

Sadza ne Nyama ye Huku

(Sadza with Chicken Stew)

by Solomon Murungu

Chicken Stew Ingredients: (5 adults Serving)

- 2 lbs fresh boneless chicken breast
- 3 - 3 1/2 lb. of very ripe red tomatoes
- 1 bunch scallions (about 6-8 scallion plants)
- 2 medium-size onions
- ginger root
- red pepper
- black pepper
- chili powder
- parsley flakes
- salt
- olive oil

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Mealie-Meal - In various parts of the world there is "Parenta white maize meal". In North America you can substitute Cream of Wheat or Pillsbury Farina for corn meal. Farina seems to work better. If your community has an ethnic food store - Puerto Rican, African or Caribbean Food market, chances are they may have white maize corn meal. Feel free to experiment with the many types of mealie-meal available.

Accessories

- large sauce-pan
- medium (8-12") diameter frying pan
- mugoti (Sh) - a sadza stirring wooden spoon made from a hardwood that does not fray or splinter.
- various containers

Preparing the Ingredients

- slice up two onions into small chunks and store in an air-tight Tupperware container.
- cut up all tomatoes into 1/4" pieces and store in a large container
- skin and finely cut about 3 ounces of fresh ginger - and store in an air-tight container to maintain freshness
- cut up the chicken into 1/4-inch cubes
- cut up 1 bunch of scallions into 1/4" pieces and store in an air-tight container. Keep both the root and leaves!

Preparing the Sauce.

- Cover the bottom of a large sauce-pan with olive oil and apply medium to high heat.
- When the oil is very hot (and thin), stir fry the ginger alone for 1/2-minute.
- Add the onions and continue to stir fry. (Leave a tiny bit of ginger and onions for next step).
- Sprinkle enough chili powder to redden the onions and ginger.
- While stirring constantly also add a tinge of red pepper, a fair amount of black pepper.
- Add 1 - 2 teaspoons of salt and continue to stir. Using your finger, grab a half teaspoon worth of dried parsley leaves and pulverize it with your fingers while sprinkling in the pan. Continue to stir.
- The contents should shimmer from the heat and a spicy aroma should be evident.
- Turn the heat to high. The heat will begin to brown/blacken the bottom of the pan.
- Add the cut tomatoes in 4 to 5 portions at a time while stirring constantly. You aim to maintain boiling point while you add tomatoes.
- When all the tomatoes are in, and the sauce has reached/maintained boiling point, turn the heat down to medium and let boil for 10 to 15 minutes. Stir and mash the tomatoes occasionally.
- Re-sprinkle some more chili powder and stir. After five minutes turn the heat down to low, where the sauce is barely at boiling point. Cook for 10-20 minutes stirring and mashing the tomatoes as needed. [At this point if you have other things to do, you can simply turn the heat off and go off to do other things and return to the recipe later.]

Preparing the Chicken (or Beef)

- Cover the bottom of a frying sauce-pan with olive oil and apply medium to high heat.
- When the oil is very hot, carefully tilt the pan to spread the oil so as to cover the walls of the frying pan. Add the tiny amount of ginger and onions from last step and stir fry for a couple of seconds.
- Apply high heat. Add all the cut chicken into a large pile in the center of the frying pan.
- Allow bottom pieces to cook and spread/stir the rest around the pan while stirring. Do not allow any of it to burn.
- After a while the water in the chicken will cover the bottom of the pan and boil.
- Continued to stir and add, chili powder, black pepper, red pepper, salt and parsley leaves.
- Allow all the water to boil off and continue to stir until the bottom of the pan is dark brown from the heat and spices.
- Mix the chicken with the tomato sauce in the tomato saucepan and stir to ensure an even mixture. Keep under low heat - barely boiling. Let simmer for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally.
- After 30 minutes or so turn heat off but keep saucepan on the hot burner to use the residual heat.

Cooking Sadza (Shona: "Kubika Sadza")

- Before you begin, bring to boil about one gallon of water in a kettle.
- Add 5 cups of mealie-meal in a 3 quart saucepan. Add enough cold water to completely soak the mealie-meal. Most of the water will be absorbed by the mealie-meal.
- Add little more water to allow you to stir with a mugoti into a very thick white mixture and place saucepan over medium high heat, and while stirring add boiling water slowly.
- Continue to stir evenly and constantly to prevent the mealie-meal from settling and hardening at the bottom of the pan. (If this happens you end



up with lumpy sadza - in Shona: "Sadza rine Mapundu" - literally "Sadza with pimples".)

- As the mixture heats up the texture changes from rough to smooth. Continue to add water to loosen the mixture and allow it boil with enough movement - some upward spattering will occur (Shona: "kukwata").
- At this stage, the sadza is in porridge state. If the water/mealie-meal mixture is just right, the sadza will boil without spilling over. However if it is too thin it might spill over, especially if you put a the saucepan cover on. Keep an eye on it.
- Allow the mixture to boil under medium high heat for about 5 minutes. Add the mealie-meal (upfu) 1/2 cup at a time and stir. At this point the sadza requires relatively heavy stirring as it thickens.
- Continue to add upfu and stir evenly until the sadza takes on the appearance of mashed potatoes. Be careful not to make it too thick otherwise it becomes too hard (Sh:"chidhina")- literally "brick" and not as enjoyable to eat.
- After the sadza reaches the desired texture and is well mixed, turn heat off an cover and let it sit for a couple of minutes before serving. Good luck!

To Cook and to Serve

Before serving, bring the chicken stew to a boil again. Turn heat off completely and add the cut scallions. Stir evenly to spread scallions in the stew. Let sit for 1 minute and serve while scallions are green and crunchy. Stew is served in a bowl and sadza on a plate.

How to eat Sadza neNyama

Sadza is finger food. However the first time around you may wish to use a spoon until you have had a chance to observe an experienced person eat with their hands - it is quite an art! Wash your hand well in a bowl of clean water. Using your right hand (Sh: rudyi -lit. 'the one used to eat') partition a small chunk of sadza and mold it into a little round or oval ball of sadza called "musuwa we sadza" in your palm. Be careful not to burn yourself. Dip (Sh: tonha) it in the soup (Sh: muto) and bite off and eat a sizable chunk. Re-mold the remainder of your sadza in your palm and continue the process. Use your fingers to pick up and eat chunks of chicken or beef. Enjoy!

Sadza is normally shared by several people all eating from the same plate and bowl sitting in a circle on the floor. This environment provides ample opportunity to learn sharing as one has to pace themselves accordingly while eating with others. It is particularly interesting to watch children of different ages eat from the same servings. The older children, who may be capable of eating very quickly and consume most of food at the expense of younger slower kids. They will either pace themselves at the rate of younger children or consume a fair portion but leave enough food for the younger children to finish at their own pace - a tremendous way to instill sharing and responsibility.

Information retrieved from

http://www.zambuko.com/mbirapage/resource_guide/pages/culture/sadza_text.html