

# List of African cuisines

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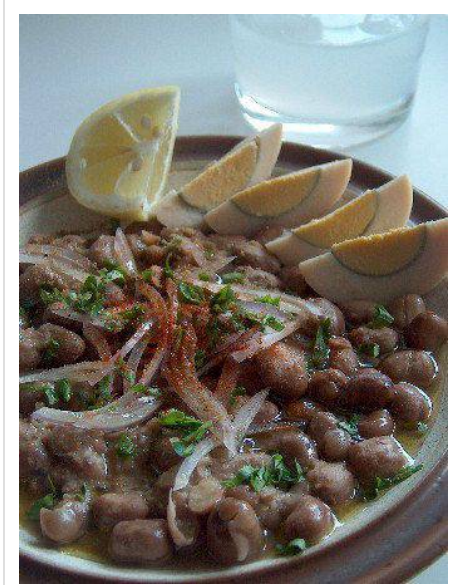
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# African cuisine

**African cuisine** is a generalized term collectively referring to the cuisines of Africa. The continent of Africa is the second largest landmass on Earth, and is home to hundreds of different cultural and ethnic groups. This diversity is also reflected in the many local culinary traditions in terms of choice of ingredients, style of preparation and cooking techniques.

Traditionally, the various cuisines of Africa use a combination of locally available fruits, cereal grains and vegetables, as well as milk and meat products. In some parts of the continent, the traditional diet features a preponderance of milk, curd and whey products. In much of Tropical Africa, however, cow's milk is rare and cannot be produced locally (owing to various diseases that affect livestock). Depending on the region, there are also sometimes quite significant differences in the eating and drinking habits and proclivities throughout the continent's many populations: Central Africa, East Africa, the Horn of Africa, North Africa, Southern Africa and West Africa each have their own distinctive dishes, preparation techniques, and consumption mores.



Ful Medames, one of Egypt's national dishes, served with sliced eggs and vegetables.

## Central Africa

Central Africa stretches from the Tibesti Mountains in the north to vast rainforest basin of the Congo River, and has remained largely free of culinary influences of the outside world, until the late 19th century, with the exception of the widespread adaptation of cassava, peanut, and Chile pepper plants which arrived along with the slave trade during the early 16th century. These foodstuffs have had a large influence on the local cuisine, perhaps less on the preparation methods. Central African cooking has remained mostly traditional. Nevertheless, like other parts of Africa, Central African cuisine also presents an array of dishes.

The basic ingredients are plantains and cassava. Fufu-like starchy foods (usually made from fermented cassava roots) are served with grilled meat and sauces. A variety of local ingredients are used while preparing other dishes like spinach stew, cooked with tomato, peppers, chillis, onions, and peanut butter. Cassava plants are also consumed as cooked greens. Groundnut (peanut) stew is also prepared, containing chicken, okra, ginger, and other spices. Another favorite is Bambara, a porridge of rice, peanut butter and sugar. Beef and chicken are favorite meat dishes, but game meat preparations containing crocodile, monkey, antelope and warthog are also served occasionally.



Fufu (right) is a staple food of Central Africa, pictured with some peanut soup.

## East Africa



*Ugali* is pictured here with a side dish of cabbage, though it is more typically eaten with *kale* (Sukuma wiki).



Barbecued beef cubes and seafood in Forodhani Gardens, Zanzibar

The cuisine of East Africa varies from area to area. In the inland savannah, the traditional cuisine of cattle-keeping peoples is distinctive in that meat products are generally absent. Cattle, sheep and goats were regarded as a form of currency and a store of wealth, and are not generally consumed as food. In some areas, traditional peoples consume the milk and blood of cattle, but rarely the meat. Elsewhere, other peoples are farmers who grow a variety of grains and vegetables. Maize (corn) is the basis of ugali, the East African version of West Africa's fufu. Ugali is a starch dish eaten with meats or stews. In Uganda, steamed, green bananas called matoke provide the starch filler of many meals.

Around 1000 years ago, the Arabs settled in the coastal areas of East Africa, and Arabic influences are especially reflected in the Swahili cuisine of the coast – steamed cooked rice with spices in Persian style, use of saffron, cloves, cinnamon and several other spices, and pomegranate juice.

Several centuries later, the British and the Indians came, and both brought with them their foods, like Indian spiced vegetable curries, lentil soups, chapattis and a variety of pickles. Just before the British and the Indians, the Portuguese had introduced techniques of roasting and marinating, as also use of spices turning the bland diet into aromatic stewed dishes. Portuguese also brought from their Asian colonies fruits like the orange, lemon and lime. From their colonies in the New World, Portuguese also brought exotic items like chilies, peppers, maize, tomatoes, pineapple, bananas,

and the domestic pig – now, all these are common elements of East African foods.

## Horn of Africa

The main traditional dishes in Ethiopian cuisine and Eritrean cuisine are *tsebhis* (stews) served with *injera*<sup>[1]</sup> (flatbread made from teff, wheat, or sorghum), and *hilbet* (paste made from legumes, mainly lentil, faba beans). Eritrean and Ethiopian cuisine (especially in the northern half) are very similar, given the shared history of the two countries.

Eritrean and Ethiopian food habits vary regionally. In the highlands, injera is the staple diet and is eaten daily among the Tigrinya. Injera is made out of a variation and/or blend of: teff, wheat, barley, sorghum and corn and resembles a spongy, slightly sour pancake. When eating, diners generally share food from a large tray placed in the centre of a low dining table. Numerous injera are layered on this tray and topped with various spicy stews. Diners then break into the section of injera in front of them, tearing off pieces and dipping them into the stews.



*Kitcha fit-fit*, a mainstay in Eritrean cuisine, is presented with a scoop of fresh yoghurt and topped with berbere (spice).

In the lowlands, the main dish is *akelet*, a porridge-like dish made from wheat flour dough. A ladle is used to scoop out the top, which is filled with berbere and butter sauce and surrounded by milk or yoghurt. A small piece of dough is broken and then used to scoop up the sauce.



Typical Ethiopian and Eritrean cuisine: *Injera* (pancake-like bread) and several kinds of *wat* (stew)

The best known Ethio-Eritrean cuisine consists of various vegetable or meat side dishes and entrées, usually a *wat*, or thick stew, served atop *injera*, a large sourdough flatbread made of teff flour. One does not eat with utensils, but instead uses injera to scoop up the entrées and side dishes.

Tihlo prepared from roasted barley flour is very popular in Amhara, Agame, and Awlaelo (Tigrai). Traditional Ethiopian cuisine employs no pork or shellfish of any kind, as they are forbidden in the Islamic, Jewish, and Ethiopian Orthodox Christian faiths. It is also very common to eat from the same dish in the center of the table with a group of people.

Somalian cuisine varies from region to region and consists of an exotic mixture of diverse culinary influences. It is the product of Somalia's rich tradition of trade and commerce. Despite the variety, there remains one thing that unites the various regional cuisines: all food is served halal. There are therefore no pork dishes, alcohol is not served, nothing that died on its own is eaten, and no blood is incorporated. *Qaddo* or lunch is often elaborate.

Varieties of *bariis* (rice), the most popular probably being basmati, usually serve as the main dish. Spices like cumin, cardamom, cloves, cinnamon and sage are used to aromatize these different rice dishes. Somalis serve dinner as late as 9 pm. During Ramadan, dinner is often served after Tarawih prayers – sometimes as late as 11 pm.

*Xalwo* (halwo) or halva is a popular confection served during special occasions such as Eid celebrations or wedding receptions. It is made from sugar, cornstarch, cardamom powder, nutmeg powder, and ghee. Peanuts are also sometimes added to enhance texture and flavor.<sup>[2]</sup> After meals, homes are traditionally perfumed using frankincense (*lubaan*) or incense (*cuunsi*), which is prepared inside an incense burner referred to as a *dabqaad*.



*Xalwo*, the Somali version of halva, is a staple of Somali cuisine.

## North Africa

North Africa lies along the Mediterranean Sea and encompasses within its fold several nations, including Morocco, Algeria, Libya, Tunisia, Mauritania, and Egypt. This is a region marked by geographic, political, social, economic and cultural diversity, and the cuisine and the culinary style and art of North Africa are also as diverse as the land, its people and its history. The roots to North African cuisine can be traced back to the ancient empires of North Africa, particularly in Egypt where many of the country's dishes and culinary traditions date back to ancient Egypt.



An array of Moroccan pastries





Fresh *couscous* with vegetables and chickpeas

Over several centuries traders, travelers, invaders, migrants and immigrants all have influenced the cuisine of North Africa. The Phoenicians of the 1st century brought sausages, the Carthaginians introduced wheat and its by-product, semolina. The Berbers, adapted this into couscous, one of the main staple diet. Olives and olive oils were introduced before the arrival of the Romans. From the 7th century onwards, the Arabs introduced a variety of spices, like saffron, nutmeg, cinnamon, ginger and cloves, which contributed and influenced the culinary culture of North Africa. The Ottoman Turks brought sweet pastries and other bakery products, and from the New World, North

Africa got potatoes, tomatoes, zucchini and chilies.

Most of the North African countries have several similar dishes, sometimes almost the same dish with a different name (the Moroccan *tangia* and the Tunisian *coucha* are both essentially the same dish: a meat stew prepared in an urn and cooked overnight in a public oven), sometimes with a slight change in ingredients and cooking style. To add to the confusion, two completely different dishes may also share the same name (for example, a "tajine" dish is a slow-cooked stew in Morocco, whereas the Tunisian "tajine" is a baked omelette/quiche-like dish). There are noticeable differences between the cooking styles of different nations – there's the sophisticated, full-bodied flavours of Moroccan palace cookery, the fiery dishes of Tunisian cuisine, and the humbler, simpler cuisines of Egypt and Algeria.

## Southern Africa

The cooking of Southern Africa is sometimes called 'rainbow cuisine', as the food in this region is a blend of many cultures – the indigenous African tribal societies, European and Asian. To understand indigenous cuisine, it is important first to digress to understand the various native peoples of southern Africa. The indigenous people of Southern Africa were roughly divided into two groups and several sub groups. The largest group consisted of the Bantu-speakers, whose descendants today may identify themselves by various sub-group names such as Zulu, Xhosa, Swazi, Sotho, Tswana, Pedi, Shangaan and Tsonga. They arrived in the region around two thousand years ago, bringing crop cultivation, animal husbandry, and iron tool making with them. Hence the Bantu-speakers grew grain crops extensively and raised cattle, sheep and goats. They also grew and continue to grow pumpkins, beans and leafy greens as vegetables.



Traditional South African cuisine

A smaller group were the primeval residents of the region, the Khoisan, who some archaeologists believe, had lived in the region for at least ten thousand years. Many descendants of the Khoisan people have now been incorporated into the Coloured population of South Africa. The Khoisan originally were hunter gathers (who came to be known as "San" by the Bantu-speakers and as "bushmen" by Europeans). After the arrival of the Bantu-speakers, however, some Khoisan adopted the Bantu-speakers' cattle raising, but did not grow crops. The Khoisan who raised cattle called themselves "Khoi-Khoi" and came to be known by Europeans as "Hottentots."



*Potjiekos* is a traditional Afrikaner stew made with meat and vegetables and cooked over coals in cast-iron pots.

People were, in other words, defined to some extent by the kinds of food they ate. The Bantu speakers ate dishes of grain, meat, milk and vegetables, as well as fermented grain and fermented milk products, while the Khoi-Khoi ate meat and milk, and the San hunted wild animals and gathered wild tubers and vegetables. In many ways, the daily food of Black South African families can be traced to the indigenous foods that their ancestors ate. The Khoisan ate roasted meat, and they also dried meat for later use. The influence of their diet is reflected in the universal (black and white) Southern African love of barbecue (generally called in South Africa by its Afrikaans name, a "braai") and biltong (dried preserved meat). Traditional beer was ubiquitous in the southern African diet, and the fermentation added additional nutrients to the diet. It was a traditional obligation for any family to be able to offer a visitor copious amounts of beer. Beer brewing was done by women, and the status of a housewife in pre-colonial southern Africa depended significantly on her skill at brewing delicious beer.

Milk was historically one of the most important components of the southern African diet. Cattle were considered a man's most important possession, and in order to marry, a man had to compensate his prospective in-laws with a gift of cattle as a dowry for his bride. A married man was expected to provide a generous supply of milk to his wife and children, along with meat whenever he slaughtered cattle, sheep or goats. Because there was no refrigeration, most milk was soured into a kind of yogurt. The young men of the family often took care of the cattle far away from the villages at "cattle posts," and they sent a steady stream of yogurt home on behalf of their fathers. Today, many Black South Africans enjoy drinking sour milk products that are sold in the supermarket, and these products are comparable to American buttermilk, yogurt and sour cream. On weekends they, like white South Africans, will have a "braai" and the meal would usually consist of "pap and vleis", which is maize porridge and grilled meat.

The basic ingredients include seafood, meat products (including wild game), poultry, as well as grains, fresh fruits and vegetables. Fruits include apples, grapes, mangoes, bananas and papayas, avocado, oranges, peaches and apricots. Desserts may simply be fruit, but there are some more western style puddings, such as the Angolan cocada amarela, which was inspired by Portuguese cuisine. Meat products include lamb, and game like venison, ostrich, and impala. The seafood includes a wide variety such as crayfish, prawns, tuna, mussels, oysters, calamari, mackerel, and lobster. There are also several types of traditional and modern alcoholic beverages including many European-style beers.



A carton and glass of *mageu*, a traditional non-alcoholic drink made from fermented mealie pap that is popular among many of the Nguni people.

## West Africa



West African *Maafe* or *groundnut stew*, prepared by a Senegalese cook

A typical West African meal is heavy with starchy items, meat, spices and flavors. A wide array of staples are eaten across the region, including those of Fufu, Banku and Kenkey (originating from Ghana), Foutou, Couscous, Tô, and Garri which are served alongside soups and stews. Fufu is often made from starchy root vegetables such as yams, cocoyams, or cassava, but also from cereal grains like millet, sorghum or plantains. The staple grain or starch varies region to region and ethnic group to ethnic group, although corn has gained significant ground as it is cheap, swells to greater volumes and creates a beautiful white final product that is greatly desired. Banku and Kenkey are maize dough staples, and Gari is made from dried grated cassavas. Rice-dishes are also widely eaten in the region, especially in the dry Sahel belt inland. Examples of these include Benachin from The Gambia and Jollof rice, a pan-West African rice dish similar to Arab kabsah.

Seeds of Guinea pepper (*Aframomum melegueta*; also called grains of paradise or melagueta pepper) a native West African plant, were used as a spice and even reached Europe, through North African middlemen, during the Middle Ages. Centuries before the influence of Europeans, West African people were trading with the Arab world and spices like cinnamon, cloves, and mint were not unknown and became part of the local flavorings. Centuries later, the Portuguese, French and British influenced the regional cuisines, but only to a limited extent. However, as far as is known, it was European explorers who introduced the American Chile, or chili (*Capsicum*), to Africa sometime soon after Columbus sailed to America, and both chillies and tomatoes have become ubiquitous components of West African cuisines.

The local cuisine and recipes of West Africa continue to remain deeply entrenched in the local customs and traditions, with ingredients like native rice (*oryza glaberrima*), rice, fonio, millet, sorghum, Bambara and Hausa groundnuts, black-eyed beans, brown beans, and root vegetables such as yams, cocoyams, sweet potatoes, and cassava. Cooking is done in multiple ways: roasting, baking, boiling, frying, mashing, and spicing. A range of sweets and savories are also prepared.



*Jollof rice* is a popular dish throughout West Africa





*Klouiklou*, rings of fried peanut butter as served in Benin

Cooking techniques of West Africa are changing. In the past people ate much less meat and used native oils (palm oil on the coast and shea butter in sahelian regions). Baobob leaf and numerous local greens were every day staples during certain times of the year. Today diet is much heavier in meats, salt, and fats. Many dishes combine fish and meat, including dried and fermented fish. Flaked and dried fish is often fried in oil, and sometimes cooked in sauce made up with hot peppers, onions and tomatoes various spices (such as soumbala) and water to prepare a highly flavored stew. In some areas, beef and mutton are preferred, and goat meat is the dominant red meat. Suya, a popular grilled spicy meat kebab flavored with peanuts and other spices, is sold

by street vendors as a tasty snack or evening meal and is typically made with beef or chicken. It is common to have a preponderance of seafood and the seafood, as earlier stated, is sometimes also mixed with other meat products. Guinea fowl eggs, eggs and chicken are also preferred.

With regard to beverages, water has a very strong ritual significance in many West African nations (particularly in dry areas) and water is often the first thing an African host will offer his/her guest. Palm wine is also a common beverage made from the fermented sap of various types of palm trees and is usually sold in sweet (less-fermented, retaining more of the sap's sugar) or sour (fermented longer, making it stronger and less sweet) varieties. Millet beer is another common beverage.

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## Further reading

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## External links

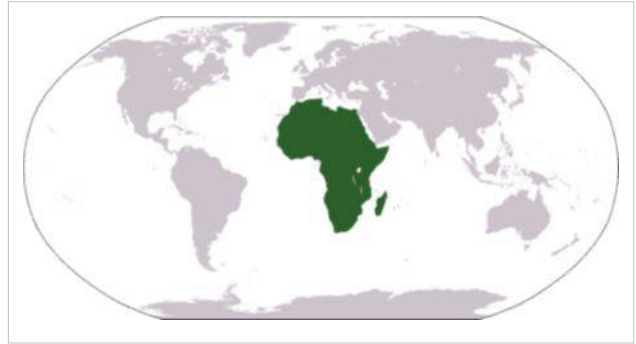
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## List of African cuisines

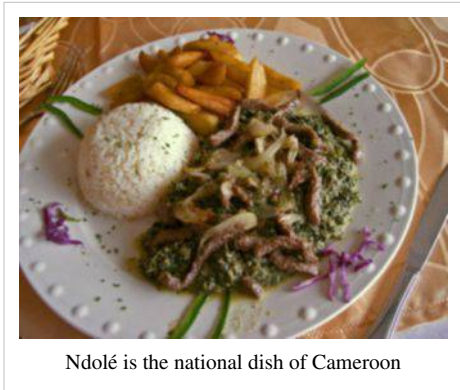
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This is a **list of African cuisines**. A cuisine is a characteristic style of cooking practices and traditions,<sup>[1]</sup> often associated with a specific culture. The various **cuisines of Africa** use a combination of locally available fruits, cereal grains and vegetables, as well as milk and meat products. In some parts of the continent, the traditional diet features a preponderance of milk, curd and whey products. In much of tropical Africa, however, cow's milk is rare and cannot be produced locally (owing to various diseases that affect livestock). The continent's diverse demographic makeup is reflected in the many different eating and drinking habits, dishes, and preparation techniques of its manifold populations.



### Cuisine of Central Africa

- The Cuisine of Central Africa remains largely traditional because of the remote nature of the region,<sup>[2]</sup> which remained relatively isolated until the 19th century. Some foods, such as cassava (a food staple in Central Africa), groundnuts (peanuts) and chili peppers were imported from the New World. Plantains are also common in Central African cuisine. Meats, such as crocodile, antelope, monkey and warthog, are sometimes hunted in the forests. *Bambra* is a porridge made from cooked rice, peanut butter and sugar. A *jomba* is the bundling of foods in fresh green plantain leaves and then cooking them over hot coals or fire.<sup>[3]</sup>



- Cameroonian cuisine is one of the most varied in Africa due to its location on the crossroads between the north, west, and center of the continent; added to this is the profound influence of French food, a legacy of the colonial era.
- Congolese cuisine (Democratic Republic of the Congo) cuisine varies widely, representing the food of indigenous people. Cassava is generally the staple food usually eaten with other side dishes.
- Centrafrican cuisine in the Central African Republic includes Middle Eastern and French influences

## East African cuisine



A Ramadan dinner in Tanzania

- East African cuisine: East Africa is the eastern region of the African continent, variably defined by geography or geopolitics. In the UN scheme of geographic regions, 19 territories constitute Eastern Africa:<sup>[4]</sup> This is a vast region with many diverse cuisines.
- Burundian cuisine - Burundi is situated in Central Africa and has a territory full of mountains, savannas and agricultural fields, with forests in the surrounding of rivers and waters. Agriculture is spread on 80% of the country's surface and it especially includes coffee, tea, corn, beans and manioc.
- Kenyan cuisine - There is no singular dish that represents all of

Kenya. Different communities have their own native foods. Staples are maize and other cereals depending on the region including millet and sorghum eaten with various meats and vegetables. The foods that are universally eaten in Kenya are ugali, sukuma wiki, and nyama choma.

- Sudanese cuisine is varied by region, and greatly affected by the cross-cultural influences upon Sudan throughout history. In addition to the influences of the indigenous African peoples, the cuisine was influenced by Arab traders and settlers during the Ottoman Empire, who introduced spices such as red pepper and garlic.
- Tanzanian cuisine - Along the coastal regions (Dar es Salaam, Tanga, Bagamoyo, Zanzibar & Pemba), spicy foods are common, and there is also much use of coconut milk. Regions in Tanzania's mainland also have their own unique foods.
- Ugandan cuisine consists of traditional and modern cooking styles, practices, foods and dishes in Uganda, with English, Arab, Asian and especially Indian influences. Like the cuisines of most countries, it varies in complexity, from the most basic, a starchy filler with a sauce of beans or meat, to several-course meals served in upper-class homes and high-end restaurants.
- Maasai cuisine

## Horn African cuisine

- Horn African cuisine: The Horn of Africa is a peninsula in East Africa that juts hundreds of kilometers into the Arabian Sea and lies along the southern side of the Gulf of Aden. Besides sharing similar geographic features, the countries of the Horn of Africa are, for the most part, linguistically and ethnically linked together.<sup>[5]</sup> Cuisine in the region involves many cooking techniques and ingredients. The main traditional dishes in Eritrean cuisine are *tsebis* (stews) served with *injera*<sup>[6]</sup> (flatbread made from teff, wheat, or sorghum), and *hilbet* (paste made from legumes, mainly lentil, faba beans). Common Ethiopian cuisine consists of various vegetable or meat side dishes and entrées, usually a *wat*, or thick stew, served atop or scooped with *injera*, a large sourdough flatbread made of teff flour,<sup>[7]</sup> the dough of which is fermented for several days before cooking. Somalian cuisine varies from region to region and consists of an exotic mixture of diverse culinary influences. It is a product of Somalia's rich tradition of trade and commerce. *Xalwo* or *halva* is a popular confection<sup>[8]</sup> served during special occasions such as Eid celebrations or wedding receptions.<sup>[9]</sup>



Injera bread and several kinds of Wat (stew) are typical of Ethiopian and Eritrean cuisine.

- Eritrean cuisine is a fusion of Eritrea's native culinary traditions, and the area's long history of trade and social interchanges with other regions and cultures.

- Ethiopian cuisine and Eritrean cuisine characteristically consist of spicy vegetable and meat dishes, usually in the form of *wat* (or *wot*), a thick stew, served atop *injera*, a large sourdough flatbread, which is about 50 centimetres (20 inches) in diameter and made out of fermented teff flour. Ethiopians eat with their right hands, using pieces of *injera* to pick up bites of entrées and side dishes. Utensils are rarely used with this dish.
- Somali cuisine varies from region to region and is a mixture of native Somali, Ethiopian, Yemeni, Persian, Turkish, Indian and Italian influences.

## North African cuisine

- North African cuisine includes cuisines from regions along the Mediterranean Sea,<sup>[11]</sup> inland areas and includes several nations, including Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia. In North African cuisine, the most common staple foods are meat, seafood, goat, lamb, beef, dates, almonds, olives, various vegetables and fruit. Because the region is predominantly Muslim, halal meats are usually eaten. The best-known North African/Berber dish abroad is surely couscous.<sup>[12]</sup>
  - Algerian cuisine is a distinct fusion of Middle Eastern and Mediterranean cuisines.
    - Algerian wine
  - Egyptian cuisine consists of the local culinary traditions of Egypt. Egyptian cuisine makes heavy use of legumes and vegetables, as Egypt's rich Nile Valley and Delta produce large quantities of high-quality crops.
    - Egyptian wine
  - Libyan cuisine is the cooking traditions, practices, foods and dishes associated with the country of Libya. The cuisine derives much from the culinary traditions of the Mediterranean and North Africa, with an Italian influence, a legacy from the days when Libya was an Italian colony.
  - Moroccan cuisine is extremely diverse, thanks to Morocco's interaction with other cultures and nations over the centuries. Moroccan cuisine has been subject to Berber, Moorish, Mediterranean, and Arab influences. The cooks in the royal kitchens of Fez, Meknes, Marrakesh, Rabat and Tetouan refined it over the centuries and created the basis for what is known as Moroccan cuisine today.
    - Moroccan wine
  - Tunisian cuisine is the cuisine of Tunisia, a blend of Mediterranean and desert dwellers' culinary traditions. Its distinctive spicy fieriness comes from neighboring Mediterranean countries and the many civilizations which have ruled the land now known as Tunisia: Phoenicians, Romans, Arabs, Ottoman Empire, French, and the native Berber people.



Nile perch are one of the world's largest freshwater fish and a significant food source.<sup>[10]</sup> It reaches a maximum length of over six feet, weighing up to 440 lbs, although many fish are caught before growing this large. It is widespread throughout much of the Afrotropic ecozone.

## Southern African cuisine

- South African cuisine is sometimes referred to as "rainbow cuisine"<sup>[13]</sup> because it is based on multicultural and various indigenous cuisines. Curried dishes are popular with lemon juice in South Africa among people of all ethnic origins; many dishes came to the country with the thousands of Indian laborers brought to South Africa in



the nineteenth century. South African cuisine can be defined as cookery practiced by indigenous people of South Africa such as the Khoisan and Xhosa, Zulu- and Sotho-speaking people, and settler cookery that emerged from several waves of immigration introduced during the colonial period by people of Indian and Afrikaner and British descent and their slaves and servants.

- Botswanan cuisine is unique but also shares some characteristics with other cuisine of Southern Africa. Examples of Botswanan food include Pap, Samp, Vetkoek and Mopane worms. A food unique to Botswana includes seswaa, heavily salted mashed-up meat.
- Malagasy cuisine is the cuisine of the island country of Madagascar, located in the Indian Ocean off the southeastern coast of Africa. Madagascans are mostly Malayan Polynesian, along with Africans, Arabs, Indians and Europeans.<sup>[14]</sup> Rice is a common staple food, and fruits and vegetables are prominent in the cuisine. Pineapples, mangoes, peaches, grapes, avocados and lichee nuts are grown on the island. Meats include chicken, beef and fish, and curry dishes are common. A common food is *laoka*, a mixture of cooked foods served atop rice. Laoka are most often served in some kind of sauce: in the highlands, this sauce is generally tomato-based, while in coastal areas coconut milk is often added during cooking.



**Malagasy cuisine:** Two common Madagascan *laokas*: Bambara groundnut and pork (left) and potato leaves with dried shrimp (center), usually served atop rice. On the right are bottles of lemon and mango sauces (*achards*), which are common in the northwestern coastal regions of Madagascar.

- Mauritian cuisine
- Namibian cuisine is the cuisine of Namibia. It is influenced by cookery practiced by indigenous people of Namibia and Settler cookery introduced during the colonial period by people of German, Afrikaner and British descent.
  - Namibian wine
- South African cuisine is sometimes called "rainbow cuisine", as it has had a variety of multicultural sources and stages. Influences include indigenous practices and settler cookery that immigrants practiced.
  - South African wine
  - Western Cape wine

- Zimbabwean cuisine - Like in many African countries, the majority of Zimbabweans depend on a few staple foods. "Mealie meal", also known as cornmeal, is used to prepare *Sadza* or *Isitshwala* and porridge known as *Bota* or *ilambazi*.

## West African cuisine

- West African cuisine refers to many distinct regional and ethnic cuisines in West African nations, a large geographic area with climates ranging from desert to tropical.<sup>[15]</sup> Some of the region's indigenous plants, such as hausa groundnuts, pigeon peas and cowpeas provide dietary protein for both people and livestock.<sup>[16]</sup> Many significant spices, stimulants and medicinal herbs originated in the evergreen and deciduous forests of Western Africa. Ancient Africans domesticated the kola nut and coffee, now used globally in beverages.
- Burkinabe cuisine is the cuisine of Burkina Faso. It is similar to the cuisines in many parts of West Africa, and is based around staple foods of sorghum, millet, rice, maize, peanuts, potatoes, beans, yams and okra. Grilled meat is common, particularly mutton, goat, beef and fish.<sup>[17]</sup>
- Ghanaian cuisine is the cuisine of Ghana. There are diverse traditional dishes. Foods also vary according to the season, time of the day and occasion.
- Ivorian cuisine is the traditional cuisine of Côte d'Ivoire, or the Ivory Coast, and is based on tubers, grains, chicken, seafood, fish, fresh fruits, vegetables and spices and is very similar to that of neighboring countries in west Africa. Common staple foods include grains and tubers. Côte d'Ivoire is one of the largest cocoa producers in the world, and also produces palm oil and coffee.
- Nigerian cuisine Like other West African cuisines, it uses spices, herbs in conjunction with palm oil or groundnut oil to create deeply flavored sauces and soups often made very hot with chili peppers. Nigerian feasts are colorful and lavish, while aromatic market and roadside snacks cooked on barbecues or fried in oil are plentiful and varied.<sup>[18]</sup>
- Sierra Leonean cuisine refers to the cuisine and eating styles found in the Republic of Sierra Leone, a country in West Africa. Sierra Leonean cuisine includes cassava bread, fried fish, and okra soup.
- Senegalese cuisine has been influenced by nations like France, Portugal, and those of North Africa, and also by many ethnic groups, the largest being the Wolof; Islam, which first penetrated the region in the 11th century; and various European cultures, especially the French, who held the country as a colony until 1960.

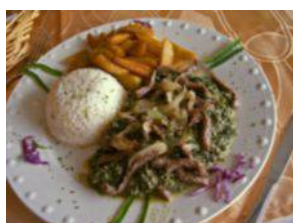


Yassa is a popular dish throughout West Africa prepared with chicken or fish. Chicken yassa is pictured.

## African foods and dishes



Traditional South African cuisine



Ndolé is the national dish of Cameroon.



A woman carrying bananas in the Democratic Republic of the Congo



Central market of Léo, Burkina Faso

## By country

- Angolan cuisine is the cuisine of Angola, a country in south-central Africa. Because Angola was a Portuguese colony for centuries, Portuguese cuisine has significantly influenced Angolan cuisine, with many foods imported into Angola by the Portuguese.<sup>[19]</sup>
- Benin cuisine is known in Africa for its and exotic ingredients and flavorful dishes. Beninese cuisine involves lots of fresh meals served with a variety of sauces. Meat is usually quite expensive, and meals are generally light on meat and generous on vegetable fat.
- Cape Verde - The Cape Verde diet is mostly based on fish and staple foods like corn and rice. Vegetables available during most of the year are potatoes, onions, tomatoes, manioc, cabbage, kale, and dried beans. Fruits such as banana and papayas are available year-round, while others like mangos and avocados are seasonal.
- Centrafrican (Central African Republic) is the cooking traditions, practices, foods and dishes associated with the Central African Republic. The diet is heavy on staple starches such as millet and sorghum, and utilizes a significant amount of vegetables and sauces.<sup>[20]</sup>
- Chadian cuisine is the cooking traditions, practices, foods and dishes associated with the Republic of Chad. Chadians utilize a variety of grains, vegetables, fruits and meats. Commonly consumed grains include millet, sorghum and rice as staple foods.
- Comoros
- The Republic of the Congo
- Djiboutian cuisine
- Equatorial Guinean cuisine
- Gabonese cuisine is the cooking traditions, practices, foods and dishes associated with the sovereign state of Gabon. French cuisine is prevalent as a notable influence, and in larger cities various French specialties are available.<sup>[21]</sup> In rural areas, food staples such as cassava, rice and yams are commonly used.<sup>[22]</sup>
- Gambian cuisine
- Guinean cuisine
- Guinea-Bissauan cuisine
- Lesothoan cuisine
- Liberian cuisine
- Malagasy cuisine encompasses the many diverse culinary traditions of the Indian Ocean island of Madagascar.
- Cuisine of Malawi
- Cuisine of Mali
- Cuisine of Mauritania
- Cuisine of Mauritius
- Mozambique - Present for nearly 500 years, the Portuguese greatly impacted the cuisine of Mozambique. Crops such as cassava (a starchy root) and cashew nuts (Mozambique was once the largest producer of these nuts), and pãozinho (pronounced pow-zing-yo; Portuguese-style bread rolls) were brought in by the Portuguese.
- The Cuisine of Niger reflects many traditional African cuisines, and a significant amount of spices are used in dishes. Grilled meats, seasonal vegetables, salads and various sauces are some of the foods consumed.



Spices at central market in Agadir, Morocco



A map of Africa

- Rwandan cuisine is based on local staple foods produced by the traditional subsistence-level agriculture and has historically varied between the country's different ethnic groups.<sup>[23]</sup>
- São Tomé and Príncipe
- Seychellois cuisine
- Cuisine of Swaziland is largely determined by the seasons and the geographical region. Staple foods in Swaziland include sorghum and maize, often served with goat meat, a very popular livestock there.
- Togolese cuisine is the cuisine of the Togolese Republic, a country in Western Africa. It is often a combination of African, French and German cuisines.<sup>[24]</sup> The cuisine has many sauces and pâtés, many of which are made from eggplant, tomato, spinach and fish.
- Western Saharan cuisine
- Zambian cuisine - The Zambian staple diet is based on maize. It is normally eaten as a thick porridge, called Nshima (Nyanja Word), prepared from maize flour commonly known as mealie meal. This may be eaten with a variety of vegetables, beans, meat, fish or sour milk depending on geographical location/origin.

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**Further reading**

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