

FOOD FROM THE *heart and soul*

Ghanaian Patti Gyapomaa Sloley is on a mission to introduce the world to African cuisine through her fusion-inspired food. Here, she shares six of her favourite recipes from her book, *A Plate In The Sun*.

Patti Gyapomaa Sloley has always enjoyed food but a “love affair” started when she gave up work to be a full-time mum to her two “now strapping sons” and a wife to her English-born-and-bred husband. “Expanding his horizons beyond delicious but numerous Cornish pasties and Devon dumpings was my challenge. Rice was simply not on his menu,” says Patti. “Now, my jollof rice is top of his favourites. Garlic and chilli, once complete no-noes, now often appear on his shopping list.”

These days, Patti’s culinary horizons have extended beyond her family. After a chance meeting in a nail bar with the fiancée of renowned chef Jean-Christophe Novelli, Patti ended up becoming a “Novelli chef” at the Novelli

Academy in Hertfordshire, England.

Her book, *A Plate In The Sun*, has a foreword by Novelli, whose support has helped her mission to take African cuisine to the world.

Patti was born and educated in Ghana, but has lived in the UK since 1985. Food influences included a year spent as an exchange student in America, European travel and “too many international friendships to count, some as far back as primary school”.

“Of course the single biggest contribution to the way I cook is my mum’s almost encyclopaedic knowledge of West African cooking – a seemingly endless and effortless production of

fabulous food with a flavour all of its own,” says Patti. “I want to bring the fun factor to cooking and dispel any fears people have when attempting African dishes.

“I also want to share and promote Ghana and the hidden Africa – the Africa beyond the headlines. Food is a great communicator and can bring a celebration of diversity to the table. Variety is the spice of life, so let’s enjoy treats and delights from Ghana, my special corner of Africa.”

For more information, visit pattismenu.com.



Crisp prawns with chilli salsa

Prawns cook in minutes and salsa is blitzed in seconds. How much faster can good food get? For the perfect finish, add a generous drizzle of Worcestershire sauce, balsamic vinegar or ketchup over the salsa. I know the general wisdom is that prawns should be just cooked through, but this recipe is an African experience – crisp!

1 Scotch bonnet chilli
2 onions, chopped
1 tomato
Pinch of salt
12 fresh medium prawns, shelled and deveined, tails left on
Salt and pepper to season
1 tbsp ginger, grated
Oil to shallow fry
Serves 2

1. To make the salsa, place the Scotch bonnet, onions and tomato in a blender and blitz for 20 to 30 seconds, pour into a shallow serving bowl. Season with salt and stir through.
2. Rinse the prawns, pat dry and season with salt, pepper and ginger. Fry the prawns in a hot pan until pink, crisp and cooked through.

Serve with slices of kenkey to mop up the salsa sauce, or try them with hummus, chopped spring onion and pitta bread.

Styling by Brita Du Plessis | Photography by Zaid Joseph



For the love of food:
Jean-Christophe Novelli and
Patti in a kitchen at
his cookery academy;
and, below, in her
kitchen at home.



Guava and plantain pudding

Plantain works with both sweet and savoury dishes. It is cheap and packed with goodness. This pudding is quick and easy and, with very few ingredients, it couldn't be simpler. It works well with fresh, dried and tinned fruits, and best of all, there's no added sugar.

2 over-ripe plantains
½ tsp mixed spice
115g sultanas
½ tsp grated nutmeg
1 tsp vanilla extract
1 tin guava halves, drained, de-seeded and quartered
2 tbsp olive oil
150g plain flour
2 tsp baking powder
Serves 4

Preheat oven to 180°C.

1. Peel and slice the plantain lengthways and remove the seeds. Place in a bowl and mash with a fork. Add the mixed spice and nutmeg, sultanas, vanilla extract and olive oil, and gently mix. Sieve in the flour and baking powder and gently mix again.
2. Pour into a greased loaf tin and bake in a pre-heated oven for about 35-40 minutes or until a skewer inserted into the middle comes out clean. Serve warm with ice-cream or mascarpone.

♥ **Health tip:** Wrap a slice in foil and pop it in a lunch box for a nutritious snack.



Ginger and chilli plantain kelewele

Kelewele is spiced and fried ripe plantain, a favourite early evening road-side snack often served in newspaper. Queues of people chatter and wait eagerly at their favourite spot as tantalising aromas waft through the evening air and the kelewele seller leisurely stirs her large skillet of plantain over a wood fire.

4 very ripe plantains
1 tbsp grated ginger
Chilli flakes to taste
1 onion, minced
Salt to taste
Oil to shallow fry
Serves 4 to 6

1. Peel the plantains, slice lengthways, dice and place in a bowl. Add the grated ginger, chilli flakes, onion and salt, and mix with your hands to coat. Leave to marinate for 10-20 minutes.

2. Fry in hot oil until golden. Drain on absorbent kitchen paper and serve.

♥ **Health tip:** Plantains are a nutritious side dish for curries, stews and vegetarian meals. As a low-fat alternative to frying, toss the seasoned plantain with a little oil and bake on a tray in a pre-heated oven at 180°C.



Black-eyed beans with smoked fish and bacon

This is a weekend special in boarding schools in Ghana, a family favourite in most Ghanaian homes and a popular street food. If you fancy a vegetarian dish, just leave out the bacon.

1 litre Maa's tomato sauce (see overleaf)
6-8 rashers smoked bacon, chopped
2 x 400g tins black-eyed beans, drained
115g smoked haddock or salted fish, flaked
Serves 4

1. If using salted fish, rinse under running water to remove all salt crystals.
2. Warm the Maa's tomato sauce in a saucepan. Add the chopped bacon and

leave to cook on a low simmer for about 10-15 minutes.

3. Pour in the black-eyed beans, give it a good stir, add the fish, cover and simmer for roughly 45 minutes to an hour, stirring occasionally, until the beans are tender.

Serve with fried plantain, plantain fritters, boiled rice, gari or as a topping for a jacket potato.

If using tinned beans, squeeze a few beans between your thumb and forefinger to make sure they are soft. If not, before step (1), simmer with ½ tsp of bicarbonate of soda until tender.

♥ **Health tip:** Black-eyed beans are a good source of fibre, protein and potassium. They are free of fat and cholesterol.

Chicken peanut butter soup

I've had proposals of marriage based on this dish, but I know they are falling for every creamy and comforting mouthful. My preference is with chicken or lamb, but it also works well with most meats and seafood. Called mafe in other parts of Africa, it's our equivalent of chicken korma.

2kg whole chicken, chopped into 10 pieces
Salt to season
2cm ginger, peeled
1 Scotch bonnet chilli, to taste
3 guinea peppers (optional)
1 chicken stock cube
Handful of fresh basil
400g tin tomatoes
3 garlic cloves, crushed
3 onions, chopped
200g smooth peanut butter
2 carrots, chopped (optional)
12 button mushrooms (optional)
1 aubergine, chopped (optional)
Serves 4

1. Place the chicken, salt, ginger, Scotch bonnet, guinea pepper, stock cube and basil in a large saucepan.
2. Blend the tomatoes, garlic and onions until smooth. Pour over the chicken, then cover and simmer for about 20 minutes until the chicken juices run clear.
3. Add about 1½ litres of hot water, bring to the boil, reduce the heat and simmer.
4. Whisk the peanut butter with a cup of hot water to form a smooth sauce and add to the soup. Partially cover and simmer for 30-40 minutes.
5. Add the remaining ingredients and bring to the boil. If you want a lighter sauce, add a little more water.
6. Partially cover and simmer until the vegetables are tender and the peanut oil separates. Remove the ginger and guinea peppers before serving.

Serve with fufu or rice and fried plantain, sliced avocado, pawpaw and boiled eggs.

♥ **Health tip:** Studies have shown that peanuts contain high concentrations of poly-phenolic antioxidants, a compound that is thought to reduce the risk of stomach cancer.

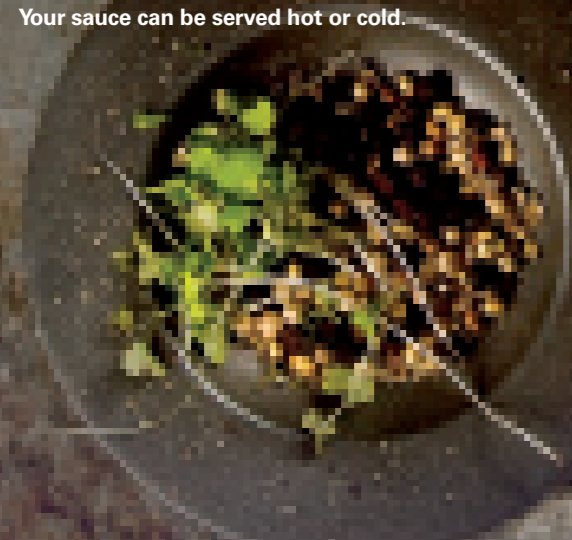


Maa's tomato sauce

This is Mum's version of an African classic. Full flavoured and adaptable, it forms the basis of almost all our sauces and stews. Simple to make, this spicy tomato sauce is an excellent base for seafood, meat and vegetarian dishes. As it cooks, it breaks down and thickens to form a partial purée. If you want a smoother sauce, just give it a quick whizz with a blender – a good way to conceal wholesome ingredients from fussy eaters. I often prepare a large quantity and freeze in portions.

2 onions, sliced
2 garlic cloves, crushed
2cm ginger, peeled and halved
2 tsp cayenne pepper or 1 Scotch bonnet chilli, to taste
1 tbsp dried prawn powder (optional)
400g tin chopped tomatoes
1 tbsp tomato purée
1 chicken stock cube
2 guinea peppers, crushed (optional)
Small handful of fresh basil leaves
Dash of Worcestershire sauce
Salt to taste
Oil to shallow fry
Makes about ½ litre

1. Heat a heavy-based pan, add the oil, then fry and stir the onions until golden.
 2. Stir in the remaining ingredients and bring to the boil. Taste and adjust the seasoning. Leave to simmer until the sauce reduces and intensifies in flavour and the oil separates. This should take about 10–15 minutes.
 3. Remove the guinea peppers and ginger. Your sauce can be served hot or cold.



Tropical fruits and peppercorn syrup

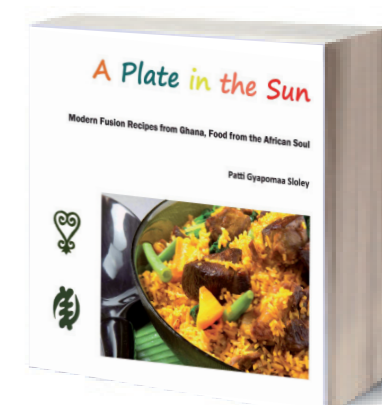
Fresh tropical fruits in a lively ginger and peppercorn syrup get your taste buds tingling. I serve this dish on a banana leaf.

Syrup

115g caster sugar
200ml water, or pineapple or orange juice
2cm ginger, peeled, thinly sliced
1 tsp tropical peppercorns, whole
¼ tsp black peppercorns, freshly ground
Tropical fruits

1 small ripe pineapple
2 small ripe papayas
2 ripe mangoes
2 tbsp fresh coconut shavings
Pomegranate seeds to scatter
Serves 4

1. Put the sugar into a pan and add the water or fruit juice. Stir over a low heat until the sugar dissolves. Add the ginger and peppercorns (ground and whole) to the sugar syrup. Bring to the boil, then simmer for about 10 minutes or until reduced and syrupy, then chill.
 2. Peel, core, de-seed and roughly dice the fruits.
 3. Divide into four bowls, scatter with the coconut shavings and pomegranate seeds.
 4. Drizzle the syrup over the fruit and serve with a dollop of ice-cream. 🍌



Spreading the word:
 Patti at The Galleria Shopping Centre in Hatfield, England, during a cooking demonstration last year; and, above, her book, *A Plate In The Sun*. To get a copy, visit aplateinthesun.com.