

Heaven: Sweet Potato and Coconut Bread

By Henry Obispo

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The magical combination of Caribbean Sweet Potato and coconut is known throughout the Caribbean basin as the quintessential tropical delight. A favorite of varying islands and known by different names with similar references... The sweet potato bread/pudding/cake is ubiquitous and loosely held as an identifying dish of the varying territories.

The interconnectedness of this dish is not well known throughout the different islands, as language and sea seem to stretch the commonalities between cultures that call the Caribbean home.

Much like in the United States, where sweet potatoes as dessert/sweetened are often associated with the African American Experience and cuisine, the Caribbean, similarly regard the sweet potato to the large population of afro-descendants. The addition of the coconut cements the African experience as an ingredient associated with West African cuisine. So, however, we slice it or name it, the Caribbean sweet potato and the coconut are intertwined, in a perfect relationship of legacy, culture and flavor in this very dish.

Reference; Country & Name:

Dominica: Sweet Potato Cake

Dominican Republic: Pan De Batata (Sweet Potato Bread)

Haiti: Pain Patate (Sweet Potato Bread)

Jamaica: Sweet Potato Pudding

Serves 7-8

Ingredients:

2 lb Caribbean sweet potatoes, peeled and finely grated
14 oz organic Thai coconut milk, full fat
1 ¼ cup coconut sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 teaspoon grated ginger
1 ½ cup almond meal
½ cup grated coconut
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
sea salt
vegan butter for greasing

Serve with:

Coconut yogurt

Whipped coconut cream

Instructions:

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit and grease 9-inch round pan or Dutch oven with dairy free butter.

Peel each of the sweet potatoes and wash them to remove any debris. Use a box grater, the side with the protruding medium holes, to grate each sweet potato in a bowl. Add the coconut milk and vanilla into the bowl with the sweet potato and stir.

Place the almond meal, grated coconut, cinnamon, nutmeg, and coconut sugar into a bowl and stir. Fold the dry ingredients into the wet ingredients and stir into a smooth batter.

Pour into a baking pan. Bake for 1 hour and test the readiness by inserting a knife/skewer into the bread. If it comes out clean, it's ready, if not bake for another 10 minutes or so.

Allow the BREAD to cool for at least an hour before cutting. Serve with yogurt or whip cream of choice.