

From “Uganda, Pearl of Africa” 2024 Year-end and New Year special edition Ugandan Food

What do the people of Uganda, whose climate and customs are completely different from Japan's, eat every day? To be honest, I couldn't even imagine it until I came here about nine months ago and I've finally gotten a glimpse of how ordinary people live.



Typical Ugandan foodstuff

I have listed foodstuff that are used on a daily basis in ordinary households. This is an exhibition by Ashinaga Uganda students at their Festival. Pumpkins, onions, and tomatoes are familiar. Fruits like mango and banana are very delicious and abundant in Uganda. There is a green banana in the upper middle, but this is not a fruit banana that is eaten even in Japan, but an edible one called matooke (see below). Taro, sweet potato etc. are also the same as what you see in Japan. Peanuts and other legumes are crushed in a mortar on the right and made into sauce. Below the pumpkin is the jackfruit. The one in the photo is small, but it is usually the size of a child's head. Although it is a rare fruit for Japanese people, it is very sweet and popular.

Matooke

The small green bananas in the photo above are peeled, steamed in banana leaves and kneaded into a food called matooke, which is a common staple food in central Uganda.



Steamed matooke, and steamed mixture of cassava and millet flour called Kalo on the right



As shown in this photo, trucks loaded with large quantities of matooke are brought to city markets every day for families to eat

Rolex

An omelet is made by adding tomatoes, onions, etc. to eggs, and then wrapped in a chapati (a thin layer of toasted flour that forms the outer layer of the omelet). As you can see in the photo, there are food stalls all over the place. However, local Ugandans usually have their own recommended places, not just anywhere.



Rolex Stall



Cross section of rolex

Posho

It is made by kneading flour and hot water, then wrapping it in banana leaves and steaming. The price is probably the cheapest among Ugandan meals. In ordinary schools, posho is often served for school lunches throughout the year.



Posho

For lunch, Ugandans usually eat a large portion of these on one plate at a buffet-style restaurant. This time I ordered chicken soup which comes with the set of matooke, posho, kalo, and yam. There are also soups with fish in them. The soup is made with a strong flavor, and many people eat by dipping matooke or posho into the soup. They all look similar except for their colors, but each one has a different texture and is refreshing and delicious.



Chicken soup with the set of matooke, posho, kalo and yam



Meal status

What do you think? Raw fish and sashimi are unfamiliar to most Ugandans. Similarly, the Ugandan food that I introduced here is something that we almost never see in Japan. For example, Matooke is similar to Japanese puffed sweet potato. I hope that you can feel even a little bit of what Uganda is like now.