Slow Food®

Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity

Slow Food Uganda

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Uganda
From Earth to Table

Traditional Products and Dishes

Second edition - 2018

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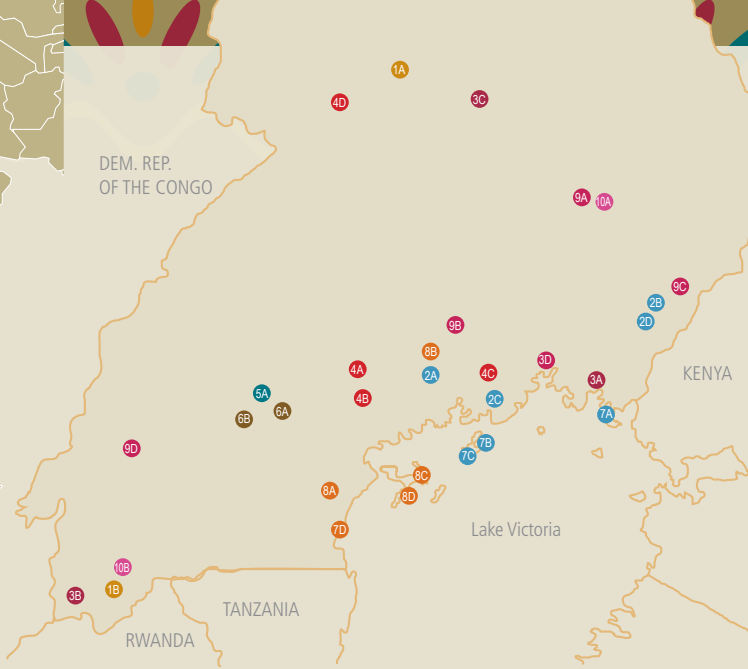
The Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity and Intesa Sanpaolo are working together to develop the Slow Food network in Uganda, creating gardens and Presidia and initiating many other activities with food communities.

The Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity thanks the Slow Food network in Uganda for its collaboration and recipes.

With this publication, Slow Food seeks to promote local products and traditional recipes from around Uganda.



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INTRODUCTION

Journalist, anthropologist, and cultural promoter Madjeng Sek was one of the very first Slow Food members in Africa, and the convivium leader in Dakar for many years. Already 15 years ago he was saying that the nascent middle class in Senegal ate French at breakfast (croissants, baguettes, jam, butter), American at lunch (hamburgers and fries), and Italian at dinner (pasta)—In other words, everything but African. And these choices were not based on food preferences as much as a kind of affirmation of status that involved the suppression of the simple, humble foods of traditional local cuisine. For foreigners travelling in the countries of sub-Saharan Africa, it has never been easy to get an idea of African cuisine. In the hotels and restaurants with some level of comfort, the cooking was – and unfortunately still is in most places – a kind of paraphrase of so-called international cuisine, with imported ingredients and seasonings. The restaurants that offered something more than a mixed plate of meat and vegetables were and still are very few, and none of them bothered to try and include even a minimum of local foods. Without the opportunity to eat in a family home, it was, and still is, very hard to form an impression of the local cuisine.

Can we say that now, after 15 years, the situation has improved in any appreciable way? Yes, something is changing. There is a very slow, but constant, shift. Restaurants are opening that are proud to serve traditional recipes and, thanks in part to the Slow Food Presidia, we are seeing the formation of communities of farmers and fishers with an increasing awareness of the value of their work and the importance of preserving food biodiversity in their local area. A growing contingent of young people in many sub-Saharan countries has had the chance to get to know the Slow Food gardens, and has come into contact in some way with local species and varieties. These young people will be able to voice new demands and to reject the social and economic domination of imported foods. I repeat, this is a slow process, but it is taking place.

To ensure that this movement lays solid foundations and can spread in the best possible way, populations must understand what still remains in their area that is specific, local, and traditional. Young people don't need to go to cooking school or follow university courses, welcome though that is. Much progress can still be made with less effort—for example, by contributing to the inventory of species, varieties, breeds, and fish that still live in their country. And that is exactly what this book wants to do, to make available to anyone who believes it is right to "eat local" a practical guide to the food heritage

of the country where they live. Africa is not a land of processed foods, but a land where one can still grasp the sublime simplicity of a grain, the unique nature of a herb, the distinctive flavor of meat from an animal fed only on grass and hay. A gastronomic quest should start from here, from the feeling of ancient purity that this book wants to capture.

This is the starting point for the Slow Food network in Uganda, which, under the leadership of the young Edward Mukiibi, a Slow Food International vice-president, is travelling around the country, interviewing women and elderly farmers, cataloguing products and knowledge, creating community and school food gardens, establishing Presidia (for local varieties of coffee, bananas, yams, and more), and organizing Earth Markets.

This extraordinary work, the result of the enthusiasm, passion, and experience of many young people from the Ugandan Slow Food network, has been made possible thanks to the important contribution of Intesa Sanpaolo.

Piero Sardo

President of the Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity

In this book we give the scientific name for every plant and animal: one or two Latin words used to distinguish its genus and species. These terms are useful because they are shared by the international scientific community and they allow plants and animals to be easily identified. The local names are the result of research carried out by the Terra Madre network, and they vary from region to region and from village to village. That's why we've only listed the most common.

"Gifted by Nature" is our national slogan, and indeed Uganda is the richest among East African countries in terms of biodiversity and proud to be one of the countries with the most diverse foods in the world. The truth is that a vote of thanks is owed to the local, traditional, and indigenous food species, and to the great caretaking skills shown by the small-scale peasant and artisan producers practicing traditional farming systems in different regions of the country.

From east to west, north to south, Uganda – the Pearl of Africa – is endowed with a range of climates and environments that encourage the flourishing of diverse forms of both flora and fauna: Macro and micro, terrestrial and aquatic. The same conditions are ideal for the farming of a wide range of indigenous African species that have supported local communities through tough times. In Uganda, as in other African countries, there are specific crops for each season, an edible insect for every time of the year, and animals adapted to every specific type of vegetation, altitude, and climate. All these products are closely linked to the culture, traditions, and beliefs of the Ugandan people. The country's 40-plus ethnic groups are all united by one important asset: Diversity. Slow Food is working to defend the complex diversity of Ugandan foods by promoting the "Gifted by Nature" slogan from a food perspective.

This book is the first in a series by Slow Food Uganda, published by Slow Food International, highlighting some of the major food products that form the rich diversity of the Pearl of Africa.

The main aim of this handbook is to draw attention to some unique foods and related recipes from different cultures and regions in Uganda, taking into account traditional farming systems and agroecological zones. Since biodiversity is the foundation of food and life, we must put more emphasis on preserving our rich food biodiversity if we are to sustainably feed the growing population, and this kind of documentation is of vital importance.

The most crucial aspect is that the text here represents a collective contribution made by experts, small-scale producers, cooks and chefs, elderly men and women, as well as young people from all regions of the country, with the hope that the information will be widely shared and used by individuals, chefs, farmers, food experts, and nutritionists, among others, in order to help build a diversified food system, a prerequisite for a better, more diversified, and more nutritious diet in Uganda and Africa in general.

Edward Mukiibi,
Vice-President of Slow Food International and President of Slow Food Uganda

www.slowfood.com - www.slowfooduganda.org

SLOW FOOD UGANDA

Slow Food is an international association with members and supporters in over 150 countries around the world, promoting access to good, clean and fair food for everyone. Slow Food believes food is tied to many other aspects of life, including culture, politics, agriculture, and the environment. Through our food choices we can collectively influence how food is cultivated, produced, and distributed, and as a result bring about great change.

Slow Food is active in Uganda with a network of over 10,000 food activists organized in ten convivia (local chapters). Our activities are aimed at protecting local food biodiversity, promoting sustainable agriculture, and raising awareness among consumers about the importance of local healthy food consumption. Active members are small-scale producers, cooks (through the Slow Food Chefs' Alliance), teachers, students, agronomists, journalists, academics, and many others from a wide range of different backgrounds, each enriching the network with their experience. All together, they form the Terra Madre communities of Uganda, the people who care for our natural resources.
In particular, the Slow Food network in Uganda is implementing the following projects:

Presidia projects that support quality food production at risk of extinction, protect unique regions and ecosystems, recover traditional processing methods, and safeguard native breeds and local plant varieties.

10,000 Gardens in Africa, a project that uses farmer ownership to empower African food communities to achieve food sovereignty and security. Over 300 school and community gardens have been established in Uganda so far, managed by local women, men, and children of all ages.

Ark of Taste, a catalogue of traditional foods at risk of extinction.

Earth Markets, farmers' markets where food producers come to sell locally produced, seasonal foods.

Slow Food Youth Network , a network of young people linked to the Slow Food philosophy and activities, including the Food Academy, which educates the world's future leaders, entrepreneurs, farmers, and consumers.

1 GRAINS

Several of Uganda's traditional grains, now neglected, could become major contributors to the well-being of communities around the country. Alongside the few grains known countrywide, there exist a huge number of other native grains and food plants that have been feeding people for thousands of years. Over 100 native grain seeds are being, or have been, eaten in East Africa, but in modern times only a handful are given attention by researchers and the development industry, and even those few are largely underappreciated. Despite being ignored and judged less useful than wheat, rice or maize, Uganda's indigenous grains have the potential to make an essential contribution to keeping the country fed.

Finger Millet

Local names: *obulo* in central Uganda, *oburo* in the west, *akuma* in the Teso language in the east, *kan* in the north
Scientific name: *Eleusine coracana*

Finger millet is one of the most important traditional grains in Uganda, where farmers have been cultivating it for thousands of years. Finger millet is a tufted annual grass that grows to a height of between 40 and 130 centimeters and takes roughly six months to mature. It has narrow graminaceous leaves and many tillers and branches. The head consists of a group of digitately arranged spikes. Finger millet is one of the most important and nutritious cereal grains grown in Uganda, and is rich in methionine, an amino acid known to be lacking in a number of staple diets in the country. It serves not only as a staple food crop, but is also an important source of income for rural women who process it and turn it into fermented and non-fermented beverages. The civil war in northern Uganda posed a serious threat to the native finger millet varieties and led to the introduction new fast-growing varieties, which do not provide consistent yields once replanted or trimmed. Slow Food is working with food communities in northern and northeastern Uganda (where the Teso people prepare a millet bread called *atapa* and a fermented millet brew called *ajon*) to preserve the native variety of finger millet.

▶ Bushera or Ekitiribita (Finger Millet Porridge)

Ingredients for 4 people
125 g finger millet flour
500 ml cold water
2 litres boiling water
sugar

Method

In a clean bowl, thoroughly mix the finger millet flour with cold water until a uniform brown liquid is obtained. Pour the mixture into the boiling water and continue to cook, stirring, for about 7 minutes. Add sugar to taste if desired and serve either warm or cold.
Note: *Bushera* millet porridge is normally prepared for breakfast or for the evenings in Uganda. Milk or tamarind juice is sometimes added to the porridge to enhance its taste.

Sorghum

Local names: *muwemba* in central Uganda, *mugusha* in the southwest
Scientific name: *Sorghum bicolor*

A vigorous cane-like grass, approximately 5 meters tall, sorghum comes in many varieties in Uganda, most of which are annual. Its leaves look much like those of maize and a single plant will have between 7 and 12 leaves depending on the cultivar. The flower head is usually a compact panicle, and each head carries two types of flowers, one sessile, with both female and male parts, and the other pedunculate and usually male. Sorghum grains are smaller than those of maize but have a similar starchy endosperm. Like millet, sorghum is also one of the most important traditional grains of Uganda. It features in many staple dishes in northern Uganda and is also used in a number of ceremonial beverages in southwestern, central, and northern Uganda. Over the years, sorghum-growing regions have developed traditional processing methods that seek to improve the nutritional value and palatability of sorghum products, which are derived from a number of cultivars. Slow Food is working with food communities around Lira in northern Uganda and around Kabale in southwestern Uganda to preserve traditional local sorghum varieties and their products.

▶ Matured Sorghum Porridge

Ingredients for 4 people
clean filtered water
500 g sorghum flour

Method

In a clean kettle, bring 2 litres of water to boil. In a bowl, mix the sorghum flour into cold water and stir until there are no lumps left (it is normal for some particles to remain). Put a saucepan on the fire and add the hot water from the kettle. Pour the mixture from the bowl into the saucepan and continue stirring until the color of the porridge changes to black and a foamy liquid starts rising to the top. Pour the hot porridge into a medium-sized pot and dilute it with cold clean water. Cover the porridge and let sit for 12 hours. After this time the porridge is ready for consumption. There is no need to add sugar.
Note: Serve at any time, especially after a meal.

2 Starchy staples

Uganda is home to a wide variety of little-known crops. Traditionally, each region and ethnic group gives value to a specific staple food as a base crop. For example, green bananas play an essential role in the Central Region, while cassava is a staple for people living in West Nile, bamboo shoots are equally important to easterners of the Mount Elgon area, and, of course, if one visits Kabale in the southwest they will most certainly eat sorghum. This diversity of staple foods along with the commitment and hard work of small-scale farmers has made Uganda a breadbasket, not only for its own dense population, but also for neighboring countries. This is also thanks to the region's fertile soil and reliable rainfall, which lead to high food productivity. A wealth of knowledge about staple foods in different regions has historically been of great importance to those living in Uganda.

Green Banana

Local name: *Matooke*

Scientific name: *Musa* spp.

Over 50 cultivars of bananas, including *nakitembe, musakala, muvubo, kibuzi, namwezi, mbwe zirume, njoogabakazi* and *nfuuka*, to name a few, are traditionally the major source of food in central, and parts of western, Uganda. At the same time, the sale of fresh bananas as well as their various products is a source of income for communities and contributes to raising their standard of living. This easily digested staple produces more food for the same cost than any other fresh fruit or vegetable or even fish, meat, or eggs. The individual fruits are about 6 centimeters long, depending on the cultivar or variety, and have a dark green peel. Bananas represent food security for households in the central and western parts of the country, and in the Baganda culture, the Nakitembe variety is ceremonially presented by the groom to the bride's family during traditional marriage ceremonies. The bananas are generally harvested before they become fully ripe, when they contain more starch and less sugar. Delicious and highly nutritious, the bananas can be used in a number of ways: Steamed, baked, boiled, fried, served as chips, French fries, and so on. The banana is a high-power fuel producer for the body, besides being rich in beneficial salts and base-forming minerals, and of great value as a food for children. The ripe *matooke* can be steamed in their peels and served as desserts and are also popular with children.

Staple foods like bananas - of which there are hundreds of traditional varieties - are replaced by hybrid plants or even fruits that have been created in a laboratory. The most fertile land is sold to big foreign investors for commercial monocultures like palm oil, maize or coffee, while forestry and water resources are given to third parties to manage, not the local communities. Exotic breeds like Friesian cattle are promoted, along with standardized tastes (instant coffee, a few fish species, artificial fruit juices).

▶ Katogo (Green Banana Stew)

Ingredients for 4 people
2 clusters of matooke bananas
500 g groundnut paste or 500 g cow or goat offal or 500 g fresh beans (any kind)
1 onion
2 tomatoes
salt
cooking oil

Method

Peel the bananas and set them aside, properly covered.
Prepare the sauce: For groundnuts, dissolve the groundnut paste in 250 ml of water in a bowl. In a separate saucepan, bring water to a boil then add the diluted groundnut paste and add the onion and tomatoes, chopped, directly into the sauce. Add the bananas and then cook over low heat for about 30 minutes, adding salt to taste.
For offals, clean the offals and cut them into cubes, then boil them in water until they are soft. Chop the onion and tomatoes and fry them in a little cooking oil, then add the offal and bananas fingers, add water to cover the bananas, and cook until the bananas are soft, adding salt to taste.
For beans, boil the beans in water until they are soft and ready. In a separate saucepan, fry the chopped onion and tomatoes in a little oil. Once the tomatoes are soft, add the cooked beans and the bananas in layers to ensure a uniform mix. Cook until the bananas are soft, adding salt to taste.
Note: *Katogo* is usually prepared for breakfast or a light dinner.

Eat local
Cultivating, breeding, and eating local food is good for the economy because it supports small-scale producers, is often healthier as produce is fresher, and is good for communities as it gives them pride in their heritage and territory, and safeguards local food traditions.

Smoked Bamboo Shoots

Local name: *malewa* in Lugisu/Lumasaba, eastern Uganda
Scientific name: *Yushania alpina*

Malewa is obtained by smoking and drying crushed bamboo shoots. Harvest (which involves digging up the shoots with a hand hoe) takes place in May and June on the high slopes of Masaaba (Mount Elgon) in eastern Uganda. Though the fresh shoots (which are also called malewa) can be eaten, they have a very short shelf life and cannot be kept in the household for long. To improve the shelf life, the shoots are crushed, smoked for about six hours, and then dried. A unique delicacy eaten for over 3,000 years, malewa is a highly cherished traditional treat among the Bagishu living on Masaaba. Other Bantu-speaking peoples in the eastern mountains have also adopted the dish and for those that love attending ceremonies like circumcisions, weddings, graduations, and others where buffets are prepared, the party is not complete unless malewa is served. Once boiled, malewa can be eaten on its own or made into a sauce to complement most dishes. The latter is particularly popular among the Bagishu living around Mbale, Sironko, Bududa, Manafwa, and Bulambuli. *Matooke* (green banana) and malewa remain inseparable at most meals prepared in the region.

▶ Malewa with Groundnuts

Ingredients for 4 people
3 malewa shoots
250 g groundnut paste
1 piece rock salt
salt

Method

Soak the malewa in a saucepan of water for about 30 minutes, then put the saucepan on the fire and heat for about 10 minutes. Wait for the water to cool and remove the malewa. In a bowl, wash the malewa thoroughly in cold water to remove the smoke coating, making sure the malewa turns from black to cream or light brown in color. In another bowl dissolve the groundnut paste in cold water. Cut the malewa joints off the shoots and chop the middle parts into smaller pieces. Place them in a saucepan, adding a cup of water and some rock salt to make the malewa more tender. Place on the heat and leave to boil for about 20 minutes. Finally, add the dissolved groundnut and salt to taste and let the sauce simmer gently to develop the flavor. Remove from the heat and serve hot or cold. Note: Malewa can be eaten raw, steamed, or boiled. It is best served with matooke, sweet potatoes, *posho*, rice, or cassava.

Climbing Yams

Local names: *balugu* and *ndaggu* in central Uganda
Scientific name: *Dioscorea dumetorum*

Uganda is home to numerous species and ecotypes of climbing yams, which have more than ten different local names that are used depending on their morphological and physiological structures. The climbing vine known as *balugu* has been cultivated in Uganda for generations, and grows up to 6 to 8 meters tall. It is traditionally cultivated in the Bukunja-Buikwe district but has now spread to many other parts of the country. The root tubers grow in a bunch or on their own, and can weigh up to 80 kilograms. Their flesh is white or pale or dark yellow. Traditionally, the tuber is consumed steamed and served with beans, groundnuts and vegetables. It requires thorough boiling or sun drying to remove its toxic constituents before eating. Different commonly cultivated varieties of balugu include *kyetutumula* (the most common), *luyiki, nandigoya, mukulu jjuuni, kisebe,* and *kikongo*, among others. Another species is called *ndaggu* (in Nganda, Nsowe, and Nziba). Other edible varieties like *kaama* are yet to be fully domesticated because the deep-growing tubers are difficult to harvest.

Air Yam

Local names: *kobe* in central Uganda, *lisankonyo* in the east
Scientific name: *Dioscorea bulbifera*

The air yam is an important clan totem in central Uganda. It is also known as climbing yam, air potato, and yam potato. This special plant requires little water and no synthetic fertilizer, and thrives even with limited space. It grows well if planted alongside woody plants, as the latter provide physical support for this climbing species. As is the case with many traditional vegetables, the air yam is resistant to pests and disease.

The dark brown bulbils that grow at the base of the leaves are the most commonly eaten part of the plant. To detoxify them, the bulbils must be soaked and then boiled or steamed. The bulbils are ready for harvest about six months after planting, and the plant is productive for about two years. The bulbils can be stored for more than six months uncooked, and up to two weeks cooked. In Mbale, elders say that this plant is medicinal. It was always given to boys who had just been circumcised in order to accelerate the healing process.

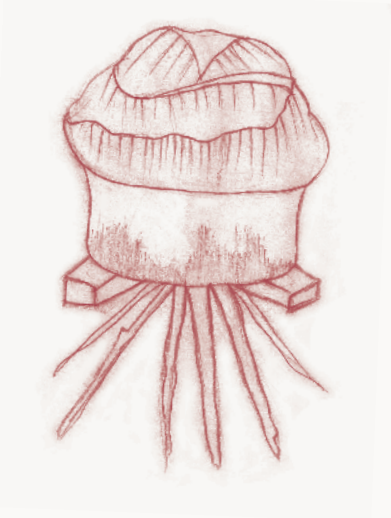
▶ Steamed Bitter Yams or Air Yams

Ingredients for 4 people
5 kg yams
2 banana leaves
water

Method

Do not peel the yams, but wash thoroughly and wrap in banana leaf. Pour some water in a saucepan, put in the banana leaf petiole and midribs, locally known as emizingonyo, to create a base, and cover them with another banana leaf. Place the wrapped yam into the saucepan and cover well with more banana leaves and another saucepan. Place the saucepan on the fire and steam for up to 2 hours. Once the yams are cooked, remove the saucepan from the fire and then unwrap and peel the soft, cooked yams.

Note: Serve hot or cold with any desired accompaniment, for example a thick sauce of beef, fish, chicken, beans, or vegetables.



3 VEGETABLES AND PULSES

The world outside of Uganda knows little about the country's traditional vegetables and pulses. These plants are characterized by their nutritional qualities and have the potential to boost food sovereignty. Vegetables and pulses in Uganda are grown on a small scale, mainly for domestic consumption. The country is home to a wide variety of vegetables and legumes native to tropical Africa, and some are still gathered from the wild for local use. They generally thrive in the well-drained fertile soil of cultivated fields, home gardens, waste dumps, and along the slopes of trenches with a sunny exposure. These crops make good accompaniments for staple foods like cassava, potatoes, and yams.

Groundnut

Local names: *binyebwa* in central Uganda, *maido* in the east
Scientific name: *Arachis hypogaea*

Unlike in other countries where groundnuts (peanuts) are eaten as snacks or as a condiment, in Uganda they are an integral part of everyday meals. Groundnut paste is used to prepare different dishes at home and for special events, functions, and traditional ceremonies. The most delicious traditional dish, very exotic to foreign visitors, is groundnut *luwombo*. Luwombo is a traditional Buganda cooking method of steaming stews wrapped in packets made from scorched banana leaves, tied with banana fibers. This cooking method dates back to 1887, during the reign of Ssekabaka Mwanga, when it was introduced to the royal table by Kawunta, the king's personal chef at the time, and officially launched as one of the royal food preparation methods. Luwombo is a fairly common method these days, used especially during holidays. It is well known across central Uganda and is now spreading to other parts of the country. Examples of common types of luwombo include groundnut and dry or smoked fish, mushroom, smoked meat, and a plain groundnut version that is particularly delicious.

▶ Groundnut and Mushroom Luwombo

Ingredients for 3 medium-sized *mpombo* (plural of *luwombo*)
young banana leaves
250 g clean mushrooms
500 g groundnut paste (crushed groundnuts mixed with water)
1 onion
3 tomatoes
2 garlic cloves
30 g curry powder
1 tsp salt
banana fibers

Method

Cut off the petiole and the entire midrib of the banana leaves, scorch the now clean banana leaf laminas on an open fire for a few seconds, and set them aside.

Soak the mushrooms in a bowl of cold water and, in another bowl, dissolve the groundnut paste in cold water.

Chop the onion, tomatoes and garlic into very small pieces. Set the scorched banana leaves in a bowl one after the other, put in the mushrooms followed by the tomatoes, onions, garlic, and curry powder in reasonable amounts. Add a little salt and pour in the groundnut. Wrap up and tie to close with a banana fiber.

Prepare a saucepan: Add water and set in the petiole and midribs previously cut from the banana leaves. Arrange them in such a way that they support the mpombo, avoiding contact with water. Cover them with another fresh banana leaf and set the mpombo on top. Cover everything with three or four fresh banana leaves and put on the fire to start steaming.

Cook for about an hour and serve with steamed green bananas, sweet potatoes, cassava, yam, or any food of your choice.

Pumpkin

Local names: *essunsa* or *ensujju* in Luganda, *obututu* in Banyankole, *igihaza* in Rufumbira
Scientific name: *Curcubita maxima*

Pumpkins grow in most parts of Uganda, often as a cover crop to protect the soil from erosion and moisture evaporation. It is believed that crops intercropped with pumpkins give a higher yield. Different regions have different varieties of pumpkins. Southwestern Uganda has two main varieties of pumpkin: *Edegede* is round in shape and has an army green color, and it tends to grow bigger in size than any other pumpkin. *Igihwanya* is small in size and turns yellow or orange when ripe. Both are cooked after being cut in pieces, and served with beans. A pumpkin called *igihaza* grows in the south, on the border between Uganda and Congo. Its name derives from the Rufumbira word *guhaga*, meaning "satisfaction." As in the rest of the country, the Bafumbira people in the Kisoro district also traditionally eat pumpkins and use the leaves in a sauce. The Baganda people in central Uganda also cook the very young pumpkins called obuguju, mixed with pumpkin leaves (*essunsa*) and other leafy vegetables. The leaves can be cut into small pieces, boiled, and mashed with beans to make a sauce known as *igusasa* in Rufumbira or essunsa in Luganda. Pumpkin seeds (*ebiryo*) are also used in traditional Uganda cuisine, either roasted and eaten as a snack or steamed and served on the side of a plate of pumpkin pieces. For centuries, mashed steamed pumpkins have been used as a baby food, often mixed with beans or fish soup. It is believed that children fed on pumpkins will be brighter and have better eyesight and resistane to diarrheal disease.

Cowpea

Local names: *empindi* in central Uganda, *mashaza* in the west, *eggobe* in the east
Scientific name: *Vigna unguiculata*

Commonly known as a crop cultivated by women, the cowpea is a drought-tolerant, heat-adapted annual herbaceous legume, predominately self pollinating although a slight amount of outcross may occur depending on the cultivar and location. Cowpeas thrive across the vast stretch of land with low levels of rainfall where the typical sandy soils are poor in nutrients and organic matter. The peas develop within elongated pods about 18 to 25 centimeters long, called *enkaaga*. One pod could contain 10 to 15 seeds, depending on its length. Cowpeas serve different purposes according to the regions: In the Central Region, apart from being one of the totems of the major clans of the Buganda Kingdom, the seeds are used to prepare soups and sometimes the fresh pods are steamed and eaten as a side vegetable. In the Eastern Region, the seeds and leaves are also eaten as a vegetable. In the Northern Region, the cowpea leaves, known as *boo*, are the main delicacy, while the most outstanding cowpea dish across the Central and Eastern regions is called *ggobe*. This plant is an important source of protein for resource-poor farmers as well as an essential component of cropping systems. It is a crop of major importance to the nutrition of poor rural households in the drier regions of Uganda, where diets tend to rely heavily on starchy foods such as millet, sorghum, maize, and cassava. It is consumed both as a pulse and a vegetable, and the local rural women make several soups using the cowpeas. The cowpea occupies an economically important place among pulses, especially in the Eastern and Northern regions where it is an important source of protein and household income for the resource-poor subsistence farmers.

▶ Cowpea Leaf and Groundnut Soup

Ingredients for 4 people
300 g cowpea leaves
300 ml salted water
4-5 tbsps cooking oil
2 medium-sized onions, chopped
3 medium-sized tomatoes, chopped
250 g groundnut paste

Method

Neatly pluck the whole cowpea leaves from the stems and wash them thoroughly to remove all soil particles. Pour the salted water into a saucepan and bring to a boil. Add the cowpea leaves, boil for about 20 to 30 minutes and then remove from the heat. In another clean saucepan, add the cooking oil and chopped onions and fry until golden brown. Add the tomatoes and let fry until they fall apart, adding some salt to taste. Add the boiled cowpea leaves and stir to combine. Place the groundnut paste in a bowl, add water and stir to thin the paste. Add the diluted groundnut paste to the cowpea mixture and simmer for 15 minutes. Best served with millet posho (a thick mush).

Note: Cowpea leaves are quite tough and just boiling them in water may not be enough to soften them, so the lake salt (*kisula*) from Lake Katwe helps to tenderize them. People commonly buy it in shops or markets for cooking such greens. Traditionally, this material was unavailable and people could either use dried banana peels, or even bean pods for the same purpose.

▶ Ggobe (Cowpea Leaf Powder)

Ingredients for 4 people
300 cowpea leaves
300 ml salted water
4-5 tbsps cooking oil
2 medium-sized onions, chopped
3 medium-sized tomatoes, chopped
250 g groundnut paste

Method

Carefully harvest around three baskets of the plant's tender leaves, making sure not to damage buds. Wash the leaves well and prepare them for steaming. After steaming the leaves for about 5 minutes, put them on a stand to dry for 5 days and then grind them using a mortar and pestle, to obtain a flour. Sieve the flour for purification. *Ggobe* is delicious when prepared as a sauce together with groundnut paste, beans, bambara nuts, and oysternuts. It can be mixed into the sauce while cooking or at the time of serving. This sauce is delicious with foods such as matooke (starchy banana), potatoes, and cassava. To store ggobe, tie it in banana fibers or put it in a calabash or any clean container and hung it in a smoky are in the kitchen for preservation, and to allow it to take on a nice scent.
Note: Ggobe is a symbol of unity, good relations, trust, and the strength of love among different people, who offer it to each other in exchange for other ingredients while signing an agreement.

Oysternut

Local name: *kulekula* in central Uganda

Scientific name: *Vigna unguiculata*

The oysternut, or *kulekula* as it is known in hot and humid areas of central and eastern Uganda, is the seed of Telfaira pedata, a species of African liana. In Uganda, kulekula plays a major role in many cultural events. It begins producing fruit after two years and remains productive for up to 20. Seeds obtained from trees in cold, rainy areas are considered of better quality than those from mountain plants. The long fruits are about the size of an average watermelon and contain multiple seeds. The flat, round seeds are 3 – 4 centimeters in diameter. They are harvested when the fruits fall from the tree and break open at the end of the rainy season. They can be consumed fresh, dried for storage, or roasted and crushed in a mortar to create a paste to add to other vegetable or meat dishes. The sand-colored shell has a fibrous texture, while the inside is green and oily, with a taste that is reminiscent of fava beans and green almonds. Kulekula have a high protein content (about 25%) and high oil content (55 – 60%). The oil obtained from the seeds has a delicious, sweet flavor. Oysternuts are often consumed by pregnant women. They are also made into a soup with mushrooms to be served to the groom during wedding ceremonies, as a sign of love, as well as to the special guests. Oysternuts are still collected for personal consumption, but are no longer found on the local market, though local farmers have expressed interest in cultivating the trees if there were demand among consumers. Another reason this product is at risk of extinction is the low germination rate of the seeds (about 30%) in conditions where seed humidity is lower than 40%, and so more information is needed on proper seed storage in order to cultivate this species.

4 LEAFY GREENS

Uganda's edible botanical wealth offers great promise for its future. Many of Uganda's little-known indigenous plants have such outstanding qualities that they could resolve some of the country's – and Africa's – most pressing food problems. These plants are rich in nutrients compared to other fruits and vegetables. Knowledge about what can and cannot be eaten is generally passed through the generations from mother to daughter. This direct personal tutoring is effective but it can be hard to take advantage of it.

Uganda's leafy vegetables (*say, doodo, bbga*, etc.) come from a wide variety of plants, varying from region to region and also depending on ethnic diversity, but they are normally cooked in similar ways. Most leafy vegetables are measured in bundles, mugs, or pieces. Some are ground into powder for special culinary purposes and preservation.

Tricolor Amaranth (Purple, Green and Red)

Local names: *ebbuga* and *doodo* in the central Uganda, *eboga* in Teso
Scientific name: *Amaranthus lividus / dubius*

Purple amaranth is leafy vegetable long cultivated in Uganda, grown for its edible purple leaves which are believed to have specific nutritional and health benefits. Commonly known as bbuga, the purple amaranth is a fast-growing, erect annual tropical plant that can reach a height of 2 meters. It is characterized by branched stems with alternating spikes topped by small bright-red flowers. The seeds are very small but easy to harvest, and the purple leaves are steamed on top of food or prepared like spinach, chopped and boiled or fried. The leaves have a mild flavor and are rich in vitamins and minerals.
Green amaranth is another leafy vegetable that has been grown in Uganda since ancient times, and is still grown today on a small scale for its tasty green leaves. The erect annual tropical plant is commonly harvested at a height of 20 centimeters but is sometimes left to grow to 60 cm tall for the purpose of seed production. Its leaves and young seedlings are normally steamed or prepared like spinach, sometimes added to soups and occasionally eaten raw. It has a smooth, mild flavor.
All of these amaranth types can survive in dry conditions but grow well in moderate pH soils with a high concentration of major nutrients, especially nitrogen.

Traditional varieties of fruits and vegetables have adapted over the centuries to the local climate and soil conditions. This makes them more resistant, and they don't need chemical inputs (fertilizers and pesticides) to flourish. They cost less and are better for our health and the environment.

Spider Plant

Local name: *ejjobyo* in central Uganda
Scientific name: *Cleome gynandra*

If you have always been fascinated by the world of vegetables, then you are probably familiar with spider plant. Just like purple, green or red amaranth, spider plant is another leafy vegetable commonly used to accompany other dishes. In Uganda it is prepared by steaming or boiling together with other ingredients to make a soup with a sour taste. When steamed, it is eaten as a starter or side dish with most of the major staples. Spider plant is very common in eastern and central Uganda where it also serves medicinal purposes. Also locally called *ejjobyo* or *eyobyo,* spider plant is one of the indigenous African vegetables that can survive with little or no attention and is considered to be one of the most nutritious vegetables. A short herbaceous plant (approximately 50 centimeters), it has small white flowers that produce small black seeds in soft, rough-skinned pods.

▶ Spider Plant or Amaranth Side Dish

Ingredients for 4 people
1.5 kg spider plant or amaranth leaves
1 banana leaf
pinch of baking powder
salt

Method

Wash and chop the leaves. Wrap them in a banana leaf and, for the spider plant leaves, add a pinch of baking powder to help soften them. Steam them with, or on top, of another food like bananas or sweet potatoes. Add a pinch of salt once ready. Serve as a cooked salad.

Cocoyam Leaf

Local name: *ttimpa* in Central Uganda

Scientific name: *Colocasia esculenta* and *Xanthosoma sagittifolium*

Cocoyams are tuber crops found mostly throughout central and eastern Uganda. There are two main types of cocoyam: *Colocasia esculenta* is cultivated in the wetlands and is known locally as *bwayise*, while *Xanthosoma sagittifolium* grows in upland areas and is known by several names including *koona* and *lukalaga mpiri*. The upland variety is more of a biennial crop and is drought resistant, with the tubers the only commonly eaten parts of the crop. The annual wetland cocoyams known as bwayise take about 7 to 9 months to mature and both the leaves and the tubers are eaten. The edible leaves of the arrow yams have no slit near the stalk and normally have a purple dot in the middle of the leaf, but there are some varieties common in Mbale (on the slopes of Mount Elgon) that are entirely bright green without the purple dot. Only the young leaves are harvested for use as a vegetable and mostly cooked with groundnut paste to make a thick soup that can be served with most of Uganda's staple foods.

▶ Ttimpa in Groundnut Soup

Ingredients for 4 people

500 g young cocoyam leaves

1 banana leaf

salt

250 g groundnut paste

500 g cold water

Method

Wrap the young cocoyam leaves in the banana leaf and steam until soft. The cocoyam leaves can also be steamed on top of other foods like bananas and potatoes. On the side, prepare the groundnut by dissolving the groundnut paste into cold water and then and boil until ready. Mash the cocoyam leaves, add to the prepared groundnut sauce and serve.

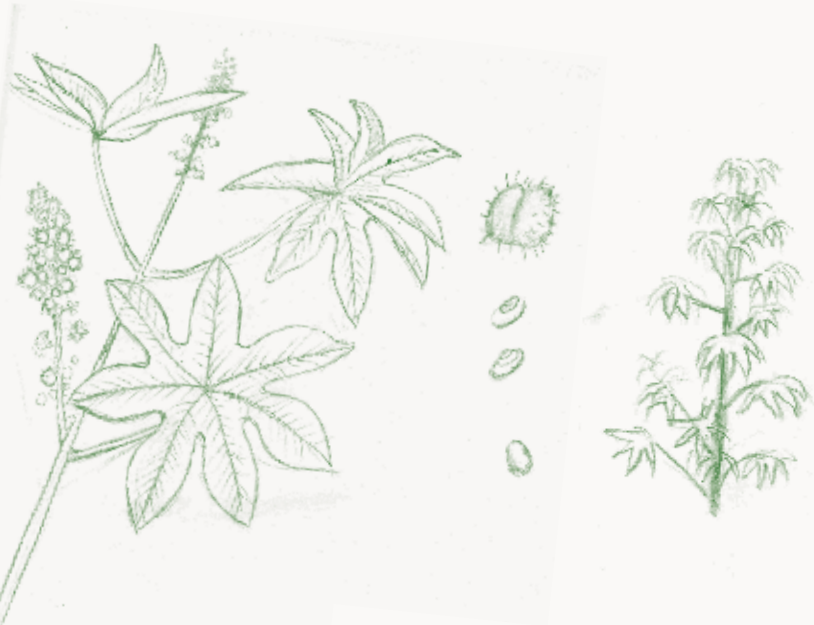
Note: Salt can be added to the groundnut sauce before adding the cocoyam leaves.

Roselle

Local name: *malakwang*

Scientific name: *Hibiscus sabdariffa*

Malakwang belongs to the Malvaceae family of plants and is typical of northern Uganda, where the Ancholi people live. It is a drought-resistant herbaceous plant that grows to about a meter high. It is a very traditional and popular vegetable that is commonly used to thicken sauces. Traditionally malakwang was never served at wedding ceremonies because it was believed that serving it would mean that the marriage would not last, but it was treated as a precious vegetable and served to in-laws when they visited the married couple at home. Because of its bitter taste malakwang is usually cooked with groundnut or sesame paste.



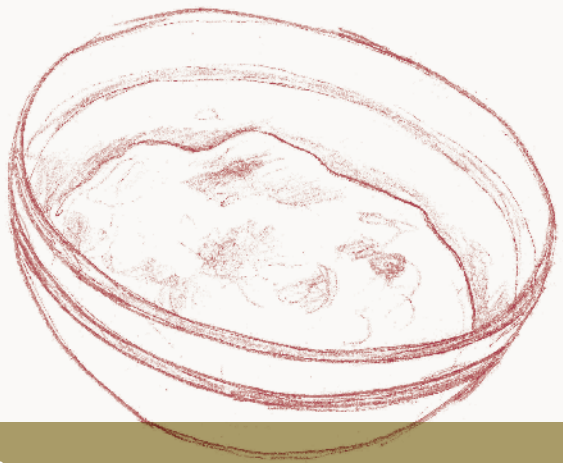
5 CONDIMENTS AND SPICES

Many of the Uganda's herbs (such as African basil), spices (such as clove), condiments, and seasonings come from tropical plants, mostly grown in the Central Region, with the exception of ghee (clarified butter), an animal product made from the milk of Ankole Long-Horned Cattle in the Western Region, along the cattle corridor. Seasonings (like the hot bird's eye chili, which is usually served in a very spicy sauce called *kamulali* in Luganda) are added to food to complement or enhance the dish's flavor and can also be used for preserving or medicinal purposes.

Clarified Butter (Ghee)

Local name: *muzigo* in Luganda, *majuta* in Runyankole

Ankole cattle, also known as *inyambo* in Rwanda, are reared in the Rift Valley along the border between Uganda and Rwanda (though some are also found in Burundi) in a semi-arid strip often called the "cattle corridor." This rustic breed is raised for both its meat and milk. Among the culture of the Ankole people, the milk is handled mainly by the women in a special building called *orugyegye*. This is where the milk is collected, cooled, and processed. The milk is stored in *kyanzi*, carved vessels made from black smoked wood from the mugawu tree, while for yogurt and ghee dried calabash are used. Both the kyanzi and the calabash are closed with beautiful caps with geometric decorations, handmade from woven fibers. The milk has a high fat content and is processed into ghee (clarified butter) where milk is sieved, boiled, and left to rest overnight. The cream is removed and transferred into a calabash for churning. The formed ghee is then separated from the residual liquid, put in a saucepan with clean water, and washed. The final product has a shelf life of more than six months and, over time, acquires a pungent flavor. Milk is also transformed into yoghurt (*amakano* or *bongo* in Banyakole) by the women in the community. Some of the processed milk production is reserved for home consumption in traditional dishes like *eshabwe* and *nunire* (ghee sauce with rock salt used to season vegetables, *matooke*, and rice), while the surplus is sold to local shops and vendors. *Ntsimbo* is the best type of ghee for making eshabwe.



▶ Eshabwe (Ghee sauce)

Ingredients for 4 people
2 kg ntsimbo ghee
3 tsps rock salt
Fresh water

Method

Gently stir ntsimbo ghee with a pinch of rock salt (from Lake Katwe in western Uganda) melted in a little water. Little by little, the diluted ghee will change color from yellow to white. Sieve the sauce to remove the remaining of rock salt or clots of ghee. Add some table salt. The same sauce made from lower quality ghee is called nunire.

The Slow Food Presidia are communities of producers who work together and decide how to produce and promote their products. Their objective is to save local breeds, plant varieties and quality artisanal food products at risk of disappearing. Together, the Presidia producers promote the local area, preserve traditional techniques and knowledge and develop sustainable cultivation and farming techniques.

ANIMAL BREEDS

Uganda is one of the African countries where the agriculture sector is dominated by a mix of small-holder farmers and pastoralists. Animal farming dates back to ancient times, when communities kept goats, chicken, sheep, and cattle for manure, meat, skins, and milk (from cows only). Uganda boasts of a number of indigenous livestock breeds, including local native poultry breeds, zebu and Ankole Long-Horned cattle, and Mubende and other goats, including lowland and highland breeds, which play a very important identity-forming role among communities and different cultural groups.

Local breeds are hardier and need less attention, because over the centuries they've adapted to the territory and climate. Local breeds and their products (like milk, meat, or wool) are an asset to local communities and must be preserved.

Mubende Goat

Local name: *mbuzi* in central Uganda
Scientific name: *Capra hircus*

The Mubende goat has straight, shiny hair, normally black or a mixture of black and white. Males have manes, and are usually hornless. Adult males weigh 25 to 35 kilograms and females weigh 22 to 28 kg. Like other native goats, this breed can survive well during times of drought and is resistant to heartwater (a tick-borne disease), worms, and other diseases such as mange. It is believed that this breed was domesticated in the Mubende and Sembabule districts of central Uganda by communities of subsistence herders. Mubende goat meat is of high quality and generally consumed on special occasions. Its skin is also used for leather by the tanning industry.

▶ Goat Mucomo

Ingredients for 4 people
800 g goat meat
20 g ground ginger
20 g ground garlic
20 g mixed spices of choice
salt
1 lemon

Method

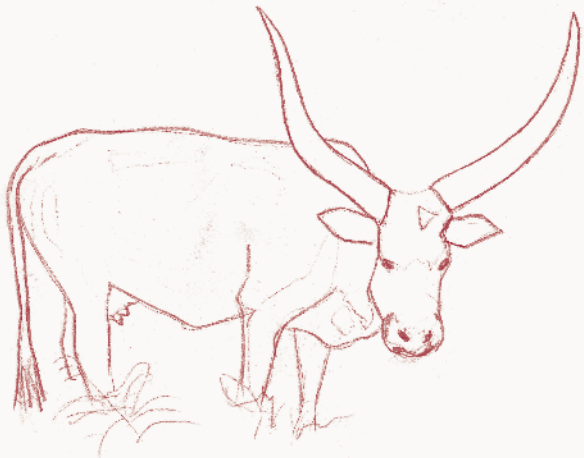
Chop the meat into cubes. Put the meat cubes into a clean bowl, then add in the ginger, garlic, spices, salt and lemon juice. Mix with your hands until combined. Let sit for 15 to 20 minutes. Meanwhile, prepare your grill with hot charcoal. Thread the meat cubes onto grilling sticks and start roasting gently. Once ready, serve with banana *mpogola* (steamed unpeeled green bananas) and salads.

Ankole Long-Horned Cattle

Local names: *ente zeny'Ankole* in Runyankole and Banyoro-Hima-Hema, *nte Nyakole or ensagala* in Luganda, *Nyankore* or *Inyankore* in Runyankole
Scientific name: *Bos taurus*

Ankole Long-Horned Cattle (also known as *inyambo*, *inkuku*, and *inka Ntutsi* in Rwanda and Burundi) have a dark brown coat and long white horns that curve outwards then up, forming the shape of a lyre. It is a majestic and elegant animal, able to travel long distances in search of pasture and water. Thanks to its impressive horns (almost six times longer than European cattle breeds), it was once considered the incarnation of divine beauty. The Ankole cow still has a sacred role in the communities that depend on it, serving as a maternal figure and used as currency and for gifts. The cattle strengthen social relationships, and their elegance is celebrated in poems and songs. For farmers, the time of day is named for the animals' habits: The morning is "grazing time" and the evening is "home time."

Ankole beef is very tasty, and common cuts at the slaughterhouse include head, neck, hump, *akafumito* (the chest), *enkoggo* (the point at which the tail of the cow starts – one of the very special cuts at the local butchers, soft and tender and popular for stews and barbecuing), and *molokoni* (the lower part of the legs). The blood (*eshagama*) is also used as an ingredient in local cuisine.



▶ Beef Luwombo

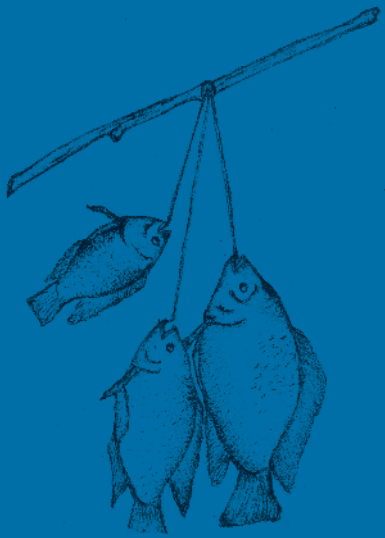
Ingredients for 3 medium-size *mpombo* (plural of *luwombo*)
500 g beef
young banana leaves
banana fibers
3 tomatoes
1 onion
1 garlic clove
2 tsps curry powder
100 g salt

Method

Roast the beef until it is very dry and cut it into cubes. Prepare the banana leaves by cutting off the petiole and the entire midrib, then scorch the now clean banana leaf laminas on an open fire for a few seconds and set them aside. Chop the onion, tomatoes, and garlic into very small pieces. Set the scorched banana leaves in a bowl one after the other and set in the meat cubes followed by the tomatoes, onions, garlic, and a reasonable amount of curry powder. Wrap up and tie closed with a banana fiber.
Prepare a saucepan: Add water and set in the petiole and midribs previously cut from the banana leaves. Arrange them in such a way that they support the mpombo, avoiding contact with the water. Cover them with another fresh banana leaf and set the mpombo on top. Cover everything with three or four fresh banana leaves and put on the fire to start steaming.
Cook for about an hour and serve with steamed green bananas, sweet potatoes, cassava, yam or any food of your choice.

7 FISH

Uganda is gifted with many lakes, including Lake Victoria (shared with Tanzania and Kenya), Lake Kyoga in Soroti, Lake Albert in Pakwach, and lakes Edward, George, and Wamala in Mityana; as well as various navigable rivers where fish dwell. Communities living along these bodies of water carry out lake, river, or swamp fishing as their main economic and social activity. Traditional fishing practices and equipment are still used, with great respect for nature and the water resources. Men take their pirogues (small boats) to cast nets or baskets (for river and swamp fisheries) at night, then draw them in the next morning. Women tend to process the catch, using smoking and drying techniques, while a good amount of the catch will be prepared fresh in stews and soups. The most common species include tilapia, catfish, Nile perch, and silver fish from the lakes, while the river catch mainly includes *angara* from the West Nile and *ningu, nzeere, nsonzi*, and *nkolongo*, among others. Uganda is suffering from lake grabbing and wetland grabbing from rich fishing and mining investors in the name of development and illegal fishing carried out by big fishing boats. Communities are left with limited opportunities and resources and some important species are facing extinction.

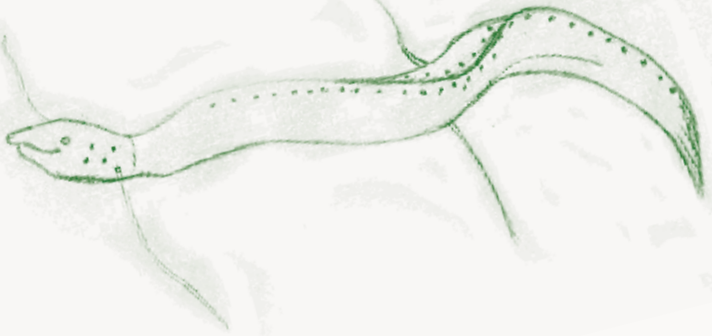


African Lungfish

Local name: *mamba*

Scientific name: *Protopterus annectens*

Known as *mamba* in Uganda, the African lungfish is believed to be endemic to Lake Victoria in eastern Uganda but can also be found in shallow streams, swamps, and marshes. It is strongly connected to the Ganda and Soga people of central and eastern Uganda respectively, and this fish is one of the oldest totems belonging to the original clans of the Buganda Kingdom. The elongated, eel-like, scaleless fish can either swim like an eel or crawl along the lake's bottom using its pectoral and pelvic fins. One unusual characteristic of this fish is that it can live for several months out of water, in burrows of hardened mud in dried-up streambeds. These fish feed on crustaceans, aquatic insect larvae, and mollusks. The fishermen say that during the dry season, the fish goes into hibernation and starts feeding on its own fins until more food is available. Caught for personal use and for sale at local markets, the fish is often smoked and served with a groundnut paste at important events. It may also be dried and cooked in stews as well as being fried.

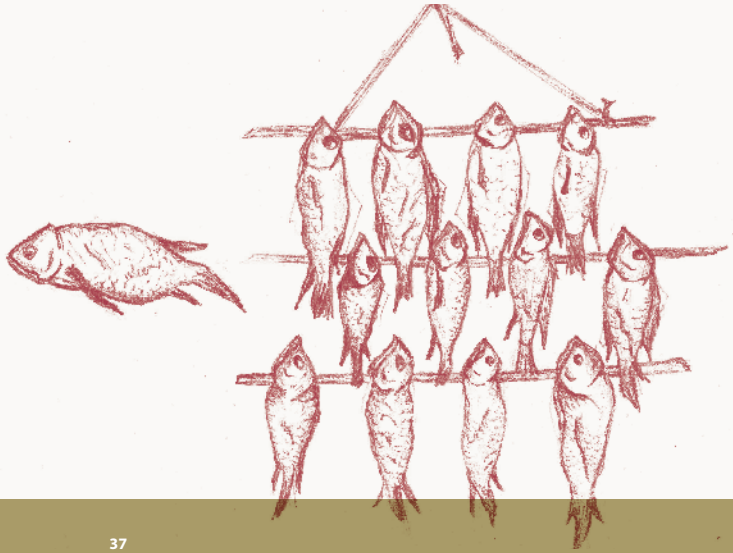


Nkejje

Local name: *nkejje*

Scientific name: *Haplochromis* spp.

This traditional, small, broad-bodied fish has scales all over its body. It lives in both the deep and shallow parts of Lake Victoria, in relatively low numbers compared to other types of fish. Today, overfishing (by commercial exporters), pollution, and the introduction of Nile perch into Lake Victoria have led to a drop in the nkejje population and the destruction of their habitats. Mature fish are about 6 centimeters from head to tail and about 3 centimeters wide depending on the breed: For example, the *madoola* are the largest and shiniest type of *nkejje*. In many communities, especially among the middle class and elites, it is considered an inferior fish with lots of bones. However, its high protein and calcium content helps to prevent malnutrition. Nkejje is dried directly under the sun immediately after being caught, and since they are caught in groups, they are all dried together, pinned on sticks in horizontal rows. After several days of drying, they are then taken to the market on the same sticks used for drying. The nkejje are commonly served in groundnut paste after a little roasting over an open fire. They play a very important cultural role in the Buganda Kingdom, especially during child initiation and confirmation ceremonies.



Nkolongo

Local name: *nkolongo* in central-western Uganda
Scientific name: *Synodontis* spp.

Nkolongo is the local name for several fish species in the genus *Synodontis*, including *Synodontis victoriae*, known in English as the Lake Victoria squeaker. Nkolongo are non-scaly freshwater fish that live at the mouths of rivers. They are found in several parts of Lake Victoria, as well as smaller lakes throughout the region. The most commonly caught nkolongo is yellowish green with brown patches all over the body. Adults typically measure 4 to 7.5 centimeters long, but some reach lengths up to 12.5 cm and are darker in color. These larger fish, which are usually found in deeper parts of the lake, must be handled with care, as the bony spines that develop at the back of their heads can pierce flesh. Nkolongo are mainly fished for personal or family subsistence, and rarely considered for commercial sales. Today, commercial fishers on Lake Victoria use nkolongo—especially young fish from the shallow river waters—as bait for larger fish such as Nile perch (*Lates niloticus*). This has driven nkolongo populations down and now they are at risk of disappearing from Uganda's food traditions.

Ningu

Local name: *ningu in central-western Uganda*
Scientific name: *Labeo victorianus*

Ningu is a scaly fish, about 30 centimeters long at maturity, silver-gray in color, and very bony. It lives in streams and lakes, and used to be particularly abundant where the Kagera River runs into Lake Victoria. Ningu have been fished since people first settled along Uganda's rivers. Because of their high fat content, ningu are usually eaten boiled or smoked. They are caught primarily during the rainy season (from March to May), as well as in November. Elderly fishermen explain that, before hooks became available, they would wait for the water to settle and, once all was quiet, hit the side of their canoe with the paddle, prompting the fish to come to the surface where they could be easily collected. In recent years nets have largely replaced hooks. Nowadays ningu is an extremely rare fish, caught only occasionally for personal consumption. Commercial fisheries on Lake Victoria use small nets and traps to collect this species to use as bait for Nile perch (Lates niloticus) or catfish, and many young ningu are caught before being able to reproduce.

8 INSECTS

There are hundreds of types of edible insects throughout the country and the type and method of eating varies from one region to another depending on cultural beliefs. For many centuries edible insects formed a great part of the diets of many Ugandan communities and provided an immeasurable nutritional contribution. They have always been considered an alternative protein source for many people in different areas. Edible insects are more popular in central Uganda, the Lake Victoria islands, and, in eastern Uganda, where *kamanofe* ants, bee larvae (*bugishu*), and several breeds of grasshoppers, winged termites, palm weevils, and crickets are common.

Grasshoppers

Local names: *nssenene* in central Uganda, *isanani* in the southwest
Scientific name: Order Orthoptera, suborder Caelifera

To a typical person from central Uganda, *nseenene* are more than just edible insects: They represent community relationships, honesty and sharing. The main grasshopper season is in the month of November (*Museene*) and the light season is in May (*Biswamugosi*). Grasshoppers are also one of the totems in the Buganda Kingdom. To the Bafumbira in the southwest of Uganda, nseenene are known as *isanani* and are harvested by the women for their husbands as sign of love and respect. They normally appear in large numbers during the early morning hours and especially when there is some drizzly rain, and were traditionally collected by the whole community. In central Uganda, once one person spotted the nseenene flying in the bush he had to invite the whole community to join him through a signal called *wuuli*. The harvested nseenene were collected in bundles and delivered to the individual collection troughs called nkanga. Though today commercial harvesting commonly uses LED lights, which are shone into the sky at night. Nseenene are now seen as a money-maker because of the great market demand in major towns of Uganda and not much emphasis is put on the cultural and traditional value embedded in these tasty and harmless insects.

There are three common types of nseenene, differentiated mainly according to their size and morphological appearance. *Kulunkalu* (Central Region) is brown in color and looks like a dry banana leaf, or lusansa, hence its second name, kulusansa. Among the Bafumbira it is known as rukwi because it looks like a splinter of firewood. The second type, kulumbisi, is green in color like a fresh banana leaf, hence its second name, kululagala. The Bafumbira call it cyasti because it is as green as grass. Kibazzi is the third type, and has a green and purple stripe on the wings as well as purple on the legs. It is the rarest type, and is believed to bring good luck to those collecting grasshoppers.

▶ Roasted Grasshoppers

Ingredients for 4 people
2 kg grasshoppers
3 tsps salt
1 onion, chopped
wood ash

Method

After catching the grasshoppers, clean them thoroughly by removing all the wings, legs, and the hair-like tail fin. To make this work easier, first dip all the insects into wood ash and remove them one by one as you clean. Wash the insects until clean and free from ash. Place a clean saucepan on the fire and drop in the grasshoppers then stir continuously for about 15 minutes. Sprinkle them with salt, add the chopped tomatoes and onions, then stir continuously for about 10 minutes. They are then ready to serve.

Winged Termite (White Ant)

Local name: *nsswa*

Scientific name: *Macrotermes bellicosus*

Winged termites – also known as white ants – are edible flying insects at risk of disappearance because of increasing urbanization and the continued use of synthetic chemicals on farmlands, which destroy the habitats of these delicious insects. Winged termites come in different sizes, types, and flavors, and appear during different seasons. Their economic, social, and traditional value varies from type to type as well as place to place.

Ntunda are small black flying ants with delicate wings that normally emerge from knee-height anthills in the evening (especially during the rainy season in September). They are eaten fresh without cooking or roasting—only salt is added after picking.

Embobya have a stronger flavor and come out of the ground from small anthills after the rain stops.

Ennaka are very small black winged termites predominantly found in Bulemeezi County, and because of their flavor and rarity they are one of the most popular among all the edible flying termites. Traditionally, to trap more ennaka, a person could get three sticks, sit around the holes where the termites were coming from, and make music for the termites to lure more of them out.

Nsejjere – also known as *Kamaresi* – are the biggest and fattest among the white ants in Uganda and make relatively larger, flat-topped anthills with wide holes on the sides that can reach up to 15 centimeters in diameter. The nsejjere – reddish brown and black on top, with relatively large, hard wings and a fatty abdomen, which they lift up while moving – are considered to be the most delicious among all the white ant types. They are highly seasonal, appearing during the wet seasons in central and eastern Uganda, when they are harvested, cleaned, roasted, dried and stored for use in vegetable and groundnut soups and stews.

Mpawu (in Luganda) or *kamashwahi* (in Gishu) are the second biggest after Nsejjere and they normally construct large and sharp pointed anthills with multiple peaks. They are also very seasonal, with their main season in April. They are normally trapped and harvested in the early morning hours from around 4 a.m. and tend to come out when there is a dry night following a series of rainy days.

▶ Roasted, Boiled, or Pounded Ants

Roasted Method

Place a clean saucepan on the fire and drop in the winged ants. Stir continuously for about 5 minutes using a wooden spoon. During this process, the insects lose their wings, which must be winnowed out. Fill a clean basin with water and slightly wash off the dirt from the dried insects. Remove and place in a clean dry saucepan over medium heat. Sprinkle with a pinch of salt, add chopped onions, and stir constantly for about 10 minutes. They are then ready to be served.

Boiling Method

Salted water is added before putting them on the fire. After boiling for about 10-15 minutes, they are sun-dried, and the wings removed. The insects are then ready for eating as a snack.

Pounding Method (most popular among the Baganda)

Clean the ants by removing their wings and carefully pick out any foreign matter like other unwanted insects. Roast the ants and sun-dry them. The dried insects can then be pounded into flour and prepared as luwombo. This tasty and aromatic dish is best served with matooke or cassava.

Red Palm Weevil Larvae

Local name: *masiinya*

Scientific name: *Rhynchophorus ferrugineus*

A species of snout beetle documented in Uganda as far back as the 17th century still inhabits the wild palm trees found in the dense forests on Kalangala Island. These insects are eaten by the Ssese people, who live on the Ssese Islands in Lake Victoria. With the introduction of monoculture plantations for the production of palm oil, the native forests have been cleared, and researchers from the big palm oil companies are testing more effective insecticides to eliminate these stem borers, putting them at risk of extinction even though they are still a delicacy among the native families on the island. The adult beetles are relatively large, from 2 to 5 centimeters long, and are usually a rusty red color with black wings. The neonate larvae are yellowish-white, segmented and legless and have a chitinous head capsule that is a darker brown than the rest of the body. The larvae are prepared fried and roasted, served as desserts and breakfast snacks. *Masiinya* have been described as creamy tasting when raw, and like bacon when cooked.

Crickets

Local name: *amayanje* in central Uganda, *jjenje/mayenje* in Luganda
Scientific name: Family Gryllidae

Amayenje are large crickets about the size of a thumb. They are called *jjenje* (singular) and *mayenje* (plural) in Luganda, the main language of central Uganda. They have a large head and a flat forehead, black wing covers, and brown wings. The joins are brown, and the belly is light brown. These edible crickets live in holes that they dig in the reddish earth at the side of foot paths in diversified gardens. The process of digging them out involves chopping into the low bank to reveal their tunnels. Each tunnel ends in two chambers, one in which the cricket eats (above), and one in which to lay eggs (below). Sometimes they make additional tunnels to fool predators. Amayenje eat only plants with soft leaves, such as beans, groundnuts, and black-jack. They live in ecological gardens and some wild areas. Previously these crickets were plentiful in gardens but now they are very scarce, mainly due to the increased use of agrochemicals and monocropping.

Traditionally amayenje are prepared by plucking off the wings and the lower joint of each leg. The head is pulled forward to remove the digestive tract, and then the cricket is dunked in a pail of water to clean it and let it die. Once thus prepared, the crickets are put in a hot pan and roasted on the fire. These crickets have a particular taste: The thighs are thick, with a crisp shell and a concentrated flavor of chicken, and the head is bursting with fat and umami juices, and has a silky texture reminiscent of lamb's brains. The body is milder, creamy and slightly sweet.

9 FRUITS AND BEVERAGES

Like other tropical countries, Uganda is blessed with a rich tropical flora that includes many different delicious fruits, for example, African elemi (*mpafu*), *ndiizi* banana, passion fruit (butunda), sour sop (*kitafeeri*), false cardamom (*tunguru*), jackfruit (*fene*) and tamarind (*nkooge*). But the constant influx of non-native fruits, either imported or grown under very controlled and fragile conditions within the country, is coming to dominate the market. For this reason, Uganda's fruits have not yet reached their potential in terms of quality, quantity, productivity, and availability.

Uganda is also Africa's second-largest coffee producer after Ethiopia. Even though some government bodies and international investors are pushing for high-yielding, more productive, and less tolerant commercial hybrids, many growers have preferred to keep the indigenous and local varieties, which earned Uganda its current prestigious status as one of the world's leading coffee producers and Africa's biggest exporter.

Tamarind

Local name: *nkooge*
Scientific name: *Tamarindus indica*

The tamarind is a large, strong tree with an extensive, dense crown. It grows to 40 meters high. It has small compound leaves attached firmly to small hairy stalks. Its trunk can grow close to a meter wide. The tamarind tree is indigenous to Africa and is well adapted to the dry conditions in arid and semi-arid regions and woody grasslands. The leaves of this nitrogen-fixing tree are also used as fodder for ruminants. The edible part is the dark-brown, sticky, acidic-tasting pulp found in the pale-brown sausage-like hairy pods. These are cracked once dry to extract the pulp, which can be eaten directly or used to make juice. The pulp is also used to prepare millet meal in the Iteso subregion of Uganda's Eastern Region. Tamarind trees are mainly found in the dry and semi-arid parts of eastern Uganda around Kumi, Soroti, and Serere, and in some districts of the Busoga Kingdom. There are a few scattered trees in the Nakasongola district.

Make your own fruit juices, choosing the best fruit from the market, and use fresh, local, flavorful vegetables to prepare meals for your family. Your cooking will be healthier and tastier.

Kisansa Coffee

Local name: *Kisansa*

Scientific name: *Coffea liberica* var. *dewevrei*

Uganda is Africa's second-largest coffee producer, after Ethiopia. While the Ethiopian highlands are the birthplace of *Coffea arabica*, Central and East Africa's equatorial forests are home to *Coffea canephora*, also known as robusta. This species is appreciated around the world in espresso blends, and it represents 85 percent of the coffee produced in Uganda. *Coffea liberica* grows naturally in the same area. Kisansa coffee plants—supposedly an indigenous strain of the dweverei variety—can keep producing for several decades, growing up to 10 meters tall. They and are cultivated together with shade trees, particularly bananas (the "coffee-banana system" has become common practice throughout the region). Traditionally, the beans were processed in a lengthy ritual. The pulp from the fruit was removed using two stones, and then the beans were pre-toasted in an iron pan. The resulting green coffee beans were then ready for the final roasting inside a terracotta clay pot, constantly moved around to stop them spending too long in contact with the sides. After crushing the roasted beans in a mortar, the ground coffee is finally infused in water, producing a beverage with an intense and balanced aroma, characterized by herbaceous notes. Before the arrival of British colonialists, coffee was consumed in various other ways in Uganda: As a fruit, as an ingredient in soups, and chewed for its stimulant properties. Coffee continues to have a strong symbolic value in the local culture. Owning coffee plants helps to increase one's social status, and it is said that a bride who marries a coffee owner will be stable for life.

Nyasaland Coffee

Local names: *Nyasaland*
Scientific name: *Coffea arabica*

Nyasaland coffee is Uganda's oldest variety of arabica coffee, introduced to the Ugandan Masaba Highlands in Bugisu in the Eastern Region in early 1900s and to Bwamba in the Rwenzori mountain range in the Western Region. Nyasaland coffee is believed to have travelled all the way from the Geisha region of Ethiopia and was first tried by the British colonial government. It was initially grown in what is now Malawi, known as Nyasaland during colonial times. It should be noted that in Uganda, arabica coffee was first traded under the name Nyasaland, though it was later also marketed as "Bugishu local." The colonialists wanted to improve Uganda's peasant economy, which relied greatly on robusta coffee and some introduced cotton, and so this new variety, which had economic prospects in Europe, was also introduced. Today the Nyasaland variety is still cultivated by growers around Mount Elgon, where it is in competition with the new hybrid varieties, mainly the SLs and Ruiru 11, which are higher yielding. The Nyasaland arabica beans are slightly smaller than the hybrids, and their aroma is more intense and floral, sometimes with almond notes.

The Slow Food Presidia are projects for safeguarding local, traditional and quality products at risk of extinction. There are over 500 Presidia in more than 60 countries around the world. Uganda has Presidia for robusta coffee, Ankole long-horned cattle, the Kayinja banana and climbing yams. Discover them!

Green and Purple Passion Fruit

Local names: *mirandano* in the southwest, *butunda obuganda* in central Uganda, "Masaka local" in Greater Masaka

Scientific name: *Passiflora edulis*

Mirandano is a local variety of passion fruit that grows well in the southwestern hills, elevated parts of central Uganda, and in the mountains of eastern Uganda. Mirandano passion fruits are small and round with a diameter of approximately 4 centimeters. This variety of passion fruit is a long, climbing variety, less aggressive in nature, with small, pointed, simple, lobed leaves. They are green in color when young and turn purple when mature and ripe, becoming softer, with the typical orange color inside. The taste is sweet and less acidic. Compared to the early maturing hybrids, mirandano are slow-growing fruits that take approximately five months from planting to flowering and an additional four months from flowering to harvesting. They are high yielding and highly resistant to diseases and also can survive well in wild environments. Traditionally the fruits are used for juice extraction as well as preserves, especially in the colder mountainous areas of Kabale and Mbale in southwestern and eastern Uganda respectively. Mirandano passion fruits are also commonly eaten as dessert with other fruits as well as added to a mixed fruit cocktail.

Together the food communities make up the Terra Madre network: groups of people who produce, process and distribute quality food in a sustainable way, maintaining a strong link with the local area. Buy their products when you can!

10 FERMENTED FOODS

Fermented beverages are very traditional in most regions of Uganda. Beer and spirits can be prepared from different base ingredients. From the *kayinja* (or *mbidde*) plantain, farmers in Central Uganda make beer (*tonto* or *bwakata* in the local language) and waragi, the traditional colorless brandy with a slightly smokey flavor. Today waragi is often produced with cane sugar instead of kayinja, pushing many small producers to stop growing this plantain variety. This is why Slow Food Uganda launched a Presidium to preserve this variety and the traditional methods of fermentation and distillation. *Omuramba* is a fermented alcoholic beverage typical of the Kigezi Region of southwestern Uganda, especially the cold mountains of Kabale District. The major ingredient in this highly cherished drink is sorghum, specifically the brown sorghum variety called *omugusha*. Tonto, waragi, omuramba, millet beer, and sorghum brew are served at every community event, for feasts and celebration, and during gatherings elderly people.

Millet Beer

Local names: *ajon* in the Teso language in the east
Scientific name: *Eleusine coracana*

Millet beer, or *ajon*, comes in both liquid and solid forms. It is obtained from fermented dried *emiroiti* finger millet (*Eleusine coracana*). The emiroiti variety is characterized by dark brown seeds that reach maturity after four months, and resistance to drought. Ajon is an important element of Teso culture and represents a link between people. It is present in many ceremonies (e.g. weddings, births, graduations) and Teso traditions. For example, after a woman has given birth, she's not allowed to go out for three days. After this period, there is a celebration during which some ajon is put in the mouth of the newborn. If a couple has twins, their families should share a calabash of ajon, to ensure the health of the millet crop. Today religious people often criticize ajon, but in the old days it was highly appreciated by the communities in eastern and northern Uganda as a product with great social value. During celebrations and feasts, Teso people serve ajon to visitors and neighbors that they wanted to impress. A local elder mentioned that, "ajon created excitement and happiness, inspiring people to dance and exercise. No wonder old people nowadays are crying of muscle pain, since they are no longer taking ajon to help them perform exercises!"

To obtain both liquid and solid ajon, finger millet seeds are dried and milled into flour. The flour is mixed with water and put in a pit to ferment. The fermentation process takes about a week. (The amylase enzymes in the finger millet readily convert starch to sugar. Only barley surpasses finger millet in terms of its saccharifying power.) Once the fermentation is done, the flour is removed from the pit, roasted in a large saucepan, and then sun dried. Once dry, the roasted fermented flour is mixed with ground yeast and covered for four days. After four days the mixture is diluted with hot water to obtain liquid ajon. Dry ajon lasts for months and is easy to carry, characteristics that made it an important food source throughout the year in the past.

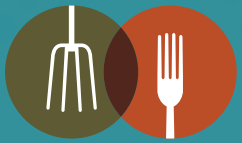
Sorghum Brew

Local names: *enturire* in the Kiga language of southwestern Uganda
Scientific name: *Sorghum bicolor*

Enturire is the Rukiga name given to a fermented product obtained from a mixture of honey and the world's most versatile crop, sorghum (*Sorghum bicolor*). As the saying goes, "and so God created the Kiga people and saw that what he had created was beautiful, and then gave them enturire for better performance." If the twentieth century has been the century for wheat, rice, and maize, the twenty-first could become the century of sorghum. Sorghum is one of the fastest-maturing crops, taking as little as 75 days to reach maturity, and providing up to three harvests a year.

Enturire is made from fermenting sorghum and honey. Sorghum seeds are put in a sack and soaked in water for two days to induce fermentation. The sack is drained and wood ash is added to remove the tannins (the ratio of sorghum to wood ash is 2:1.5), which would lock up proteins and starch, and to enhance the flavor, aroma, and color of the final product. The seeds are then covered with banana leaves or any leaves capable of trapping enough warmth to allow germination. At this point the seeds turn from reddish to black. Once germination initiates, it is stopped by sun drying the seeds, which are then milled into flour.

To make the sorghum paste (*kyunga*), begin by heating and then cooling 5 liters of water. Bring another 5 liters of water to a boil and add the sorghum flour and, bit by bit, the cool water. After a two-day fermentation, add honey. Cover properly and let the mixture sit for 2-3 days to turn into enturire. The more honey, the better the final product.



Where to Buy Local Products
CHEFS' ALLIANCE

The Slow Food Chefs' Alliance in Uganda involves chefs and managers who are committed to giving value to local food biodiversity and the work of small-scale farmers from the Terra Madre food communities and Presidia in different regions of the country.

Harriet Birabwa
Bamboo Restaurant, Mukono
+256 782925292 +256 752925292

Betty Nakato
Mulongo Catering Services, Kampala
+256 701115448

Nassozi Kezia
Dembe Catering Services, Mukono
+256 774380943 +256 782586620

Timothy Zimula Mugwanya
Kalya Courts Hotel, Fort Portal
+256 783407182

Magomu Esther
Cosy Point Restaurant, Mbale
+256 772532538

Naminya Saleh
Eco Shamba Cafe and Restaurant, Mbale
+256 772328085 +256 701260493

George Ntumwa
Ssese Island Beach Hotel, Kalangala Island
+256 754186814

Lydia Kyeyune
Black and White Restaurant, Kalangala Island
+256 788470924

Michael Kijjambu
1000 Cups Coffee House, Kampala
+256 772505619 +256 775667858
coffeestm@hotmail.com

Beatrice Ndagano
Beatrijus Catering Services, Kiwangala Lwengo
+256 703287653

Takumba Munira
Munira, Buikwe
+256 775909248

Milly Nantabo
St. Luke Vocational Training Centre, Ngogwe
+256 775192393

Rose Nankanja
Ratifah, Buikwe
+256 706151159

Alisi Kisahe
Kitenda Baptist Primary School, Kitenda
+256 704421698

Jonathan Katongole
Bwindi Jungle Lodge, Kisoro
+256 789685028
katsjonathan0@gmail.com

Alice Kabatabazi
Alice Restaurant, Lugazi
+256 392961417 +256 772434192

Earth Markets

The first Earth Market in Uganda was started in Mukono-Wakiso in 2015. By the end of 2017, farmers in Manafwa and Lira districts had also joined the experience. At the Earth Market, you can find a selection of Ark of Taste and Presidia products, indigenous seeds and food products and juices, as well as talking to Slow Food experts about agronomic techniques, beekeeping and other food issues.

Mukono-Wakiso Earth Market
Where: Mukono, in front of the Mukono District headquarters
When: Friday, every two weeks
Contact: Medi Semakula, +256 757603388

Manafwa Earth Market
Where: Manafwa, in front of the Manafwa District headquarters
When: Every other Wednesday
Contact: Martin Wapatiti, +256 775140874

Lira-Amach Earth Market
Where: Lira, in front of Lira Sub-county headquarters (close to the Amach Municipal Council)
When: Friday, every two weeks
Contact: Moses Ogwal, +256 775334504

John Kiwagalo – Slow Food Uganda
+256 777535575
jonniekhe07@gmail.com

Terra madre

Examples of Food Communities

BOCOVACO (Bogoya banana, vanilla, cacao, coffee)
in Bukunja, Kisigala
Joseph Kkonde Kigongo
+256 754054317

Bukunja Youth Producers of Climbing Yams
Umar Kityo
+256 779131224 +256 704600809
kityoumar@gmail.com

Apala Youth Sesame Producers
Lydia Moro
+256 783001152

Mukono Beekeepers Association
Prosy Nakisozi
+256 772888759 +256 751888759

DEL Women's Group
Annet Kyojjo
+256 777107396

Mihale Tubana Mixed Farmers
Khaukha Mutwalibi Magolofa
+256 773538788

ARK OF TASTE

Let's save the flavors of the world!

Thousands of fruits, vegetables, cheeses, and animal species are disappearing, along with related traditional knowledge.
This shared heritage is also biodiversity and must be preserved.
Slow Food is collecting products from around the world aboard the Ark of Taste.

You can help too!

Search for products in your country. Help us to find and catalogue more!
www.fondazioneslowfood.com/en/what-we-do/the-ark-of-taste

JOIN SLOW FOOD

Promoting local and traditional food varieties
and defending Uganda's food biodiversity

By joining Slow Food you will support a sustainable system of food production and distribution, the development of food education projects around the world, the promotion of food cultures and biodiversity and the pleasure of food and a slow way of life.

Contact Slow Food Uganda - www.slowfooduganda.org
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Write us at Slow Food International Press Office – internationalpress@slowfood.it
To receive the newsletter with the latest updates on the Terra Madre network
and Slow Food activities visit www.slowfood.com

www.slowfood.com - www.slowfooduganda.org