



Fun "Fufu" African Dough Balls

By Dylan Sabuco

Prep Time 5 / Cook Time 5 / Serves 4 - 6

Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

measure: to calculate the specific amount of an ingredient required using a measuring tool (like measuring cups or spoons).

stir: to mix together two or more ingredients with a spoon or spatula, usually in a circle pattern, or figure eight, or in whatever direction you like!

Equipment

- Medium pot
- Liquid measuring cup
- Dry measuring cups
- Wooden spoon

Ingredients

Fun "Fufu" African Dough Balls

- 1 1/2 C water
- 1 pinch salt
- 3 C cassava flour
- Optional for color:
 - 1 tsp turmeric (yellow)
 - 1 tsp paprika (red/orange) ****(Omit for NIGHTSHADE ALLERGY)****
 - 1 handful baby spinach, blended (green)

Food Allergen Substitutions

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Nightshade: Omit optional paprika.

Instructions

Fun "Fufu" African Dough Balls

intro

"Fufu" (FOO-foo) is a West African dish that consists of starchy cassava, potato, or other root vegetables boiled, blended, and stirred until transformed into a thick ball of dough. Fufu is classified as a "swallow" food. Swallow foods are used as your utensil when eating a meal. The fufu is torn into bite-sized pieces and then used to scoop up stew. Then, you toss the whole thing in your mouth and enjoy! In other words, think of fufu as a utensil you can also eat! It has a neutral flavor, so whatever soup, stew, or sauce you serve will be the star. This is such a fun recipe from start to finish (just try saying "fufu" without smiling). It is quick, hands-on, and sure to make long-lasting memories in your kitchen.

measure + boil

First, bring **1 1/2 cups water** to a boil with **1 pinch of salt** in a medium pot. Meanwhile, measure **3 cups of cassava flour**.

pour + stir

Pour the cassava flour into the water all at once. If you are adding any color to your fufu, add **1 teaspoon paprika**, **1 teaspoon turmeric**, or **1 handful puréed baby spinach** now. Turn the heat to low, then stir vigorously.

stir + stir

Here comes the fun part! Making fufu is all about stirring to get the right texture from the starch in whichever root vegetable you are using. You are looking for a thick ball of dough that can be touched without it sticking to your hand. Continue to stir until no flour or water remains in the skillet and the fufu ball is smooth and thick. This should take about 5 minutes total from start to finish.

tear + scoop + swallow

Divide the fufu ball into enough pieces for your family. Then, serve the fufu alongside **Green Ghanaian Spinach Stew**. Remind your family that this dish is traditionally eaten in West African cultures with your hands. Start tearing the fufu into pieces and scoop up all the stew. Remember, fufu is about having fun, eating with your hands, and experiencing a bit of West African culture. Enjoy!

Featured Ingredient: Cassava!

Hi! I'm Cassava!

"My ancestors originally came from South America and Portuguese traders brought some to Africa. Cassava root is popular in South American and West African cuisine. You can find "casabe" or cassava bread in South America and Caribbean islands and in Columbia and Cuba, they make their "buñuelos" (doughnuts) with cassava flour. In Ghana and some other West African countries, they use cassava to make "fufu," a spongy dough that is dipped into soups and stews. And, did you know those boba or tapioca pearls in your bubble tea are made from cassava root?!"

History & Etymology

Cassava (*M. esculenta*), also known as manioc, tapioca, or yuca, is a woody shrub from the spurge family. It originated in South America and is native to Brazil and certain areas of the Andes Mountains. The first to grow cassava may have been the Maya on the Yucatán Peninsula. Cassava was brought to Africa in the 16th century, immediately becoming one of the most important crops.

Cassava can be found in tropical regions around the world today. It grows on fertile, well-drained, moist soil in frost-free areas. Cassava is cultivated because of its edible root (tuber). Cassava roots are also used in animal feed and many laundry starches.

Cassava root can be used to produce non-grain ethanol as a biofuel. China is the largest producer of cassava-based biofuel.

The word "cassava" comes from the mid-16th century French "cassave," Spanish "casabe," or Portuguese "cassave," from a Taino (Arawakan) word, "caçabi."

Anatomy

Cassava grows as a shrub that is about 12 feet high. It produces multiple light-green or reddish branches. The roots grow in clusters; each root is long and tapered, 6 to 12 inches long, like a slender sweet potato. The clusters can weigh 15 to 30 pounds.

Cassava root has naturally occurring cyanide compounds, similar to almonds, bamboo shoots, lima beans, soy, and spinach, and the stones or seeds of stone fruit, like apricots and peaches. Thoroughly boiling the cassava in water successfully reduces the level of toxicity.

Some cassava species are bitter, and others are sweet. Sweet cassava contains much less of the toxins than the bitter varieties, but the bitter ones attract less pests. While African and South American cuisine uses both, the sweet varieties are found more often in the United States.

How to Buy & Use

The sweet variety is what you typically find in stores. Fresh cassava or yuca is sometimes seen in larger grocery stores and is often available in African, Asian, and Latin markets. Look for firm roots without bruises or cuts on the skin. It has a waxy coating to preserve it. You may also be able to purchase it peeled and frozen.

Store cassava in a cool, dry place for no longer than two weeks. You can peel it, cut it into pieces, put it in water, and store it in the refrigerator for about a week, changing the water daily. You can also put the peeled, cut-up cassava in the freezer.

The skin resembles bark and contains most of the cyanogenic glycoside, linamarin, so you must remove the peel and the thin white layer just underneath it before cooking and eating. If there are a few brown streaks in the flesh, cut those out, as they are signs of spoiling. If there are too many streaks throughout, it is not fresh enough to eat and should be thrown out.

Soak the cassava in water for about 20 minutes before cooking, then discard the water. Since raw cassava is not edible, it has to be properly cooked before it can be eaten. Thoroughly boiling it is the typical method.

You can also find cassava root in the form of flour. "Farinha de mandioca" is Brazilian cassava flour. It comes in two forms, "branca" (or white) and "torrada" (or toasted).

Cassava flour can be used to prepare breads, chips, flakes or as an ingredient in soups, stews, or meat dishes.

Tapioca is the powdery or pearl-like extract of the dried cassava root. It is used to make sweet puddings or baby food due to its neutral taste. Pearl tapioca is added to Asian desserts and drinks, like bubble or boba tea.

Nutrition

Cassava root is higher in energy-producing carbohydrates but lower in protein, vitamins, and minerals than corn and rice.