

LESSON 5: Tubers and Mashes

Lesson 5 brings a new concept to the nutritional landscape: tubers. Various mashes and dough made from tubers, root vegetables and starchy fruits, like breadfruit and plantains, are staples in African heritage cuisine. Like pasta in the Mediterranean, tubers and mashes act as vehicles for heaps of nutritious vegetables, sauces, stews, herbs and spices poured on top. As students begin to rethink their plate, featuring plant-based foods as their main courses, tubers make for a hearty, healthy, satisfying ingredient.

Oldways Tip #1: Alleviate fears about peanut butter stew. Understandably, many Americans are skeptical about using peanut butter in a vegetable recipe. The Senegalese Sweet Potato Peanut Stew (*Mafe*) is actually the program's highest rated recipe by students. Let your students know this ahead of time, to excite their positive expectations. Peanuts have been used in culinary traditions for millennia, from African peanut stews to Asian peanut sauces, like those featured in Pad Thai.

Oldways Tip #2: Bring in other tubers to show students. Use page 127 in your Teacher's Curriculum to help you find different varieties of tubers, either at a conventional or ethnic grocery store, to show your students. You can also send your students on a scavenger hunt, asking them to seek out and bring in tubers to class. Cassava, taro root and plantains are becoming more widely available in commercial grocery stores. Walking through page 127 with these ingredients on hand, for students to hold in their hands and examine, will make for an even richer discussion.

Class Extra: If available near you, consider serving raw jicama slices as a class snack for this lesson. Jicama is a wonderful tuber to eat raw, peeled and sliced into matchsticks, dipped in hummus.

Tips and Comments from Fellow Teachers

- Loved the creativity of the *Irio* recipe! Everyone was impressed with how that came together, because the food combinations were not common.
- As part of our meal theme, we started with several varieties of ready-made hummus and vegetables -- they loved it! We wanted to use jicama but no such thing in our stores.
- The Senegalese Stew (*Mafe*) was a big hit for this class.
- Several people did not know about the various types of tubers available to them in local grocers.
- They loved the sweet potato peanut stew. We gave each participant 2 bananas to take home and prepare in a new way. They really enjoyed them baked in the oven with spices!
- Putting vegetables into mashed potatoes was a great idea!

- The highlight of class was the 5 year olds who attended, sampled the dishes and enjoyed eating each one! I brought in yucca and jicama for students to taste and places a bowl filled with *Malanga*, yellow yam, *batata*, and taro tubers on display. Great lesson!
- Participants wanted to taste *fufu*. Yuca was easy to find in our area, but I had a difficult time finding breadfruit and taro. I served Ghanian *Kelewele* (plantain, ginger, chili and peanuts).
- I also prepared *saltfish* and *ackee* and *fufu* made from yucca, yams and plantains. A student commented that she had never tasted jicama until now. All students enjoyed this lesson.

Additional Recipes

[Oldways Herbed Sweet Potato Fries](#)

[Oldways Hearty Pumpkin Soup](#)