



# RECIPE BOOKLET

2020

Add some spice to your holidays with A Trini Christmas Experience!

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## Smoked turkey

Please note: This recipe was written with smoked turkey in mind, but if you love pork, it will work well with ham!

Makes 6-8 servings (depends on the size of your turkey)

### Ingredients

- 1 smoked turkey (any size)
- ½ cup to 1 cup of whole cloves (you might need more if your smoked turkey is very large)

### To make the smoked turkey:

1. Pre-heat your oven to the recommended cooking temperature on the smoked turkey package.
2. Remove the smoked turkey from its plastic package and other wrappings. Don't throw away the cooking instructions! (I have done this before, trust me).
3. Reach inside the cavity of the turkey and remove the extra parts. Discard.
4. Wash the turkey in cold water thoroughly.
5. Put the turkey on a flat surface or a clean kitchen towel.
6. Get your whole cloves and push them, one by one, into the top of the turkey. No need to make a fancy pattern; just push as many as you can into the turkey, leaving about ½ to 1 inch between each clove.
7. Once you've covered the breast and the thighs, also add some to the legs.
8. Cover the entire turkey tightly with foil.
9. Move to a roasting pan. If you have a roasting rack, put the rack in the pan and then add the turkey on top of it.
10. Cover the roasting pan with the roasting pan cover.
11. Bake the smoked turkey according to your package directions.
12. At the end of the baking time, remove the turkey from the oven and let it cook until you can easily remove the foil.
13. Remove the cloves from the turkey and keep it warm.
14. When it's time to serve, slice the turkey and serve with your chosen sides.

If you do this right, there will be lots of leftovers for sandwiches and snacking throughout the holiday season! Don't throw the bones out; you can make a delicious soup or stock with them. If you're not ready to make soup right away, they will freeze beautifully.

## Pastelle pie

Pastelle pie is the perfect alternative to Trinidadian pastelles, which are very labour intensive and involve using a pastelle press to shape the cornmeal dough around the ground beef mixture. A staple at Christmas time, you'll find pastelles or pastelle pie at any household on the island.

Makes 6-8 servings

For the beef mixture:

- 2 Tbsp Vegetable Oil
- 3 Tbsp Minced Onions
- 1 Tbsp Minced Garlic
- 2 Tsp Pimento Pepper/Jalapeños, minced
- 1 Lb. Minced Beef, or Chicken, Pork, Lamb
- 3 Tbsp Minced Chives/green onions
- 1 Tsp Fresh Thyme Leaves, minced or 1/2 Tsp of dried thyme
- 3 Tbsp Tomato Paste
- 2 Tbsp BBQ Sauce
- 1 Tbsp Soy Sauce
- 1/4 Cup Chopped Olives or capers
- 1/4 cup of raisins (optional)
- Salt and Black Pepper to taste

For the Pastelle:

- 3 Cups Milk
- 3 Cups Water
- 3 Oz Butter, melted
- 2 Tbsp Vegetable Oil
- 1 1/2 Tsp Salt
- 1 Tsp Black Pepper
- 1 Tsp Garlic Powder
- 3 Cups Cornmeal
- 3/4 Cup Cheddar Cheese

### To make the Pastelle pie:

1. Place a medium sized skillet over high heat and add the vegetable oil.
2. Sauté the minced onions, garlic and pimentos for 2 minutes.
3. Add the minced meat, chives and thyme leaves and cook until meat turns a slight grey and become grainy in pot, about 5 minutes.
4. Reduce heat to medium and add the tomato paste, BBQ sauce and soy sauce. Stir to combine and add the olives and raisins (if using).

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5. Cook covered for 8 minutes, then remove lid and let simmer for 5 more minutes.
6. Season with salt and black pepper to taste and remove from heat. Set aside.
7. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.
8. Lightly grease a 12 x 9-inch baking dish with Vegetable Oil.
9. To make the pastelle dough, place a medium sauce pan on medium heat and add all the ingredients for the dough except the cornmeal and cheese.
10. Bring mixture to a light simmer where small bubbles break the surface of the liquids then slowly whisk in the cornmeal into the warm liquids.
11. Reduce heat to low, then switch over to a rubber spatula as mixture becomes thicker and continue folding and mixing for a further minute.
12. Remove pan from heat.
13. While mixture is still pliable, divide the dough in half and place half of it into the greased baking dish. Smooth the mixture until it covers the bottom of the dish to about 1/4 inch thick.
14. Place the minced beef filling on top of the layer of cornmeal dough evenly.
15. Gently press out the remaining cornmeal dough over the minced beef to cover it completely over the top.
16. Sprinkle cheese over the top layer and place in the oven to bake for 45 - 50 minutes.
17. Let cool for 10 – 15 minutes before cutting and serving.

This unique and delicious side will disappear at your table this year! The next day, serve yourself a slice as a snack.

## Christmas rice

This rice side dish is called Christmas rice for the colours that the red and green peppers bring.

Makes 4-6 servings

### **Ingredients:**

- 2 tbsp of oil
- 1 medium onion, minced
- Half of a red pepper, finely diced
- Half of a green pepper, finely diced
- 1 1/2 cup of brown rice or your preferred rice, rinsed
- 3 cups of water or stock (or add the amount of liquid recommended on your rice package)
- 1 tsp of salt (I like to use Lawry's Garlic Salt with parsley, but regular salt will do)
- 1/2 tsp of pepper

### **To make the Christmas rice:**

1. To a medium saucepan on medium heat, add the oil.

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2. Once the oil is hot, add the minced onions and cook for 2-3 minutes.
3. When the onions are soft, add the peppers and cook for another 2-3 minutes.
4. Add the rinsed rice. Mix together with the onions and peppers until the rice changes colour and is coated with the oil.
5. Add the liquid (water or stock) and stir.
6. Add the salt and black pepper and stir until the salt is dissolved.
7. Turn up to heat to high and bring to a boil. Once boiling, reduce the heat to simmer and let cook for 30-45 minutes, depending on the rice cooking instructions on your package.
8. At the end of the cooking time, the liquid should be absorbed and the rice soft, but not mushy. Allow to stand for 5-10 minutes before serving.

This mild flavoured rice is the perfect complement to the other dishes in this Trini Christmas menu!

## Cassava salad

Any Trini Christmas meal has to come with a salad of some kind. Cassava salad gives you a wonderful freshness with the green vinaigrette, along with a few fresh veggies for crunch and the creaminess of the cassava.

Please note: this recipe calls for cassava, which is root vegetable very easily found fresh throughout the Caribbean. Preparing fresh cassava is very labour intensive since it involves peeling the tough skin of the cassava and boiling it. I prefer to buy frozen cassava at my grocery store. None of the work with all of the tasty rewards!

Makes 4-6 servings

For the cassava salad:

- 4-6 pieces of frozen cassava (do not thaw)
- 1 tbsp of butter
- 1 tsp of salt
- Enough water to cover the cassava
- 2 carrots, chopped
- 1 stalk of celery, chopped
- ½ cup of green seasoning (see below)
  - 1 bunch of green onions
  - 1 head of garlic, peeled
  - 1 bunch of cilantro - chadon beni (pronounced shadow benny) also known as Mexican cilantro is used in Trinidad. If you can find it, then use 4-5 bunches. Otherwise, North American cilantro is fine
  - ¼ cup of water – use as much water as needed to get your blender going
  - Add ingredients to a blender. Blend until smooth and add to a jar. Set aside.

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- Juice of 2 limes
- 1/4 to 1/3 cup of olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

**To make the cassava salad:**

1. Add the frozen cassava to a medium saucepan. Cover with water and place over high heat.
2. When boiling, add the salt and the butter.
3. Cook the cassava for about 20-30 minutes. Check it at 20 minutes. You want the cassava to be soft, but not mushy.
4. While the cassava is cooking, make the vinaigrette.
5. Place green seasoning in a large bowl. Add the lime juice. Combine and then slowly drizzle in the olive oil, whisking to combine. You can also add all ingredients to a jar and shake vigorously to combine. Add salt and pepper to taste. Set aside.
6. Once the cassava is cooked, remove it from the water and let cool. When it's cool enough to handle, chop it into 1 inch pieces.
7. Add cassava pieces to the vinaigrette in the large bowl. Also add the chopped carrots and celery. Gently combine, being careful not to break up the cassava pieces.
8. Add more salt and pepper to your taste. Serve.

Cassava salad is sure to please the vegetarian or vegan in your family and everyone else who eats it!

**Stew peas**

There probably isn't a Trini meal served without some kind of sauce or gravy. Stew peas is very common year-round since it gives more dimension to the meal with the peas. Then the tasty and rich liquid is delicious over any kind of rice! This recipe calls for pigeon peas which grows wild during peas season in Trinidad, but feel free to substitute canned pigeon peas if you can find them or cooked kidney beans.

Makes 4-6 servings

**Ingredients:**

- 2 Tbsp of oil
- 2 tsp of garlic powder or granulated garlic
- 1 can of pigeon peas (or kidney beans – see above), drained
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 3 cloves of garlic, minced
- Half of a tomato, chopped

- Half of a jalapeno pepper, minced (if you can find fresh pimento peppers, then use 2, finely minced)
- ½ cup of cubed butternut squash or pumpkin
- 5 sprigs of fresh thyme or ½ tsp of dried thyme
- 1 tsp of salt
- ½ tsp ground pepper
- 2 cups of water or stock
- 1 Tbsp of butter (can also use vegan butter)
- 1/8 cup of canned, full fat, coconut milk

### **To make the stew peas:**

1. To a medium saucepan, add the oil.
2. When the oil is hot, add the garlic powder. Let cook until light golden brown in colour.
3. Add the pigeon peas and stir. Stir to cover the peas with the garlic powder and oil.
4. Add the onions, tomatoes, pepper and squash to the saucepan. Stir to cover everything in the spices.
5. Add the water or stock. Add the salt and pepper. Stir to combine.
6. Bring to a boil and reduce heat to a simmer over low heat. Cover with lid. Simmer, uncovered for about 15 minutes or until the squash is soft.
7. Once the squash is soft, add the butter and the coconut milk. Turn up the heat to medium-low and bring to a small simmer. Let simmer for 5 minutes.
8. Taste and add more salt per your preference.
9. Keep warm until ready to serve.

With all of the flavour in these stew peas, it's great as a side dish, but if you want to try them vegan style, then just add Christmas rice and chow down!

### **Sorrel**

Sorrel is the quintessential holiday drink throughout the Caribbean. I prefer to enjoy it year-round though. It's pretty simple to make once you have the sorrel. If you don't live in a city with a Caribbean community or Latin grocery store, then order the dried sorrel from Amazon. When it's made, I store any additional unsweetened sorrel in clean glass jars at the back of the fridge. When I need my sorrel fix, I pull out a couple of jars, add the ingredients and drink up!

### **Ingredients:**

- 1 16 oz pack of dried sorrel, separated
- 12 cups of water, separated
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 12 whole cloves

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- 1-3 tsp of Kola essence (optional)
- 1 cup of sugar (add more to your taste)

### **To make the sorrel:**

1. To a large pot, add ¼ of the package of dried sorrel (about 4 oz).
2. Add 8 cups of water, cinnamon sticks and cloves. Stir. Leave overnight for the sorrel to draw. This step isn't required; however, you will get a stronger sorrel flavour and your dried sorrel will last longer.
3. The next day, bring to a boil and then reduce the heat to a simmer while covered. Simmer for 1 hour, then remove from heat and allow to cool.
4. To mix the sorrel for drinking, put 1-2 cups of the boiled sorrel into a pitcher. Add 4 cups of water, the sugar and the Kola essence (if using). Stir to dissolve the sugar and taste. Add more sugar or more sorrel to your taste.
5. Add the full strength, left over sorrel to glass jars and keep in the fridge.
6. Enjoy with ice! Sorrel also makes a great chaser when mixed with rum (yum)!

### **Ginger beer**

Okay, okay. I know what you're thinking, "Make my own ginger beer?" Trust me, the hardest part about making ginger beer is peeling the ginger and waiting 24 hours to make it into a drink! Ginger beer is synonymous with Trini Christmas and it's another drink I make throughout the year because I love it so much. I also hear it's good for you because of the probiotics. Give it a try!

### **Ingredients:**

- 3 cups of peeled and roughly chopped ginger
- Enough water to blend the ginger
- 10 whole cloves
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 4 cups of water
- 1-2 tsp of Kola essence (optional)
- 1 cup of sugar (or more to your taste)

### **To make the ginger beer:**

1. Add the ginger to a blender. Put enough water with it to blend easily.
2. Blend until the ginger is very fine and the entire mixture looks combined.
3. Pour the mixture into a glass jar. You may need a couple of jars depending on the volume of liquid.
4. Add the cloves and the cinnamon stick. Leave in a dark place overnight or up to 48 hours. I usually leave it in my pantry.
5. After the blended ginger mixture has sat at least overnight, grab your pitcher and a fine strainer. Put the fine strainer over a medium sized bowl. Pour about 2 cups of the blended ginger mixture through the strainer over the bowl. Use the

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back of a spoon to press the ginger so all of the liquid comes out. Pour some water over the ginger and press the ginger again.

6. Discard the pressed ginger. Add the strained liquid to your pitcher. There will be some white stuff at the bottom of the bowl; don't forget to add that to your pitcher too.
7. Add 4 cups of water, 2 cups at a time. Taste at 2 cups and adjust to your desired strength.
8. Add the sugar and the Kola essence (if using). Stir and enjoy!

Once you've made your ginger beer and it sits, you'll notice the separation of the liquid. Before you drink it, shake or stir it to get the full strength of the ginger beer. You can add a shot (or 2) of rum if you like.

Now you've made your own ginger beer, let me show you something delicious that you can make with it. I call it the Gingerango and it's my twist on a mango colada.

### Gingerango (ginger beer and mango cocktail)

While this isn't a traditional Trini Christmas drink, I came upon this as a happy accident one night. I didn't want to drink ginger beer by itself and was also going through a mango phase at the time. I started putting things together and here we are!

Makes 1 serving

#### **Ingredients:**

- 1 cup of frozen or fresh mangoes (skin and seed removed), cubed
- 1 1/2 cup of ginger beer
- 2 oz of dark rum (I love Mount Gay XO Rum or Angostura 1919, but any dark rum will do)
- 1/2 cup of coconut milk
- Note: if using fresh mangoes, add a 1/2 cup of ice

#### **To make the Gingerango:**

1. Add all ingredients to a blender and blend until smooth.

Put on some parang (Trini Christmas music) and enjoy! Trust me, you will bring lots of holiday joy with this drink.

Want more Caribbean recipes? Join our Ultimate Insiders+ fam-a-lay and get a live cooking class every month, virtual vacations and so much more. Go to <https://www.patreon.com/ultimateinsiders> to learn more.

Hope you enjoyed A Trini Christmas Experience! Happy Holidays!