KitchenBooQ

Asaro (Yam Porridge)

Serves: 4 | Cooking Time 40 minutes | Level: Easy



INGREDIENTS

2 lbs (900 g) firm or semi-ripe yam, peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes
3 tbsp red palm oil
1 large yellow onion, finely diced
3 scotch bonnet peppers, seeded and minced
4 cloves garlic, minced
1 tsp (5 g) grated fresh ginger
2 cups (480 ml) water or vegetable broth
1 tbsp vegetarian seasoning powder, crushed
1/2 tsp ground black pepper
Salt to taste
Optional: 4 soft-boiled eggs for serving

Notes
Traditional Asaro often includes dried crayfish or smoked fish for umami depth; omit these to keep it vegetarian while maintaining flavor through extra ginger and garlic. Palm oil can be substituted with olive oil or avocado oil, though the authentic reddish hue and distinct taste will change. Store cooled leftovers in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 4 days. Freeze for up to 3 months. Never leave this dish at room temperature; cool and refrigerate within 2 hours of cooking.

PREPARATION

1. Place the peeled yam cubes in a large pot and cover with cold water. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat and cook for 5 minutes to parboil. Drain well and set aside.

2. In the same pot or a wide skillet, heat the red palm oil over medium heat until shimmering but not smoking. Add the diced onion and sauté for 3-4 minutes until softened and translucent.

3. Stir in the minced scotch bonnet peppers, garlic, and grated ginger. Cook for another minute until fragrant, being careful not to burn the spices.

4. Add the drained yam cubes to the pot along with the water or vegetable broth. Sprinkle over the vegetarian seasoning powder, black pepper, and salt. Stir gently to coat everything evenly.

5. Reduce heat to low, cover partially, and simmer for 15-20 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the liquid reduces and the yam becomes tender enough to mash slightly against the side of the pot. The mixture should thicken into a porridge-like consistency.

6. Taste and adjust seasoning if needed. Arrange halved soft-boiled eggs on top just before serving if using. Garnish with fresh herbs if desired. Serve hot as a standalone dish or alongside fried plantains.