026 – she has represented her cuisine, community and country internationally and showcased her skills, particularly in traditional dishes using extra virgin olive oil.

Feryal has also become a trainer, becoming a mentor for other women producers. Her story is one of resilience, transformation and a deep-rooted passion for her community's heritage.



© Alex Blokstra/Pexels

© Reham Ahmad Qasam Dahadha



Feryal tosses freshly harvested olives.

Feryal's story is one of resilience, transformation and a deep-rooted passion for her community's heritage.

MAKMOURA WITH CHICKEN

Originating from the north of Jordan, *makmoura*, meaning buried, is exactly what it sounds like: chicken and onions are finely chopped and buried between layers of dough, then placed in the oven until fully cooked. It is later cut into triangle pieces and served like pie. The highest-quality olive oil possible should be used when making this recipe. The best time to prepare it is just after the olive harvest, when olive oil is at its freshest and most abundant.



© Reham Ahmad Qasam Dahadha



TO FEED
4-6 PEOPLE
YOU WILL NEED

- **1 whole** large chicken
- **600 g** onions, finely sliced
- **2 cups** extra virgin olive oil
- **800 g** wheat flour
- **1 tablespoon** sesame seeds and **1 tablespoon** black nigella seeds
- **Salt and** pepper, desired

PREPARATION

1. First, prepare the filling. In a pot, begin by sautéing the chicken with the chopped onions and a generous pour of extra virgin olive oil.

2. Add the salt and pepper, mixing well to combine the flavours. Let the mixture cook on the heat for about half an hour to allow the flavours to mingle. Add a little water if necessary. Let the mixture cool a little. Remove all bones and shred the chicken. Adjust salt and pepper.

3. While the chicken is cooking, prepare the dough. In a separate bowl, mix the flour with the salt, sesame seeds and nigella seeds. Gradually add water to form a consistent dough, then let it rest covered for 10–15 minutes.

4. Next, assemble the *makmoura* on a round baking dish. Divide the rested dough into small pieces suitable for your cooking dish. Roll out the first layer of dough to the size of the pan, then add a layer of the prepared chicken, onions and olive oil.

5. Repeat the layering process until all the dough and filling are used. Drizzle well with olive oil.

6. Place the dish in the oven at medium heat (approximately 180 °C) and bake for about 2.5–3 hours until the dough and chicken are thoroughly cooked. Many cooks cover the *makmoura* for the first half of the cooking process, then remove the covering to let the pastry crisp up in the final stage.

7. Let the pie rest for a few minutes before cutting and serving in triangular pieces.



© Reham Ahmad Qasam Dahadha

Madagascar

BEAN BY BEAN: FARMER FIELD SCHOOLS SOW NUTRITION AND HOPE



In rural Madagascar, a network of farmer field schools help strengthen women's ability to produce nutrient-rich foods, adopt better feeding habits, and prevent acute malnutrition in their children.

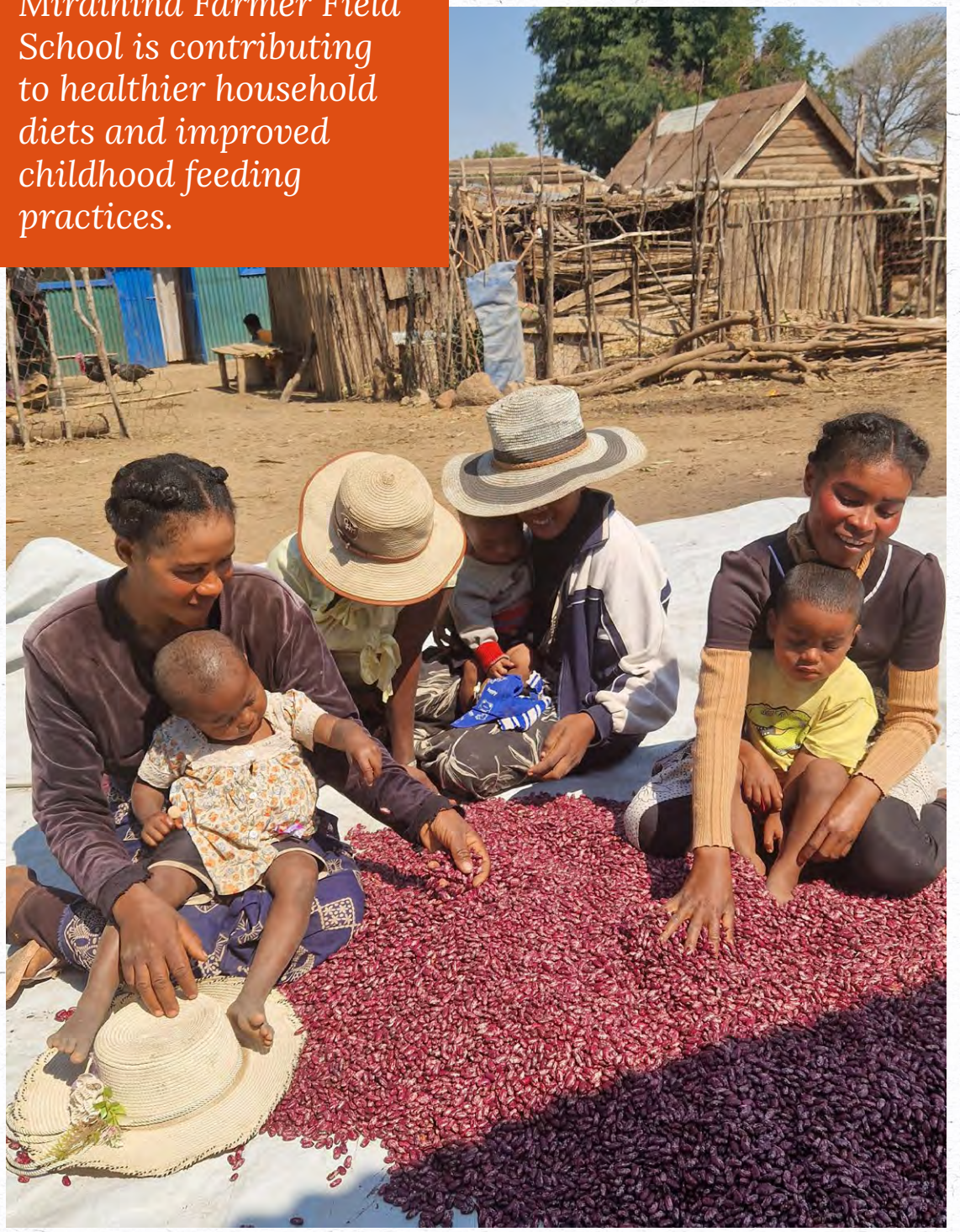
The Miraihina Farmer Field School in Ambahatrazo brings together 21 women from the Antemoro community around a common goal: to improve their agricultural production systems while sustainably strengthening the nutritional quality of their households.

Henicia is the leader of the group of women involved in the programme, which provides training in home gardening, small livestock production, climate-smart practices and more. The women also learn to prepare balanced meals using local ingredients and the highly nutritious crops promoted through the project. These changes are contributing to healthier household diets and improved childhood feeding practices, demonstrating strong potential to reduce acute malnutrition in the community.

One of the key crops grown by the women farmers are Cal98 beans (the common bean, *Phaseolus vulgaris*), known locally as *fofifa vanbamena*. The beans, which have high iron and zinc content, are well-suited to local conditions when cultivated using controlled farming practices, and offer significant and relatively stable yield potential. Their high plant protein content is a key advantage in a context where access to animal protein remains limited for many households.

The training provided to women by the Miraihina Farmer Field School is contributing to healthier household diets and improved childhood feeding practices.

Mothers and children sort freshly harvested Cal98 beans, a nutrient-rich crop grown by the Miraihina Farmer Field School in Madagascar.



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MADAGASCAR

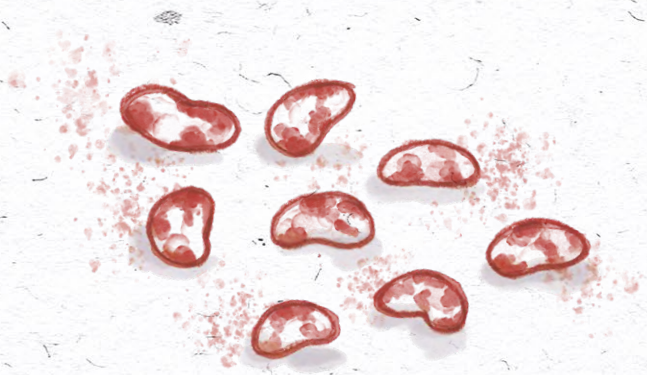
SOUPE DE MANIOC AUX LÉGUMES

MANIOCA AND BEAN SOUP

Madagascan manioca and bean soup combines cassava, Cal98 beans and moringa leaves – simple yet nutritious local ingredients. Carrots, tomatoes and onions bring colour and flavour, while garlic adds a kick. Simmered slowly, it is served hot and constitutes a complete meal, representative of traditional Madagascan cuisine. This soup is a simple soup that can be consumed daily, full of nutrition for children and adults alike.



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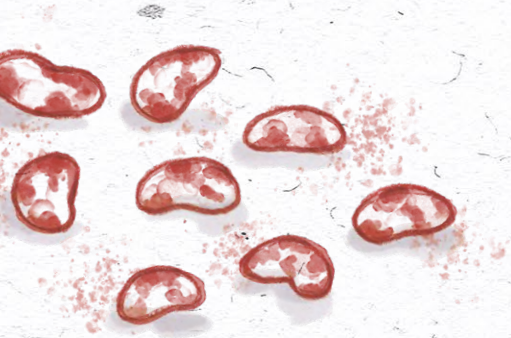


All photos: © Rombaka, Solondrainy

Rows of young bean plants grow in a field in Madagascar.

TO FEED **3-4 PEOPLE** YOU WILL NEED

- **400 g** medium-sized fresh cassava roots
- **150 g** dried Cal98 beans (250 g cooked)
- **1 large** onion, diced
- **1 to** 2 tablespoons of oil
- **2 cloves** of garlic, peeled and minced
- **2 large** carrots, peeled and diced
- **2 tomatoes,** roughly chopped
- **1 handful** of fresh or dried moringa leaves, washed and pulled of stems
- **Salt (to** taste)



PREPARATION

1. Soak the dried beans in water for roughly 4 hours before cooking to reduce cooking time and improve digestibility.

2. Put beans in a pot with cold water and cook until tender.

3. Peel the cassava, cut it into small cubes, and wash them thoroughly. Add to a medium pot of boiling water and cook for 2–3 minutes. Discard the cooking water.

4. Return the pot with the cassava to the heat, cover with cold water and cook until just able to be pierced with a skewer.

5. Meanwhile, dice the onion and garlic. Cut the carrots and tomatoes into pieces.

6. In a large pot, sauté the onion and garlic in a little oil with a pinch of salt. Add the tomatoes and carrots and cook for a few minutes, until slightly reduced.

7. Add the cassava and cooked beans (with their water). Add another 1 litre of water.

8. Simmer until the cassava and beans are tender, adding spoons of water if necessary. Add the moringa right at the very end of cooking. Do not cook the moringa for more than 1 minute in order to preserve the nutrients.

9. Remove from heat and serve hot. Adjust salt to taste.

Niger

MORINGA: A PLANT VALUED FOR ITS LEAVES, PODS AND SEEDS

Moringa *(Moringa oleifera)* is a cash crop in the Niger, consumed daily as a leafy vegetable in rural and urban areas. The main production areas are in Maradi, Tillabéry, Dosso, Tahoua and Niamey. An important crop for nutritional security, it was introduced to the Niger in the early twentieth century. Moringa leaves are rich in protein and calories.

Women mainly ensure the retail sale of moringa in markets. They are practically absent from wholesale trade but also from cultivation, because they often cannot own land (due to customary laws), especially to cultivate a plant that can remain unproductive for more than 15 years and is similar to a perennial crop. However, particularly in the Maradi region, part of the moringa is processed by women. They buy fresh leaves from producers and pre-cook and dry them, before selling the processed product to traders who collect, repackage and resell the dried leaves. As with many foods, proper preparation is necessary to avoid losing too many nutrients, especially vitamins destroyed by the heat of cooking. Also, the leaves should be consumed quickly after harvesting and cooked for only a short time. It is important to conserve and use the liquid in which they are cooked, which also has nutritional value. Moringa leaves are an economical source of protein, vitamins and minerals.

Consumed as a national dish, several moringa-based recipes are produced during traditional ceremonies. Sixty percent of Nigeriens consume moringa daily, and demand is influenced by daily habits and festive periods. Recently, local hotel and restaurant chains have started incorporating moringa into their menus.

Mme Djibrilla Nafissatou Sahirou, a moringa processor, harvests moringa leaves in her garden in Niamey, Niger.



Particularly in the Maradi region, part of the moringa is processed by women. They buy fresh leaves from producers and pre-cook and dry them, before selling the processed product to traders.

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NIGER

DAMBOU WITH MORINGA

Dambou is an emblematic dish from the Niger, traditionally made with moringa and millet semolina, although these days rice semolina is more commonly used. In the Niger, when we talk about *dambou*, we refer to the Djerma, an ethnic group concentrated in the Dosso and Tillabéry region, where this recipe is very typical.

Dambou has become a national dish, consumed daily either for breakfast or more frequently for lunch. However, it is also commonly found at wedding and baptism ceremonies. It often accompanies a meat dish such as *gabagaba*, a recipe based on pounded chicken and peanuts.



© Alice Adams Carosi

TO FEED
3-4 PEOPLE
YOU WILL NEED

- **250 grams** rice semolina
- **500 ml** lukewarm water
- **120 ml** vegetable oil
- **2 teaspoons** salt (more or less according to taste)
- **3 handfuls** cooked moringa (the quantity can be increased as you wish)
- **½ onion,** sliced
- **1 large** onion, chopped
- **3 green** chilis (optional)
- **100 ml** oil for frying the onion (preferably peanut oil)
- **3 pinches** salt
- **1 bouillon** cube (optional)
- **Seasoned dry** chili, ready to eat (as desired)

NOTES: Rice semolina can be replaced by any type of cereal semolina (wheat, corn, millet). Corn and rice semolina are more frequently used to make this recipe. Moringa can be mixed with spinach, white sorrel flowers (*waraou*) or purslane (*youla youla*).

PREPARATION

1. To cook the moringa, remove the leaves from the stems and discard the stems. Wash the green leaves in clean water.

2. Bring a medium pot of water to the boil and cook the leaves for 5–10 minutes with a pinch of salt. Drain the leaves and set aside.

3. To cook the rice semolina, put water in a pot, place the couscous cooker on top, and bring to the heat.

4. Pour the semolina into a salad bowl and add 125 ml of water. Stir well with a fork to avoid lumps, and let it rest for 5 minutes. Add 30 ml of oil and stir well, crushing the lumps. Spread a clean cloth at the bottom of the couscous cooker before putting the semolina to cook for 15 minutes.

5. Using the skimmer, remove the semolina from the couscous cooker and pour it into the salad bowl. Spread the pre-cooked grains well; then sprinkle with 125 ml of water and with 2 teaspoons of salt, stir well and spread with the skimmer or fork. Let it rest for 5 minutes before putting it back to cook for 20 minutes.

6. Repeat this step 1 to 2 times until you are sure that the semolina is well cooked and tender. Each time you put it back to cook, sprinkle with a little water, in a quantity less than the previous steps. Adjust the salt to taste.

7. Pour the cooked rice semolina into the salad bowl. Drain the moringa well, and squeeze well to extract the remaining water. Mix with the semolina. Add a quarter of the onion, sliced; mix well and steam again for 10 minutes. Pour the mixture into the salad bowl and set aside.

8. To complete the *dambou*, in a small saucepan, sauté the remaining onion in 100 ml of oil until golden brown. Add the crushed or minced green chili, salt and (optionally) the bouillon cube. Simmer until the mixture is fried and the condiment is ready.

9. Arrange a dish in which the *dambou* is arranged and sprinkled with the fried onion and chili. The dish is ready to eat.

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© FAO/Luis Tato



A woman cleaning *Moringa ovalifolia* seeds at Centre National de Semences Forestières (CNSF).



© FAO/Giulio Napolitano



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Palau

HEART-SHAPED LEAVES, DEEP ROOTS: THE WOMEN CONTINUING THE TARO TRADITION

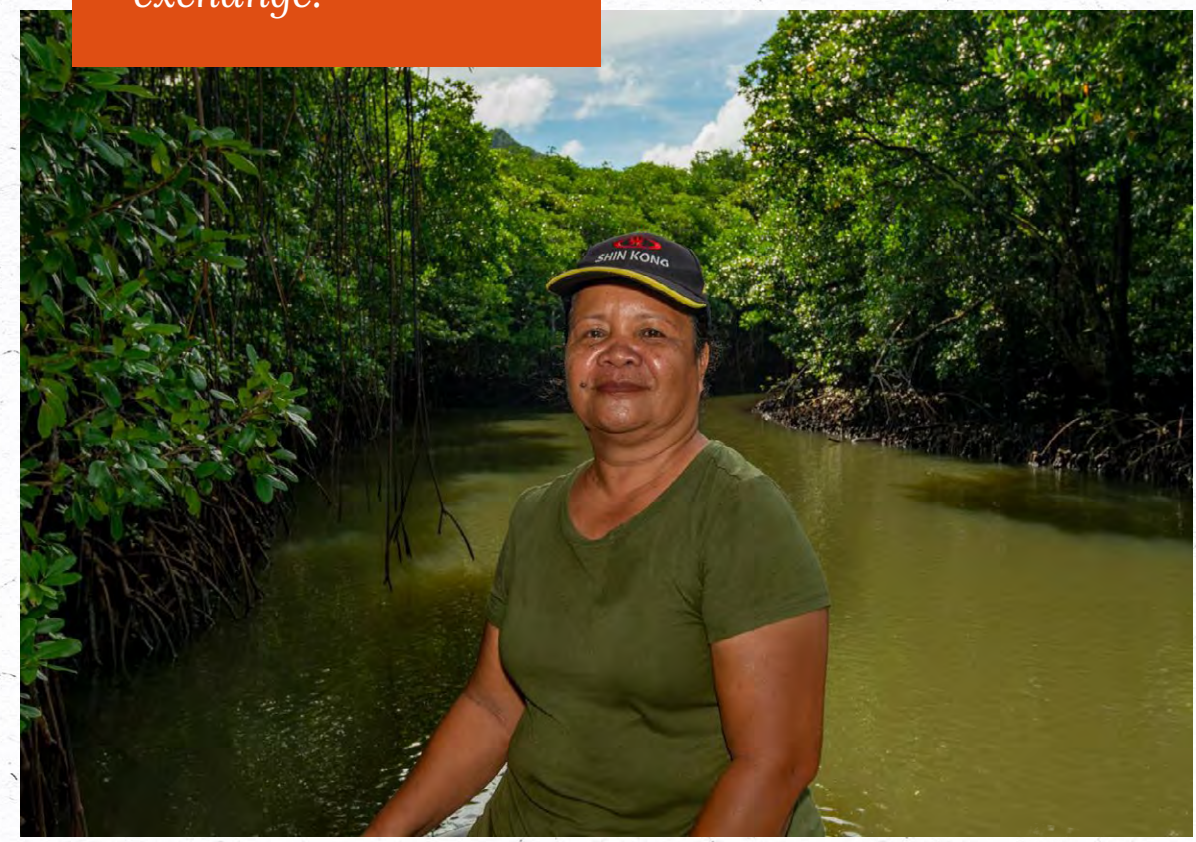
In Palau, taro is traditionally cultivated by women in plots of land around the shores of the small Pacific island nation. The tubers have distinctive heart-shaped leaves and they provide a source of starch for local communities. The leaves can also be cooked and are a source of fibre, vitamin A, vitamin C and folate, and essential minerals like potassium, calcium and iron. Historically, taro are served as a symbol of wealth and an object of ceremonial exchange.

Doreen M. Ongelungel is the president of the Maltreng Women's Association, promoting the cultivation of Taro among women farmers in Palau. Through a project grant from the Asian Development Bank, Doreen helped form the Maltreng Women's Association. Doreen participated in the Bureau of Agriculture (BOA) training to become a taro farmer. As President of the Association, she recruits and coordinates members' participation in workshops and training.

The group also brings their harvest to the BOA to dispense to other farmers who need it to resell whole or to produce flour.

The women face various challenges, including difficulty selling products due to limited buyers, and limited access to markets in which to sell the harvest that the BOA does not buy. Climate change also causes droughts that damage crops and prevent good harvests.

Historically, taro are served as a symbol of wealth and an object of ceremonial exchange.



© FAO

Rose Ongalibang travels by boat through Palau's mangroves to reach the taro gardens she helps cultivate.



© FAO/Mele Tauati



PALAU

DEMOK

TARO LEAF SOUP

This is a national dish of Palau. Each community has a different style to cook it, which is shared across families. This recipe was provided by Auntie Nesti Noriwoa.

Taro leaf soup is a healthy everyday meal. For special occasions, it is often paired with crabmeat. Other leafy greens can substitute the taro leaves.



© Alice Adams Carosi

TO FEED
5 PEOPLE
YOU WILL NEED

- **500 g** taro leaves
- **500 g** taro stem
- **250 g** bilimbi fruit (*Averrhoa bilimbi*)
- **25 g** ginger
- **100 g** garlic chives, finely chopped
- **400 ml** coconut milk
- **A pinch** of hilara salt

NOTES: Taro leaves must be boiled or cooked thoroughly for at least 40 minutes to neutralize the calcium oxalate crystals, which cause severe throat irritation. Depending on the dish, many recipes require boiling or simmering the leaves until they are perfectly tender.

PREPARATION

1. Remove the taro leaves from their stems, cut the stems and boil them together for 1–3 hours, depending on the size of the plant; they should be completely tender. Discard cooking water and then rinse well.

2. Cut the bilimbi fruit and mince the ginger. Put them in a pot together with the boiled taro leaves and stems.

3. Pour in the coconut milk, stir it and let it simmer. Season with finely chopped garlic chives and adjust salt to taste.





All photos: © FAO/Mele Tauati

Philippines

KEEPING AN HEIRLOOM VARIETY – AND BELOVED SWEET DELICACY – ALIVE: DADA AND THE KEEPERS OF INURUBAN

Alberta "Dada" Gattoc farms rice along with her extended family in San Clemente, in the Tarlac area of the Philippines. This is a mountainous inland area of Luzon island, with high-altitude areas dotted with terraced rice fields. The region is home to the rice cultivar *Bongkitan* (also spelled *bungkitan* or *buenkitan*), a high-yielding heirloom glutinous white rice variety (*Oryza sativa L.*) that is very glutinous, and has a longer maturity period compared to lowland inbred or hybrid varieties. *Bongkitan* is most often used for making rice wine, due to its high sugar conversion, but is also the chief ingredient in *inuruban*, a traditional rice cake.

Dada is helped on the farm by her husband Verginio Gattoc. According to them, making *inuruban* used to be a community activity, but now, only a few families maintain the culinary tradition.

Planting *Bongkitan* should be done during the last week of June until the first week of July, with the help of the monsoon wind, to ensure a good harvest during the last week of October. Once yellowish, the rice is ready to be harvested. This is mostly the responsibility of women, who use Indigenous tools such as *rakum*, a long knife that cuts the stalk.

According to Dada and her husband Verginio, making inuruban *used to be a community activity, but now, only a few families maintain the culinary tradition.*



Dada holds freshly harvested *Bongkitan* rice, an heirloom variety she farms with her family in Tarlac, Philippines.

All photos: © Ige Ramos / Ugnayan Center for Filipino Gastronomy

PHILIPPINES

INURUBAN

Locals trace the name of this *kakanin* – a Philippine word for a variety of native rice cakes – to *irub*, the word in Ilokano dialect that means to fire or to grill. *Inuruban* is mostly made and served once a year, in early November during All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day.

Dada cooks the inuruban by sight, so she does not follow a written recipe. The recipe is passed on orally and visually. She learned it from her ancestors, who passed it down to the next generations. Instead of quantities, weight and measurement, the recipe shows the ratio and proportion of the ingredients.





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TO FEED
8-10 PEOPLE
YOU WILL NEED

- **1 part** *bongkitan* rice
- **1.5 parts** water
- **1 part** *nilubyan* coconut cream, grated mature coconuts
- **0.5–0.75 parts** sugar or muscovado

For 1 part of Bongkitan rice

- **1 part** (2 cups) glutinous rice
- **1.5 parts** (3 cups) water (for parboiling)
- **1 part** (2 cups) coconut cream (*kakang gata*)
- **0.5–0.75 part** (1–1.5 cups) brown sugar (dark/muscovado)

The *kakang gata* rule: For the richest flavour, use only the first extraction (coconut cream) for the syrup. Save the second extraction (thin milk) if you prefer to use it instead of plain water for the initial rice boiling.
Aromatic base: Optional – adding a knot of pandan leaves to the rice while it parboils adds a necessary floral depth that cuts through the heavy fat of the coconut.
The salt factor: Add a generous pinch of salt to the coconut cream and sugar mixture. It bridges the gap between the earthy rice and the intense sweetness of the sugar.

PREPARATION

1 The rice must first be parboiled. Rinse the glutinous rice and combine it with the water in a rice cooker or pot. You want the rice to be *al dente* – slightly undercooked and firm. Using a 1:1.5 rice-to-water ratio ensures the grains stay distinct and do not turn into a paste during the second stage.

2 While the rice cooks, combine the coconut cream and sugar in a large wok. Simmer over medium-low heat until the mixture thickens into a heavy syrup (syrupy stage) or until the oil begins to separate slightly.

3 Add the parboiled rice to the syrup. This is where manual labour is needed. Fold the rice constantly over low heat until the liquid is fully absorbed and the mixture becomes very sticky and difficult to stir. Add a couple of drops of water if drying out and the rice is not cooked.

4 Spoon into fresh banana leaves to serve. *Inuruban* can be eaten hot or kept in the refrigerator for up to 2 days.

NOTES: For a traditional *inuruban* that achieves the signature chewy, cohesive texture without being too mushy or dry, the ratio typically follows a two-stage cooking process. The key is to partially cook the rice first (parboiling), before finishing it in the sweetened coconut cream.





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Türkiye

FROM PASSION TO PRODUCER: THE MAKING OF A BEEKEEPER

Züleyha Ceylan's beekeeping journey began in 2022, when she was accepted into the Beekeeping Programme at Düzce University. While still a first-year student, she took her first steps, with just five hives of bees (*Apis mellifera*). Gradually, what began as a personal fascination with nature's cycles grew into a professional vision. At the outset, many doubted that she – a young woman working alone – would have the physical strength or stamina to sustain such a demanding field. Yet, as her determination became clear, her family and close circle became her strongest supporters. Today, she produces quality chestnut honey in Akçakoca.

Beekeeping has deep roots in Düzce and Akçakoca. Almost 60 percent of the province is forested, with linden, chestnut and other nectar-rich trees, making it one of Türkiye's most important beekeeping regions. The area is home to around 60 000 hives and approximately 800 beekeepers. Düzce holds a geographical indication for its chestnut honey and hosts a university programme dedicated to apiculture. A unique local strain, the Yığılca queen bee, is protected for its resilience and high-quality honey production. Honey is sold both locally and, increasingly, through online channels.

Climate change is disrupting rainfall patterns and seasonal cycles in the region, affecting bee health and honey yields. Wildlife poses a further practical challenge, requiring constant vigilance to protect hives. Economically, over 32 percent of youth between 15 and 24 years of age in Düzce are unemployed, and rural depopulation is a growing concern as young people leave for cities. This threatens the intergenerational continuity of beekeeping knowledge and practice, and makes it especially difficult for young women to establish themselves independently in the sector.

Züleyha chose to stay in her village and build her livelihood there, combining her university education with hands-on practice. She developed technical solutions to protect her hives from wildlife and »

» harsh conditions, and she participated in FAO-organized training that gave her both practical skills and broader market awareness. She says that this training gave her not only technical knowledge but also a global perspective on the critical role of women producers in food security.

Züleyha plans to grow her operation by increasing quality chestnut honey production, branding her products, diversifying into other bee-derived goods, and eventually founding a family company, all while becoming a visible example for other women in her community.

Züleyha developed technical solutions to protect her hives from wildlife and harsh conditions, and participated in FAO-organized training that gave her both practical skills and broader market awareness.

Züleyha tends her beehives in Akçakoca, Türkiye, where she produces chestnut honey.



© Yulia Ilina/Pexels

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TÜRKIYE

AKÇAKOCA BALLI MELENGÜCCEĞI

AKÇAKOCA HONEY MELENGÜCCEĞI DESSERT

Melengücceği is a deeply rooted speciality of Düzce and Akçakoca cuisine, believed to date back about 700 years and originating in Central Asia. It is said to have featured in Ottoman palace cuisine. Its name refers to the strengthening quality of its ingredients and their combination with honey. The recipe is been passed down from mother to daughter across generations, and the one featured here is Züleyha's own family recipe, carried forward through the women of her household.

Melengücceği is traditionally reserved for weddings, religious holidays and special guest tables. It is a prestigious dessert, prepared with care for truly celebratory occasions.



© FAO/Turuhan Alkır

FOR
20+PIECES
YOU WILL NEED

For the dough:

- **1 egg**
- **240 ml** (1 cup) milk
- **30 g** melted butter
- **1 pinch** of salt
- **5 g** baking powder
- **350 g** (3 cups) soft wheat flour, added gradually

For the filling:

- **200 g** *darti* (clotted milk residue)
- **250 g** walnut kernels, finely chopped
- **150 g** hazelnut kernels, finely chopped

For the syrup and frying:

- **1 litre** water
- **550–700 g (1.5–2 cups)** strained honey (adjusted to taste)
- Generous amount of vegetable oil for deep frying

For the topping:

- **200 g** fresh buffalo clotted cream

NOTES: If *darti* (the residue of clotted milk) is unavailable, it can be approximated by gently cooking fresh cream over a low flame until it turns lightly golden; alternatively, as a last resort, condensed cream may be used. For the topping, fresh cow's milk cream or a thick, high-fat strained yoghurt can replace buffalo clotted cream for visual purposes, though the original flavour depends on buffalo cream. The sweetness of the honey syrup can be adjusted to taste, using between 1.5 and 2 cups of strained honey per litre of water.

Make sure the oil reaches the right temperature for frying (about 180 °C) so the dough does not absorb excess fat. The contrast between hot dough and ice-cold syrup is essential: plunging the freshly fried pieces straight into cold honey syrup creates a crisp exterior while allowing the inside to absorb the sweetness. When spreading *darti* on the dough, use a thin, even layer to prevent it from seeping out during frying.



© FAO/Turuhan Alkır

PREPARATION

1. To prepare the dough, in a large mixing bowl, whisk the egg and milk together until smooth and uniform.
2. Add the warm melted butter, salt and baking powder.
3. Sift in the flour gradually, incorporating it slowly as you knead. The dough is ready when it reaches the softness of an earlobe: pliable, smooth and just past feeling sticky.
4. Cover with a damp cloth and rest for 20 minutes.
5. To prepare the filling, chop the walnuts and hazelnuts.
6. To make the cold honey syrup, stir the honey into 1 litre of water until fully dissolved.
7. Refrigerate the syrup so it is thoroughly cold and fluid by the time the fried dough is ready. The temperature contrast is critical.
8. To make each pastry, pinch off pieces of dough roughly the size of a tangerine (approximately 200 g).
9. On a lightly floured surface, roll each piece out with a rolling pin into a thin, smooth sheet.
10. Spread a thin, even layer of *darti* across the surface, then scatter the chopped walnuts and ground hazelnuts over it.
11. Roll the sheet tightly and slice into rounds approximately 3 cm wide, about two fingers thick.
12. Gently press each round flat with your palm or a rolling pin to roughly the size of an open hand. Pull flaps of pastry out to help close each disk.
13. Deep-fry in very hot oil, turning, until both sides are golden and crisp.
14. Remove from the oil immediately and drop straight into the cold honey syrup.
15. Leave for 1–2 minutes until the dough has absorbed the syrup and feels satisfyingly heavy, then lift out and arrange on a serving plate.
16. Place a spoonful of cool, smooth buffalo clotted cream on each warm piece.
17. Finish with a scattering of ground hazelnuts and serve immediately.



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Züleyha inspects a hive frame.



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PART 2

Pasture

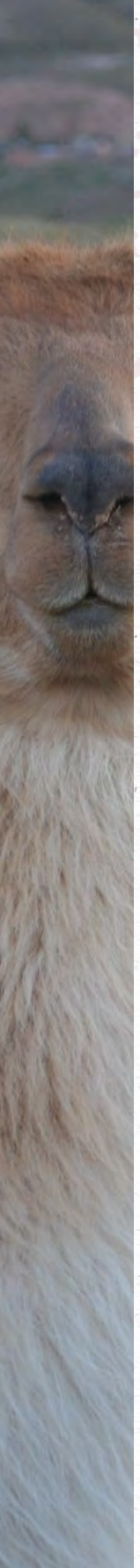
Argentina

WOMEN OF THE LLAMA CARAVANS



The Indigenous communities of Peña Colorada-Canchillas, Aucapiña Chambi and Atu Saphis are part of the Indigenous community council of Santa Catalina, in the Andean high plains of Jujuy province. Here, camelid herding is a deeply rooted source of livelihood dating back to pre-Hispanic times. Pastoralists in these communities specialize in raising llamas and sheep. Llamas (*Lama glama*) are herded for both fibre and meat, with fibre used by the communities as part of their subsistence economy.

In Santa Catalina and the high Andean pastoral landscapes, herders rely on llama caravans, a millennium-old traditional method of transportation across the steep mountain terrain. Llama caravans link pastoral families with animals, fibre, food exchange and community relationships. Women are an integral part of the family-based systems that keep this tradition alive. They accompany and work within the journeys, while also contributing to animal care, textile knowledge, passing on pastoral traditions and food preparation.



© FAO/Bernarda Claure

Women from the Santa Catalina community present traditional llama-meat dishes at a cooking competition celebrating the International Year of Camelids.



© VICAM (Vicuñas, Camélidos y Ambiente)

Women are an integral part of the family-based systems that keep the camelid herding tradition alive. They accompany and work within the journeys, while also contributing to animal care, textile knowledge, passing on pastoral traditions and food preparation.

KALAPURCA SOUP WITH LLAMA

Kalapurca is a type of ancestral soup made with llama meat. It is a very common food among shepherds because it has high energy value. It is also often consumed in ceremonies and festivities that pay tribute to Pachamama, or Mother Earth. *Kalapurca* is a core recipe in Andean cultural and culinary heritage.

The dish is named from the Quechua words *kala* (stone) and *purka* (pot), and it stands out for its unique cooking method: in addition to cooking with heat from below the pot, stones are heated and placed in the soup to make it boil. This not only intensifies the soup's flavours, but also connects those who prepare it to an ancient tradition.

In this context, *kalapurca* belongs to a wider pastoral world – one in which women help carry knowledge across generations through animals, fibre, food and the travel that connect mountain communities.



© VICAM (Vicuñas, Camélidos y Ambiente)

TO FEED
4-6 PEOPLE
YOU WILL NEED

- **800 g-1** kg llama meat, on the bone [can be fresh or dried (*charqui*)]
- **Llama bones** (if meat not on the bone)
- **200 g** Andean potatoes (or good waxy potatoes)
- **200 g** *mote*
- **2 tablespoons** vegetable oil
- **1 onion**
- **2 tomatoes**
- **3 cloves** of garlic
- **1 green** onion, parsley
- **Salt, pepper** and ground chili pepper to taste

PREPARATION

1. Chop the onion into medium-sized pieces and sauté it in a large pot with a little oil.
2. Once the onion is translucent, add the meat and cover with water to make a broth.
3. In a separate pot, boil the *mote*.
4. Once the meat is cooked, remove it from the heat and shred it.
5. In a frying pan, sauté the chopped green onion, garlic and peeled and diced tomatoes. Season with salt and pepper to taste and add the ground chili pepper.
6. Add all the ingredients to the broth.
7. Cut the potatoes into small slices and add them to the rest of the mixture. Let it cook. Add hot stones to the pot and/or to the dishes.
8. Serve immediately. *Kalapurca* is a delicious, warm and flavourful dish!

NOTES: *Mote* almost always accompanies dishes with llama meat. It is a preparation of corn (*Zea mays*) kernels cooked with ash or lime, which dissolves the pericarp in a process known as nixtamalization. The kernels are then dried, after which they can be preserved for a long time and used in traditional dishes. When they hydrate during cooking, they swell and take the shape of puffed corn.



Orán/Salta, Argentina. A rural farmer lights a fire in her traditional kitchen.



© FAO/Rolando Teves



Norway

ANCIENT BONDS: THE SÁMI TRADITION OF REINDEER HERDING AND FOOD

Elle Save is a Sámi reindeer (*Rangifer tarandus*) herder from Northern Norway. She grew up actively involved in reindeer herding. Sámi food traditions have always been a close part of her family life – and still are today.

Elle trained as a chef and has worked as a chef in restaurants, boats, hotels and tourism. In these environments, she found that Sámi food traditions were largely absent. Because of this, she began working more independently as a freelancer, taking on assignments focused on sharing and serving Sámi food. This is what lies closest to her heart as a chef.

Her dream is to work full-time with Sámi food and culture: to share what is authentic, nature-based and nutritious.

Elle married into a reindeer-herding family in Sørreisa, Mid-Troms, and has a son. This has further strengthened her conviction about the importance of passing on traditional knowledge and the history of reindeer herding to the younger generation.

Reindeer herding in the Arctic is a profoundly traditional, nomadic way of life primarily maintained by different Indigenous Peoples, most notably the Sámi, the Nenets, the Evenki, the Evens, the Chukchi, the Khanty, the Dolgans and other various groups in the Circumpolar North. Over 20 different Indigenous groups in the world practice reindeer herding, and there are more than 3 million semi-domesticated reindeer. The intimate connection between humans and animals is perhaps best embodied by this relationship, as reindeer husbandry represents a connection ancient in origin and practised almost identically wherever it is found.

Sámi reindeer herding is practised in Finland, Norway, the Russian Federation and Sweden, it is an Indigenous way of life, based on ancient knowledge of living with and managing reindeer herds. There are still many reindeer herding families, for example in Northern Norway, where slaughtering animals is a main source of income. Today, reindeer herding also depends on cooperation and support from the state. »





© David Becker/Unsplash

» Within the Arctic reindeer herding culture, people learn how to use the entire animal – for food, preservation, clothing, footwear, and tools. They also learn how to use and care for nature with future generations in mind.

Reindeer herding requires constant innovation, creativity, and adaptability. It is both physically and mentally demanding, and is not just an economic activity, but a complex cultural system combining herding, harvesting and deep environmental knowledge.

Reindeer herding regions in the Arctic and Circumpolar North face several similar challenges including predator populations, the impact of climate change, pressure from industrial developments and the complex socioeconomic challenges faced by herding communities. To help strengthen the future outlook of herding, communities are asking for more consultation with government, improved access to markets, mentorship and empowerment programmes, especially for women, and greater recognition and integration of traditional ecological knowledge.



© Alena Gerasimova

Elle's dream dream is to work full-time with Sámi food and culture: to share what is authentic, nature-based and nutritious.

Elle, a Sámi chef and reindeer herder, serves a traditional Sámi dish.

NORWAY

SMOKED REINDEER WITH LINGONBERRY JAM

In the past, it was essential to be able to preserve food for long periods without refrigeration. That is why smoked reindeer meat became a special preservation method among the Sámi and other reindeer-herding peoples. It inhibits bacterial growth, provides long shelf life and adds great flavour.

The meat is first salted overnight, then hung above the fire. Drying and smoking happen at the same time. It is smoked in several rounds over the fire in a *gamme* or *lavvu* (traditional nomadic tent), using fresh wood such as birch (Betula) and willow (Salix). The fire should be small but produce a lot of smoke.

The different kinds of wood give the meat its characteristic taste and colour.

Smoking is done when the weather is cold, so that the meat does not spoil during the process. The meat gradually becomes firmer and darker, and the flavour develops slowly.

The final result should be a dark, firm meat with a distinctively smoky flavour, slightly sweet, slightly strong and very aromatic.

Today, smoked reindeer meat is both traditional food and a gourmet product. It has also become a symbol of Sámi food culture, often used to convey history and identity. »



© Alena Gerasimova

» Lingonberries are an Arctic berry often eaten with reindeer meat, especially with smoked meat. The flavours pair very well together, and the berries also provide important nutrients that the meat does not contain.

Smoked reindeer might be eaten 1–2 times a week, as breakfast, lunch, or dinner. It is also considered a festive dish, often served by Sámi people on special occasions, and it is perfect for outdoor trips in the mountains, grilled directly over the fire.

Reindeer meat hangs and smokes inside a traditional gamme, or Sámi tent.



© Alena Gerasimova



TO FEED **2 PEOPLE** YOU WILL NEED

- 400 g smoked reindeer meat
- 50 g butter
- 4 slices of bread
- 4 tablespoons lingonberry jam

PREPARATION

1. Cut the smoked meat into slices 0.5 cm thick.

2. Melt butter in a pan and quickly fry the meat in a hot pan.

3. Dip the bread slices in the pan and add the lingonberry jam on top.

South Sudan

WEEDING OUT HUNGER: HOW PURSLANE SUPPORTS INCOMES AND FOOD SECURITY



Grace Ali started vegetable production in 2023, in Gezira in Wau County, Western Bahr el Ghazal State. With help from FAO training, as part of a project by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), she was trained on how to produce vegetables, cook and sell them. Grace and her family, which includes five children, now depend on vegetables for income generation through selling and for family nutrition.

One of the crops Grace grows is purslane (*Portulaca oleracea*), which is known as *rujlah* in Arabic. Grace learned about purslane through the FAO training; now, she shows other farmers how to grow, cook and market purslane.

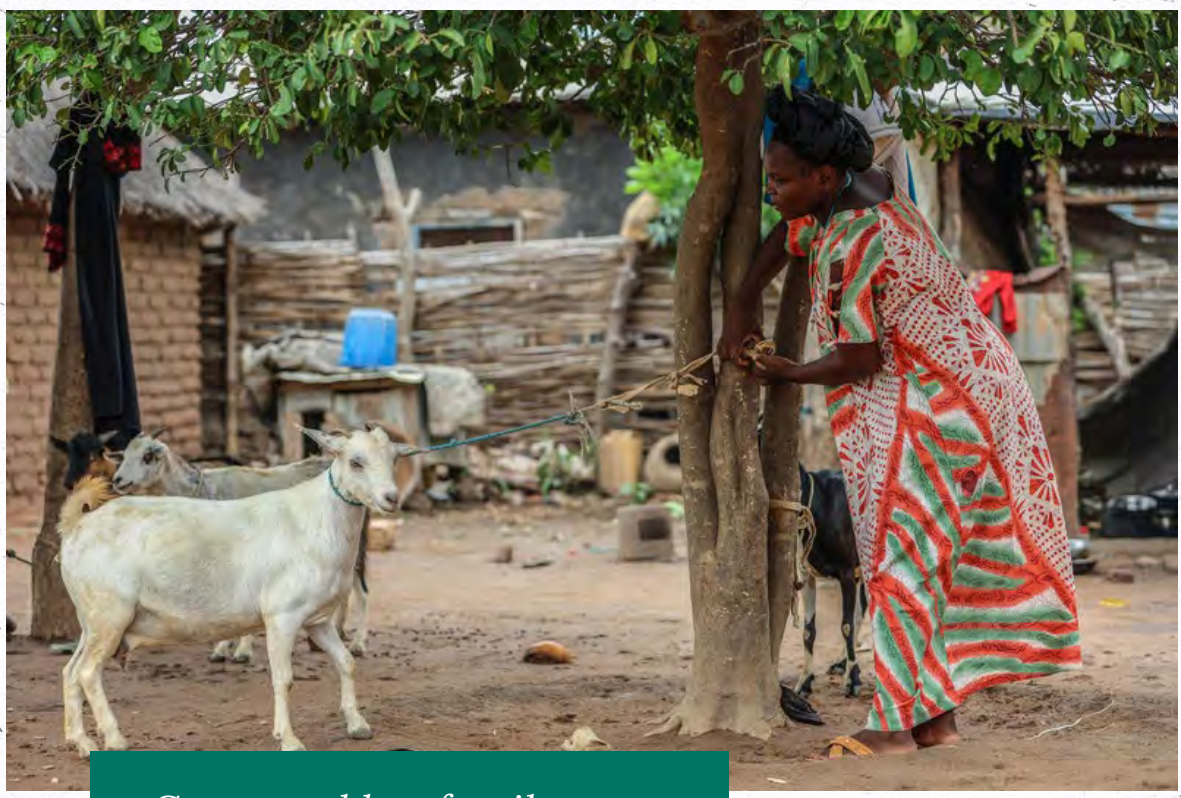
Purslane is a traditional crop in the area, both for local consumption and to sell. It is widely grown by smallholder farmers – mostly women.

Purslane is a highly nutritious, edible succulent weed known for its mat-forming growth, reddish stem, and thick, fleshy leaves. It is packed with omega-3 fatty acids, vitamins A, C and E, and antioxidants.

It is a nutrient-dense food source, also rich in minerals like magnesium, potassium and calcium. It has been used traditionally for feeding, as well as for its antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory and wound-healing properties. Purslane's high mucilage content makes it beneficial for treating dry coughs or sore throats. »

» With support from the SIDA-funded project, FAO also provided women with goats for milk and meat, in order to improve nutrition at the household level. The women were trained to care for and manage the goats. With support from FAO, farmers also received quality seeds, tools and irrigation equipment to overcome climate change-related challenges and expand their farms. In addition, Grace was trained on how to prepare local organic pesticides, like ash, pounded chili, and boiled neem leaves and seeds, helping to protect her crops in an environmentally friendly way.

Wau, South Sudan. Grace Ali ties a goat to the base of the tree.



© Adam Ibrahim

Grace and her family depend on vegetables for income generation through selling and for family nutrition.

© FAO/Akuot Mayak

SOUTH SUDAN

RUJLAH BIL-LAḤM

GOAT AND PURSLANE STEW

This recipe is both traditional and modern depending on the way it is prepared. Traditionally, it is prepared with groundnut paste; in modern times, it is often cooked with cooking or vegetable oil. The dish is very versatile; it can be cooked using either of these two ingredients, and the meat and vegetables can easily be substituted with other similar ingredients of your choice.





© Alice Adams Carosi

TO FEED
4 PEOPLE
YOU WILL NEED

- **¼ cup** of cooking or vegetable oil
- **1 small** onion, chopped
- **1–3 tomatoes,** chopped or two tablespoons of tomato paste
- **500 g** of goat meat (*lahm*), chopped into small pieces
- **1 teaspoon** of stock cube or sachet, or a mix of turmeric, chili, cumin, pepper and cloves
- **2 teaspoons** salt
- **250 g** red lentils (*adas*)
- **Large bunch** of purslane, chopped (*rujlah*)
- **1–2 cloves** of garlic, pounded

PREPARATION

1. Wash the purslane well, pull the leaves off the stalks and chop roughly.

2. Heat the cooking oil for about a minute, then add the chopped onion and stir it until it changes colour and softens.

3. Add the chopped tomatoes or tomato paste to the onion, and stir until it starts reducing, then add salt and the goat meat to the pot and stir until the meat is well sealed.

4. Add the lentils to the goat meat, just cover with water and cook for 5–10 minutes. Then, add the spices, the chopped purslane and cook together with meat and lentil stew for another 8–10 minutes. Add a little water if it starts to dry out.

5. Pound (or mince) the garlic, add it to the sauce, and leave it for 2 minutes. Remove the pot from the heat and serve the stew hot.

Goats raised by women farmers for milk and meat.



© FAO/Emma Alegi

Yemen

FROM SUNRISE: A JOURNEY TO SELF-RELIANCE THROUGH LIVESTOCK

Fatima is a woman pastoralist from the Muslam region. She started tending a herd of goats and sheep as a means to provide for her family after she lost her husband. Goats and sheep are traditional livestock in this part of Yemen, and have been part of rural life for generations. Families rely on them for daily nutrition, such as fresh milk, yogurt and traditional cheese, which provide essential protein and nutrients. At the same time, they are also an important source of income: animals are sold in local markets or during seasonal events like Eid Al-Fitr and Eid Al-Adha, when demand and prices are higher.

Despite having no formal training, Fatima chose herding and dairy production as a way of maintaining her independence. She was taught by older women from her village, learning through observation and daily practice. She learned from them that proper care increases milk production and protects income.

Fatima's day begins before sunrise. She prepares feed and water, then takes her sheep and goats to graze. After returning, she milks the animals using hygienic methods. She processes part of the milk into yogurt and traditional cheese. She sells a portion in the local market and keeps the rest for household consumption. At first, production was limited and income was low. She remained consistent and reinvested her earnings in her herd. Milk output increased gradually.

Almost one year ago, a new turning point began when FAO started operating in her area. Through targeted support for rural women, Fatima received structured training on professional dairy production techniques. FAO also provided her with dairy production equipment that increased efficiency and reduced waste.

With this support, her productivity improved and the quality of her products »

© Joerg Hartmann/Pexels

» became more consistent. Her income increased as customer trust grew. Thanks to her experience, commitment and leadership, she was selected as the head of the local dairy production group in her community. In this role, she supports other women, shares technical knowledge, and coordinates group production and marketing activities.

Today, Fatima manages her livestock enterprise with practical skills and leadership confidence. Her children attend school regularly, and her household runs on income she generates through structured work. Her journey reflects resilience, continuous learning and the impact of targeted agricultural support in strengthening rural women's economic independence.

Fatima's journey reflects resilience, continuous learning and the impact of targeted agricultural support in strengthening rural women's economic independence.



© FAO/Moayed Alshaibani

Al Hudaydah, Yemen - Female workers prepare raw milk for selling at the local market.

YEMEN

SHAFOOT

FERMENTED BUTTERMILK WITH HERBS

Al-Shafot, *shafoot* (تـوفـش) or *shafuta*, is a traditional Yemeni dish, deeply rooted in cultural dietary customs and rituals. Its preparation has been passed down through generations, learned from ancestors and cherished by descendants. This dish is especially significant during Ramadan and is often served at special occasions.

Made of fermented buttermilk mixed with herbs and poured over traditional *lahoh* flatbread, it is widely eaten in the Northern part of Yemen. *Shafoot* is served cold, as it is kept in the refrigerator after mixing so that the *lahoh* absorbs the liquid. The dish highlights the importance of women pastoralists, who produce the dairy in rural areas.



© Alice Adams Carosi



© FAO/Chedly Kayouli

A dairy farmer milks her cow in Al Hudaydah, Yemen, supported by FAO's Enhanced Rural Resilience project to improve milk production and hygiene.

TO FEED **4-6 PEOPLE** YOU WILL NEED

- **2–3 pieces** of *lahoh* bread or other flatbread
- **2 cups** buttermilk (or kefir, or a mixture of milk and yoghurt)
- **1 cup** fresh coriander
- **1 cup** fresh mint
- **1–2 cloves** garlic
- **1 small** green chili (optional)
- **½ teaspoon** cumin powder
- **½ teaspoon** fine salt
- **Tomato slices** or pomegranate to serve

PREPARATION

1. Break bread and arrange the *lahoh* or flatbread pieces in a shallow dish.
2. Wash and dry the herbs, and chop them finely along with the garlic and green chili. A handheld blender or food processor can be used; in this case, add a couple of tablespoons of buttermilk to assist blending.
3. Roughly chop the garlic and chili before adding to the blender. Blend everything until the mixture becomes a fine green paste.
4. Mix buttermilk with herbs, cumin powder and salt. Adjust the seasoning to taste.
5. Pour the mixture over the *lahoh* flatbread and let it soak for 15 minutes before serving.
6. Decorate with tomato slices or pomegranate seeds and serve cold, as part of an appetizer spread.

NOTES: *Lahoh* bread is like a pancake with very fine holes, similar to Ethiopian *injera*. Pita or other flatbreads can also be used. Add garlic, chili and spices according to personal taste. Buttermilk is a thick, tangy, cultured dairy product traditionally left over from churning butter; it is an excellent source of calcium and probiotics. Buttermilk and fresh herbs contribute to a refreshing and nourishing dish.



Niger

AGAINST THE DROUGHT: SAFEGUARDING A WAY OF LIFE IN THE SAHEL

Haruna Abarchi farms dairy cattle in the Sahel region of the Niger, continuing an activity that she and her family have practised since ancient times. Inherited from their ancestors, livestock farming is their main occupation: it is profitable, meets their food needs through milk, meat and sales, and is a prestigious activity, well respected within the community.

The family carries out this activity across all available grazing areas, both within the Niger and the wider subregion, moving their herds throughout the year through transhumance. Mobility is essential in the Sahel, an arid region where pasture, water and other resources are often scarce: it allows herders to make use of resources wherever they are found, and at times forces them to leave areas of high milk consumption in order to safeguard their livestock. This constant movement also helps preserve the surrounding environment. Because milk is such a highly perishable product, transforming it into *tchoukou* allows the family to preserve it even while on the move.

Today, livestock farmers across the region face a range of challenges: security issues such as cattle theft and disputes over land; political obstacles that hinder the movement of livestock, including border closures, embargoes and inconsistent enforcement of cross-border transhumance regulations; and the growing impact of climate change, from drought to flooding.



Because milk is such a highly perishable product, transforming it into tchoukou *allows the family to preserve it even while on the move.*



© FAO/Andrew Esiebo

Gafati, Niger - Mehao Saley feeding her cattle.



© FAO/Luis Tato

NIGER

TCHOUKOU

SAHELIAN DRIED MILK CHEESE

Known as *tchoukou* in Hausa and *tikomart* among the Tuareg, this hard cheese is traditionally made from the raw milk of cows, goats, sheep or camels, and dried in the sun without forming a rind. It is a speciality of Tuareg and Fulani herding communities across the Sahel, including Niger's Agadez region, where it is recorded among the traditional foods catalogued by Slow Food's Ark of Taste. Made without salt and pressed into thin sheets, it keeps for months when stored in a well-ventilated basket, and is traditionally eaten in slices dipped in hot tea or crumbled into millet porridge.

Making *tchoukou* is a traditional skill passed down from mother to daughter and from grandmother to granddaughter. For as long as Haruna can remember, it has been made in every family in her community, always by the women.

In Haruna's household, *tchoukou* is eaten directly or added to porridge, and is a daily staple, especially during periods when milk is abundant. Haruna particularly values this recipe because it allows her to preserve milk for several days; it is rich in nutrients, helps combat malnutrition in children and women, and provides women like her with an income of their own.



© Harouna Abarchi

FOR **5 LITRES OF MILK** YOU WILL NEED

For the cheese:

- **5 litres** fresh raw milk (or pasteurized milk, see note)

For the rennet:

- **1 dried** abomasum (stomach lining) from a young ruminant, such as a calf, lamb or kid (or substitute a food-grade rennet, see note)
- **250 ml** whey (enough to fill the bottle halfway)
- **A few** pieces of fresh ginger
- **A few** grains of Guinea pepper

EQUIPMENT

- **Clean sieve** or muslin cloth, for filtering
- **Large clean** container or bucket with a lid
- **Spatula**
- **500 ml** bottle, for preparing the rennet
- **Cup, for** ladling the curd
- **Flat moulds**
- **Drying rack**
- **A trowel,** pressing board or similar flat weight
- **Fine, clean** white cloth
- **A sunny** or shaded spot, or a fan, for drying

NOTES: This recipe is traditionally made with fresh raw milk straight from the herd, which is why it begins with testing, filtering and pasteurizing the milk. If using store-bought pasteurized milk instead, these first three steps can be skipped; simply check that it is still fresh and warm it gently to around body temperature before adding the rennet, since the rennet needs warm milk to coagulate properly.

If dried abomasum is not available, or where food safety regulations require it, a food-grade rennet can be used instead of the traditional preparation, following the dosage instructions for the quantity of milk.

© FAO/Giulio Napolitano



Goulbi, Niger - Cattle grazing outside the village of Goulbi.

PREPARATION

1 To test the milk's quality, check for any signs of spoilage in its smell, taste or appearance. Two simple checks are used: the lactometer test and the boiling test.

2 To filter the milk, pass it through a clean sieve to remove impurities such as animal hair, straw, sand and pebbles.

3 To pasteurize the milk, heat it to a temperature of 85 °C, then allow it to cool.

4 To prepare the rennet, which is used to coagulate the milk, start by carefully drying the abomasum, preferably in the shade in a dark room. Once dry, place it in a 500 ml plastic bottle and add whey until the bottle is half full, along with the ginger and Guinea pepper. Shake well and leave the mixture to rest for 24 hours, after which the rennet is ready to use.

5 To curdle the milk, add 50 ml of the filtered rennet to the 5 litres of milk. Mix well with a spatula, then seal the container tightly and leave the mixture to coagulate.

6 To mould the curd, use a cup to spoon it into moulds set on a drying rack, spreading it evenly with a fork. Place a trowel or other flat weight on top to flatten and press the curd for 15–20 minutes; this expels the remaining whey.

7 To unmould and dry the cheese, remove the trowels and moulds, then cover the cheese with a fine white cloth to keep flies away. Set the drying rack in the sun, in the shade, or under a fan to speed up drying. Once dry, separate any sheets of *tchoukou* that have stuck together and store them in a dry place.


© K/Pexels



PART 3

Water



Brazil

FROM EXTINCTION TO CELEBRATION: THE RETURN OF PIRARUCU



The *pirarucu* (*Arapaima gigas*, also known as *arapaima* or *paiche*), is a highly prized aquatic resource in the Amazon region. Weighing up to 200 kg, it is a fish with firm flesh and high commercial value. It is fished according to strict quotas, with traditional fishing methods using net and spears. Once caught, the fish is pulled onto the fishers' canoe, where it is slaughtered and then transported to a suitable location for gutting. *Pirarucu* is salted or frozen, in order to preserve it for sale or local consumption.

The Santa Maria do Tapará community manages the stocks of *pirarucu* in two lakes in the lower Amazon, with about 1 000 specimens between juvenile and adult fish.

In the late 1990s, the *pirarucu* almost became extinct in the two lakes, the species' primary habitat, due to overfishing. Thanks to the work of the Santa Maria do Tapará community, in partnership with the local NGO Sapopema (the Society for Research and Protection of the Environment), a local *pirarucu* management system was launched in the early 2000s with local fishermen and fisherwomen, allowing the fish population to recover and thrive. Community members actively participate in surveillance to protect the area from illegal fishing, thus preserving the traditional form of income and nutrition source that the *pirarucu* provide.

The annual Santa Maria do Tapará Pirarucu festival, first held in 2010, was one of the traditions initiated to celebrate the fish and the importance of controlling fishing practices for the benefit of all. During the festival, the local community prepares dishes such as shredded *pirarucu*, roasted *pirarucu* belly and *pirarucu* stew. »

» The festival, held in October, also provides an important way to raise funds for community infrastructure such as sheds, dock renovations and community bridges. The festival generates work and income for the women who run the kitchens during the festival.

The involvement of women in the pirarucu industry extends well beyond the individual. Often, the extra income the industry provides can be put towards children's education and more nutritious food for the family.

Woman prepares vegetables in the community kitchen at the Santa Maria do Tapará Pirarucu Festival.



The involvement of women in the pirarucu industry extends well beyond the individual. Often, the extra income the industry provides can be put towards children's education and more nutritious food for the family.

All photos: © Sapopema

DESFIADO DO PIRARUCU

SHREDDED PIRARUCU

Dishes like shredded *pirarucu* are usually learned at home, with recipes passed from grandmother to mother to daughter. The cooking of these dishes has always been transmitted not just as an essential life skill, but also as part of their cultural heritage. These recipes are part of a repertoire "from the ancients", preserved through memory and practice.

Shredded *pirarucu* is a dish for special occasions, celebrations and family gatherings. The seasonings, vegetables, herbs and spices can be enhanced or modified according to one's own taste. The instructions given here include the full process from salting and air drying – a process that can last up to seven days. After this time, patience is also needed to de-salt and reinvigorate the fish.

This recipe was kindly shared by the women of the community of Santa Maria do Tapará. Gratitude also goes to Sapopema (the Society for Environmental Research and Protection) and the Nature Conservancy for their support in making this initiative possible.



© Alice Adams Carosi

TO FEED **4-6 PEOPLE** YOU WILL NEED

- **1 kg** dried *pirarucu*
- **Lemon or vinegar** for de-salting
- **1 cup** vegetable oil
- **1 medium-sized** onion
- **5 cloves** of garlic
- **1 tablespoon** annatto powder (ground seeds of the tropical achiote tree (*Bixa orellana*)
- **6 small** chili peppers
- **3 medium-sized** tomatoes
- **1 teaspoon** dried seasoning (cumin and black pepper)
- **1 bunch** of herbs (chives and cilantro)

* Annatto powder can be substituted with ground paprika for a vivid red colour.







All photos: © Sapopema

PREPARATION

1. To initially prepare the fish, the *pirarucu* should be washed well, opened and salted. Then, it is spread out and left to rest for a day. On the second day, it is taken to the sun to dry. This drying process lasts seven full days, until the fish is completely dry and firm.

2. After drying, when it is time to use the fish, the *pirarucu* is cut into small, square-shaped pieces. These pieces are soaked in a container with water, lemon or vinegar for about an hour to remove excess salt. Then, they are washed again with lemon or vinegar.

3. The dried and salted pieces must then be placed into a pot, covered with water, and cooked for approximately 15 minutes, or until tender. Then, they are drained and left to cool slightly.

4. Once the fish has cooled, it is shredded manually. If there are bones, a fork is used; otherwise, shredding can be done by hand. After shredding, the *pirarucu* is washed again with lemon or vinegar to remove the remaining salt. Finally, it is squeezed well to remove excess water.

5. Before starting to sauté, chop all seasonings (garlic, onion, cilantro and chili peppers) and cut the tomatoes and herbs into small pieces, ready for use.

6. Heat the oil with the annatto powder (or paprika if using that as a substitute). Sauté the shredded fish in the flavoured oil with onions, garlic and chili peppers until it is well browned and dry. The ideal point is when there is no excess oil and the shredded fish is very dry. Season with cumin and black pepper. Finish by topping with the chopped tomatoes and herbs.

7. Serve with white rice and/or cooked cassava.

The community kitchen team of the Santa Maria do Tapará Pirarucu Festival.
© Sapopema





A woman, accompanied by her son, brings food while taking a break from fishing for *pirarucu* in a lake within the Amanã Sustainable Development Reserve (Reserva de Desenvolvimento Sustentável Amanã).
© FAO/Lalo de Almeida

Community members stand alongside a freshly caught *pirarucu*.
© Sapopema





Dominican Republic

WHERE THE SEA PROVIDES: THE WOMEN BEHIND MAHI-MAHI FISHING

Artisanal fishing in the Dominican Republic directly benefits over 22 000 people, of which around 9 percent are women. In offshore artisanal fisheries, mahi-mahi (*Coryphaena hippurus*) has gained recognition as a flagship species, providing livelihoods and nutrition for vulnerable coastal communities while supporting the demand from the tourism sector. One in six artisanal fishers in the country catches mahi-mahi.

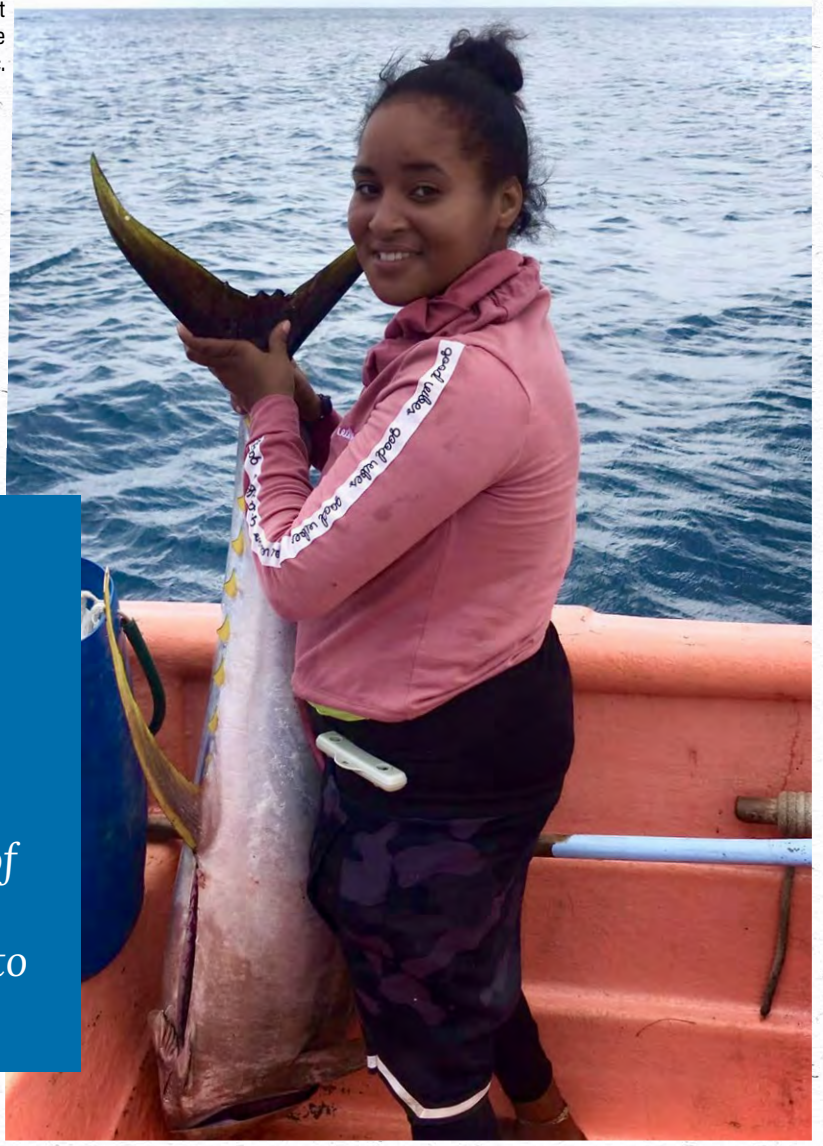
Although few women are directly involved in mahi-mahi capture, Julia Mañón, president of the Boca Chica Fishers Association, and Sheila Peguero, fisher and member of the Virgen del Carmen Fishers Association in Palmar de Ocoa, stand out for their courage, leadership and dedication. Both women highlight how mahi-mahi fishing has significantly supported their families. Julia recalls: "I have been fishing for over 25 years, and thanks to this, my five children always had a roof over their heads and never went to bed hungry." Sheila adds: "Fishing is hard but exciting; my husband and I make our living from it and provide for our children."

FISH4ACP is an initiative of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) and is implemented by FAO and »

» partners, with funding from the European Union and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Mahi-mahi is a lean, white fish rich in protein, low in fat, and a good source of vitamins B3, B6 and B12, which are essential for energy metabolism and neurological function. Mahi-mahi is also rich in minerals that support antioxidant activity, bone health and proper muscular and cardiovascular function. Its nutritional content makes the fish a healthy, low-calorie option.

Sheila, a fisher, holds a freshly caught mahi-mahi in the Dominican Republic.



Sheila says: "I have been fishing for over 25 years, and thanks to this, my five children always had a roof over their heads and never went to bed hungry."

All photos: © FAO/Erika Santelices

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

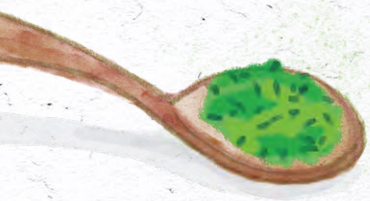
MAHI-MAHI IN CREOLE SAUCE

The recipe presented by Julia and Sheila is mahi-mahi in Creole sauce, a traditional dish of Dominican coastal communities. The recipe, created by Chef Justo Manuel Sena Silfa, a healthy eating expert, combines spices and vegetables reminiscent of ancestral Dominican cuisine, with a modern twist to delight contemporary palates.



© Alice Adams Carosi





TO FEED
2-3 PEOPLE
YOU WILL NEED

- **450 g** mahi-mahi fish
- **2 tablespoons** oregano
- **3 garlic** cloves, minced
- **Salt**
- **Pepper**
- **Vegetable oil**

For the sauce

- **1 garlic** clove, minced
- **½ cup** onion, diced
- **½ cup** Cubanella pepper (horn-shaped, mild-sweet pepper, sliced
- **1 cup** chopped tomatoes
- **Oregano**
- **Salt**
- **Pepper**





All photos: © FAO/Erika Santelices

Julia Mañón cleans her catch outside a local pescadería.

PREPARATION

1 Season the fish fillets with minced garlic, oregano, salt and pepper.

2 Heat a couple of tablespoons of vegetable oil in a pan over medium heat and lightly fry the fish until golden and cooked through. Remove and set aside.

3 In a separate pan, heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil. Add one minced garlic clove, chopped onion, the Cubanella peppers and tomatoes. Season with oregano, salt and pepper. Sauté gently until the vegetables are tender and aromatic (about 10–15 minutes). Add a little water if necessary.

4 Serve the fish warm, topped with the flavourful Creole sauce. For a modern twist, garnish with fresh herbs or a squeeze of lime to brighten the flavours.



Gambia

MANGROVE HARVEST, COASTAL TABLE

Catherine Ndey Sambou began oyster farming commercially in 2019, at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Gambia. After working as a domestic worker for over 30 years, she made the bold decision to return to her roots, harvesting oysters within the mangrove ecosystem.

With the economic uncertainty brought by the pandemic, she transformed her traditional knowledge of oyster harvesting into a sustainable source of income. What began as a survival decision quickly became a structured commercial activity focused specifically on oyster production.

Since 2019, she has consistently harvested oysters, supplying local markets and contributing to food security and income generation within her community. Her journey reflects resilience, dignity in labour, and the power of women reclaiming Indigenous knowledge to build sustainable livelihoods in the blue economy.

Oyster harvesting is a deeply rooted traditional activity in coastal communities of the Gambia. For generations, Indigenous women living along the coastline have relied on oysters and other shellfish as a primary source of livelihood. The knowledge of harvesting, processing and marketing oysters has been passed down from mother to daughter, making it both a cultural and economic activity.

Oysters are used for both local consumption and trade. They are an important source of affordable protein for households, especially in coastal communities, while also serving as a key income-generating product in local markets.

Within the Greater Banjul Area, increasing pressure on mangrove ecosystems and the growing number of resource users have led to seasonal migration. Many women travel to less congested oyster harvesting communities during the open season. They temporarily lodge there, harvest and process oysters, market their products, and return home once the season closes.

Environmentally, Catherine respects seasonal closures and sustainable harvesting practices to allow oyster regeneration and »



» protect the mangrove ecosystem. She also engages in seasonal migration to reduce pressure on overexploited sites.

Economically, one of her major breakthroughs has been securing a guaranteed buyer. Through a family-led agribusiness arrangement, her daughter purchases all her harvested oysters directly.

This arrangement provides her with consistent income, dignity and reduced physical strain, while allowing the oysters to move into a more structured processing and marketing system. By integrating harvesting with value addition and formal sales channels, she has transitioned from informal subsistence selling to participating in a more organized oyster value chain.

This model demonstrates how strengthening market access and family-based agribusiness linkages can improve income stability for women oyster harvesters.

The knowledge of harvesting, processing and marketing oysters has been passed down from mother to daughter, making it both a cultural and economic activity.



Members of the TRY Oyster Women's Collective prepare a dish during National Oyster Day celebrations.

All photos: © Think Mina

GAMBIA

OYSTER SAUCE

This oyster sauce recipe is rooted in Gambian coastal food tradition and was passed down to Catherine by her mother, an experienced oyster harvester. Growing up, oysters were not just a source of income for their family but also an important part of their household meals.

Catherine's mother prepared oysters in several traditional ways, but oyster sauce became one of the most versatile recipes in our home. It reflects the simplicity and richness of coastal Gambian cuisine: fresh oysters combined with local spices and ingredients to create a flavourful sauce that can be eaten with rice, bread or local staples.

For Catherine, learning this recipe from her mother was about more than learning how to cook: it was about learning the value of their ecosystem, the importance of women's work, and the connection between harvesting and nourishment.

This oyster sauce is especially suitable as an everyday meal during the oyster harvesting season, when fresh oysters are readily available. In coastal communities, oysters are a seasonal delicacy, and families take full advantage of their abundance during this period.

It is commonly prepared as a nutritious daily meal. Because oysters are rich in protein and essential nutrients, the dish provides both nourishment and flavour for households. At the same time, it can also be prepared for family gatherings or shared meals.

The recipe reflects how seasonal coastal resources are integrated into everyday diets, supporting both household nutrition and women's livelihoods.



© Think Mina

TO FEED
3-4 PEOPLE
YOU WILL NEED

- **250 g** boiled oysters
- **30 ml** vinegar
- **2 tablespoons** black pepper (divided)
- **2 teaspoons** salt (divided)
- **3 medium** onions
- **5 cloves** of garlic
- **3/4 cup** vegetable oil
- **70 g** tomato paste
- **½ cup** water

PREPARATION

1. To prepare the oysters, boil or steam them, remove the flesh and weigh 250 g. Thoroughly rinse the boiled oysters. Strain and gently squeeze off excess water.

2. Place the oysters in a bowl and season with 30 ml vinegar, 1 tablespoon black pepper and 1 teaspoon salt. Mix well and set aside.

3. Peel the onions and cut into small cubes. Peel the garlic and chop finely.

4. Next, fry the oysters. Heat the vegetable oil in a large pan. Carefully add the seasoned oysters and fry until golden brown.

5. Add the chopped onions and garlic to the pot. Stir well and allow to fry for about 10–15 minutes until softened and fragrant.

6. Add the tomato paste. Mix thoroughly and allow to fry for 5 minutes. Then add 1⁄2 cup of water and allow the mixture to simmer until the onions are fully cooked and all ingredients are well combined into a rich sauce. Adjust salt and pepper to taste.

7. Serve hot with rice or bread.

NOTES: The main ingredient, fresh oysters, cannot be substituted, because they are the foundation of the recipe and give the oyster sauce its distinct flavour, texture and nutritional value. Without oysters, the identity and authenticity of the dish would be lost.

However, some of the supporting ingredients – such as local spices, peppers or seasoning – can be adjusted based on availability or personal preference. This flexibility allows the recipe to remain accessible while preserving its core essence.



© Think Mina









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Italy

RAISED AMONG THE FISH STALLS: A FAMILY'S FISHMONGERING HERITAGE



Loredana Spagnardi's earliest memories of work date back to the age of 6, when she used to follow her parents to their first fish shop, opened over 50 years ago in San Felice Circeo, a seaside town near Rome. About 20 years ago, the family opened a second shop in the city of Rome, to bring to the city their tradition and their way of selling and engaging with customers. It was also a way to introduce the consumption of new fish species in the city.

Loredana has watched the trade change profoundly over the decades. People once bought fish whole, whereas today around 90 percent is processed, usually filleted, largely out of a fear of bones. Also, the consumption of raw fish – once almost unheard of – has become widespread. Despite these shifts in consumer habits, Loredana has never lost her fascination with the trade.

The fish she sells comes mostly from the Mediterranean, and particularly the Tyrrhenian Sea. She deliberately stocks as wide a range of Tyrrhenian species as possible, so that customers look beyond their usual choices and discover other fish.

A tradition Loredana inherited from her mother is pairing every fish she sells with a simple recipe suggestion. She also likes to help customers look after their health through fish, suggesting the species and cooking methods best suited to certain ailments.

Running costs such as transport and rent have risen steadily over the years. Some once-abundant species, such as razor clams (Solenidae), are now caught only in small numbers, while others such as pomfret (*Pampus* spp.) have appeared – a clear sign of changes under way in marine ecosystems. »

» Loredana does not see competition from large retailers as a direct threat, since her work centres on championing local fish and building loyalty.

Loredana keeps a wide range of fish on offer while steering customers towards so-called *pesce povero* – "humble, inexpensive fish", that is also good for health. She has built her business on a small number of trusted suppliers, rather than trade associations or professional networks. She also runs a social media group, where she posts videos of the day's display so that customers who cannot visit in person can call in their order. Looking ahead, she would like to add filleting, cooking and fish-education courses to her retail business, having noticed growing curiosity, especially among younger customers, about learning to clean and cook fish well.

Loredana presents a fresh crate of shrimp at her fish shop.



A tradition Loredana inherited from her mother is pairing every fish she sells with a simple recipe suggestion.

© Philipp Deus/Pexels

© Alice Adams Carosi

SPAGHETTI CON LE COZZE E I TRE COLORI DEL POMODORINO DATTERINO

SPAGHETTI WITH MUSSELS AND THREE-COLOURED *DATTERINO* TOMATOES

This dish belongs to the family's coastal seafaring tradition and was passed down to Loredana by her family. Her own addition is the use of three-coloured datterino tomatoes (*Solanum lycopersicum*), in yellow, red and green, together with salicornia, or sea asparagus (*Salicornia europaea*), which brings a natural saltiness typical of the area's coastal wetlands.

It is a versatile first course: light and nourishing enough for everyday meals, yet colourful and elegant enough for special occasions, guests or summer celebrations, especially in the warmer months, when mussels (Mytilidae) and *datterino* tomatoes are at their best.



© Alice Adams Carosi



TO FEED
2 PEOPLE
YOU WILL NEED

For the pasta and seafood:

- **160 g** spaghetti
- **800 g** mussels (in their shells)

For the sauce and flavouring:

- **300 g** *datterino* tomatoes in three colours (yellow, red and green)
- **50 g** salicornia (sea asparagus)
- **1 clove** of garlic
- **Extra virgin** olive oil
- **Fresh parsley**
- **Salt, to** taste (use sparingly: the salicornia is already salty)

All photos: © Alice Adams Carosi







NOTES: If fresh mussels are not available, clams *(Mercenaria)* or lupin clams *(Chamelea gallina)* can be used instead. In place of salicornia, *agretti* (monk's beard, *Soda inermis*) or a handful of fresh parsley can be used. The three-coloured *datterino* tomatoes can be replaced with plain red cherry tomatoes. The spaghetti can be replaced with linguine or vermicelli.

The secret lies in the freshness of the mussels: clean them well, scraping the shells and removing the byssus, then open them over high heat to release their liquid, which is pure gold for flavour. Strain the cooking liquid through a fine sieve to remove any sand before using it to season the pasta. Salicornia is already naturally salty, so it is best to taste before adding any salt; often, none is needed at all. Overcooking the mussels makes them rubbery; add them only at the very end.

PREPARATION

1 To clean the mussels, scrape the shells under running water, remove the byssus (the "beard"), and discard any open ones that do not close when tapped. Rinse the salicornia well and wash the *datterino* tomatoes.

2 To open the mussels, place them in a large pan over high heat with a drizzle of oil and half a clove of garlic. Cover and let them open, about 5 minutes, keeping the lid on for a few minutes more. Shell three-quarters of the mussels, discarding any that remain closed, keeping some in their shells. Strain the cooking liquid and set aside: it will become the heart of the dish's flavour. Wipe, but do not wash, the pan.

3 To cook the pasta, bring a pot of water to the boil and salt it very lightly, bearing in mind the saltiness of the mussels and salicornia. Add the spaghetti and cook until *al dente*.

4 To make the sauce, heat a drizzle of oil in the same large pan with the remaining half clove of garlic and the salicornia, both finely chopped, and cook for about a minute. Add the *datterino* tomatoes, halved, and let them soften for 4–5 minutes, crushing a few to create a juicy base.

5 Pour in the strained mussel liquid and let it infuse for a minute, then add the shelled mussels and turn off the heat at once, so that they do not toughen.

6 To finish the dish, drain the spaghetti while still *al dente* and toss in the pan with the sauce, until it binds well. Add extra pasta cooking water to lengthen the sauce if necessary.

7 Plate the spaghetti in a nest, arrange the mussels and the three-coloured *datterino* tomatoes on top so they are clearly visible. Finish with chopped fresh parsley if desired and a drizzle of fresh olive oil, and serve immediately.

Republic of Korea

JEJU HAENYEO DIVERS: THE WOMEN WHO NURTURE THE SEA THAT FEEDS THEM

Haenyeo means "sea women". On the Korean island of Jeju, women divers have been harvesting molluscs, seaweed and other marine life for centuries.

The oldest documented record related to the *haenyeo* dates back to the fifteenth century, from records that ban naked diving and require wearing diving clothes. *Haenyeo* divers, who today wear wetsuits, rather than the traditional diving attire, and number about 3 000 (down from over 20 000 in the 1960s) still dive for the varied bounty in the waters of Jeju. This includes seaweed such as *miyeok* (*Undaria pinnatifida*) and mojaban (Sargassum), along with shellfish like conch (Strombidae) and abalone (*Haliotis asinina*), as well as other marine products like sea urchins (Echinoidea).

The fishing practices of Jeju *haenyeo* face significant environmental challenges, primarily the severe depletion of marine resources due to changes in the marine environment and, thus, a sharp decline in the primary source of income for *haenyeo*. This is a major factor contributing to the rapid decrease in the number of *haenyeo*, a critical socioeconomic challenge that threatens the sustainability of *haenyeo* culture.

Beyond fishing activities, *haenyeo* have continuously engaged in traditional fishery management practices such as *getdak-i*, or sea floor cleaning. This helps to maintain a healthy marine ecosystem by cleaning the sea floor, removing dead corals and eliminating underwater debris, and actively contributing to marine environmental protection. Furthermore, they voluntarily implement fishery rest periods and establish closed seasons to conserve aquatic resources and promote sustainable fishing. These efforts play a crucial role in preserving marine resources and ultimately safeguarding the economic foundation of the *haenyeo* community.

Beyond fishing activities, haenyeo *have continuously engaged in traditional fishery management practices such as* getdak-i, *or sea floor cleaning.*





All photos: © FAO/David Hogsholt

Jeju, Republic of Korea. A haenyeo student says goodbye to her real-world haenyeo teachers after having cleaned her catch of sea urchin at the Beopwhan *Haenyeo* School near Seogwipo on the south side of the island.



JEJU HAENYEO SEA URCHIN SEAWEED SOUP

This recipe is part of a culinary tradition and life wisdom that has been handed down through generations within the Jeju *haenyeo* community, typically learned from grandmothers or mothers.

Jeju *haenyeo* sea urchin noodles boast both nutrition and flavour, making them a warm and hearty meal that nourishes the body and soothes the stomach. When there is fresh sea urchin roe – a precious ingredient – the dish is versatile enough to be served for birthday celebrations, in honour of important guests, or as a special restorative dish like maternity seaweed soup.



© Taeho Ko fo

TO FEED
2 PEOPLE
YOU WILL NEED

- **100 g** sea urchin roe
- **200 g** Korean noodles, medium or thin
- **2 pieces** kelp (dried seaweed), approx. 10 x 10 cm
- **10 dried** anchovies for broth
- **1 litre** water
- **1/2 teaspoon** salt, or to taste
- **Handful of** finely chopped scallions/spring onions to garnish
- **Handful of** julienned carrots to garnish
- **A little** shredded dried seaweed (*gim garu*) to garnish
- **Pinch of** sesame seeds to garnish
- **Drizzle of** sesame oil (optional)

Cooking equipment

- Pot (large, for boiling noodles)
- Pot (medium, for broth and assembling noodles)
- Colander
- Cutting board
- Knife
- Measuring cup
- Measuring spoons
- Ladle
- Tongs (for handling noodles)

NOTES: Substituting sea urchin roe is difficult, but the umami can be supplemented with seafood such as mussels or dried pollack, or by using tuna extract and fish sauce. While kelp or other varieties of seaweed can be used as substitutes, caution is needed as there may be differences in taste and texture.

PREPARATION

1 Handle the sea urchin roe carefully as it is soft and easily crushed. If using frozen sea urchin roe, gently rinse it under cold water, then drain thoroughly in a colander, patting dry.

2 To make the anchovy and kelp broth, in a medium pot, combine 1 litre of water, 2 pieces of kelp and 10 dried anchovies for broth. Bring to a boil over high heat. Once the water starts bubbling vigorously, remove the kelp. Reduce heat to medium-low and continue to simmer for another 10 minutes to extract the savoury flavour of the anchovies. Turn off the heat, remove the anchovies and strain the broth to ensure it is clear and transparent.

3 Then, cook the sea urchin. Open and remove the eggs from the sea urchin, discarding any digestive organs and rinsing gently. Then, add the eggs to the anchovy and kelp broth and gently simmer until just cooked, then remove. Set aside to use as the final topping for the noodles.

4 To cook the noodles, in a large pot, bring a generous amount of water to a vigorous boil over high heat. Add 200 g of noodles and cook for 3–4 minutes. When the noodles come back to boil, add about ½ cup of cold water in two or three lots, to make the noodles chewier and firmer. Once the noodles are *al dente*, quickly drain them in a colander, rinse them vigorously under cold water to remove all starch, and shake off the water thoroughly.

5 Place the prepared noodles in a bowl and pour warm broth over them. Then, pour the broth back into the pot and repeat this process two or three times. Once the noodles have absorbed the broth, ladle an appropriate amount of broth over the noodles ready to serve.

6 Top each bowl with thinly sliced chives and shredded seaweed, julienned carrots, sesame seeds and sea urchin. If desired, drizzle a little sesame oil to enhance the aroma.





All photos: © Taeho Ko fo



Philippines

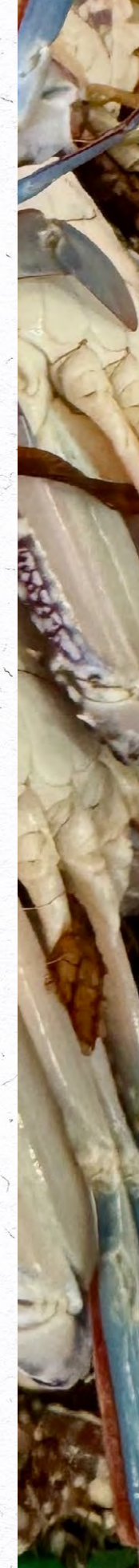
STRENGTHENING COASTAL COMMUNITIES AND THE BLUE SWIMMING CRAB

Blue swimming crab *(Portunus pelagicus)* fisheries are important worldwide. In the Philippines, they are known as *alimasag*, are both a valuable export and a key source of income for many coastal fishing communities.

Blue swimming crabs are found in coastal areas and estuaries across the Indo-Pacific region, where they are native, and have more recently expanded into parts of the Mediterranean as an introduced species. The species grows rapidly and has a short life cycle, making them well-suited to fisheries, but also vulnerable to fishing pressure.

Virgie Mahiney works in the blue swimming crab fishery in Igbon, a small coastal community in the province of Iloilo. Many women in the community work as crab pickers in the local processing unit. Virgie works alongside her husband in the fishing activity. Together, the couple sets nets at sea and catch crabs, sharing the demands of fishing. Virgie also manages household responsibilities, from preparing meals to overseeing family finances. Whether catches are good or poor, fishing provides the main source of income for the family. However, the work is physically demanding and crab catches have declined significantly compared to the past, making it harder to rely on fishing as a stable livelihood.

Beyond fishing, Virgie is active in her community. She is a member of the local community association that is engaged in a crab-waste processing initiative and in managing a local crab-picking facility. »



» She has also participated in a "foodshed" training, helping to diversify her household food and income sources.

Her advice to other fisherwomen is simple: work closely as a family, especially as spouses, and support each other both at sea and at home.

Virgie's story reflects wider efforts in the Philippines to support fishing communities. FAO – together with partners including the Monterey Bay Aquarium, Brazil's Institute for Applied Economic Research, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources of the Philippines, and local government units – is working with fishers and fishworkers to link social protection with sustainable fisheries management.



Virgie Mahinay works in the blue swimming crab fishery in Igbon, a small coastal community in Iloilo Province, Philippines, where fishing and seafood processing support local livelihoods.

Virgie's advice to other fisherwomen is simple: work closely as a family, especially as spouses, and support each other both at sea and at home.

All photos: © FAO/ Alison MacNaughton

PHILIPPINES

TORTANG ALIMASAG

CRAB CAKES

There are many ways blue swimming crabs are incorporated into Filipino menus, including various versions of crab cakes and crab omelettes. This recipe fits the crab mixture back into the shell to be fried, but other recipes are for simple patties or larger skillet-cooked omelettes. Adjust herbs and seasonings to personal taste.





© Alice Adams Carosi

FOR **20+ CRAB CAKES** YOU WILL NEED

- **1 kg** blue swimming crabs (*alimasag*)
- **1 tablespoon** vegetable oil
- **1 red** onion, finely diced
- **6–8 cloves** garlic, finely minced
- **2 stalks** green onion, finely chopped
- **1 stalk** celery, finely chopped
- **2 teaspoons** of shrimp paste (*alamang*)
- **2 eggs,** beaten with a fork
- **3+ tablespoons** cornstarch
- **1/2 teaspoon** of salt
- **Ground black** pepper
- **1 litre** frying oil





All photos: © Alice Adams Carosi

PREPARATION

1 First, steam the crabs in a large deep pan, pot or wok with about 400 ml water. Let the crabs steam for 10–15 minutes with the lid on, moving them around a bit. When the flesh turns white, they are ready.

2 Once the crabs are cooked, place them on a tray and let them cool before breaking them open and removing the meat using a small spoon or chopstick. Break the larger claws open and pull out the flesh from these. Set aside the tops (or bottoms, if you have bought them with the upper shell removed) to use as a base for the cakes.

3 In a medium-sized pan, very lightly cook the chopped onion and minced garlic in 1 tablespoon of oil, for about one minute, until they release their aromatics. Place in a large bowl and let cool slightly. Add the chopped celery and chopped green onions, then the crabmeat and stir well.

4 Lightly beat the eggs and add these to the mixture with half a teaspoon of salt and some freshly ground pepper. Now add the cornstarch and mix with a spoon or spatula. If the mixture seems too liquid, add another tablespoon or two of cornstarch.

5 Fill a smallish, wide but deep frying pan with frying oil (about 1 litre), turn heat to medium and let the oil heat up to 160 °C.

6 To test, fry a small ball of mixture, let it cool and taste to check the seasoning. Adjust salt and pepper if required. Take the crab shells and fill with mixture. If you prefer, make simple round and flat patties.

7 Carefully place the crab cakes in the hot oil, crab shell down first. Let them cook for a minute or two, then flip to brown the stuffed side using tongs or a slotted spoon. Cook until golden brown as the crab filling is already cooked.

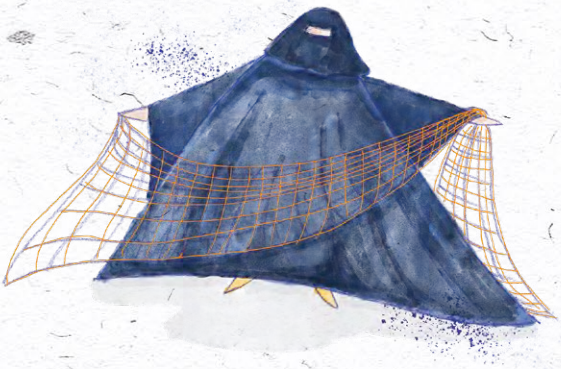
8 Best served with steamed rice and a side of banana sauce or your favourite hot sauce.

Saudi Arabia

FARASAN'S FISHERWOMEN CAST NETS FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

The Farasan Islands of Jazan are a cluster of volcanic islands of Saudi Arabia with pristine blue water and high-quality fish and fauna.

Anbra Qasim Mohammed Masawi is a woman fisher in the region. She started fishing over 40 years ago, with her grandmother and the Farasan elders. Today Anbra is one of the most knowledgeable women in the field. She plays an important role as a mentor and teacher, passing on her knowledge and cooking skills to younger and aspiring fisherwomen in the community.



The fisherwomen of Farasan have been part of a fishers' community for centuries. They are keen to ensure that their skills are maintained and carried on, but also provide income and opportunities for the next generation. They are trying to overcome the challenge of lack of income by increasing their efforts, whether through making more fishing trips or improving the quality of the catch. FAO, through the Sustainable Rural Agricultural Development Programme implemented with the Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture, is supporting the farmers in fish canning and artisanal fishing skill development to improve quality and practices. Extra care is being taken to ensure ecosystem management and ecological balance are respected in the harvesting practices.

Farasan women seafood processors learned a new way to add value to their catch.



© FAO/Hana Bahi

The fisherwomen of Farasan have been part of a fishers' community for centuries. They are keen to ensure that their skills are maintained and carried on, but also provide income and opportunities for the next generation.

© Şehsuvar Şahin/ Pexels

DRY SALTED FISH, SAUDI ARABIAN STYLE, AND ACCOMPANYING SALAD

Drying and salting sigan and arabi fish (rabbitfish, *Siganus rivulatus* or seabream, *Sparus aurata*) uses a traditional method that has been passed down through generations. The process begins by thoroughly cleaning the fish and opening the belly to remove the internal contents. After that, coarse sea salt is applied generously inside and outside the fish. The fish is then set aside for 12–24 hours so that the salt can draw out moisture and preserve the quality of the fish.

At the salting stage, the fish is quickly rinsed to remove excess salt, then placed under the sun on drying racks or hung in a well-ventilated area. The drying process usually takes between 2–4 days, depending on sunlight and airflow, with the fish turned regularly to ensure even drying. Once fully dried, the fish becomes suitable for long-term storage while maintaining flavour and the heritage inherited from our ancestors.

Salted fish is used in many traditional dishes in the Farsan and Jazan regions of Saudi Arabia.



© Alice Adams Carosi

FOR **DRIED SALTED FISH** YOU WILL NEED

- **2–3 medium-sized** white fish such as seabream or rabbitfish
- **1 kg** salt (coarse non-iodized sea salt or rock salt)



© Osama Ahmad

PREPARATION

1. First, clean the fish by washing them thoroughly with clean, fresh water.

2. Gut the fish removing the gills, entrails and intestines and wash again. For faster, more even salting, split the fish in a "butterfly" style, cutting along the spine.

3. Dab the fish dry with a clean cloth, making sure to remove blood and moisture from the belly and gills.

4. Cover the bottom of a non-metal container (a plastic bucket, wood vat or glass container) with a thick layer of salt.

5. Rub salt generously into the gills, mouth and all over the fish. Place the fish in the container, alternating layers of fish and salt. Ensure that the top layer is completely covered with a thick (approx. 1/2-inch) layer of salt.

6. Weigh down by placing a weight (like a clean stone or heavy plate) on top of the fish to help press out moisture.

7. The curing process takes 2–3 days, sometimes longer. Store in a cool, dry place and let the salt draw out the water, creating a brine. Make sure that the container allows liquid to drain, or drain the excess liquid daily.

8. The final step is the drying. Remove the fish from the salt, rinse it lightly, and lay it on a mesh screen or bamboo platform, or hang using kitchen string, to dry in direct sunlight for 1–4 days.

9. When cooking with the salted fish, note that it first needs to be rehydrated. Thoroughly wash the fish to remove surface salt. Submerge in a large container of cold water and place in the refrigerator to prevent spoilage, particularly during hot Saudi summers.

10. Soak for 24–48 hours, changing the water 2–4 times over this period to ensure salt is adequately removed and the fish becomes tender.

11. Grill the fish in a pan or on a barbecue and serve with a traditional salad of cucumber, tomatoes and red onion.

FOR THE **ACCOMPANYING SALAD** YOU WILL NEED

- **1 large** cucumbers, or 2 small ones
- **2–3 firm** ripe tomatoes
- **1 red** pepper (optional)
- **4 radishes** (optional)
- **1 bunch** fresh parsley
- **2 green** onions
- **50 ml** olive oil
- **Juice of** 1 lemon
- **1 teaspoon** sea salt
- **½ teaspoon** black pepper

PREPARATION

1. Wash and peel the cucumber. Cut around the seeds and discard the seeds and dice the cucumber. Add to a large bowl.

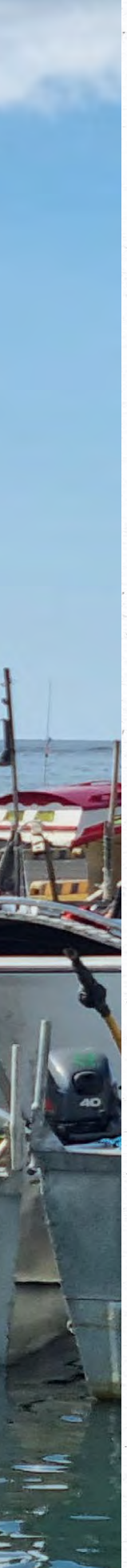
2. Wash and cut the tomatoes and remove the core. Dice the tomatoes to a size similar to the cucumber and add to the bowl.

3. Wash the red pepper, cut into 4 quarters and remove the core and fibrous part and discard. Also remove any white flesh from the inside of the pepper and discard. Dice and add to the bowl.

4. Next, chop the ends off 4 radishes. Chop the radishes very small. Add to your bowl.

5. Wash, dry and chop a whole bunch of fresh parsley. Add to the bowl along with chopped green onion stems.

6. Before serving, dress the salad with olive oil, lemon juice, salt and black pepper.



Samoa

FROM BOAT TO MARKET: TALALEU'S FISHING LIFE

Talaleu Ah Kuoi is part of the fishing community in the Apia region of Samoa, where small-scale fishers bring in yellowfin tuna *(Thunnus albacares)* and bottom fish such as snapper (Lutjanidae) from the surrounding Pacific waters.

Many fishing trips are made on 'alia boats, traditional Samoan double-hulled vessels that have evolved from large sailing canoes into the smaller motorized boats used today for fishing and inter-island transport.

Talaleu is both an 'alia boat owner and a fish vendor at the main fish market in Apia. She has been running her fishing operation since 2015, organizing not only the sale of the catch but also the practical preparations that make each fishing trip possible.

At first, Talaleu felt nervous about running her own operation. Over time, she has grown into the work and now speaks of it with pride and enjoyment. For her, fishing is a way to support her family and serve the wider community. She has also taken on a leadership role as Secretary of the Savalalo Fish Market Vendors Association, helping to represent the interests of fish vendors in the local market.

Fish from Samoa's waters is central to local food culture and livelihoods. Talaleu sells most of her catch at the main fish market in Apia, while also supplying regular customers such as restaurants and hotels. The work can be unpredictable: bad weather can cancel fishing trips, leaving fishers and vendors without fish to sell that day. Market selling is also competitive, but Talaleu manages these challenges by maintaining good relationships with regular customers and encouraging other vendors to take part in useful training, including financial literacy.



Over time, Talaleu has grown into the work and now speaks of it with pride and enjoyment. For her, fishing is a way to support her family and serve the wider community



Talaleu sells fresh tuna and snapper at the main fish market in Apia, Samoa.

All photos: © FAO/Mele Tauati

SAMOA

’OKA

RAW FISH WITH FRESH VEGETABLES AND COCONUT CREAM

For Talaleu, *’oka* is a family recipe passed down through generations. It celebrates the freshness of locally caught fish and the tropical abundance of Samoa, especially fresh coconut cream. Simple, bright and cooling, it is a dish that brings together the sea, the land and the shared table.





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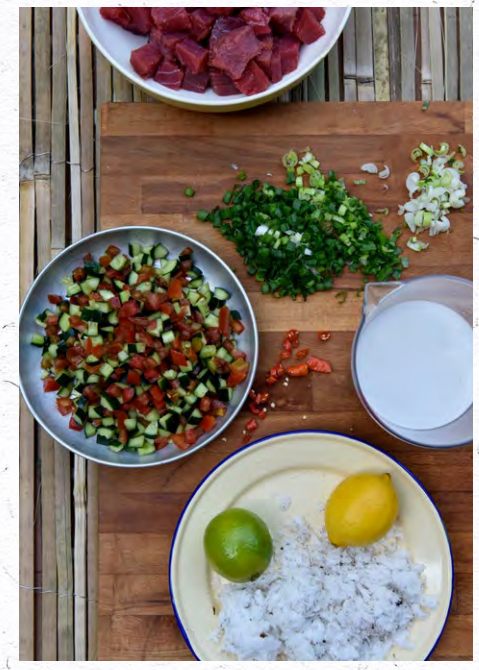
TO FEED UP TO **10 PEOPLE** YOU WILL NEED

- **About 1** kg freshly caught yellowfin tuna fillet
- **2 medium** cucumbers
- **6 medium** red tomatoes, ripe but still firm
- **2 spring** onions
- **2 lemons,** or up to 6 if small
- **2–4 mature** brown coconuts, for fresh coconut cream (approx. 400 ml)
- **Salt, to** taste
- **Black pepper,** to taste
- **A little** water, as needed
- **Fresh chili,** optional

NOTES: Yellowfin tuna is traditionally used here, but albacore (*Thunnus alalunga*), blue marlin (Makaira), sailfish (Istiophorus) or skipjack (*Katsuwonus pelagis*) may also be used. The spring onions, tomatoes and black pepper can be adjusted or omitted according to preference.

Because this dish is prepared with raw fish and fresh ingredients, cleanliness is especially important. Wash all vegetables well, use very fresh fish, and make sure knives, bowls and cutting boards are clean before beginning.

Fresh coconut cream is strongly preferred. Canned or carton coconut cream does not give the same flavour or texture.



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PREPARATION

1 To prepare the coconut cream, crack open the mature brown coconuts and grate the flesh. Traditionally, the grated coconut is squeezed and strained using *tauaga*, a fibrous plant material made from *laufao*, a Heliconia species. If *tauaga* is not available, use clean coconut husk fibre or a very fine clean cloth.

2 Squeeze and strain the grated coconut until you have a thick, smooth, white coconut cream. Strain again if needed to remove any remaining fibres. Because this is time-consuming, it can be done ahead of time and left to rest in the refrigerator, which will further help the cream to separate.

3 To prepare the fish, cut the tuna fillet into small cubes of about 1–1.5 cm, removing as much of the dark red bloodline as possible.

4 Place the cubed fish in a large bowl. Season lightly with salt and black pepper, cover, and chill in the refrigerator while preparing the other ingredients.

5 To prepare the vegetables, peel the cucumbers, slice them open and scrape out the seeds with a spoon. Dice the cucumber flesh finely.

6 Dice the tomatoes into small pieces. Slice the spring onions finely, keeping a small amount aside for garnish.

7 Slice the lemons, squeeze out the juice and strain it to remove the seeds.

8 To assemble the *'oka*, remove the chilled fish from the refrigerator. Add the diced cucumbers, tomatoes and most of the spring onions, stirring gently so the fish keeps its shape.

9 Pour in the fresh coconut cream. Add a little water if needed to loosen the cream slightly.

10 Add the lemon juice last. This keeps the fish fresher in texture, as adding the lemon too early will begin to "cook" the fish. Some families prefer to marinate the fish first in lemon juice, so this step can be adapted according to preference.

11 Stir gently, then taste and adjust with more salt, black pepper or chili if desired.

12 Sprinkle the remaining spring onions on top and serve immediately while still chilled.

Senegal

BLOOMING AGAIN: RESTORING WATER LILIES AND WOMEN'S LIVELIHOODS





White water lily *(Nymphaea alba)* seeds are a traditional food in the Senegal River Delta. Rural communities have long used them for their nutritional and medicinal properties. Historically, water lily seeds were collected in wetlands and consumed locally, often ground into flour, or added to traditional dishes such as *thiéboudienne*.

In recent years, the RESSOURCE+ initiative, part of the Sustainable Wildlife Management Programme, has helped revive and expand this traditional practice by reintroducing water lily cultivation in restored wetland areas. This work combines traditional ecological knowledge with new sustainable production techniques. Today, the crop is mainly used for local consumption, but it increasingly offers opportunities for small-scale trade, particularly through women's groups and local restaurants.

Revitalizing this traditional crop strengthens local diets and supports women's livelihoods. In addition, by restoring abandoned rice fields into functioning wetlands, the project has helped re-establish the ecological conditions needed for water lily growth. This has rebuilt a suitable habitat for both water lilies and waterbirds, boosting the availability of water lily seeds and revitalizing ecosystems that sustain biodiversity.

On the economic side, women have received training in sustainable harvesting, processing and storage, which reduces labour constraints and improves the quality of the final product. Awareness-raising and community events have helped create local demand and visibility for water lily products, linking producers with restaurants and local buyers. Women such as Awa, a restaurant owner from Saint-Louis, continue to preserve and share this culinary heritage, keeping the tradition alive while giving it new visibility.



All photos: © Bruno Portier

Women share a meal made with water lily seeds in the Senegal River Delta.



Today, white water lily seeds are mainly used for local consumption, but the crop increasingly offers opportunities for small-scale trade, particularly through women's groups and local restaurants.

SENEGAL

THIÉBOUDIENNE MADE WITH WATER LILY SEEDS

Thiéboudienne is a traditional recipe in the Senegal River Delta, passed down through generations of women in local communities. Like many traditional dishes, it is typically learned within the family – from mothers, grandmothers or aunts – and prepared during everyday meals as well as community gatherings.

The modern recipe for *thiéboudienne*, considered the national dish of Senegal, uses rice. Few Senegalese people, especially in towns and cities, are aware that the original recipe uses water lily seeds instead, given that since the 1960s, locally produced rice has become the most common everyday staple food.





© Bruno Portier

TO FEED **4 PEOPLE** YOU WILL NEED

- **1 large** onion, sliced
- **3 tablespoons** vegetable oil
- **2 large** ripe tomatoes
- **2 cloves** of garlic
- **1 dried** chili (optional)
- **2 green** or spring onions
- **Bay leaf** and thyme
- **2 carrots**
- **500 g** seasonal vegetables: eggplant, cassava, turnips, cabbage, zucchini
- **Small piece** of dried fish (or preserved anchovy)
- **500 g** fresh white fish fillets
- **Water**
- **200 g** water lily seeds
- **1 lemon**





All photos: © Bruno Portier

PREPARATION

1 To make the sauce, place a pot on the stove and heat a small amount of oil. While the oil warms, crush the tomatoes by hand. Once the oil is warm, add the sliced onions, followed by the crushed tomatoes. Add the peeled green onions and the peeled garlic cloves, and a crushed dried chili if desired. Allow everything to cook gently for a few minutes, then add the thyme and bay leaf and season with salt.

2 Peel, wash and cut the vegetables. If using cassava, pre-cook in boiling water until cooked through for 30 minutes, rinse and drain and discard water.

3 Let the mixture simmer briefly, then pour in a little water. For four people, about 700 ml of water is sufficient. Bring the sauce to a boil. Once boiling, add the legumes and tubers, along with a handful of dried fish to enhance the flavour, and cook for 15–20 minutes until the vegetables are almost cooked through. Add a little water if necessary. Finally, add the pieces of fresh fish and let them cook for about 15 minutes.

4 To prepare the water lily seeds, rinse them thoroughly in plenty of water, changing the water several times to remove any sand or impurities. Repeat this process three to four times. Then, soak the seeds for about 5 minutes, until their color lightens slightly.

5 Transfer the drained seeds to a perforated saucepan or steamer basket. Set this over the pot where the sauce is simmering, cover with a lid, and steam the seeds. After a few minutes, when they begin to release a pleasant, nutty aroma, they are ready.

6 Remove the fish and vegetables from the sauce and set them aside in a separate dish. Add the steamed water lily seeds to the pot containing the sauce. Let them cook until they fully absorb the liquid. Then, reduce the heat and allow the mixture to caramelize gently.

7 To serve, arrange the cooked water lily seeds – often referred to as water lily rice – on a serving platter. Reheat the fish and vegetables, adjust salt, and place on top of the water lily seeds. Finish with a squeeze of fresh lemon and serve immediately.



White water lilies bloom across the restored wetlands of the Senegal River.



Women harvest water lily seeds from the wetland.

All photos: © Bruno Portier

United Republic of Tanzania

A LEGACY IN THE WAVES: HOW SEAWEED WOMEN FARMERS CARRY FORWARD A PIONEER'S VISION

Seaweed farming (*Kappaphycus alvarezii* and *Eucheuma denticulatum*) employs over 25 000 people in the United Republic of Tanzania, Zanzibar, over 80 percent of whom are women. Projects like the Zanzibar Seaweed Cluster Initiative – a marine agriculture and economic development network founded in 2006 to support the archipelago's seaweed farmers – provide support through education, training and help with expanding markets.

One of the earliest and most influential women in the industry was Dr Flower Ezekiel Msuya, who passed away in 2025. A pioneer in the algaculture and aquaculture field, Dr Msuya was also devoted to helping develop a healthy seaweed farming community in Zanzibar.

Nancy Iraba and Fatuma Mang'ena are two women building on the progress made by Dr Msuya, and opening up new opportunities for processing and export for women farmers. The women are co-founders of the Healthy Seaweed Company, a social enterprise founded in 2020 and based in Dar es Salaam. Fatuma and Nancy work closely with seaweed-farming communities across the United Republic of Tanzania, Zanzibar and the Tanzanian coast, and through their company, develop and sell »

» products that capture the health properties of seaweed. The women are committed to paying seaweed like Asha Hamadi Makunku, a premium price for their seaweed, in order to support earnings and enhance the focus on quality produce. Their work not only increases demand for seaweed – thereby increasing incomes for farmers – but is also redefining seaweed as a powerful ingredient for healthy living and sustainable food systems.

Indeed, seaweed is an incredible dietary source of iodine, which helps support the thyroid gland. It also contains other vitamins and minerals, such as vitamin K, B vitamins, zinc and iron, along with antioxidants that help protect cells from damage.

Fatuma and Nancy's work not only increases demand for seaweed – thereby increasing incomes for farmers like Asha – but is also redefining seaweed as a powerful ingredient for healthy living and sustainable food systems.

Asha Hamadi Makunku holds freshly harvested seaweed in the United Republic of Tanzania, Zanzibar.



All photos: © Jerry Mangena, Fatuma Mang'ena

SEAWEED SWAHILI CURRY

This recipe was given by Fatuma. It is a Swahili-style curry that combines traditional coconut and spice flavours with different seaweed additions – seaweed powder; sea lettuce (*Ulva lactuca*) as salt; crunchy sea moss – creating a dish that honours heritage while embracing innovation. It is perfect for lunch or dinner, especially when served with rice.



© Alice Adams Carosi

TO FEED
4 PEOPLE
YOU WILL NEED

- **1 medium-sized** onion, diced
- **2 tablespoons** cooking oil
- **2 cloves** garlic, minced
- **1 tablespoon** minced fresh ginger
- **2 teaspoons** curry powder
- **1 teaspoon** turmeric
- **1 large** tomato, chopped
- **400 g** chicken – cut into cubes or strips
- **300–400 ml** coconut milk
- **2 tablespoons** seaweed powder
- **2 tablespoons** sea lettuce (ulva seaweed), as a substitute for salt
- **Soaked golden** sea moss for garnish
- **Fresh coriander** for garnish (optional)

PREPARATION

1. Heat oil in a medium-sized pot over medium heat. Add the diced onions and sauté until golden brown (about 5 minutes).

2. Add the minced garlic and ginger, curry powder and turmeric. Stir continuously for 1 minute until fragrant. Add the chopped tomatoes and cook until soft and broken down (about 3–4 minutes).

3. Add the chicken pieces and stir to coat with the spice mixture. Cook until the chicken is sealed on all sides, or about 5 minutes. Pour in the coconut milk and bring to a gentle simmer. Cook for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally until the chicken is cooked through.

4. Add the seaweed powder. Stir well and cook for an additional 2–3 minutes to allow the flavours to meld. Add the sea lettuce salt, then taste and adjust salt and pepper to taste.

5. Serve hot with rice and garnish with golden sea moss and/or fresh coriander.

NOTES: The seaweed powder acts as a natural thickener while also adding minerals and nutrients. Instead of coconut milk, plain yogurt can be used. Chicken can be substituted with fish, prawns and/or eggplant or chickpeas.







All photos: © Alice Adams Carosi



Woman harvests seaweed at low tide.



All photos: © Jerry Mangena, Fatuma Mang'ena

Extended acknowledgements

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LAND

AZERBAIJAN | Adopting age-old farming traditions, improving women's lives
Story featured: Irada Asadova, farmer and founder/leader of a women's cooperative (potato and grain growers, Garakhanli village, Tovuz)
With thanks to: Taliye Masimova, FAO Partnership and Liaison Office in Azerbaijan (FAO Azerbaijan); the Women Empowerment Project
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DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO | Two harvests: How cassava feeds families twice
Story featured: Women farmers from Mbanza-Ngungu, Kongo-Central, Democratic Republic of the Congo
With thanks to: Christian Piema, Ayouba Coulibaly (FAO Regional Office for Africa), Neema Kavira Sinandugu (FAO Office for Coordination and Decentralization), Marie Musifu Bougain (FAO Office for Coordination and Decentralization), Ayouba Coulibaly (FAO Regional Office of Africa)

ECUADOR | Seed guardian combats climate change
Story featured: Magdalena Laine, Kichwa farmer and ancestral seed guardian
With thanks to: Union of Peasant and Indigenous Organizations of Cotacachi (UNORCAC) Women's Committee, Forest and Farm Facility (FFF), FAO Ecuador
Additional support: Virginia Vallejo-Rojas (FAO Ecuador), National Facilitator for the Forest and Farm Facility, Marguerite France-Lanord (FAO Forestry Division)

EGYPT | A staple for every table: the fava bean brings egypt together
Story featured: Maha Kamel, member of the women's group of the FFS Aswan Province
With thanks to: The farmer field schools of Aswan Province
Additional support: Ahmed Elshemy (FAO Regional Office for Near East and North Africa)

ETHIOPIA | Injera: symbol of Ethiopian identity, powerhouse for health
Story featured: Tsigie Yemane, woman-headed farmer and teff seed producer, Adwa Woreda, Tigray
With thanks to: the FAO–JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) project "Promoting Climate-Resilient Agricultural Management through the Establishment of Farmer Field Schools in Conflict-Affected Communities in Tigray, Yetarik Benjaw (FAO Ethiopia)
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GHANA | Small grain, strong roots: How fonio builds resilience for Ghana's women
Story featured: Christabel Kwasi, farmer
With thanks to: Seed to Foods, FAO Regional Office for Africa, Ministry of Agriculture of Ghana, Fulani Kitchen Foundation, Chef Fatmata Binta, FAO Regional Goodwill Ambassador for Africa, Zoie Jones (FAO Regional Office for Africa
Additional support: Zoie Jones (FAO Regional Office for Africa), Fanjan Combrink

JORDAN | Cultivating knowledge, harvesting tradition: women and the future of olive oil in Jordan
Story featured: Feryal Al-Kofahi, small-scale olive farmer and culinary leader, member of the Women's Olive Oil Network
With thanks to: Women's Olive Oil Network
Additional support: Nehayah Al-Muhaisen, Claudia Valdivielso Sancho (Inclusive Rural Transformation and Gender Equality Division, FAO)

MADAGASCAR | Bean by bean: Madagascar's farmer field schools sow nutrition and hope
Story featured: The Miraihina group, led by Henicia
With thanks to: Holy Raobelina (FAO Madagascar), the "Fanilo" Farmer Field School, Ambahatrazo
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NIGER | Moringa, a plant valued for its leaves, pods and seeds
Story featured: The Rural Women's Economic Empowerment (RWEE) joint programme [FAO, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), World Food Programme (WFP), UN Women] active in the Niger's Dosso and Maradi regions
With thanks to: FAO Niger (FAO Regional Office for Near East and North Africa), Fourera Abdou Mani, food security and nutrition expert
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PALAU | Heart-shaped leaves, deep roots: The women continuing the taro tradition in Palau
Story featured: Doreen M. Ongelungel, Taro farmer and President, Maltreng Women Association (Ngermid, Koror, Palau)
With thanks to: Bureau of Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and the Environment, Republic of Palau, Jodean Ongelibel Remengesau, Director, Bureau of Agriculture
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PHILIPPINES | Keeping an heirloom rice variety – and beloved sweet delicacy – alive: Dada and the keepers of inuruban
Story featured: Alberta "Dada" Gattoc, rice farmer
With thanks to: Safa Rodas, John Carlo Palacol, Ige Ramos
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TÜRKIYE | From passion to producer: the making of a beekeeper
Story featured: Züleyha Ceylan, beekeeper
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PASTURE

ARGENTINA | Women of the llama caravans
Story featured: The women of the Indigenous Community Council, Santa Catalina
With thanks to: Indigenous Community Council of Santa Catalina; Global Alliance for Rangelands and Pastoralists (GA4RP) Gender Working Group
Additional support: Bibiana Vilá, Claudia Forte Díaz (Animal Health and Production Division, FAO), IYRP team, Lauren Svejcar, Global Alliance for Rangelands and Pastoralists (GA4RP)

NORWAY | Ancient bonds: The Sámi tradition of reindeer herding and food
Story featured: Elle Save-Njálggat, Sámi reindeer herder and chef
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SOUTH SUDAN | Weeding out hunger: How purslane supports incomes and food security in South Sudan
Story featured: Grace Ali Darfur, woman producer
With thanks to: FAO South Sudan (FAOSS), Abigail Wathome (FAOSS)
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YEMEN | From sunrise: A journey to self-reliance through livestock
Story featured: Fatima, member of dairy group
With thanks to: Mona Alhajri (FAO Yemen), for sharing this recipe and story, FAO Yemen, FAO Regional Office for Near East and North Africa, Hanan SaifAlSabai (FAO Yemen), Evani Debone (FAO Yemen), Ahmed Aladimi (FAO Yemen)
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NIGER | Against the drought: safeguarding a way of life in the Sahel
Story featured: Haruna Abarchi, dairy cattle pastoralist, Sahel region of the Niger
With thanks to: Claudia Forte Díaz (Animal Health and Production Division, FAO) and IYRP team, Lauren Svejcar Global Alliance for Rangelands and Pastoralists (GA4RP)

WATER

BRAZIL | From extinction to celebration: the return of pirarucu
Story featured: Maria Sultana, member of the Santa Maria do Tapará Community Association, community organizer, and local gastronomy knowledge holder and the women of the Santa Maria do Tapará Community Association
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DOMINICAN REPUBLIC | Where the sea provides: The women behind mahi-mahi fishing in the Dominican Republic
Story featured: Julia Mañón, President of the Boca Chica Fishers Association and Sheila Peguero, fisher and member of the Virgen del Carmen Fishers Association (Palmar de Ocoa)
With thanks to: Chef Justo Manuel Sena Silfa, healthy eating expert, FISH4ACP
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THE GAMBIA | Oyster harvesting and mangrove stewardship
Story featured: Catherine Ndey Sambou, oyster harvester, Greater Banjul Area
With thanks to: Khadidiatou Diallo (FAO Gambia Gender Focal Point), Arianna D'Amico (Fisheries and Aquaculture Division, FAO), the TRY Oyster Women's Collective' and Fish4ACP
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ITALY | Raised among the fish stalls: a family's fishmongering heritage on the Tyrrhenian coast
Story featured: Loredana Spagnardi, biologist, fishmonger, co-owner of Pescheria Azzurra
With thanks to: Pescheria Azzurra Circeo, Roma
Additional support: Rosa Federica Grassi (Fisheries and Aquaculture Division, FAO).

REPUBLIC OF KOREA | Jeju haenyeo divers: the women who nurture the sea that feeds them
Story featured: The Haenyeo (women free-divers), Jeju Island
With thanks to: Jeju Special Self-Governing Province
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THE PHILIPPINES | Strengthening coastal communities and the blue swimming crab in the Philippines
Story featured: Mrs Virgie Mahinay, Barangay Igbon, Concepción Municipality, Iloilo Province, Philippines
With thanks to: Josette Emlen Genio, Monterey Bay Aquarium, Brazil's Institute for Applied Economic Research, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources of the Philippines, and local government units
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SAUDI ARABIA | Farasan's fisherwomen cast nets for the next generation
Story featured: Women fisherfolk working with local Red Sea fish, Farasan Island
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SAMOA | From boat to market: Talaleu's fishing life in Samoa
Story featured: Talaleu Ah Khoi, fish vendor and secretary, Savalalo Fish Market Vendors Association
With thanks to: Mele Tauti (Fisheries and Aquaculture Division, FAO), Malia Talakai (FAO Samoa)
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SENEGAL | Blooming again: restoring water lilies and women's livelihoods in the Senegal River Delta
Story featured: Women in the Senegal River Delta communities
With thanks to: Mauro Bottaro (Forestry Division, FAO), RESSOURCE+ initiative / Sustainable Wildlife Management (SWM) Programme, FAO Forestry Division
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UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA | A legacy in the waves: How the United Republic of Tanzania, Zanzibar's seaweed women farmers carry forward a pioneer's vision
Story featured: Fatuma Mang'Ena, Co-founder and CTO Healthy Seaweed Company
With thanks to: Berenice McLean AUDA-NEPAD
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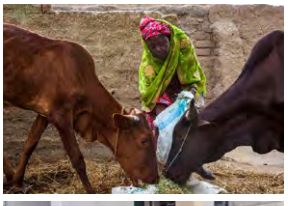
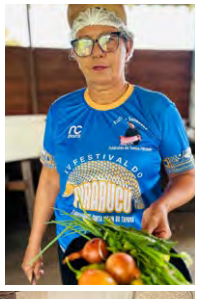


















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Across farms, rangelands and waters around the world, women sustain food systems through their labour, knowledge and resilience. From growing crops and herding livestock to fishing, processing and trading food, their contributions are essential yet too often overlooked. Published during the *International Year of the Woman Farmer* and *the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists*, this cookbook celebrates the women behind the recipes, highlighting the skills, traditions and innovations that nourish communities and support more sustainable agrifood systems.

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