

Matooke (green banana)

With many thanks to Agnes Naluwagga and the rest of the team at the Centre for Research in Energy and Energy Conservation (CREEC), Uganda, for sharing this recipe and background.



L-R: Matooke in the garden, Matooke peeled, Matooke cooked and served with beef stew (image credit: Agnes Naluwagga, CREEC).

No meal in Uganda would be complete without matooke; in fact, to many people especially the Baganda the term 'emeere' means matooke though the term's translation means food. To be invited to somebody's home in Buganda (including Kampala) or western Uganda and be served pasta, rice and Irish potato as a staple is downright frowned upon and considered near unorthodox.

Recipe:

Ingredients:

- 3-4 matooke (green bananas)
- 4 endagala (banana leaves)
- 2 used endagala
- 2 banana stalks and banana fibre for wrapping and tying

Method:

- To prepare matooke for steaming as opposed to braising, one has to have Endagala (banana leaves), usually sold in bunches or singularly.
- Then once the matooke is peeled and washed, it is neatly wrapped with the banana leaves and secured with banana fibres.
- Then, the cook proceeds to prepare the saucepan. For this, the cook will place a couple of banana stalks crosswise at the bottom of the saucepan and place the matooke (wrapped with banana leaves) on top of the stalks. Then pour a small amount of water to the bottom of the saucepan, but without submerging the matooke.
- The process of cooking matooke is via steaming. Then place the saucepan on high heat and allow for the water to boil for an hour or so. Then reduce the heat, but always make sure that the matooke has

enough water and that at all times it is boiling. Allow a minimum of two hours of cooking, the longer the better.

- When the banana leaves have turned brown, this is an indication that the matooke is ready to be mashed. Safely remove it from the heat and set it aside.
- At this juncture, you will need to have some used banana leaves where you can place the wrapped banana and begin mashing. Gingerly press the matooke until it is mashed to the consistency of mashed potatoes.
- Wrap the mashed matooke in banana leaves and return to the saucepan adding more water making sure that the water does not touch the matooke.
- Then, return the saucepan to the stove and bring it to boil before reducing the heat and allow it to gently simmer. The simmering duration can vary from minutes to several hours depending on user or consumer preference; for die-hard matooke lovers, the longer the food is allowed to simmer, the better. Without adequate heat you will get poor and dismal results as the matooke will stay hard and blacken instead of softening and proper yellowing

