



SIMPLY TRINI COOKING

10 DELICIOUS COOKED MEALS

A Christmas Special Collection

BY FELIX PADILLA

A Simply Trini Cooking Holiday Series

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A Word from the Author

The Trini passion for food is strongest around this festive occasion. It is the Trini expression to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ in such a way where families can come together and reconnect.

Therefore, the Christmas meal is always abundant and colourful. It is always accompanied with Christmas music, especially the local Parang music that seems to elevate the jubilant spirits of the nationals. Without it Christmas would not feel like Christmas.

We at www.simplytrinicooking.com would like to share a little of our Christmas happiness with our regular readers. We have chosen ten of our favorite Christmas recipes since the site was launched, and placed it in an ebook format for our readers. This is our Merry Christmas to you all.

These 10 recipes are simple and delightful. They will provide you and your family with the very best for this Christmas season.

However, do not forget there are more recipes on the Simply Trini Cooking website as well as in the Simply Trini Cooking Cookbook. Do enjoy!

GHP Peanut Cookies

Ingredients:

1 cup brown sugar	2.83 ounces (80g) almond nuts
½ -¾ cup peanut powder	1 teaspoon cinnamon
½ cup butter	1 teaspoon nutmeg
2 small eggs (or 1 large egg will do)	1 teaspoon vanilla or almond essence (optional)
1 teaspoon baking soda	Pinch of salt
1½ cups flour	

Method:

Cream the sugar, peanut powder, butter together.

Blend in one egg at a time until smooth. Add the vanilla or almond essence and mix well.

Sift the salt, soda and flour together. Mix in the cinnamon and nutmeg. Then stir the flour into creamed mixture.

Roll into balls, diameter about 1" or 1½"(for larger cookies), and placed on greased cookie sheets (about 5" apart). Place a piece of almond in the centre of each cookie and flatten slightly. Bake in a preheated oven 325 F for 15 to 18 minutes.

Yields:

Approximately 2 dozen large cookies

The first cookies were created by accident when cooks started testing small amounts of their cake batter, called *koekje* or “*little cake*” in Dutch.



Sorrel Cake

Ingredients:

2 cup strained sorrel pulp	6 eggs
½ cup mixed peel	1 cup cherry brandy
1 teaspoon vanilla	¼ teaspoon nutmeg
1 teaspoon almond essence	½ pound butter
⅛ teaspoon red food colouring powder	3 teaspoon baking powder
½ pound flour	1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 cup sugar	½ teaspoon salt
1½ cup raisins	1 cup rum

Directions:

Boil the sorrel a bit. Then strain and mince it.

Wash and dry the fruits. Mince half the fruits. Mix all the fruits with the blended sorrel pulp. Add the almond and vanilla essence, pour ¾ cup of the cherry brandy, and ½ cup of the rum on to the mixed fruit.

Cream the butter and sugar until light. Whisk eggs and add to butter mixture. Mix well. Add the fruits and colouring; mix well. Sift together the flour and baking powder. Then add the salt, cinnamon, and nutmeg. Stir until smooth.

Line the cake pan with parchment paper. Carefully smear butter or shortening on the bottom and sides of the pan.

Pour the cream mixture into the greased tin and bake in a low oven (180°F) until golden brown on the top and when stuck with a knife, it comes out clean.

Pour the remaining liquor over the cake. (This part is of course optional if you wish to limit the amount of alcohol in the cake.)



Sorrel derives from the sepals of the Roselle (*Hibiscus sabdariffa*) plant, an annual or perennial species of Hibiscus native to the old world tropics. Sorrel has a high content of vitamin C and anthocyanins.

Preparation Tip:

Make sure all the ingredients for the cake is at room temperature before you begin. Do not overmix the cream and sugar. Run a metal spatula or a knife through the batter to dispel air bubbles.

Some Cake Baking Tips:

1. Enhance your cake by adding a teaspoon of lemon juice to the butter and sugar to help make the cake lighter.
2. Lower fat content in your cakes by substituting about 50% of the oil for the cake with applesauce.
3. Measure all ingredients called for in the recipe and then sift the ingredients together.
4. Don't attempt to ice the cake until it is completely cool. Ice the cake with a thin layer of frosting and refrigerate for an hour before completing the frosting job. This helps keep the area free from crumbs while you frost.

Trinidad Sponge Cake

Ingredients:

2 cups granulated sugar	½ teaspoon baking powder
1 cup butter	1 teaspoon cinnamon
4 eggs	1 teaspoon nutmeg
2 teaspoons vanilla essence	½ teaspoon salt
3 cups flour	1 tablespoon lemon juice
½ teaspoon baking soda	1 cup milk

Directions:

Sift together the flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt. Cream sugar and butter until smooth.

Beat the eggs. Add one at a time to the cream mixture. Mix the lemon juice and milk.

Fold in a $\frac{1}{3}$ flour and a $\frac{1}{3}$ liquid, repeat. Beat in the vanilla essence.

Pour into greased pan and bake in a 350 degrees Fahrenheit oven until it leaves the sides of the pan. Alternatively, test with a thin knife; insert in the centre of the cake, if it comes out clean the cake is done.

Note: This is a milky sponge cake.



Trinidad Cornmeal Pastelle

Ingredients:

Filling:

1 pounds minced beef/pork/both
beef and pork
2 onions, finely chopped
1 bunch chive
1 bunch big leaf thyme
1 hot pepper to taste, finely
chopped
1 pimento pepper, finely chopped
1 stalk celery
2 cloves garlic
20 leaves chadon beni
1 bunch fine leaf thyme
salt to taste
¼ cup roucou (or ketchup)

2 tablespoons capers (optional)
2 tablespoons raisins (optional)
8 olives chopped finely (optional)

Dough:

2 cups yellow cornmeal (very
fine)
3 cups lukewarm water
4 tablespoons coconut oil
¼ pounds butter
1¼ teaspoon salt

Wrapping:

2 -3 large fig (banana) leaves
Strings to tie

Direction:

Filling. Season the meat. Stew the seasoned meat for 15 minutes. Cook well, and then add the roucou or ketchup. Remove from heat and set aside.

Dough. Combine cornmeal, water, salt, and butter to make a soft pliable dough. Divide the dough into small balls (about 12). Cover with damp cloth to prevent drying. Cut the fig leaves and strip them from the midrib. Singe the leaf over a low fire on the stove. Wipe clean. Grind the green seasoning.

Note: If you like, you may mince the meat again to make it smoother.

Combine the seasoning and the meat and place back on the stove. Mix thoroughly and add salt to taste. Allow to cool. Dip the ball in the oil. Place on an oiled fig leaf. Use a wooden press to help flatten out the dough.

Spoon about two tablespoons meat filling to the centre of the dough. Fold the fig leaf and tie into a neat package using the string. Place in a pot of water and boil for 15-20 minutes. When cooked, drain the water. Untie and serve.



Trinidad Paime

Ingredients:

2 cups cornmeal
½ cup flour
2 tablespoons sugar
¼ cup shortening or butter
2 cups grated coconut
1 cup grated pumpkin
¼ cup raisins
1 cup water

Wrapping:

Banana leaves
Cotton strings to tie

Directions:

Mix together all the ingredients and blend well.

To prepare banana leaves: Wipe leaves with a clean cloth dipped in a weak solution of bleach and water. Quickly pass the leaves over a medium to low flame. Allow the leaf to get slightly dark, not to burn. Cut the leaves into squares (about 15-20 cm) and set aside.

Grease a square leaf and place 2 tablespoon of the mixture in the center. Flatten a bit. Fold over leaves and tie securely. Boil in hot water for about ½ an hour.

Cool, remove from wrapping and serve.



Trini Christmas Ham II

Ingredients:

1 whole ham
whole cloves
banana leaves

Directions:

Wash the ham and pat dry with paper towels.

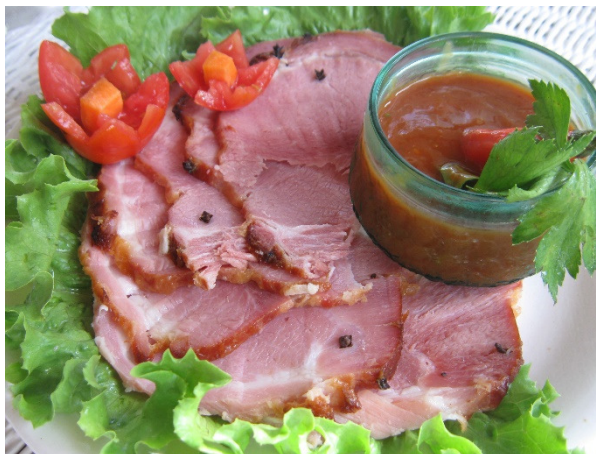
Singe a banana leaf and cut it to fit a large baking dish. Place the ham in the dish skin side down and add the whole cloves. Wrap with the remaining banana leaves and bake at 350° F for 2 1/2 - 3 hours, depending on the size of the ham, or until thoroughly cooked.

Note: The general rule for baking ham is 25 minutes per Kilogram.

While baking, test the meat by sticking a knife into it. If after sticking the meat, liquid comes out of it, then more baking is required. After 2 hours of baking, remove the banana leaves and continue baking to dry up the surface of the ham.

Place on a rack to cool.

It's best to follow package instructions for baking times. A fully cooked ham can be served as is, or glazed and roasted to an internal temperature of 140° F. Before carving, let baked ham rest for 15 minutes to redistribute juices and keep meat firm.



Sorrel Drink

Ingredients:

1 pound sorrel
11 cups water
1 cup sugar
2 sticks cinnamon

5 cloves (optional)
4 tablespoons grated
ginger(optional)
¼ - ½ cup rum (optional)

Directions:

Wash the sorrel. Separate the sepals from the 'seed'. Wash the sorrel sepals again. Place in a deep pot and add the water, cinnamon, and optional spices.

Boil for about 20 minutes or until the sepals begin to lose their colour and look jelly-like. Strain the sorrel and allow to cool. After it cools, sweeten with sugar and add the rum if desired. Transfer to a sterilized bottle and refrigerate. Serve chilled.



The seeds of the sorrel can be roasted and used as a coffee substitute

Ginger Beer

Ingredients:

1 pound fresh ginger
8 cups water

1½ cups sugar (or to taste)
lime peel

Directions:

Wash and remove the skin from the ginger. Chop the ginger and blend in a little water. Pour into a large pot with the rest of water and leave to soak and ferment for about 24 hours or longer if you want it stronger tasting.

When fermented, strain the mixture. Add lime peel to the ginger beer and sweeten to taste. Remove the lime peel, bottle and refrigerate. Serve chilled.



Ginger is a herb that has been used as a spice as well. Its nutrients are especially present in its volatile oils - gingerols and shogaols.



The following is a list of the nutritional values of ginger:

- Calcium
- Carbohydrate
- Dietary Fiber
- Iron
- Magnesium
- Manganese
- Potassium
- Protein
- Selenium
- Sodium
- Vitamin C, E and B6



Ponche De Crème

Ingredients:

4 eggs	3 tablespoons bitters
390 grams condensed milk	1 teaspoon grated nutmeg
250 ml evaporated milk	2 teaspoons lemon zest
1/2 bottle rum	(optional)
(approximately 1 1/2 cups)	

Directions:

Blend the eggs together. Add the evaporated milk, condensed milk and nutmeg.

Blend the ingredients together. Add the rum and bitters, and blend one last time. Pour in a clean bottle and refrigerate. Serve chilled.



Herbed Rice

Ingredients:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1⅓ cup rice | 1 leaf chadon beni, finely chopped |
| 3 leaves chadon beni, chopped | 1 sprig parsley, finely chopped |
| 2 cloves garlic, crushed and chopped | 2 ½ tablespoons chive, chopped |
| 1 stalk celery, finely chopped | 2 tbsp. oil or butter |
| 1 big leaf thyme, finely chopped | ½ teaspoon salt |

Direction:

Boil the rice, drain and set aside. Heat the oil or butter in a deep pot. Sauté the onions and garlic.

Add the celery stalks and sauté for a minute. Add the rest of the ingredients and allow to cook for another minute.

Add the cooked rice and salt, lower the fire and mix well. Remove and allow to cool.

Add the cooked rice and salt, lower the fire and mix well. Remove and allow to cool.

Christmas Day Sample Menu

Breakfast

- Cocoa tea
- Toasted orange bread with ham, cheese and lettuce
- A fruit

Lunch

- Roasted turkey
- Cornmeal stuffing
- Salad with lettuce and tomatoes
- Stir fried broccoli, carrots and mushrooms
- Pastelle
- Stewed pigeon peas
- Herbed rice
- Sorrel juice or ginger beer

Dessert

- Eggless cake or fruit cake
- Sour sop sorbet or Punch of crème

Dinner

- Cream of pumpkin soup

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