

# *I Give You a Recipe, I Write You My History*

*A Collective Work by Parkdale Domestic Workers*

*La nourriture retrace en grande partie l'histoire des femmes, celles de nos mères et de nos grands-mères qui vivaient littéralement dans la cuisine. Dans ce texte, des femmes immigrantes qui vivent maintenant au Canada partagent les recettes préférées de leurs pays natals.*

Food is history. It is the history of our countries since it tells what kind of plants and animals flourish in our homelands. Food is women's history because it tells the story of our mothers and grandmothers who worked in the kitchen or toiled over a fire. Often our recipes are given orally from one generation to the next. Sometimes the recipes are written down. Sharing a recipe is the only kind of writing many women do—here in Canada and all around the world.

As members of Parkdale Domestic Workers (PDW) we come from Latin countries, the Philippines, and the Caribbean. We are immigrant nannies, and we are also women with richly diverse cultures. In sharing these recipes, we invite you to see us within the framework of our histories.



**Dionisa Llance**

My country of origin is Peru. English is my third language. I also speak Spanish, and Quechuan which is the language of the Incas. I came to Canada as a domestic worker in 1990. This recipe is popular in the north of Peru when people gather for a party.

**SECO OF LAMB:** 1 kilogram of lamb, 1 cup peas, 1 cup diced carrots, 2 packets coriander, 1 clove garlic, 1 medium onion chopped, 6 potatoes cut in chunks, pepper and salt to taste. *Preparation:* Sauté onions, garlic, and meat chunks until golden brown. Add coriander and 1 cup of water and simmer for 20 minutes. Add potatoes, carrots and remainder of ingredients. Let simmer for 1 hour. Serve.



**Bernadette Marrast**

I am from Grenada. This recipe is our island's favourite dish. Because most of the ingredients are home grown and taste so delicious, it is always a favourite of the old and young. This dish is part of every celebration.

**STEAM DOWN:** An assortment of yams, callaloo, pumpkin, coconut milk, dumplin, sweet pepper, ochoré, plantain, onion, curry, bread fruit, salted meat. *Preparation:* Dumplin: mix flour with salt and water to hard dough and roll in small bits. Wash and peel all vegetables and place in pot with dough. Add salt meat. Pour coconut milk to cover three-quarters of the contents. Allow to boil until almost dry, then serve.

*—Her mother couldn't take care of her and her aunt could only take care of her in the kitchen, and with the gruels and teas she was growing healthier among the tastes and smells of this warm paradisaical place—*

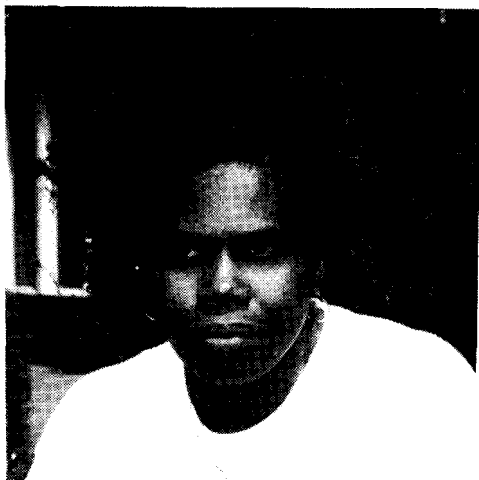
*Laura Esquirel, Like Water for Chocolate.*



### Edna Hapin

I came to Canada from the Philippines two years ago. This recipe is a very common breakfast or snack food. It is a simply prepared cake made without flour. During Holy Week back home, it is very popular in the absence of meat and lavish foods. All ingredients are available at a Canadian-Filipino store.

**CASAVA CAKE:** 3 packs grated casava, 1 can condensed milk, 1/2 tsp. salt, 1 young coconut, 1 cup sugar, 1 cup grated cheese, 1 pack coconut milk, 1 tsp. vanilla. *Preparation:* Thaw the frozen ingredients; mix together with half of milk and all of sugar, vanilla and salt to blend the taste. Pour into greased baking pan. Bake at 350 for one hour. Remove from oven and spread remaining milk on top, then the cheese. Return to oven for 15 minutes until golden.



### Pauline Ince

Barbados is my home country. This recipe is an international Christmas dish.

**JUG-JUG:** 8 cups green peas, 1 cup guinea corn flour or oatmeal, 1/2 pound salt beef, 1/4 pound fresh pork or chicken, 2 tbsp. butter, 2 medium onions, 4 blades eschalot, 1 bunch mixed herbs, salt and pepper to taste, 4 cups of water. *Preparation:* Boil the chicken in water; add the salt meat cut in pieces and previously soaked to remove salt. Add peas and herbs; cook until soft. Strain, reserving stock. Mince all other ingredients. Cook the flour or oatmeal in the stock for about 10 minutes, stirring constantly. Add minced ingredients. Cook and stir frequently for 1/2 hour until mixture becomes a fairly stiff consistency. Cover and allow to steam for 5 minutes. Before removing from heat, stir in butter. Turn mixture out on a dish, spreading it smooth with more butter. Serve hot with sliced ham and chicken.



### Monica Anderson

Jamaica is my home. This recipe has many memories of the good old life of living in the country.

**ACKEE AND SALTFISH:** 1 dozen ackees (pods), 1/2 lb. cod fish, 2 small onions, 4 tbsp. cooking oil, 1 tbsp. ketchup, 1/4 lb. bacon, 1 country pepper, dash of black pepper. *Preparation:* soak codfish for about 1/2 hour then put in cold water and boil. Drain when cooked and flake codfish. Prepare ackees (or drain from tin). Fry bacon strips in own fat and reserve a few for garnishing. Heat cooking oil in same pan, add codfish and ackee. When hot remove to plate and garnish with bacon, pepper, and onion rings.

*—It is a curious fact that novelists have a way of making us believe that luncheon parties are invariably memorable for something very witty that was said, or for something wise that was done. But they seldom spare a word for what was eaten—  
Virginia Woolf, A Room of One's Own.*



### Jenny Huidobro

Santiago, Chile is my homeland. My mother and grandmother used to prepare this dish. In summer the smell of fresh basil reminds me of the whole family getting together to help with peeling and cutting of the cobs of corn.

**PASTEL DE CHOCLO:** 10 fresh basil leaves, 10 cobs of corn, 1 cup sugar, salt to taste, pin each of cummin, oregano and pepper, 10 pitted green olives, 1/4 cup seedless raisins, 2 hard boiled eggs, 1 large chopped onion, 4 chicken legs and thighs, 3 tbsp. oil, 1 tbsp. margarine. *Preparation:* In hot oil cook: onions, chicken, cummin, oregano, pepper and salt; add 1/4 cup water when cooked and set aside. Puree corn kernels with basil in food processor or blender. To mixture add 1/2 cup sugar and cook 15 minutes in melted margarine (stir constantly). Place chicken mixture in greased 12x7 inch pan; spread olives and raisins and sliced eggs; cover with corn mixture; sprinkle remaining sugar on top. Cook for 35+ minutes at 350F.



### Fanny Tombado

I come from a small-town family in the Philippines where meat comes on our table only on the weekend. Our diet is nutritious and delicious. This recipe is fast and simple.

**EGGPLANT OMELET:** Eggplant, eggs, salt, cooking oil. *Preparation:* Broil eggplant, peel off skin and pound lightly. Beat eggs and add dash of salt. Dip the pounded eggplant in the egg mixture and fry both sides until golden brown. Serve with hot steamed rice.



### Carmen Vaca

Mexico is my country of origin. One day my Mexico City high school friends invited me to go downtown and have tinga. I had never tried the dish before—it is traditionally prepared with lots of onions and chili. One taste and my face turned red, my eyes watered, and I became dizzy. My friends would not stop laughing. This version is mild for Canadians.

**TINGA:** 5 lbs. chicken, 2 cups chicken stock, 2 tbsp. oil, 1 thinly sliced onion, 1 chopped clove of garlic, small handful of chopped parsley, 2 cans chopped chipotle chilies, salt and pepper to taste, pinch of sugar, 1 lb. peeled, seeded and chopped tomatoes. *Preparation:* Cook chicken in stock. Drain and flake. Fry onion and garlic. Add all other ingredients and cook for 15 minutes. Pour sauce over chicken. Cook together over low heat for 5 minutes. Serve.

*—Maize is the centre of everything for us. It is our culture—  
Rigoberta Menchú, I Rigoberta Menchú.*



### Janet McDonald

Jamaica is my homeland. When I was small I didn't really know the value of vegetables. I just enjoyed my Mom always cooking this dish so nicely so that we could enjoy our meals. As an adult, I still enjoy vegetarian cooking.

**VEGETABLE STIRFRY:** An assortment of fresh bokchoy, carrots, corn, onion, celery garlic, green/red/yellow sweet peppers, salt and pepper, butter or water for steaming. *Preparation:* Wash all vegetables. Cut into interesting shapes. Except for bokchoy, put all vegetables into hot stirfry pan where water or butter has been sizzling. Stirfry for 1 minute, add bokchoy and stir fry for another 2 minutes. Raise heat and cover for 2 minutes. Serve over hot rice or between pita bread.



### Valley Adora Richards

St. Vincent is my country of origin. This recipe has been served in my family on Easter Holidays, and other special weekends when entertaining friends and relatives. Shrimp always reminds me of growing up in my parents' home.

**PEPPER SHRIMP:** 1/2 lb. shrimp, 2 large green peppers, 2 medium carrots, a medium onion, 3/4 can water chestnut, 1/2 bottle of sweet and sour sauce, one christophene. *Preparation:* Season shrimp with skin using salt, garlic black pepper. Fry in oil for 3 minutes and drain. Stir fry all other ingredients for 3. Add shrimp, sweet and sour sauce. Simmer for 5 minutes and serve over plain cooked rice.

*—It was blessing that Chenchu appeared at that very moment, amid the reigning confusion, and pronounced those magical words supper is served. That announcement restored the calm and good cheer that the occasion warranted but that they had been on the point of losing. When the talk turns to eating, a subject of greatest importance, only fools and sick men don't give it the attention it deserves—*

*Laura Esquirel, Like Water for Chocolate.*



## McGill

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**Closing Date: February 14, 1994**

(Candidates requiring prior assurance of a position in order to apply for outside funding are invited to apply one year in advance.)