

## Shakirat's Yam Balls (Nigeria)



These tasty Nigerian Yam Balls are a recipe from Shakirat, who came to London as a refugee from Nigeria in 2002.

When Shakirat was forced to flee her home country she brought her much treasured recipes with her to the UK. One of her favourite dishes is Yam Balls with a special twist. Yams are the yellow stepsister of the sweet potato, a staple food in many countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the South Pacific. *'Back home not everyone adds fish to the yam balls, but personally I find the smoky flavour and aroma of smoked mackerel pairs well with the refreshing tomato sauce.'*

Shakirat's passion for cooking developed early. Encouraged by her father she went to cookery school and started working at a guesthouse in a wealthy area of Nigerian capital Lagos. *'Knowing there are people out there who like your food is a great feeling. Eating these dishes here in London evokes all the beautiful memories of the carefree and independent life I lived during that time.'*

Shakirat now hopes to host supper clubs in London and would like to run her own food business in the future.

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(This recipe is taken from the Stories on Our Plate @soop\_stories cookbook).

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## FULL RECIPE

### Ingredients:

*For the yam balls*

1 yam, peeled and chopped into medium chunks

2 smoked mackerel fillets

Black pepper to taste

Salt to taste

Half a cube of vegetable or chicken stock

150 g of breadcrumbs

1 egg, whisked

Vegetable oil, *enough to completely cover the yam balls for deep frying*

*For the sauce*

3 mixed sweet pepper, diced

1 onion, finely diced

2 tbsp tomato puree

Half a cup of sunflower oil (add more if needed)

1 vegetable or chicken stock cube

1 tsp of curry powder

1 tsp of thyme

Black pepper to taste

### Method:

Boil the chopped yam in salted water until you could easily stick in a fork, adding water if it gets too starchy. Drain the yams when cooked, add salt and pepper to taste, 1/2 of a stock cube (sprinkled) and mix and mash it all together.

Once you have reached a nice mash, crumble the smoked mackerel fillets into the mixture and fold them in. Shape the mixture into medium sized balls. Coat the balls in breadcrumbs by first rolling them in a plate of the whisked egg, and then in a plate of breadcrumbs. Fry the balls in sunflower oil or grill in the oven. You should have enough to make about twenty balls.

In a frying pan, fry the onions in the oil until soft, add the mixed pepper and let them cook gently for 2 minutes. Add the puree, the stock, curry, thyme, and black pepper and let it cook for 4 minutes on a high heat. Lower the heat, letting the mixture simmer for 10 more minutes until all the flavours are absorbed and the vegetables are soft. Serve the balls with the sauce.