

<https://www.chefspencil.com/most-popular-foods-in-congo/>

Posted on Jan 8th, 2022

by [Junior Boweya](#)



quizlet set: [https://quizlet.com/\\_ay3d10?x=1jqt&i=1b84td](https://quizlet.com/_ay3d10?x=1jqt&i=1b84td)  
password: Congo2022

(This set is based on the article, can be used by the students at home and can also be practiced in the classroom using 'Quizlet Live'.)

The Democratic Republic of Congo is the second largest country in Africa spanning over 2,345,000 square kilometers.

The national territory is mainly covered by dense equatorial forest; it stretches from the Atlantic coast in the west to the Great Lakes region in the east. There are savannahs in the northeast and south, but also gallery forests, high plateaus, and mountains in the east.

In the heart of the country, we find the central basin, which is very humid with a significant presence of watercourses and swamps.

The forests and savannahs of the country offer an immense variety of species of animals and birds, and the lakes and rivers teem with fish, while the vegetation offers a rich array of vegetables and fruits that is the culinary delight of the nearly 450 ethnic groups in this country of about 100 million inhabitants.

This cultural variety associated with the biodiversity of the country opens up an impressive field of gastronomical possibilities; each region has its native species of plants and animals that locals can cook using their own cultural and historical sensibilities.

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Food habits are often linked to the region of origin; fish is a staple food for those living on the rivers, meat-heavy dishes for Congolese living in tropical savannah regions, while those living in wooden topical areas will primarily eat vegetarian food.

It would not be possible to describe all the gastronomical diversity of the DRC in the context of this article, but we will focus on 20 of the most popular dishes.

## 1. Liboke



Credits: [chez tantie jai faim](#)

It is a dish generally composed of boiled fish with tomato, salt, and chili and wrapped in banana leaves or other wild plants, which will imbue the fish with their aromas. Everything is then put on a grill. Adding other spices, such as garlic and celery, enhances the flavor.

The fish can also be replaced with various other ingredients, like chicken, pork, squash, and many more. It's all a matter of preference.

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## 2. Pondu



Credits: [tshitshis.casseroles](https://tshitshis.casseroles)

Pondu is one of the most popular dishes throughout the country.

The dish is made using prepared cassava leaves that are cooked in a pot, with or without spices. In the center of the country, for example, pondu is simply cooked with water and a pinch of salt. In other parts of the country, oil—particularly palm oil—and spices are added, as well as onions, eggplants, scallions, etc.

It can be enjoyed with rice as well as fufu or plantains, but this list is not exhaustive. You can also add beef, fish, or beans to the dish.

## 3. Fufu



Next to pondu, fufu is one of—if not the—staple food par excellence of the Congo. From north to south, from east to west, fufu is present on all Congolese tables.

There are two main types: corn fufu and cassava fufu.

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Corn fufu is made from corn flour mixed with water, which is brought to a boil until cooked through and then simmered over low heat until the dough has solidified; it is served as balls.

Cassava fufu is made by first drying the cassava and then grinding it. Once the flour is obtained, the preparation is almost the same as for corn fufu. Note also that the two flours can be used together.

#### 4. Chikwange (Kwanga)



Credits: [hello\\_kinshasa](#)

Next to fufu, we find chikwange, which is also made from cassava, but whose preparation is more complex.

Chikwange is usually not prepared at home. Its preparation time is quite long; it may take one to two weeks. You have to soak the cassava in water for several days before preparing it and letting it drain for another two or three days before wrapping it in banana leaves and boiling it for a good hour.

Chikwange goes well with all kinds of vegetables or fish but is also enjoyed outdoors with barbecue and a good beer in the big cities of the Congo.

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## 5. Lituma



Credits: [frida\\_blessing\\_food\\_tv](#)

Another popular accompaniment is lituma. It looks like fufu but consists of plantains that are boiled and then peeled and pounded. At this stage, spices can be added to the paste for added flavor.

Lituma is highly prized by populations originating from the equatorial zones of the central basin.

## 6. Ndakala



Credits: [chef\\_apple\\_k](#)

Ndakala are small dried fish also nicknamed 1000 poisons. They can be fried in oil with a bit of chili and savored with fufu or chikwange. Ndakala can also be mixed with vegetables of all kinds, bathed in tomato sauce.

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## 7. Makemba (Plantains)



As its French name suggests, it is a kind of banana, but one that cannot be eaten raw; it needs to be either fried in oil, boiled in water, or grilled. And as we saw above, when boiled, plantain can be made into lituma.

In Congo's largest cities, fried bananas have become a very popular item on fast food menus, even overshadowing French fries.

## 8. Fumbwa



Credits: [leya\\_food](#)

Fumbwa is a vegetable made from the green leaves of the plant *gnetum africanum*.

The leaves are rolled into a bundle and then, using a knife, they are cut into thin strips, which give them the appearance of filament. They are usually prepared with spices and peanuts. It is a specialty of the western provinces.

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## 9. Matembele



Credits: [tshitshis.casseroles](https://tshitshis.casseroles)

Matembele is a vegetable made from the leaves of sweet potatoes. It is a creeping plant that grows very quickly in almost any plot in the Congo. It is quite easy to prepare with a few spices and oil and goes well with almost any local accompaniment.

Unlike pondu, matembele is found more often on the plate of the Congolese, especially because of its extremely low cost.

## 10. Mayebo (Mushrooms)



Credits: [m w foodyy](https://m.w.foodyy)

One of the delicacies of Congolese cuisine is mayebo: mushrooms of different species, fresh or dried, which can be prepared in tomato sauce or palm oil as well as mixed with vegetables, prepared in broth, or even in a stew.

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## 11. Mbinzo (Caterpillars)



Next to mayebo, there are mbinzo; these are dried caterpillars. In Kinshasa, they are generally cooked with a light white sauce made of onions and a little oil with the essential red chili pepper.

But mbinzo's recipes across the country are as varied as they are creative; they can be found associated with mayebo or mixed with mbika ... the possibilities are endless.

## 12. Mbika



Credits: [mbika\\_paris](#)

A kind of flour made from ground squash seeds that tends to be wrapped around the food it is cooked with.

Very often prepared in liboke that is, wrapped in a banana leaf the end result has a texture that makes you think of blood sausage.

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### 13. Lumba-Lumba

This vegetable with a very aromatic flavor reminiscent of mint is popular in the center of the country and does not need the addition of spices in its preparation. It is sometimes prepared with chicken and chili.

### 14. Mbala (Sweet Potato)



Sweet potato is also one of the popular foods of the Congo. There are two varieties of sweet potato grown locally: the sweet potato (mbala ya sukali) and the unsweetened potato (mbala ya mungwa). It can be cooked in tomato sauce with pieces of beef or pork with onions, garlic, etc., or simply boiled in clear water.

In cities, you can find it cut into thin slices and sautéed like French fries or like crisps.

### 15. Tshomba tsha kabiola



Credits: [mamanpatox\\_cuisine](https://www.instagram.com/mamanpatox_cuisine)

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Tshomba tshia kabiola is a dessert made with fermented cassava, peanuts, milk, and sugar. The cassava is immersed in hot water for about fifteen minutes—be careful not to soften it too much—and then drained and immersed in water at room temperature to be kept for 4 days in an airtight container.

On the fourth day, the cassava will be grated and mixed with powdered milk and sugar, not forgetting the peanuts. Finally, add water until you reach the desired texture, and keep it in the fridge.

Let's take a look next at some dishes that may not have originated in Congo, yet are still extremely popular locally and deserve a spot among the 20 most popular dishes in Congo.

#### 16. Mpiodi (Horse Mackerel)



Credits: [congofoodweek](https://www.congofoodweek.com/)

This fish is so popular, particularly in Kinshasa, that it is nicknamed the friend of Kinois (inhabitants of Kinshasa); one of its other nicknames is *Thompson*. Another surprising fact is that mpiodi costs far less than locally caught fish. It is mainly imported from Namibia.

The most popular recipe by far is the oil-fried mpiodi. In second place, we have the mpiodi grilled at barbecues; for this recipe, larger-sized mpiodis are preferred. But it is not uncommon to taste a mpiodi in tomato sauce or mixed with vegetables.

#### 17. Cuisse (Frozen Chicken Thigh)

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These are chicken thighs from chickens raised in battery cages. They are very recognizable to the eye because they are much larger than the usual chicken thighs, and they have a much more tender and full flesh.

They have conquered the palaces of the Congolese over the past fifteen years, particularly in large cities. On the other hand, on the recipe side, they are often appreciated braised.

#### 18. Chicken Mayo



Credits: [ag cooking](#)

This dish appeared over the past decade, and chicken mayo is one of the latest findings of the Congolese Cordon Bleu.

The chicken is first cut into very small pieces and seasoned, then peppers, chili, onions, and garlic are added, then the chicken is grilled wrapped in parchment paper.

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Fifteen minutes before the end of cooking, the package is unwrapped and mayonnaise is added before repacking; everything goes back to the fire before being served ten to fifteen minutes later... smooth as you wish!

## 19. Ya Jean



Credits: [viewsofcongo](https://www.viewsofcongo.com)

Another very popular dish is ya jean; it is smoked goat meat. The goat is slaughtered and butchered on the spot, and everyone chooses their piece, which is then cut and seasoned.

The pieces are wrapped in parchment paper and then put on the grill. After three-quarters of an hour, the meal is served with chikwangue or fried plantains and a cold beer.

## 20. Poso (Poso ya Ngulu)

This word literally means pig skin. As the name suggests, these are pieces of pork skin cut into squares and dipped in a marinade before being smoked on a grill.

This snack is eaten as an appetizer with chili powder, preferably, and rings of raw onions, which help to degrease the grilling.

### **2. Collect the verbs from your texts used for preparing your dishes:**

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fry, grill, add, season, wrap, cut, ...

**3. Fill in the chart, first based on the dishes you've read about, then continue with the other dishes your classmates tell about:**

NAME OF THE DISH	INGREDIENTS	PREPARATION
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		

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12		
13		
14		
15		
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		

**4. What are the traditional dishes in Hungary? What are the ingredients of the one you like most?  
How do you make it?**

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