



TASTE OF
Aruba





MANY OF ARUBA'S CULINARY OFFERINGS ARE SELF-INSPIRED. OUR FIRST INHABITANTS MORE THAN 4,000 YEARS AGO FOUND THEIR MAIN SUSTENANCE FROM THE SEA, WHILE OTHERS HIGHLIGHT THE CULTURAL INFLUENCES OF HOLLAND, SOUTH AMERICA, AND THE REST OF THE CARIBBEAN. THIS FUSION OF INFLUENCES ON OUR CUISINE HAS LED TO RECIPES THAT ARE NOW INGRAINED IN THE ISLAND'S CULINARY FABRIC AND ARE PART OF ARUBA'S UNIQUE PERSONALITY AND DISTINCTIVE FLAVOR.

FAMILY GATHERINGS, CELEBRATIONS, AND HOLIDAYS ON THE ISLAND WOULD NOT BE THE SAME WITHOUT TRADITIONAL ARUBAN DISHES APPEARING ON THE DINNER TABLE. WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO EXPLORE OUR CUISINE AT HOME WITH YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS WITH A FEW OF OUR TRADITIONAL RECIPES ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES.

THROUGHOUT THE RECIPES, WE'VE INCLUDED THE PAPIAMENTO TRANSLATION OF MANY OF THE FOOD ITEMS.

MAIN DISHES, STEWES & SOUPS



MAIN DISHES

Keri Keri

SHREDDED FISH

FISH HAS BEEN A STAPLE OF THE ARUBAN DIET SINCE THE FIRST INHABITANTS LANDED ON THE ISLAND'S SHORES. TODAY, LOCAL FISHERMEN STILL GO OUT IN THEIR TRADITIONAL FISHING BOATS TO PULL IN FRESH CATCHES OF THE DAY, WHICH MIGHT VERY WELL BE TURNED INTO KERI KERI.

DIRECTIONS

In a large saucepan, boil fish in salted water for 20 minutes. Remove fish and flake. Saute celery, bell pepper, onion, and basil leaves in margarine for 3 minutes, stirring. Add flaked fish and cook over low heat for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Stir in annatto powder and freshly ground pepper.



SERVES

4



MINUTES

30



DIFFICULTY

+++

INGREDIENTS

- 2 pounds of fresh, firm, boneless white-flesh fish fillet
- 1 quart water
- 1 tbsp. salt
- 1 celery stalk, diced
- 1 green bell pepper, diced
- 1 onion, diced
- 10 fresh basil leaves, chopped
- 4 tbsp. margarine
- ¼ tsp. annatto powder
- Freshly ground black pepper



MAIN DISHES

Keshi Yena

STUFFED CHEESE

POPULARLY IMPORTED PRODUCTS FROM HOLLAND, LIKE EDAM AND GOUDA CHEESES, HAVE LED TO A NUMBER OF LOCAL DISHES, INCLUDING KESHI YENA, WHICH TRANSLATES TO 'STUFFED CHEESE'. TRADITIONALLY MADE BY FILLING THE LEFTOVER RIND OF AN EDAM OR GOUDA CHEESE WHEEL WITH SPICED MEAT AND OTHER INGREDIENTS, COVERING THE WHEEL WITH ITS ORIGINAL CAP, AND THEN BAKING THE STUFFED WHEEL IN THE OVEN UNTIL HOT AND BUBBLY, KESHI YENA IS NOW USUALLY MADE IN A CASSEROLE DISH.



SERVES
4



MINUTES
60



DIFFICULTY
++++

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound Dutch Gouda cheese, sliced
- 1 large onion
- 4 tbsp. melted butter
- 2 cups cooked chicken (or a similar amount of cooked fish or canned tuna)
- 1 large tomato, peeled and chopped
- 2 dill pickles, minced
- 1 large green pepper, seeded and finely chopped
- 8 large green stuffed olives, sliced
- 1 ½ tbsp. minced garlic
- ¼ cup raisins
- 1 tbsp. prepared mustard
- ½ cup ketchup
- ½ tsp. Worcestershire sauce
- 1 cup chopped cashew nuts
- Butter for greasing the baking pan

DIRECTIONS

Butter a deep 10- or 12-inch glass baking pan and line the pan with 2/3 of the sliced Gouda. Melt 4 tbsp. butter in a skillet. Add onions and fry until golden brown. Add tomato, pickles, green pepper, capers, garlic, raisins, mustard, ketchup, Worcestershire sauce, and chopped cashew nuts. Spread the mixture on top of the sliced Gouda and cover with the remaining slices of cheese. Place the pan into a larger baking pan, and fill the larger pan with water about halfway up the sides. Bake in preheated oven at 350° Fahrenheit for 30 minutes.

MAIN DISHES

Balchi di Pisca

ARUBAN FISH CAKES

SIMILAR TO CRAB CAKES, ARUBAN FISH CAKES ARE TYPICALLY MADE FROM ARUBA'S LOCAL WHITE-FLESH FISH, INCLUDING RED SNAPPER, GROUPER, AND MAHI MAHI. THESE CAN SERVE AS A MAIN DISH OR AS AN APPETIZER.



SERVES
4



MINUTES
120



DIFFICULTY
++++

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound white-flesh fish fillets
- 3 medium potatoes, peeled and diced
- 1 tomato, peeled and chopped
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- ½ tsp. red hot pepper sauce
- 1 egg, beaten
- Dashes of freshly ground pepper, salt, and nutmeg
- Oil for frying

DIRECTIONS

Simmer fish gently in water until fish flakes easily with a fork. Strain and reserve a small amount of broth. Fill saucepan with water and bring to a boil. Add potatoes. Cook until tender and drain. Mash together fish and potatoes. Combine tomato, green pepper, onion, garlic, red hot pepper sauce, nutmeg, salt, and pepper, and add to fish mixture, mixing well while combining egg. If it's too dry, add a bit of the reserved broth. Mold into 1-inch balls and fry in deep oil until golden brown.



★

STEW S

Stoba di Cabrito

GOAT STEW

WHEN ARUBA'S ECONOMY WAS MORE AGRICULTURALLY BASED, PLANTATION WORKERS WOULD HAVE THEIR LUNCH AT MIDDAY AND THEN REST IN THE SHADE OF A KWIHI TREE TO WHILE AWAY THE HOTTEST HOURS OF THE DAY. HEARTY MEALS WERE USUALLY ON THE MENU, INCLUDING SOUPS AND STEWS OF BEEF, GOAT, AND FISH.



SERVES
4



MINUTES
120



DIFFICULTY
★★★★

INGREDIENTS

- 6 ounces salt beef, covered with water and soaked overnight in refrigerator
- 4 cups water
- 3 tbsp. vegetable oil
- 2 pounds of goat (or lamb), cubed into ½-inch pieces
- 2 cups diced onion
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 medium green pepper, seeded and chopped
- 1 habanero chile, seeded and minced
- 2 cups tomatoes, peeled and diced
- 3 potatoes, peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes
- 1 tsp. sugar
- 1 tbsp. fresh lime juice
- ¼ tsp. ground nutmeg
- 2 tsp. annatto oil
- ½ tsp. annatto seeds



For goat meat we can cook it by spraying it with Lager and Radler-style beer (with a high percentage of natural lemon) and accompany it with a toasted-style Lager beer, which gives us a fresh and intense aroma.

It can also be accompanied by a soft red wine. A Malbec is ideal to accompany goat meat. Very fruity wines are usually an almost perfect accompaniment. The right temperature to drink red wines is from 14° to 18° C.



DIRECTIONS

Drain the soaked beef and place it in a heavy casserole with the 4 cups of water. Bring the mixture to a boil, reduce the heat to a simmer, cover, and cook for 1 hour. Remove the beef from the pot, cube, and reserve; strain the broth and reserve. Heat the vegetable oil in the heavy casserole, add the goat/lamb, and brown it. Add the onion, garlic, green pepper, and habanero

pepper, and saute the mixture until the onion is wilted, about 3 to 4 minutes. Stir in the tomatoes, sugar, lime juice, nutmeg, annatto oil, and the reserved cubed beef, and simmer the mixture for 20 minutes. Add the reserved beef stock and the potatoes, and bring the mixture to a boil; reduce the heat and simmer for 30 minutes, or until the potatoes are tender.





SOUPS

Sopi Oester

OYSTER SOUP

THIS SOUP CAN OFTEN BE FOUND
ON THE ISLAND AT FESTIVALS
AND LATE-NIGHT FOOD TRUCKS.
IT'S AN ISLAND FAVORITE,
AND YOU'D BE HARD-PRESSED TO FIND
AN ARUBAN WHO DOESN'T LOVE IT.



SERVES
4



MINUTES
45



DIFFICULTY
++

INGREDIENTS

- 1 ½ cup chopped celery
- 1 ½ cup chopped green onions
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 6 tbsp. butter
- 3 tbsp. flour
- 2 (8 oz) cans of oysters
- 2 (13 ¾ oz) cans of chicken broth
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/8 tsp. red pepper
- ¼ cup chopped parsley

DIRECTIONS

Cook celery, onion, and garlic in butter in a large kettle or Dutch oven until onions are soft. Stir in flour and cook for 2 minutes. Remove kettle from heat. Drain oysters; reserve liquid. Add liquid, chicken broth, salt, and pepper to kettle, stirring until smooth. Bring to a boil, then lower heat and simmer for 30 minutes. Just before serving, stir in oysters; heat soup for 3 minutes, just until hot. Sprinkle with parsley.

SIDE DISHES,
SNACKS
& DESSERTS





SIDE DISHES

Pan Bati

CORNBREAD PANCAKES

PAN BATI SERVES AS THE PERFECT ACCOMPANIMENT TO STEWS, SOUPS, AND FISH DISHES. MADE FROM CORNMEAL AND FLOUR, PAN BATI LIES SOMEWHERE BETWEEN A FLATBREAD AND A PANCAKE. COMPARED TO AN AMERICAN PANCAKE, IT IS DENSER AND LESS SWEET.



SERVES
4-6



MINUTES
15



DIFFICULTY
+

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup finely ground cornmeal
- 2 tablespoons baking powder
- Pinch of salt
- 1 tablespoon white sugar
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- 1 ¾ cup whole milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

DIRECTIONS

Combine all ingredients in a large bowl. Batter should be like thick pancake batter (add a tablespoon of water if needed to achieve consistency). To cook the pan bati, Arubans traditionally use a casuela, which is a clay baking dish, but a griddle lightly coated with cooking spray works as well. Pour ¼ cup of batter for each pan bati, cooking on medium heat and flipping until both sides are a light golden brown. Serve warm.



SIDE DISHES

Funchi

POLENTA

FUNCHI—ARUBA'S OWN VERSION OF POLENTA—IS A THICK CORNMEAL PORRIDGE TRADITIONALLY SERVED WITH STEWS AND FISH. FUNCHI PORRIDGE CAN ALSO BE COOLED, CUT INTO FLAT SLICES, AND FRIED TO A LIGHT GOLDEN BROWN AS A CRISPY VARIATION.



SERVES
4-6



MINUTES
15



DIFFICULTY
+

INGREDIENTS

- 1 ½ cup coarsely ground cornmeal
- 1 ¼ cup cold water
- Pinch of salt
- 1 tablespoon vegetable or olive oil
- 1 ½ cup boiling water

DIRECTIONS

In a medium saucepan, add cold water, cornmeal, and salt, mixing until smooth. Turn heat to high and stir in oil and boiling water to bring mixture to a rapid boil. Lower heat to medium-low, stirring continuously until mixture stiffens (about 5-7 minutes). Pour mixture into a greased bowl or mold and cover with a plate or platter, turning over immediately onto the plate. Cool to a warm temperature and serve.





★
SIDE DISHES

Saus di Pinda

PEANUT SAUCE

THE DUTCH TRADITION OF SERVING CRISP, SALTY FRENCH FRIES WITH AN INDONESIAN-STYLE PEANUT SATAY SAUCE IS A POPULAR ARUBAN TREAT. ALTHOUGH RECIPES VARY, HERE IS AN EASY RECIPE THAT CAN BE AMPED UP TO A PERSONALIZED LEVEL OF SPICINESS.



SERVES
4-6



MINUTES
15



DIFFICULTY
+

INGREDIENTS

- 1 finely chopped white onion
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger
- 1 grated garlic clove
- ½ cup crunchy peanut butter
- 4 tablespoons soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon white sugar
- ½ cup coconut milk
- 1 teaspoon lime juice
- 1 lemongrass stalk
- 1 tablespoon chili paste-sambal is a favorite (use more if you want it extra spicy)

DIRECTIONS

Saute onion in vegetable oil over medium heat, adding ginger, garlic, and peanut butter once lightly browned. Once mixed thoroughly, add soy sauce, coconut milk, lime juice, and lemongrass stalk, continuing to stir until all ingredients are mixed. Cook for another 10 minutes, adding in the chili paste. Remove from heat, remove lemongrass stalk, and serve warm over French fries.

★
SNACKS

Cala

BLACK-EYED PEA PUFFS

THESE TRADITIONAL FRITTERS ARE MADE WITH BLACK-EYED PEAS AND MADAME JEANETTE OR CAYENNE PEPPER. CRISPY ON THE OUTSIDE AND LIGHT ON THE INSIDE, THEY ARE ESPECIALLY DELICIOUS WHEN WASHED DOWN WITH A COLD BALASHI BEER.



SERVES
2 DOZEN



MINUTES
45



DIFFICULTY
+++

INGREDIENTS

- ½ pound black-eyed peas
- 1 tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. cayenne pepper
- ½ cup water
- Vegetable oil for frying

DIRECTIONS

Soak beans overnight in ample water. Place beans in towel and rub vigorously to remove the skins. Discard skins and dry the beans thoroughly. Place beans in food grinder. Add cayenne and salt. While beating, add water, a little at a time. Continue beating until batter is fluffy. Deep fry in the vegetable oil, dropping in a teaspoon at a time. Remove when golden brown and drain. Serve hot.



SNACKS

Pastechi

SAVORY PASTRY

THIS IRRESISTIBLE HALF-MOON PASTRY IS THE NATIONAL SNACK OF ARUBA. THE CLASSIC PASTECHI IS MADE BY STUFFING A POCKET OF SLIGHTLY SWEET DOUGH WITH CHEESE AND THEN DEEP-FRYING IT TO TENDER PERFECTION. OTHER SAVORY FILLINGS INCLUDE HAM, BEEF, CHICKEN, AND FISH. PASTECHIS ARE SOLD ISLANDWIDE AT GROCERY STORES, CONVENIENCE STORES, AND SNACK BARS. HERE IS THE RECIPE FOR A BEEF-FILLED PASTECHI.

DIRECTIONS

Saute vegetables in oil. Add beef and cook until well done. Add bouillon cube, cumin, tomato paste, and, if necessary, a little water. Stir to mix ingredients. Simmer until bouillon cube is dissolved. Add remaining ingredients.

Roll dough out thinly on lightly floured board. Cut into rounds using a biscuit cutter or a glass. Place one generous spoonful of filling onto each pastry round. Fold rounds in half; seal and crimp edges. Fry in oil until golden brown. Drain on paper towels.



SERVES

4



MINUTES

60



DIFFICULTY

++++

INGREDIENTS

For pastry dough:

- 9 cups white flour
- 6 tbsp. white sugar
- 1 tbsp. salt
- 4 tsp. baking powder
- ¾ cup butter
- 2 eggs
- ½ cup milk
- Vegetable oil for frying

Mix dry ingredients with butter. Slowly add liquid. Knead into a smooth ball and let stand for 20 minutes.

Filling:

- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 clove garlic, minced
- 1 green pepper, chopped
- 1 stalk celery, diced
- 1 tbsp. parsley
- 1 large tomato, chopped
- 1 piece of hot pepper or 3-5 drops of Tabasco sauce
- 2 tbsp. cooking oil
- 1 pound ground beef, seasoned with salt, pepper, nutmeg, and curry
- 1 bouillon cube
- 1 tsp. cumin
- 1 tbsp. tomato paste
- ¼ cup capers (optional)
- ¼ cup stuffed olives, chopped
- ½ cup raisins
- 2 tbsp. Worcestershire sauce



★
DESSERTS

Quesillo

FLAN

QUESILLO IS ARUBA'S VERSION
OF FLAN. IT IS SILKY
AND DELICIOUS, AND MAKES
FOR A SINFUL END TO ANY MEAL.



SERVES
4



MINUTES
45



DIFFICULTY
++

INGREDIENTS

- 5 cans of condensed milk
- ½ liter (2.1 pints) whole milk
- ½ liter (2.1 pints) heavy cream
- 2 cans coconut milk
- ½ kg (1.1 pounds) sugar
- 1 tbsp. vanilla extract
- 10 whole eggs
- 10 egg yolks

DIRECTIONS

Heat the oven for 30 minutes at 250° Fahrenheit. Put the sugar in a pan and add enough water to cover the sugar. Boil the sugar on medium heat until it starts turning light brown. Lower heat until it turns dark brown (don't burn it). (**Tip:** When it has a nutty aroma, the caramel is ready.) Combine the other ingredients in a mixing bowl, mix well with a whisk, and strain. Pour the hot caramel into a metal pan (8" x 16"/ 20 cm x 40 cm) very carefully (extremely hot!) until the bottom of the pan is covered evenly. Pour the other mixture on top of the caramel and let sit for a few minutes. Put the pan in the oven, preferably in a bigger pan filled with water. Bake for 35-45 minutes, until the top becomes light brown and it feels like one piece when shaken.

★
DESSERTS

Bolo Preto

BLACK CAKE

TRADITIONALLY GIVEN TO GUESTS
AT ARUBAN WEDDINGS,
BOLO PRETO IS MADE WITH
A SIGNATURE MIXTURE OF DRIED
FRUITS STEEPED IN A STRONG
ALCOHOLIC POTION, CREATING
A RICH, DELICIOUS TREAT.



SERVES
50



MINUTES
45



DIFFICULTY
+++

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound prunes
- 1 pound currants
- 1 pound dates
- ½ pound figs
- ½ pound mixed dried fruits
- 1 cup brandy
- 2 ½ cups flour
- 1 ½ tsp. baking powder
- 1 pound brown sugar
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1 cup molasses
- ½ pound butter, melted
- 6 eggs, beaten

DIRECTIONS

In a large bowl, mix together prunes, currants, raisins, dates, figs, and mixed fruit. Add brandy and mix well. Cover and let soak for at least a day. In a separate bowl, mix together flour, baking powder, sugar, and cinnamon. Add vanilla, molasses, melted butter, and eggs, and mix well. Then add to fruit mixture. Pour into well-greased 15 ½ by 10 ½ baking pan or two 9-inch baking pans. Bake at 350° Fahrenheit for 1 hour. Let rest for at least one day before serving in small, 1-inch pieces.



Aruba Tourism Authority
L.G. Smith Boulevard #8
Tel: (+297) 582-3777
www.aruba.com