

CultureTalk Ethiopia Video Transcripts: <http://langmedia.fivecolleges.edu>
Preparing Chicken Dishes

English translation:

N: Nafkote M: Woman on the right

M: Food.

N: Okay.

M: What kind do you like?

N: Chicken. A lot.

M: How is it prepared? Describe it to me.

N: You chop onions. Lots of onions. Lots and lots of onions. And then you cook the onions with water and with oil. And then you add *berbere*¹ -- lots of *berbere*. Making chicken isn't an easy task. And while all this is happening, the chicken itself is slaughtered, boiled in hot water, her hair is pulled out. And then-

M: Her feathers are plucked...

N: Yes, they're plucked, and then it's cut apart.

M: But first, the skin is inflated and heated.

N: Right. Oh yeah, yeah. And then, well... Wait, if you know it so well, you should describe the process.

M: For the skin, you take the outside cylinder of a pen and insert it into the chicken's neck. Then someone blows through there and then the chicken is held over a hot fire. And then the skin is peeled off and chicken is cut apart. And I'm not sure, but I feel as though I heard somewhere that it must be cut into twelve pieces. I'm not sure, though. Is it true?

N: Yeah, I think so, too.

M: It's cut into twelve pieces, and after that, the most important thing when preparing chicken is to wash it. It takes a lot of time to wash the chicken. And like you said before, until then, the rest is prepared. After that, when it looks as though the *berbere* is ready, the chicken is added. After that, it cooks for a long time; butter is added, spices are added, lots of things, and finally, at the end, it's ready.

¹ Ethiopian spice.

N: It's obvious that you're a pro, from your description. All I do is eat. I really love chicken.

M: For many Ethiopians, chicken means something special.

N: *Shiro*.¹ *Shiro* is my favorite. When I think about it, it's probably because I ate it everyday. When I stopped eating *shiro*, I was really sad. I didn't know what would become of me; I was wondering where I'd manage to get *shiro* from. And I don't think that I'm the only one who feels this way. When I talk to a lot of people about *shiro*...

M: Yes, indeed. It's for a lot of people. In every family, there's always someone who loves *shiro*.

N: They'd be happy to leave meat and just eat *shiro*.

M: When you think about it, the Ethiopian diet can be very healthy because there is a very, very large variety of vegetables. Often the foods that are eaten in most houses are – not just those of the very rich but many normal middle class or lower class homes – have food that is mostly *shiro*, *missir*,² and there are many other vegetables that are eaten as well. So it can be a very good diet.

N: What's your favorite dish?

M: I'm just like you. For example, *kitfo*³ – I really love *kitfo*. *Kitfo* is raw red meat that is finely chopped and ground. And then butter and spices are added. After that, depending on your preference, you can either eat it raw or slightly cooked. And often, it is the *Gurages*⁴ that are well known for making good *kitfo*. I really love *kitfo*, but, on the other hand, perhaps even more than *kitfo*, I love *missir*.

N: *Missir*, indeed, indeed.

M: Often, when it comes time to fast, I'd be the happiest one in my family, because when we're fasting we eat vegetables, *fosolia* --

N: *Shimbra!*

M: *Shimbra*, *missir*, potatoes, carrots, spinach, salad. And I really enjoy the times when we fast.

N: I don't know; the food is special.

¹ an Ethiopian dish.

² an Ethiopian dish.

³ an Ethiopian dish.

⁴ an ethnic group in Ethiopia.

M: But, the sad thing is, we enjoy these things largely though the sweat of our mothers. No matter how many educated people there are in Ethiopia, most of the house work and everything falls on the women and on our mothers.

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