

FOOD SECTION

Bring back memories of warmer days

Just because the sun is shining a little weakly and temperatures are dropping sharply, there is no reason to forget old favorite dishes from the Islands.

Those unforgettable flavors of new caught fish, still fresh and fragrant from the sea, the aroma of spices and herbs and the taste of vegetables and snow white rice all combine to create a cuisine that is both satisfying and delicious. There has always been something special about Caribbean cooking. Even the plainest dish is invitingly aromatic and subtly delicious.

The combination of influences that brought together various foods and cooking methods created a cuisine as unique and interesting as the islands that developed it. Spices and red hot peppers are essential ingredients in many dishes. They go a long way toward enlivening otherwise bland vegetables and meats, and add interesting counterpoint to thick soups and stews.

Although some markets do not supply many vegetables that are so important to many Caribbean dishes, some of the different kinds of squash available in supermarkets can be readily substituted. Plantains can be found in many areas, and yellow ripe bananas are everywhere. White-fleshed sweet potatoes, as well as orangy yams, are becoming more popular and okra, though seasonal, is easy to find. Many other popular ingredients can now be found dried or canned and are quick and easy to use.

Prepared sofrito takes the work out of preparing this essential seasoning and makes it possible to flavor even everyday dishes just the way you like them.

These recipes are full of the warm, fragrant subtleties of island cooking, all made easy with ready-to-use products available from supermarket shelves.

While these hearty dishes are perfect as the main meal in the heat of the islands, they are also just the thing during the cold weather months in this country.

Chicken and Okra Soup starts with ready-to-use canned Chunky Chicken Soup to which Caribbean-style pink kidney beans are added.

Stir in just the right amount of sofrito for flavor and lots of ripe okra for authenticity. Choose the greenest, firmest okra you can find, the smaller the better, unless you are fond of all the seeds.

To round out this meal, make a



Easy-to-fix Chicken and Okra Soup melds tasty Caribbean flavors with the convenience of a soup base for a dinner that brings the taste of the islands home.

big green salad and serve crusty fresh bread. For those who never seem to get enough, add a bowl of fluffy white rice to mix into the soup. Top the meal off with sliced papaya for a refreshing fruit finish.

Shrimp Fiesta is just right for a gathering of family or friends. Fresh green pepper, tomato and onion are combined with hearty Chunky Ham 'N Butter Bean Soup. Add one half pound of shrimp and prepared sazón that already has coriander and annatto added. Server this hot, deli-

icious sauce over freshly cooked rice and you have a dinner main dish fit for any occasion.

Sunday night supper of Beef and Eggplant Stew will send everyone off to start the new week in very fine fashion indeed. Frying peppers, onion and ground oregano are the first steps to success. Use fresh olive oil for the taste you want. Chunky Beef Soup does all the work. Ready-to-use and full of good chunks of beef, you only need to add a large eggplant to complement the other vegetables. Choose an eggplant that is dark and very shiny with no wrinkles. (Please turn to page 10 column 1)



DELUXE PINEAPPLE-RUM SAUCE

You'll want to make more than one batch of this mellow-tasting sauce for the holidays. Amber colored and thick with juicy nuggets of pineapple, the rum taste is subtle.

Drizzle a little over ice cream, or cake... or gift wrap a jar for a friend!

DELUXE PINEAPPLE-RUM SAUCE

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1/2 cup packed light brown sugar
- Dash ground cinnamon
- 1 can (8-1/4 oz.) Crushed Pineapple in Syrup
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 3 tablespoons dark rum

Heat butter and brown sugar together in 9-inch skillet until sugar is melted and lightly caramelized. Remove from heat. Stir in cinnamon, undrained pineapple, lemon juice and 2 tablespoons rum. Heat to simmering. Cook, stirring frequently, until slightly thickened, 5 to 10 minutes. Add remaining tablespoon rum and simmer a minute longer. Serve warm or cold. Makes about 1-1/4 cups sauce.

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