

Soup Joumou or Freedom Soup

During the 17th and 18th centuries enslaved Africans in Haiti were forced by French colonizers to farm and cook squash, but they were not allowed to eat it. In 1804, when Haiti became the world's first liberated Black nation, this freedom was celebrated in part by eating Soup Joumou (Freedom Soup), and it is now an important tradition for Haitians every January 1st. The recipe varies from family to family, but usually includes pumpkin or squash, beef marinated in a bright epis seasoning, an assortment of root vegetables, and rice or pasta. Soup Joumou can also be made vegan.

- Elsy Dinvil, Creole Me Up

Ingredients

- 2 Tablespoons olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves
- 1 yellow onion
- 12 cups water
- lime juice, 1-2 limes
- 1 bouquet garni (parsley and thyme tied together)
- 4 cups butternut or acorn squash
- 1 chayote squash (or zucchini)
- 2 medium-sized carrots
- 1 turnip
- 1 celery stalk, with leaves
- 1/2 leek
- 1/4 head of cabbage, chopped in 1 inch squares
- 4 medium yellow potatoes, peeled and cut in half
- 1/2 cup elbow macaroni
- 1/4 cup rice
- salt to taste
- croutons (optional)

Meat option ingredients

- 1 1/2 lbs beef short ribs, or oxtail, or beef bones
- 2 limes
- 1/2 tablespoon of salt to scrub the meat
- 1/2 cup of vinegar



Soup Joumou Directions

If making the soup with meat:

Scrub and marinate the meat

Do 1 day ahead if possible, or at least 4 hours ahead.

Put the meat in a large bowl. Cut off any extra fat.

Cut a lime or two in half, depending on how juicy they are, and squeeze the lime juice over the meat, dropping the lime peels into the bowl. The oil from the lime peels is an essential element. Sprinkle the salt all over the meat, and then pour the vinegar over the meat.

The lime and vinegar in combination approximate the flavor of sour orange, a citrus from Haiti.

Scrub each piece of the meat using a half lime like a sponge for "scrubbing." Let the meat sit in the acidic mixture for about 10 minutes. Rinse very well. Let the rinse water run through a colander. Return the meat to the big bowl and add about 1 cup of epis marinade (*recipe following*) to the meat.

Marinate the meat, letting it sit covered overnight (or at least 4 hours) in the fridge.

Making the soup with meat step 1:

Warm up the soup pot over medium heat.

Add the olive oil and let it warm up.

Add the pieces of meat to the pot, searing on all sides a few minutes to brown the meat.

After the meat is seared on all sides, add a few cups of water to the bowl the meat was marinating in, and rinse the leftover marinade into the soup pot with the browned meat.

Add the rest of the water, the bouquet garni, lime juice and salt.

Let the stock boil for a couple of minutes.

Making vegan soup step 1:

Grind the yellow onion and the garlic together in a mortar and pestle, or finely chop.

Warm up the soup pot over medium heat.

Add the olive oil and let it warm up.

Add the onion and garlic mix to the oil. Stir until golden.

Add the water, the bouquet garni, lime juice and salt.

Let the stock boil for a couple of minutes.

Either meat or vegan step 2:

Prep all the veggies by washing, chopping, or cutting them and set aside.

Add all the chopped veggies to the stock, *except the potatoes and cabbage.*

Let them boil.

Add half of a cup of the epis marinade (*recipe following*) to the stock and let it boil until the squash is soft enough to break with a fork.

Either meat or vegan step 3:

Remove the pieces of cooked squash and blend them with some of the stock, in a blender, and then pour the mix back into the soup.

Add the pasta and rice, potatoes and cabbage. Let them cook on low to medium until rice, pasta and potatoes are done. Taste.

Add some more marinade if you would like.

Serve.

Enjoy with croutons on top or a piece of toast on the side!



Haitian Epis (green marinade sauce)

Ingredients

- 2 cups olive oil, or oil of your choice
- ¼ cup vinegar
- ¼ bunch of parsley
- 4 garlic cloves
- 2 green onions
- 1 Tablespoon fresh thyme leaves
- ½ green bell pepper
- ½ red bell pepper
- ½ Tablespoon mustard (*optional*)
- 1 Tablespoon Tabasco sauce (*optional*)
- ½ Tablespoon sea salt or more if you like
- 3 Tablespoons lime juice
- 4 freshly ground cloves
- ½ Tablespoon of freshly ground pepper
- 5 grams scotch bonnet or habanero pepper (*optional*)

Directions

Remove the stems from the herbs and the seeds from the bell peppers.

In a blender add the herbs, onions, peppers, garlic, lime juice, spices and vinegar, + mustard and Tabasco if using.

Puree ingredients, and then slowly add the olive oil until the sauce is an even consistency.

Pour the epis marinade sauce into a glass jar with a lid and refrigerate until used.

The epis will last in a covered jar in the fridge for a few months. Or the epis can be frozen in an ice cube tray, and then transferred to a ziplock back in the freezer, and defrosted as needed.

