

Igbo Food: Starch and *Banga* Soup

English translation:

Young Girl: What kind of food do you eat in your culture¹ that the Yorubas do not eat?

Woman: Okay, in my culture, what we eat that the Yorubas do not... though a lot of the Yorubas now eat our food because they now know that it is very delicious. One of [the dishes] is starch; when we eat starch, we use *banga* or *owo* soup with it.

Young Girl: Can you explain to us what starch is? How is starch prepared, as well as *banga*?

Woman: How we mix starch, as I have earlier explained...

Young Girl: The one you eat.

Woman: Okay, it is the same as the one used on clothing; it is the same one that is removed from *garri*² and used on cloth. As wet as it is when removed from the *garri*, it will be made to settle; we will remove it and mix it with water. It will be properly stirred; it will not be too thick or too watery, and we will then cook it on the stove and add palm oil. We will continue to stir it on the stove, the same way *fufu*³ is made, till it is strong like *fufu*, and it is always yellowish in color and very delicious. Then the *banga* soup that we eat it with is made from palm nut that is used to make palm oil; it is called *banga* in English. We will cook it on the stove till it is well cooked; when it shows a sign of breakage in between, then you will know that it is cooked. It will then be poured in the mortar and pounded. We will mix it with water and then use our hands to remove the palm oil; it is just the same process as palm oil. After that, we will sieve it and pour it in a pot; we will add our ingredients to it. I don't know what the ingredients are called in English or in Yoruba, but in my culture it is called *etariko*⁴, and also *eletete* leaf. We also have the tree and also different ways of cooking it.

¹ The interviewee is from the Igbo culture, another ethnic group in Nigeria. They have a different language and culture from the Yorubas.

² Cassava flakes

³ Meal prepared from grated cassava

⁴ A type of leaf used in preparing the *banga* soup

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