

# Tasteology

TRENDS, PRODUCTS AND MORE FROM NEWLY WEDS® FOODS

March 2018

## CULINARY SPOTLIGHT

### Filipino Cuisine; A Blending Of History

Numerous indigenous Philippine cooking methods have survived the many foreign influences brought about either by trade, contact, or colonization.

The first and most persistent food influence was most likely from Chinese traders who were already present and regularly came to Philippine shores. They pre-dated Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan's landing on Homonhon Island in 1521 by as many as five centuries.

The earliest written account of food was by Antonio Pigafetta, the Italian chronicler of the Magellan expedition. Pigafetta describes the dinner served by Raja Colambu, a local chief of Limasawa island as "pork in its sauce served in porcelain platters, roasted fish with freshly gathered ginger, and rice; turtle eggs; chicken; and peacock."

The Spanish ruled most of the Philippines until Filipinos launched the first successful revolution against a Western colonizer, in 1896, and declared their independence in 1898. Three hundred years of Spanish rule resulted in the introduction of ingredients such as, tomatoes, annatto (locally called achuete), corn and avocados from other colonies of Spain, but principally Mexico. Peppers were native to Mexico, Central and

North America and spread to Asia in the 15th century. The Spanish also brought varied styles of cooking, reflecting the different regions of their country. Some of these dishes are still popular in the Philippines, such as callos, gambas, and paella.

Some other delicacies from Mexico also found their way to the Philippines due to this colonial period.

Tamales, pipian, and barbacoa are a few examples. These terms are still used today, but some ingredient and cooking procedure names have changed. The tamales Filipinos know today use rice instead of corn in Mexican versions; pipian uses peanuts instead of pumpkin seeds; and barbacoa is boiled beef shanks instead of the Mexican barbacoa, slow-roasted meat cooked in a pit.

Filipino cuisine is a sum of Philippine history, from the influences of Southeast Asian cooking brought by trade to the colonial influences brought by conquest. In recent years, because of domestic migration, tourism, national food businesses, mass media and social media, regional dishes from the different islands have gone beyond their immediate borders and become part of the national table. Today's Filipinos are able to acquaint themselves with the food of their own country.



## RECIPE

### Maruya (Plantain with Jackfruit Fritters)

#### Ingredients:

- 1 cup all purpose flour
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- ¼ tsp. salt
- 1 egg
- 1 cup fresh milk
- 2 Tbsp. melted butter
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 5-6 pieces of plantain (saba) bananas, ripe but firm, peeled and mashed
- 1 ½ cups of jackfruit (langka), diced

#### Directions:

1. In a bowl, sift together flour, ¼ cup of the sugar, baking powder, and salt.
2. In a larger bowl, beat egg. Add milk, butter and whisk together until blended.
3. Add flour mixture to milk mixture and stir until just moistened. Do not overmix!
4. Mix the bananas and jackfruit in a separate bowl and combine with the batter mixture.
5. Heat the oil in a pan using moderate (medium) heat. Scoop up about two tablespoons of this mixture and gently drop into the hot oil. Slowly form the mixture into an uneven circle using the spoon.
6. Cook for about 1 to 2 minutes on each side or until golden and crisp. Remove from pan and place on paper towels in a tray to drain excess oil.
7. Repeat procedure with the rest of the ingredients. Use a fine mesh sieve to dust the fritters with the remaining sugar.
8. To serve, fritters may be arranged on serving plate and a scoop of vanilla ice cream drizzled with chocolate and caramel sauce may added.





One of the most important things we can do for our chefs is immerse them in the culture and foods of projects that they are working on. In the past, we have sent them to Dearborn, Michigan for a Middle Eastern food safari and down to Memphis in May to dive deep into competition BBQ. Sending our chefs to these locations is important, but Chicago also provides a wide range of cuisines to sample. Inspiration can come from anywhere, and we want to make sure our chefs have access to that. This time around they travelled just a few miles up the road to Seafood City, a Filipino grocery store with a massive food court right inside.

The chefs and the marketing team walked the aisles. The grocery store was filled with many excellent and unique Filipino ingredients, but the stand-out items were not even part of the grocery store at all. There is a full service counter, where you can get fresh seafood and then have it shelled, shucked, or descaled right there for you. There was a solid line of customers all taking numbers to get their fish processed before leaving.

The other interesting thing was that the bakery section is a separate store from the rest of the grocery space. We stepped into a smaller section with its own registers and employees, and looked around. A lot of the items being sold were purple because they use a lot of ube, which is a purple sweet potato native to the Philippines. If used as an ingredient, the bread or pastry takes on its purple hue. The whole bakery smelled sweet and fresh. Finally, we sampled a variety of dishes at the food court. There were noodle soups, fried rice, and an egg roll type dish called lumpia. One of the more intriguing things we ate was Kare Kare, which is a stew of oxtail in a peanut sauce. It had elements similar to other familiar Asian cuisines, but was just different enough to feel like a whole new taste.

It was an eye opening trip for both marketing and culinary. While we are by no means experts after one visit, as we explore this trend more and more, we certainly have a great base to refer to.

## RECIPES

### Jackfruit Puree

18 oz. Jackfruit (sweet) packed in syrup  
10 fl. oz. Jackfruit syrup (from can of jackfruit)  
2 Tbsp. Lemon juice  
¼ tsp. sea salt

#### Directions:

1. Place jackfruit, and 4 fluid ounces into a blender, blend for 2 minutes, looking for a semi smooth texture.
2. Place puree into a sauce pot, along with the remaining 6 fluid ounces of syrup, lemon juice, and sea salt.
3. Place sauce pot onto a low flame, stirring on occasion, so not to burn. Looking for the puree to thicken slightly.
4. Remove from heat, place into cooler.

### Ube Puree

8 oz. ube (fresh or frozen grated)  
7 fl. oz. coconut milk (full fat)  
1.2 oz. butter  
.75 oz. powder sugar  
1 oz. coconut sugar

#### Directions:

1. Place all ingredients into a sauce pot.
2. On a low flame, heat all ingredient, making sure to stir often.
3. Cook on low heat for 20 minutes, or until mixture has thickened and potato is cooked— no longer has raw taste.
4. Remove from heat, place mixture into a bowl, let cool in the cooler for about an hour.

## RECIPE

### Jackfruit & Ube Handpie

#### Ingredients:

28 oz. Pastry dough (store bought or homemade)  
4 ¼ oz. Ube mixture (see recipe above right)  
5 oz. Jackfruit puree (see recipe above right)  
1 Tbsp. Coconut sugar  
1 Large egg

#### Directions:

1. Cut 24 dough circles using 3 ¼ inch cookie cutter.
2. Place egg wash around edge of 12 circles.
3. Place 1 Tbsp. of ube mixture and 1 Tbsp. of jackfruit puree in center of circle.

4. Place a second pastry circle over ube/jackfruit mixture. Using your finger or fork, crimp the edges of pastry all the way around to seal the edges.
5. Using a pastry brush, lightly brush on egg wash over the top of pastry.
6. Sprinkle about 1/8 tsp. of coconut sugar over the top of the egg washed pastry.
7. Bake in 350°F convection oven for 12 minutes, or until golden brown.



## Where to Buy Ingredients for Filipino Cuisine

Getting started with cooking a new cuisine requires ingredient procurement. For a cuisine like Filipino, which has many specialty ingredients, this can be challenging. In North America, Seafood City, the supermarket chain specializing in Filipino foods, is one of the best options available. There is a wide assortment of fresh fruits and vegetables, meat and fish, dry goods, and frozen goods. They carry a large assortment of Filipino food products from such brands as Pamana and Mama Sita's. As of February 2018, they have 25 locations in North America with most located in the state of California. If there is not a Seafood City conveniently located, a local Filipino grocer is another great option. For example, the city of Chicago is also home to Three R's Filipino Grocery and Café and Uni-Mart, two specialty Filipino grocers.

The next place to look for Filipino ingredients can be another Asian grocer, whether it's a chain like H-Mart, Great Wall Supermarket, or Mitsuwa or a local Asian grocer. Some ingredients are used across multiple Asian cuisines, so a well-stocked Asian grocer would likely carry items like fish sauce and long beans. Many mainstream American grocers have an ethnic aisle where basic Asian ingredients such as soy sauce are readily available. Even Whole Foods Market carries bok choy.

Finally, Filipino ingredients can be purchased online. Efooddepot.com and Amazon.com both offer an assortment of Filipino ingredients and ship across the United States. So whether there is a recipe for a Filipino dish from a book, a blog, or even this newsletter that piques your interest, it is possible to find the ingredients needed to prepare it.

### Most Likely Requires A Filipino Grocer

- Sugarcane vinegar (sakang maasim)
- Coconut vinegar
- Saba bananas
- Calamansi (citrus fruit)
- Chili Leaves (dahong sili)
- Taro leaves (gabi)
- Purple yam (ube)
- Rice Stick Noodles (bihon)
- Egg Stick Noodles (canton)
- Dried Beef (tapa)
- Grilled Cured Pork (tocino)
- Sweet sausage (longganisa)
- Milkfish (bangus)

### Likely Found in other Asian Grocers

- Fermented shrimp paste (bagoong)
- Fish sauce (patis)
- Water spinach (kangkong)
- Baby bok choy (petsay)
- Long beans (sitaw)
- Bitter melon (amapalaya)
- Assorted Noodles similar to bihon and canton

### Available in Mainstream American Grocers

- Napa cabbage (petsay wombok)
- Bok choy
- Ginger root
- Soy sauce
- Mangoes
- Pineapples
- Coconut milk (gata)



Coconut Vinegar



Ginger Root



Sitaw - Long Beans



Amapalaya - Bitter Melon



Soy Sauce



Ube - Purple Yam



Gata - Coconut Milk



Longganisa - Sweet Sausage

## RECIPE

### Pinakbet (Vegetable Stew)

#### Ingredients:

- ¼ cup vegetable oil
- 3 cloves garlic, peeled, and minced
- 1 onion, chopped
- 4 tomatoes, sliced into wedges
- 3 Tbsp. fish paste
- 4 stalks yard long beans (string beans) (sitaw), sliced into 2 inch pieces
- 6 baby bitter gourds (ampalaya), tips cut off and press out inner core of seeds. Leave whole
- 6 winged beans, diagonally sliced into one inch long pieces
- 6 baby okra, stems cut off then left whole
- 3 pieces (approx. 6 inches in length) eggplants, stems removed, and sliced diagonally into 1 inch pieces
- 1 ½ cups squash, peeled and cut into ¾ inch squares
- 1 liter water
- 1 cup pork cracklings

#### Directions:

1. Heat the oil in a pan over moderate (medium) heat. Saute the garlic until golden brown, taking care not to burn.
2. Add the onions and continue cooking until translucent.
3. Add tomato wedges and fish paste and allow to simmer for at 2 minutes.
4. At this point, add in the string beans, bitter gourds, winged beans, the okra, eggplants, and squash.
5. Mix thoroughly and continue cooking for another minute, then pour in the water, and allow to simmer. Continue doing so until all vegetables are done but not overcooked.
6. Add pork cracklings and turn off heat. Serve immediately (this dish goes well with hot rice).



## FLAVOR INTROSPECTIVE

### Coconut Trees; The Tree Of Life

Coconut trees are sometimes called the "tree of life," that could not be truer in the Philippines, where the coconut industry provides a livelihood for 1/3 of the country's population, based on the Philippine Coconut Authority data.

We can give thanks to the coconut tree for numerous products — everything from coconut vinegar to desiccated coconut, coconut oil and more. The coconut blossom has a sap that can be processed to create a syrup which is then dried to form coconut sugar. Coconut water is delicious in vinaigrettes or as an addition to your summer beverage creations, like tropical coconut sangria or cucumber coconut basil aqua fresca.

Coconut milk is lactose free, so it can serve as a milk substitute for those with lactose intolerance. It also makes a great base for smoothies, curries, soup, and stews such as Ginataang Hipon, a Filipino recipe that consists of shrimp cooked in coconut milk. For those who abstain from dairy, coconut products make a great replacement for cream and butter too.



Coconut butter is made from whole coconut flesh, with all the delicious fat and solids included. Its creamy texture spreads well and is wonderful on toast or pancakes.

Coconut oil is very different from most other cooking oils and contains fatty acids which are about 90% saturated.

These medium chain fatty acids are "good fats" that are easily digestible and quickly converted into energy. Coconut oil is highly resistant to oxidation at high heats. For this reason, it is the perfect oil for high-heat cooking methods like frying.

Finally, we would like to highlight coconut vinegar, which is used in Filipino cooking. According to Lynnley Huey, MPH, RD, a registered dietician and nutritionist, coconut vinegar has the following benefits:

- Since it is fermented, coconut vinegar is a natural source of probiotics
- It is also low on the glycemic index, so it will not spike blood sugar
- Coconut vinegar contains all nine essential amino acids

### Filipino Restaurants In The U.S.

Since 2012, Google searches for "Filipino food" have doubled in the U.S. (Baum + Whiteman, 2018). American consumers are gaining awareness of the cuisine, making way for its entry into mainstream markets. Jollibee, the Philippines' largest fast food chain, now has 36 locations in the U.S. since opening its first American location in 1998. Menu items range from the popular "Chickenjoy", a classic Filipino fried chicken served with a secret marinade and a side of rice, to "Halo-Halo", a shaved ice treat with sweet beans, fruits, jellies, and evaporated milk. Another Filipino restaurant that has found success in America is Max's Restaurant. Maximo Gimenez, the chain's creator, opened his first restaurant after preparing meals for American soldiers during World War II. After almost forty years of success in the Philippines, the chain expanded into the United States in 1982.

Other Filipino restaurants that entered America include Gerry's Restaurant & Bar, a family restaurant with three branches, and Red Ribbon Bakery, a bakeshop owned by Jollibee Foods Corp. with 33 locations across the United States. As interest in Filipino cuisine remains steady in the U.S., the number of restaurant chains continues to grow, giving consumers access to the in-demand and on trend flavors of the Philippines.

## RECIPE

### Pork Adobo Sa Gata

(Stewed Pork in Vinegar and Coconut Cream)

#### Ingredients:

- 2 1/4 lb. pork parts, skin may be retained if desired (tough cuts may also be used as this dish is stewed) cut into 1 inch cubes
- 6 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/4 tsp. white pepper
- 1/2 cup vinegar (cane, white, or palm)
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- 2 cups water
- 1 Tbsp. salt
- 2 cups coconut milk
- 1 cup coconut cream
- 2-3 green finger chilies (siling pangsigang)

#### Directions:

1. In a mixing bowl, combine the garlic, white pepper, vinegar, and bay leaves. Add the cubed pork pieces and allow to marinate for at least 45 minutes.
2. Heat the oil in a deep pan over moderate (medium) flame. Saute the pork pieces in the oil until brown on all sides. Save the remaining marinade.
3. Remove excess fat from the pan with a spoon.
4. Add the coconut milk to pan together with marinade and allow to simmer for 30 minutes over medium heat until pork pieces are tender or the liquid has almost evaporated.
5. Add coconut cream and green chilies and allow to simmer over low heat for another 15 to 20 minutes, or until a creamy sauce is formed and pork is tender. Serve hot.



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