

Simple Jamaican Recipes to Try at Home

Nothing compares to the thrill of trying an exciting new food from a faraway land. If you want to add a few exotic treats to your dining repertoire, Jamaican cuisine is the way to go. For this reason, we have prepared three simple Jamaican recipes or some of the most vibrant and unique dishes that are easy to execute in the comfort of your own kitchen. Let's begin, with these top three simple Jamaican recipes.

Braised Oxtails with Butter Beans

Oxtail is traditionally a tough cut of meat that many foodies in the Western hemisphere tend to steer clear of. However, when cooked right, it becomes tender and hearty, so why not serve it for dinner today? The African influences present in Jamaican cuisine have turned a simple recipe such as braised oxtail with butter beans into a national dish worth trying any day.

Ingredients:

- 3 pounds oxtails;
- 1 can butter beans;
- 8 peeled garlic cloves;
- 3 chopped white onions;
- 3 chopped scallions;
- 2 carrots cut into chunks;
- 1 deseeded Scotch Bonnet chili pepper;
- 3 Tablespoon soy sauce;
- 2 Tablespoon vegetable oil;
- 8 ounces pearl onions;
- and salt and pepper to taste

Instructions:

1. Add the garlic, onions, scallions, and chili pepper into the food processor and blitz them into a smooth paste. Scrape the resulting mixture into a bowl and incorporate the soy sauce. Put the oxtails in and toss them for an even coat of marinade, then refrigerate for at least four hours. If you want the aroma to seep into every nook and cranny, it is advisable to leave them overnight.
2. After all the flavors have combined nicely, wipe away the marinade and throw the oxtails into a pan. Sear them until they are brown on all sides, then set them aside on a plate. This shouldn't take longer than 12 minutes. Put the marinade into the pan and caramelize it nicely, then return the oxtails on the stove alongside four cups of water.
3. Bring the sauce to a boil and set the heat to low. Leave the mixture to simmer for three

hours and re-add water when necessary. Stir the mixture every 30 minutes or so to prevent sticking. After the oxtails are nice and tender, add the carrots and pearl onions. Cook for 15 minutes, or until they are soft. Finally, add the butter beans directly from the can so that they warm through.

4. The worst thing you can do to quality pieces of oxtail is under cook them. Therefore, make sure not to hasten the process. Leave them on heat for the recommended amount of time. In fact, they can go for as long as four hours on the stove, and they will become even more tender. It is also a suitable meat for the slow cooker. The choice is all yours.

Steamed Shrimp with Okra

What would a list of the best Caribbean recipes be without a little seafood? The two main ingredients of this next Jamaican dish are shrimp and okra, two staples in the cuisine of the island that pair together beautifully.

Ingredients:

- 1 pound peeled and de-veined shrimp;
- 2 cups sliced okra;
- 1 medium-sized carrot;
- 1 large red bell pepper;
- 1 Scotch Bonnet chili pepper;
- 2 minced garlic cloves;
- 2 scallion stalks;
- ½ Julienned onion;
- 1 pack fish seasoning;
- 2 cups water;
- ½ cup coconut milk;
- 2 tbsp olive oil;
- 1 tsp butter;
- and salt and pepper to taste

Instructions:

1. Marinate the shrimp with plain salt and pepper, then set it aside.
2. Mix the fish seasoning with water to create fish stock, then heat up the olive oil in the pan.
3. Sauté the garlic, bell pepper, chili pepper, onion, carrot, and okra together for three minutes until they begin to soften.
4. Add the fish stock, scallion, coconut milk, and butter and bring everything to a boil.
5. Add the shrimp to the pan and cook in the sauce for 3 to 5 minutes. It should ideally turn pink and be tender. Make sure not to leave them on the heat for too long, or the shrimp will

become rubbery. To ensure this doesn't happen, keep your eye on the pan for the entire duration of the preparation process.

6. You can serve the dish as is, or with a side of simple rice.

Jerk Chicken with Rice and Peas

Jerk chicken is an essential dish in Jamaican cuisine. In the country, it is a common street food in stands on the beach or near the main tourist attraction, but also a popular addition to the menu of many restaurants. The recipe for it is a bit more intricate, but you cannot say you've made an island meal at home without including it in the rotation.

Ingredients:

Chicken:

- 10 to 12 large chicken thighs with the bone still in;
- 1 halved lime;
- hot sauce to serve

Jerk marinade:

- 1 bunch spring onions;
- 1 juiced lime;
- 1 piece of ginger;
- 3 Scotch Bonnet chilies, seeds removed;
- 3 Scotch Bonnet chili peppers;
- ½ chopped onion;
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme;
- 3 Tablespoon brown sugar;
- 2 Tablespoon vegetable oil;
- 2 Tablespoon sauce;
- 1 Tablespoon ground allspice;
- Rice and peas:
- 1 14 ounce can coconut milk;
- 1 cup of basmati rice;
- 2 cans kidney beans;
- 2 thyme sprigs;
- 2 finely chopped garlic cloves;
- 1 bunch sliced spring onions;
- 1 teaspoon ground allspice;
- salt and pepper to taste

Instructions:

1. Combine all ingredients for the jerk marinade in a food processor and blend them together until they are puréed and ready to smear on the meat. Do not add water or any additional liquid, as you want the paste to be thick. Taste it and check if it needs any tweaking. Of course, by following the exact quantities in the recipe, the taste will be a rich and savory one.
2. The secret Jamaican touch to the sauce lies in the allspice, a dried berry picked from the flowering branches of the tropical evergreen *Pimenta dioica*. A total of 5,700 fruit go into one pound of ground allspice. Its taste resembles that of nutmeg, cinnamon, pepper, and juniper blended together.
3. Make a few slashes in the chicken thighs and pour the marinade over them. Rub it in thoroughly until it reaches every single crevice, then leave it in the fridge overnight. For the authentic jerk experience, barbecue the chicken on a grill with wood chip smoke for 30 minutes. The heat should be slow and indirect.
4. While the poultry is smoking and charring, cook the rice and peas. Rinse the basmati rice with cold water, then put into a pot and pour the coconut milk on top together with the seasoning. Add one and half cups of cold water on top and bring to a boil, then leave the rice steam for 10 more minutes. Mix in the kidney beans, then cook for five more minutes. Serve with hot sauce.

Simple Jamaican Recipes: The Bottom Line

Jamaican cuisine relies on common ingredients with a fun and novel twist. Any of the three simple Jamaican recipes presented above make for a delicious and innovative dinner to share with your friends and family. So, what are you waiting for? Put your chef's hat on, because it's time to impress!

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