

Tapóu | Green Banana Stew with Coconut  
By Isha Gutierrez-Sumner  
Sunday 6/16 3:30pm

Tapou is a thick, hardy root stew filled with all the healthy tropical carbs you can imagine, mixed in creamy coconut. This slow-cooked stew is brought together with the awareness that each one of the roots may require more or less time to cook than the others. For example, plantains take about 15 to 20 minutes to cook thoroughly. Yams also cook for that amount of time, but if we are adding cassava to the stew (depending on the size), it may cook for a longer time than the previous two ingredients. In order for the veggies and fruits to cook harmoniously, we will add the root that cooks in more time first and then follow with the rest, in order. For this particular stew, we'll put the green bananas in last because they cook in 10 to 12 minutes. By doing that, we will achieve a creamy, delicious symphony of tropical flavors. As you take your first bite, the richness of coconut milk envelops your taste buds with accents of roots, fruits, aromatic herbs, and spices. You can also add more flavor if you top the stew with tender fish or shelled crab.

Tapóu Falumaun | Green Banana Stew  
Serves 4 to 6

Ingredients:

5 cups coconut milk, full fat  
5 green bananas, each peeled and cut into 3 pieces  
1 ripe plantain, peeled and cut into 6 pieces (optional, 1 green plantain)  
½ pound sweet cassava root, peeled and cut into 6 large chunks  
1 purple yam, peeled and cut into 6 chunks (optional, 1 sweet potato)  
1 pound taro root, peeled and cut into chunks (for thickness)  
1 small size green pepper, chopped  
4 cloves fresh garlic, minced  
½ teaspoon black pepper  
½ teaspoon powder cumin  
1 Tablespoon chicken bouillon (or veggie)  
4 leaves culantro  
2 stems fresh basil  
Salt, to taste

Instructions:

Turn on the stove to medium heat. In a large pot, add the coconut milk, garlic, and all the seasonings into the coconut milk. (save the herbs for last).

As the coconut milk begins to boil, add green bananas and cassava. Let it cook for about 5 minutes, then add yams. After 3 minutes, the last vegetable to go in is the ripe plantain to add some sweetness to the stew. (This fruit is optional, depending on your desired flavor.)

Let the tapóu cook for approximately 10 minutes or until all the vegetables and fruits are tender and the stew is thickened. If you can pierce them with a fork, they are thoroughly cooked).

For aroma and flavor purposes, add the herbs such as basil and culantro last. Serve hot.

Serve with fried fish: place fish on top of the stew in each bowl.

Garifuna -Style Fried Fish  
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For this recipe we are going to be using Red Snapper fish but this process of cleaning and seasoning fish also works for any other fish that has substantial meat like, king fish, Florida Pompano fish, or salmon just to name a few of my favorites.

Ingredients:

1 large red snapper  
2 limes, cut in half  
2 Tablespoons of white vinegar  
1 cup of coconut oil  
1 Tablespoon of Sea salt  
1 teaspoon of black pepper  
1 teaspoon of cumin (oregano makes a great substitute)  
½ teaspoon of mustard  
½ teaspoon of garlic herb seasoning (adobo)

Instructions:

In a small bowl, mix sea salt, black pepper, cumin, mustard, adobo.

Clean fish with lime and vinegar. Using a small sharp knife make 3 to 4 deep slashes (do not cut through the bone) on both sides of the fish diagonally. Place a robust amount of the garlic seasoning mix inside the slashed cavities and all over the outside.

On medium heat, place a medium to a large skillet with coconut oil. Once the oil is hot, carefully place fish for frying. Add the pieces of lime to the frying skillet (this diminishes the smell of fish while frying).

Let the fish cook until brown and crisp on each side, which takes 3 to 5 minutes depending on the size of the fish and the desired crispiness. Serve the fish with your favorite side or Tapou!