

# TASTES OF THAMESMEAD

A community cookbook





## **My Happy Place**

I stepped back and asked time to be my friend today  
Time asked me what I am grateful for, for this day  
I start off simply with food on the table  
Whether it's my dad's steamed egg dish or mum's soft tofu  
The aromas from our kitchen are much better  
When the entire family come to eat together.

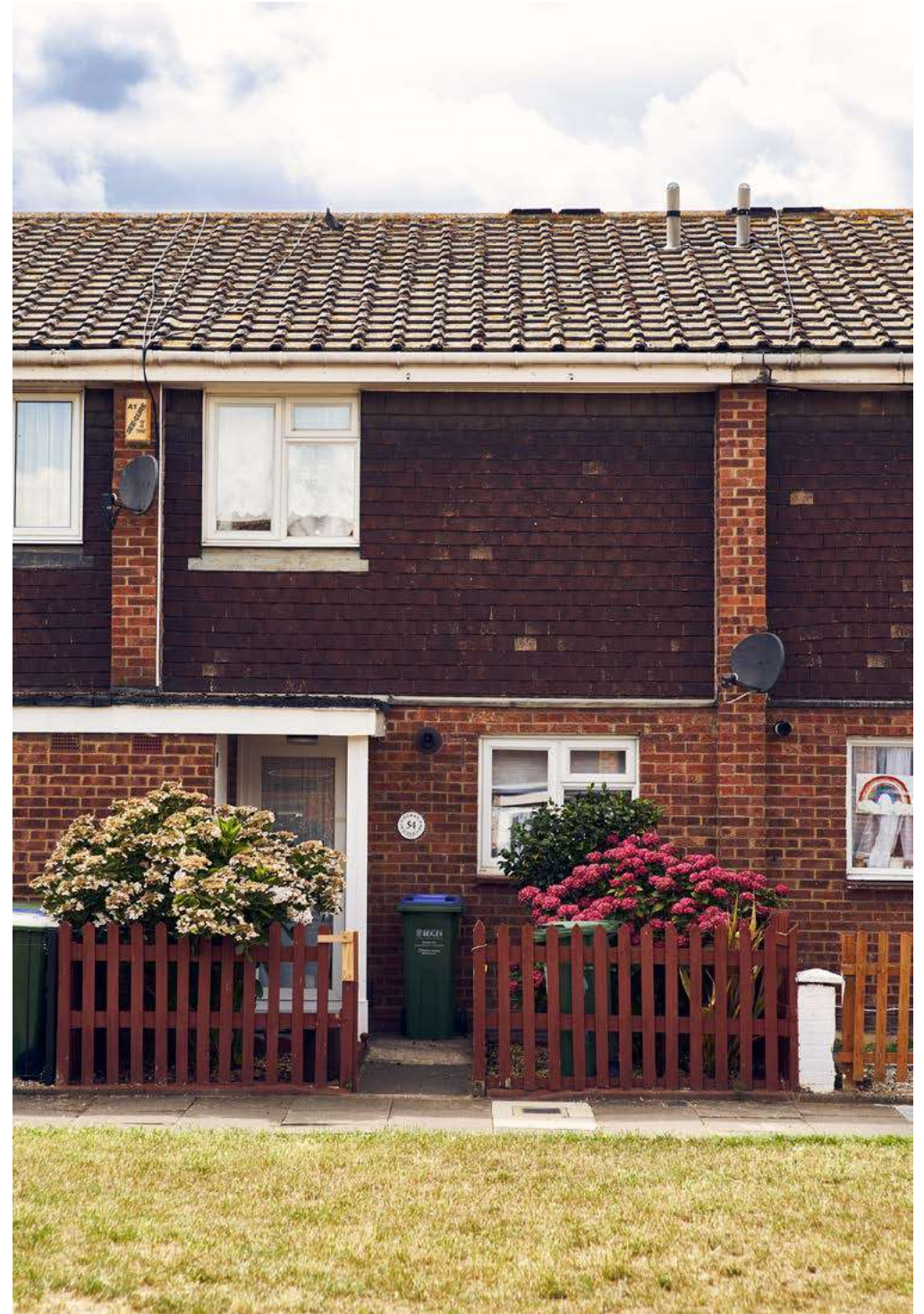
# TASTES OF THAMESMEAD

A community cookbook

— by Floro Azqueta and Hannah Ringham







## Foreword

Tastes of Thamesmead has been created from the rich and diverse food heritage that lives, and has lived, in Thamesmead.

From when it was built in 1968, Thamesmead residents have seen many changes in its architecture and in its community and this is reflected in the food stories and recipes we have collected.

This book also forms part of the Thamesmead Community Archive, a project started in 2018 by local residents to celebrate Thamesmead's 50th anniversary. The archive has collected hundreds of items over the past two years, from the iconic marketing materials and masterplans of the early 70s, to personal photographs and memories from local people past and present.

This book starts with the people of Thamesmead and their passion for food. It is connected to building on the future of food and community as well as looking at the past.

There are 10 recipes in this book, reflecting the vast talent in Thamesmead and the celebration and enjoyment which comes from sharing food.

We hope that you enjoy reading and making these dishes which are a combination of local and international flavours unique to this part of South East London.

We invite you to contribute your own stories to the Thamesmead Community Archive as it continues to grow with Thamesmead.

— Thamesmead Community Archive  
Summer 2020



Tastes of Thamesmead and the Thamesmead Community Archive have been funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Peabody.

[thamesmeadcommunityarchive.org.uk](http://thamesmeadcommunityarchive.org.uk)



## Introduction

As artists, we are fascinated by how we meet each other through food. How we enjoy eating in different ways and are influenced by other cultures, communities, and the architecture that surrounds us.

In developing this book and related food events, we have discovered crispy golden tacos, spicy jollof rice, a tasty and comforting curry, those growing food on allotments, community food groups, cookery classes, food markets, specialist shops, takeaways, fusion vegan ideas, and classic traditional recipes.

As we kept talking and meeting people, we kept on discovering more: different dishes, backgrounds, sometimes revealing challenging social histories as well as resilient individuals cooking, growing, creating food to bring their communities and families together.

Artist Bhajan Hunjan moved to Thamesmead just under two years ago: “I moved from East London, from Mile End, which is very different, quite vibrant with lots of cafes and restaurants. Thamesmead has quite an amazing, utopian architecture together with these green spaces. When it was first built, people were traveling up and down the country to look at it. But when you look at the provision for people now, the only places to shop are Sainsbury’s or Lidl - apart from the corner shop. There is a lot

currently lacking I think in terms of communal places where people can get together, have a coffee or food or anything like that, which I hope will change in the future. I think there is a lot of potential for communities here. I came as part of the Bow Arts scheme which involves artists in the community connected to the renovation of the Lakeside Centre, a former social club and restaurant and now growing into a lively creative hub. One sustainable idea for the centre is to grow fruits and vegetables which could be used for the future cafe.”

George Plemper lived and worked as a teacher in what was Riverside School in Thamesmead in the 70s and 80s: “There were very few shops to buy food, it was empty and isolating arriving in Thamesmead. The children were really nice at Riverside; they were my main community.”

Jay Brown was a pupil at Riverside School who we met through our search for local recipes. We asked about daily life and food for him as a boy growing up during that time. He said: “I remember when we first moved to Thamesmead, it was quite rough. We lived on just the cheapest basic stuff - egg and chips, bread and butter. Sometimes we had a roast on a Sunday, that would be the epitome of our best family times as kids, because you know, we were all together.”

During the coronavirus pandemic people have turned to food for comfort, inspiration and community. Infinite Catering, who make Caribbean cuisine, has been helping at the Woolwich Community Centre. While there were no street markets during the early lockdown period, their home deliveries sky rocketed. “People are tired of cooking Monday to Friday I guess, and they are just loving our food!” Shirrel and Karl (from Infinite Catering) featured on TEMO TV, a new mini-series on the Thamesmead Now YouTube channel which features local residents sharing tips and tricks on how we can get through lockdown together. TEMO TV was created by Peabody and Emergency Exit Arts during lockdown in spring 2020. More than 30 local people are featured in the five episodes of TEMO TV, sharing their love of Thamesmead, crafts and family recipes, including Shirrel and Karl who cooked a Jamaican national dish - Ackee and Saltfish. Local resident - Michelle Sanchez (with her fantastic kids) also took part and made their tasty ‘Tacos Dorado de Papa con chipotle salsa’, which is one of the recipes in this book.

Thamesmead has a long tradition of attracting people from different backgrounds for all sorts of different reasons. There are those who have come to live in Thamesmead through political

situations, as well as those who have lived in the area when there was no Thamesmead, only marshes. Vietnamese refugees came to Thamesmead in the late 70s and built communities, while Belvedere marshes were home to one of the largest settlements of Gypsies, Showpeople and Travellers in the country - long before Thamesmead itself was actually built. We have begun to understand that both communities have a celebrated cuisine that is enjoyed here. We have also met those with Scottish, Welsh, Italian, Turkish, Middle Eastern heritage among others, and if this was a longer project it could easily be a bigger cookbook with more recipes from an even wider variety of backgrounds and perspectives.

We hope you enjoy reading the stories in this book as well as trying out the recipes. At the heart of this project is the simple joy of eating.

Finally, we want to thank everyone who has contributed to this project - the residents, volunteers, food specialists, producers and supporters.

Most of all ‘Tastes of Thamesmead’ connects to the celebratory way food brings people together.

Happy reading and happy cooking.

## Recipe introduction

We hope this cookbook gives a glimpse of the people and culinary talent that exists in Thamesmead.

The recipes collected begin with each resident's passion and relationship to food locally. For some the recipe relates to a memory, for others it is tradition or health, some have built a food business here and some are developing new tastes. There are different cooking methods - often originating in other parts of the world as well as cultural heritage and ideas closer to home. All find great enjoyment in eating and sharing food.

Each dish begins with the story followed by the recipe and method.

The stories are told here as they were told to us, and they start with discoveries made when living in Thamesmead. Some of the food stories and recipes here were shared before the coronavirus pandemic and some have taken place during the extraordinary lockdown period between the spring and summer 2020. It is an eclectic mix of dishes beginning with smaller meals, moving on to more filling mains and finishing with a couple of sweet deserts. They are all delicious and most of them don't cost much to make. The accompanying photography looks for the person behind each recipe and aims to clearly present each dish with the joy that is connected to its creation.

We want to thank the residents who have so generously shared their dishes and we hope you enjoy cooking these recipes. As well as being a part of the Thamesmead Community Archive, they have been chosen as a celebration of wonderful and different tastes. Bon Appétit!





# Michelle Sanchez

— Tacos dorados de papa con salsa chipotle

We came to live in Thamesmead about two years ago. We moved directly from Mexico- from Puebla (near Mexico City). One of the first evenings in Thamesmead we discovered a Chinese restaurant called Food Angel in the centre, it's just a take away but so delicious.

The name of my dish is tacos dorados de papa. Part of the reason I like to make these is all the ingredients are available around here. When I discovered this I was so happy- food is an important part of my life.

Tacos are like a wrap, dorados means golden (through frying) and de papa means potato.

This is part of my childhood. It's a very familiar dish for us in Mexico, very traditional, all my life I've been eating this type of food- we call this kind of food 'a craving' - 'Antojitos'- ant o jitoss'- 'little cravings'- would be the literal translation. It is like a street type of food- you often find it in fairs and festivals. But, of course- my mum also made it at home and when that happened everyone

got all excited- we were like 'yesss' tacos dorados yesss!- '

I made this recipe for the parents of my children's school here (Bishop John Robinson School), - they tried it and loved it, they all have different backgrounds but all of them loved it.

One of the ingredients are tortillas, made of corn, that is important -corn is one of the main flavours in this dish and a big part of Mexican cuisine. Another is the chipotle used for the salsa. I got the chili itself, dried and smoked in a specialized Mexican shop in central London but you can buy the chipotle paste in most supermarkets and that is also fine.

It's not hard to make, it's very easy. I love it. The crispness of the tortilla and the saltiness of the potatoes, the sourness of the cream, the crumbly cheese, spicy salsa, freshness and the crunchiness of the lettuce.

It's a simple dish but it's like an adventure in your mouth!



# Tacos dorados de papa con salsa chipotle (Golden potato Tacos with chipotle)

Preparation time: 35 min

Cooking time: 40 min

Makes 12 tacos

## INGREDIENTS

12 corn tortillas

900g potatoes

12 cocktail sticks

### Sauce (salsa)

5 big plum tomatoes or 1 can  
of peeled plum tomatoes

2 cloves of garlic

2 pc of dry Chipotle chili  
or 1 tsp chipotle paste  
(or more if you like it spicy)

Salt

1 tsp dry oregano

2 tsp olive oil

1 small onion

1 tsp chicken seasoning

50ml of chicken stock

or water (if you use natural  
tomatoes)

### To garnish

120 ml of sour cream

120 grams fresh crumbly  
cheese (like feta)

1/4 fresh gem lettuce  
finely sliced

Vegetable oil for deep frying  
(my favourite is canola oil)

## Method

Peel the potatoes and boil them with salt until soft and mash them. Season with more salt if needed, when mashing.

'Now for the salsa!' If you are using cans, just open the cans. If you are using fresh plum tomatoes place them in a pan over high heat, until the skin gets burnt, turn over from time to time so the skin starts getting loose. Then, put the "pan-roasted" tomatoes inside a nylon bag and cover it with a dry cloth wait for about 5 minutes and peel off the skin from the tomatoes.

If you are using chipotle paste, just have it ready. If you are using natural dry chipotles, put them inside hot water for about 20 minutes or until they are soft. Once they are soft, take off the stem and the seeds (if you love it spicy, leave the seeds).

Then if you are using tinned tomatoes, put them (with the juice) together with the chipotle (paste or chilli's), garlic, oregano, a little salt, the chicken seasoning and blend in a mixer. If you are using natural tomatoes, add the chicken stock or water to the tomatoes as well as the chipotle, garlic, oregano, salt and chicken seasoning before blending.

Fry the onions in the olive oil for about three minutes until soft and transparent then add the sauce from the mixer- let it simmer for about 10 minutes until it has reduced and is kind of thick. Then put the salsa aside and let it cool down. Check the salsa and if needed add salt to taste.

Meanwhile, heat the corn tortillas up in a medium hot dry pan (a flat pan is the best to make pancakes) over 20-30 seconds so they are soft. After, fill the soft corn tortillas up with the mashed potato, roll and pin together with a cocktail stick.

Heat the vegetable oil so it is ready for deep frying, you will know the temperature is ready if the oil starts to bubble "dramatically", when you put the taco in. Deep fry the tacos for about 3-4 minutes until they are golden! Then place the fried tacos over a plate or tray with absorbent paper on top, to release the excess oil. Don't forget to carefully take off the tooth picks from the tacos. (Be careful, the tacos will still be very hot!)

To garnish and serve, arrange a bed of sliced lettuce, put the golden crispy tacos on top. On each taco put a table spoon of sour cream, then a table spoon of the salsa and lastly crumble some feta cheese on top and enjoy!!

You can put the rest of the salsa in a serving bowl, so people can add more salsa to taste.



# Gabriella Csadek

— Hungarian “Lángos”

I have lived in Thamesmead with my son for one and a half years. I buy food at Lidl or Sainsbury's. Luckily there is also a nearby Eastern European store where I can buy some items that I can't get in a supermarket.

My first impression of Thamesmead is that it is a wonderful place with lots of greenery. Some of my favourite pastimes are walking on the banks of the Thames or visiting the lake in Abbey Wood. I would also say there is a lot of rubbish thrown away in some places, and I hope sometime soon there will be more bins on the street!

I usually make this snack bread- lángos, when my Hungarian friends visit us. Lángos translated means flame. The first lángos date back to the 1700s and are linked to the development of bread

baking in Hungary. These breads are fast, cheap and nutritious, I would say all Hungarian families enjoy lángos. It is mainly eaten with minced garlic, sour cream and grated cheese, but there are now many variations, similar to pizza for example. Like pizza, in Hungary it is also available at Hungarian markets and festivals all year round.

It is a salty, fermented dough very similar to a bread dough. In contrast to bread it is quicker to make as it is fried in oil rather than baked in the oven.

The special feature of my dish is that it is lighter than the classic lángos and it will not be so oily thanks to the sour cream. Crispy on the outside, soft on the inside, enjoy!



# Hungarian “Lángos” (a snack flatbread)

Preparation time: 20 min and up to 1 hour proofing the dough

Cooking time: 1/2 min frying each side

Makes around 6 lángos

## INGREDIENTS

1.5g of dried yeast 250 ml of milk 500g of flour

100g sour cream

1 tsp salt

About 1 litre of oil for frying (I prefer coconut oil)

## Lángos Topping

3 cloves of garlic finely chopped

100g sour cream

100g gouda, edam, or cheddar cheese grated

## Method

Mix the yeast in lukewarm milk and add the flour sour cream and salt then knead until ingredients are incorporated (not too soft dough). Cover it with a kitchen towel and let the dough rise up for half an hour in a lukewarm place.

Then we roll the dough out to about 1cm. After this, you can cut any shape you prefer. (Usually circle form)

When you are ready, in hot oil, fry as many lángos as you will eat, as it's nice when it's freshly made.

Put the rest inside an oiled nylon bag (bigger in size than the dough). You can keep it for one week inside the fridge and bake it to warm up. Store in a fridge (make sure not to store it in the freezer).

Serve hot and sprinkle with minced garlic, sour cream and grated cheese. It is very delicious.



# Dominika Matis

— Thamesmead superfood smoothie

We first came to Thamesmead in 2007 - when we bought a little bungalow here. Food wise, something I discovered quite soon in Thamesmead was lots of African food through the African community here. I tried Jollof rice for the first time!

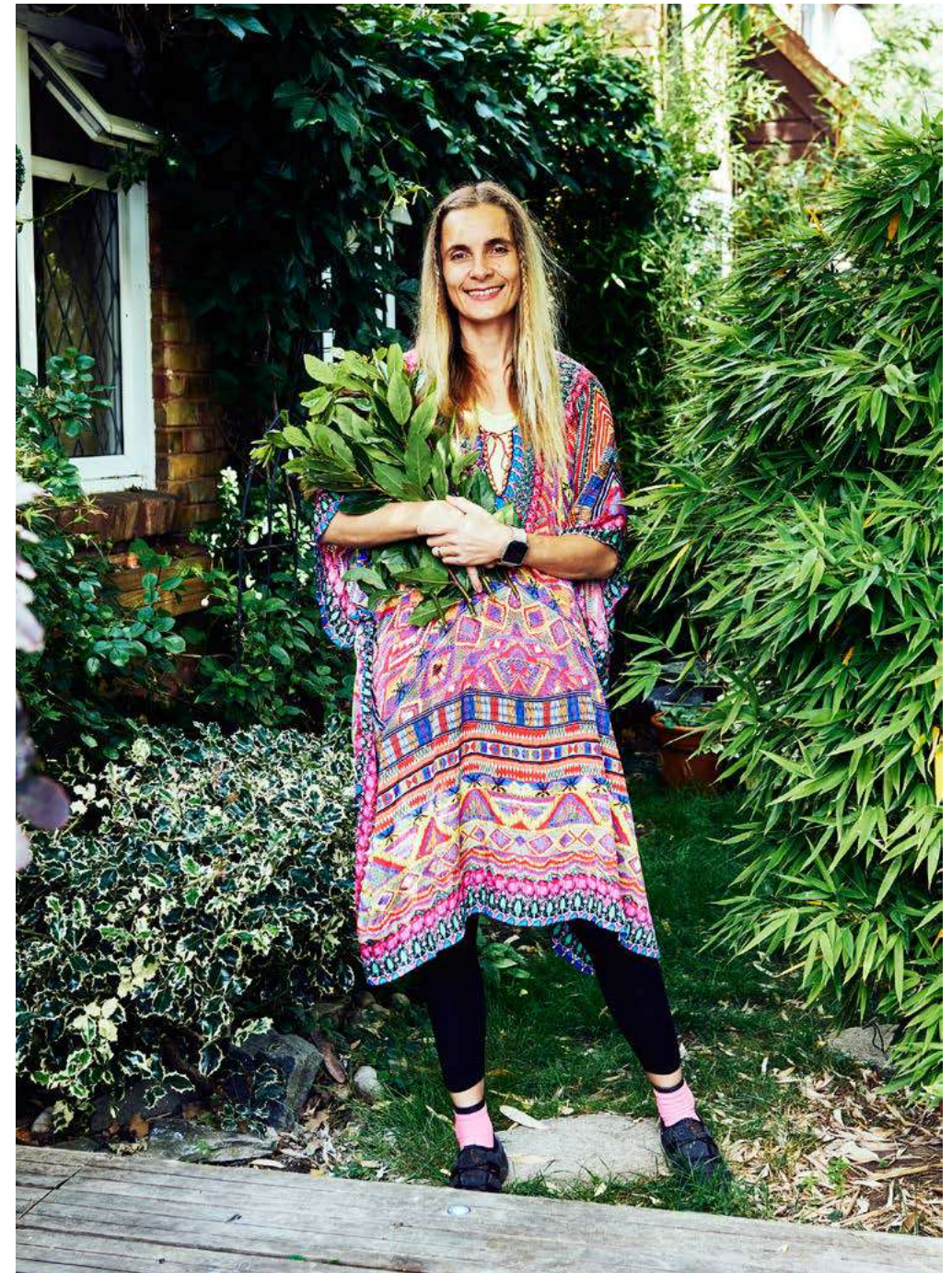
I offer my recipe for a smoothie, which is made by the foraged greens of Thamesmead and the produce from my allotment in Church Manorway close to Plumstead (you can also buy the smoothie ingredients no problem).

I have been drinking juices and smoothies, made with plants-, nuts and fruits, to put as much nutrition as I can in my body- partly to help my body heal, as I have been unwell.

This smoothie includes nettles- which has a wide range of nutrients including vitamins A, C and minerals calcium and iron. You can forage nettles on the Thames path! When you do this be careful, take precautions and wash the plants well (more details on this in the recipe).

I grow a lot of vegetables, fruits and plants, - some of which goes into juices or smoothies I make. Courgettes, marrows, beetroot, carrots, onions, lettuce, cucumbers- tomatoes as well, peppers. Some things such as garlic you can also grow in the winter months. There is a nice community there. I grow some plants in the garden at home too, herbs such as bay leaf, and mint for example. I have been discovering different healing properties of herbs and plants- like the common yarrow- which can be made into tea and help digestion.

When I drink this smoothie, I am really happy. It is full of vibrant radiant flavours, there is richness of bitters, sweets, sourness. Depending on how I feel I blend it in different ways, sometimes really smooth and sometimes I like it with a bit more texture.





# Thamesmead superfood smoothie

Preparation is the time it takes to forage in Thamesmead- enough time to go down to the Thames path in Thamesmead and collect nettles (having already collected the other ingredients)

Cooking time (at home):  
5 min

Enough for two smoothies

## **INGREDIENTS**

Handful of nettles  
Handful of frozen fruit berries  
2 handfuls spinach  
1 banana  
300 ml soya milk  
Handful of mixed nuts of walnuts, cashews, almonds  
8 dates - minus seeds

## **Method**

Take a bowl, a pair of scissors, some marigold gloves (or something similar) to the Thames Path in Thamesmead.

Put on your gloves (to prevent stinging) find some nettles (note nettles in photograph of smoothie), use your scissors to cut off a few stems from the bottom. Hold them over the bowl and snip off the top younger leaves from each stem into the bowl. Collect at least a handful and take them back to your kitchen.

With your marigold gloves on, wash the nettles thoroughly and carefully in a large bowl of water, dry- take a handful and put the rest in the fridge for another time. Then, wash your two handfuls of spinach and dry.

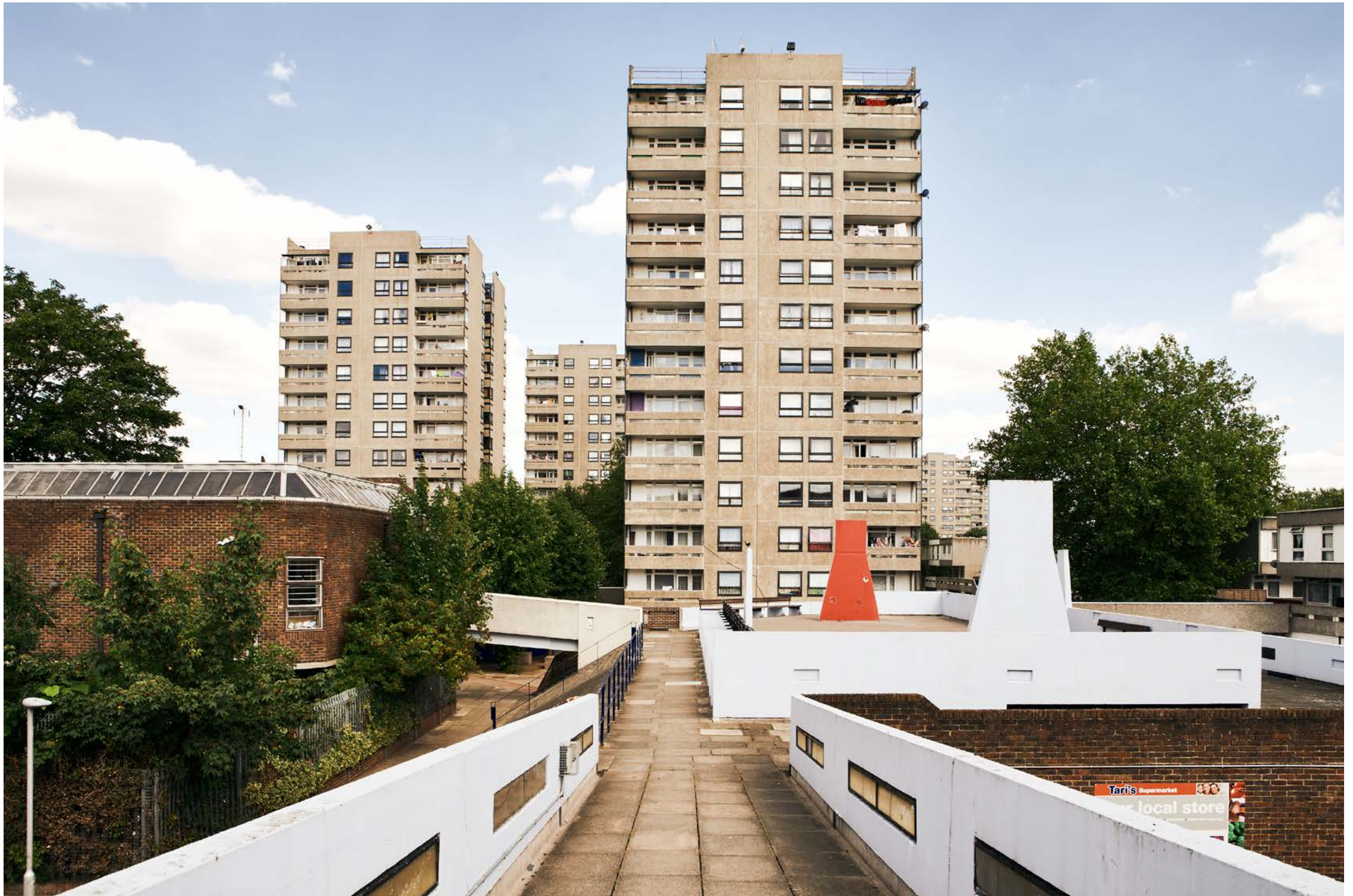
Take all the ingredients (including berries, banana, milk, nuts and seeds as well as the spinach and nettles), put them all into a blender at the same time and blend for 1 or 2 minutes until smooth.

Drink, enjoy and feel healthy!

## **Notes on ingredients**

Once you know more about plants in Thamesmead, you can also collect dandelion leaves, chickweed and prickly lettuce to add to the smoothie. For now, we only recommend nettles.





# Rachel Akindele

— Peanut vegan stew

I came to live in Thamesmead in 1998 when I was six-years-old.

We would go to the African shops in Deptford when it came to cooking African food. I still remember as a child- I would go to Deptford or Woolwich as opposed to Thamesmead. When my mum would go to Nigeria she would bring things back- because we didn't have the internet as it is now- or these shops. I do remember in terms of takeaways there wasn't that much. When I lived in a certain part of Thamesmead we used to really love Pizza Hut. We would have a thing, like, when we were coming back from church we would go to Pizza Hut in Charlton. They just didn't deliver to our address- so now we have a Pizza Hut in Thamesmead and they deliver!

I've adopted a plant-based lifestyle now, so I don't eat meat or dairy. It's been much tougher finding food on the go. We do have a massive Sainsbury's that wasn't here five to seven years ago, and you have other supermarkets, the Africa shops, so I am able to buy stuff, come home, experiment and create my own food. I do little dinner parties at my house - and this dish (Peanut vegan stew) is a favourite of mine.

I learnt it through YouTube and reading blogs because although my background is West African- and Peanut stew is native to West Africa- it depends where you are from. I have some Ghanaian blood in me- but my main ethnic group is in Nigeria and they don't typically cook Peanut stew. It's always a winner when I make it.

I put something in it we call- I think in French it's called haricots de caroube or "netetou" in Wolof but in English it's called locust beans- in Yoruba it is called iru - they are a bit weird but taste really good. They are shaped like the insect - but it's definitely not the insect!

I think this dish is quite healthy with your veges like broccoli, cauliflower and carrots. It's quite subtle, but you can taste the peanuts in there and the kick from the scotch bonnet. It's a savoury taste with quite rich flavours and the locust beans gives it this extra saltiness and nuttiness, which I like.

It does remind me of my culture and I love it also because other people really like it.



# Peanut vegan stew

Preparation time: 20 min

Cooking time: 40 min

Serves four

## INGREDIENTS

2 medium sized red onions

2 x 400g cans of chopped tomatoes

400g of fresh water

1 scotch bonnet (remove the seeds to reduce intensity of the heat)

50g locust beans- thoroughly washed. (can you buy locust beans in the supermarket- these can be bought at any African food store- but you can also get them in Lidl)

3 tbsp of sunflower or vegetable oil

300g good peanut butter (you can also get this from the African store- the raw butter I find is the best, most healthy and tasty- but you can also quite easily get this from any supermarket)

1 broccoli head- chopped into 10-12 florets

Half a cauliflower - chopped into 10-12 florets

2 large carrots -chopped (circular sliced is fine)

1 small aubergine -chopped

1 tbsp thyme and mixed herbs

1 tsp salt

500g brown basmati rice

## Method

Blend the tomatoes, onions, scotch bonnet and locust beans into sauce consistency- (it does not need to be completely smooth). Then get a medium sized cooking pot (I use what in the Caribbean they call a duchy- but any medium sized pot will work well) heat the sunflower oil and fry the sauce- once hot bring down the heat a little and let the sauce simmer for 10 minutes until it is reduced and slightly thicker. Season with half a teaspoon of the salt and the herbs and then stir in 200 grams of the water and the 3 tablespoons of peanut butter. Simmer for a further 5 minutes. Then add the rest of the water, all the vegetables and simmer on a medium heat for a further 15 minutes until all the vegetables are cooked (not too soft). During this time, have a little taste and season with the rest of the salt according to your taste.

Whilst the stew is simmering cook the brown basmati rice according to the instructions on the packet.

When the rice is cooked, plate the stew and rice together and serve!

This dish is easy yet surprisingly delicious and perfect for dinner parties.



# Riordan Tyson

— Shepherd's Pie à la Tyson

I came to live in Thamesmead five years ago- straight after university. My Dad picked me up, put my stuff straight into his van then we moved it up here.

There is lots going on in Thamesmead food wise - there's a big street food culture that has been here for a while. Southmere Sunday's and Abbey Wood Market craft market is a seasonal monthly thing for example and they have all kinds of food. There's a guy that does sausages- there's a couple that do sweets- there's Indian food - Caribbean food.

Before University, secondary school time, I was living with my mum, and she had to work late a lot - so it was just me, we kind of had to eat, and my mum wasn't going to start cooking at 8/9pm when she came in! My family taught me how to cook - I would often call my mum up and say, 'Hey mum- there's going to be some food I'm going to cook like - this steak or whatever'. My mum made her work colleagues extremely jealous, she told me - they would say: 'I don't know when I'm going to be eating tonight'- and she'd be: 'well - my son - I think he is cooking steak today so...!'.

Cooking was something that I really wanted to learn - especially as the road to University got closer, I didn't want to be one of those guys that only ate Pot Noodle- for the record there is nothing wrong with Pot Noodle, but I could not live off Pot Noodle!

My dish is Shepherd's Pie - it has a couple of details, a couple of secrets that I am going to share - one is a way to make mashed potatoes- which I am particularly proud of.

What does this dish mean to me? Creativity and independence. I'm exceedingly proud that I can cook on my own and it's so fun! I'm often running around the kitchen like a mad scientist creating food! And at the end of it I do very much enjoy giving the dish to someone I care about.

My Shepherd's Pie recipe developed because I always have cherry tomatoes on hand and they went straight in giving it that sweet flavour. It's like this big juicy taste, you feel your saliva going when you take a slice of it and you know it's just right. It's sweet, it's juicy, and tasty- just try it.



# Shepherd's Pie à la Tyson

*The following is a family recipe!*

Preparation: 10 min

Cooking: 45 min-1 hr

Serves two people

## INGREDIENTS

1 large white potato chopped into roughly 1-inch cubes

1 large sweet potato chopped into roughly 1-inch cubes

2 tsp butter or margarine

1 tbsp of cow or a plant-based milk

350g lamb mince

4 plum tomatoes chopped

Half tsp of tomato ketchup

1 tsp dark soy sauce

1/2 tsp HP sauce

1 tsp Paprika

1 tsp turmeric

1/2 tsp thyme

1/2 white onion finely chopped

1 garlic clove finely chopped

1/2 tsp salt

1/4 tsp pepper

3 tbsp water

## Method

Preheat oven at Gas Mark 5-6 / 220 degrees

Bring a pot filled with water to boil and boil your cubed potatoes for approx. 8-10 mins. (Riordan Note! The cubed potato is a great secret to good mash – it means the potatoes will cook quicker and mash easier)

In the meantime, heat 1 teaspoon of butter in a medium sized frying pan on a medium heat. Then fry your mince in the pan for 2/ 3 minutes until brown, during this add the seasoning of soy sauce, paprika, turmeric, HP sauce, thyme, salt and pepper mix into the meat. Once the meat is a golden reddish brown, add the chopped onions, garlic and chopped plum tomatoes and table spoons of water (if the meat is very dry if it isn't dry you don't need to add the water) mix and cook all together for a further five minutes.

The potatoes should now be boiled, drain the water then mash straight away with a masher, add the other teaspoon of butter and the tablespoon of milk. (Riordan Note! Be careful not to add too much milk or the mash will become too runny. You can use any milk you own, I use soya! Really!)

Get an ovenproof/ glass dish, put your mince on the bottom layer and add your mash potatoes on top.

Put in the oven for approx. 30-35 mins. Take out, grab a plate, serve up and enjoy!



# Dolma Prossor

## — Dal

I came to this area about six and a half years ago. I live close to Abbey Wood station and I am really active in Thamesmead. I go shopping and swimming there, my daughter goes to a ballet class at the LINK centre in Thamesmead and I have my food stall business- Himalayan Tiffin- where people from all parts of Greenwich enjoy my food.

In Plumstead we have a very big Nepalese community, in Woolwich they have some restaurants, but I remember there wasn't so much food wise in Thamesmead.

I love good food. I've always been very careful with what I eat - so when I started Himalayan Tiffin, my whole idea was to actually bring good nutritious food and use healthy ingredients. The recipes themselves are influenced by Indian and Nepalese culture- it is not just Nepalese, there is a fusion. But I have always made all my own sauces you know, it's so easy and so delicious.

To be honest lentil (Dal) is something that is very underrated -there's so many ways to cook lentils and it is so cheap.

In almost any shop you will find a variety of lentils for example there's the red lentil- that most people know, then there is a tiny one a yellow one it's called Mung and there is Chana dal which is the split pea lentil. There are at least four or five different varieties of lentils you can use for Dal which are very very nutritious, and you can actually mix the different lentils together. It tastes creamy even though there is no cream- a little onion while the lentils are cooking gives it a creamy quality, which is delicious.

I make lentils almost every day. Dal is our staple diet - it's a good protein- we eat it with our meals, it's nutritious, vegetarian and doesn't cost a fortune either!



# Dal (lentils)

Preparation time:  
approx. 10 min

Cooking time:  
approx. 30 - 45 min

For four people

## INGREDIENTS

200g red lentils

130g yellow lentils

50g brown lentils

1 red onion peeled and finely  
chopped (half to be used for  
the lentils/ half to fry)

1/2 tsp salt

1 or 2 tablespoons of Oil-  
Rapeseed (you can also use  
vegetable or olive oil)

1 tsp butter (for when you  
fry the spices later)

1/2 tsp cumin seeds

1/2 tsp brown mustard seeds

1/2 tsp fennel seeds

25g fresh ginger, peeled  
and finely chopped

4 garlic cloves peeled  
and finely chopped

1 tsp turmeric

1 fresh tomato chopped

1/4 or 1/2 fresh red or green  
chilli (depending on how spicy  
you want it)

1 tbsp chopped fresh

coriander (to sprinkle a little  
on each bowl when serving)

## **Method**

Wash the lentils thoroughly, using a sieve.

Get a large pot on the stove ready to boil, fill with water and the mixed washed/ soaked lentils. Make sure the water fills up at least a couple of inches past the lentils then heat, bring to the boil then reduce to simmer at a medium heat.

Put the first half of the red chopped onion into pot with the salt, the onion will make the Dal nice and creamy.

Then bring down to a medium heat and simmer until the lentils are cooked, the time will vary for this depending on the lentils, it will be between 20 and 45 mins. You will know they are ready when they are soft to taste. Keep check and topping up with water so they don't go dry.

Get a small frying pan. Heat the 1 or 2 tablespoons of rapeseed oil and teaspoon of butter then add the cumin seeds, mustard seeds and fennel seeds first until they pop then add the second half of the chopped onion. Cook for a few minutes until a little translucent then add the ginger, garlic, turmeric, frying them for a couple of minutes and then finally the tomatoes.

Cook for 1 minute or so altogether (be careful to make sure the garlic doesn't go brown) then tip and stir the whole thing into the pot of cooked dal, simmer and heat altogether for two minutes. Spoon the dal into bowls, garnish with a little of the chopped coriander on each then serve immediately.







# Caron Schersmith–Meikle

— Chickpea and Plantain curry

I used to live in Thamesmead growing up years ago, now I live nearby.

Thamesmead has changed dramatically, it's more diverse now, when we were living in Thamesmead in the 80s there was a lot of racism.

My food business 'First Choice Caribbean Hut Lunches' is based around Thamesmead and Greenwich. It was a time of celebration early this year as we got the Food and Hospitality Royal Greenwich Business Award at the beginning of March (2020). Then suddenly we had the Covid-19 crisis. I have been sharing my food with neighbours- and another thing that happened was I got a contract to provide cooked meals for vulnerable families. I do Jamaican food, but because this job was for families and their children, I adapted. There is a touch of Caribbean; I gave them the Brown chicken stew, the Jerk chicken but also Spaghetti Bolognese, Chilli con carne and then there's a vegetarian option such as the dish I have chosen for the book: Chickpea and plantain curry. I get good feedback! There was one family- the children were just recovering from Covid-19- they said, 'the chickpea curry brought him back to life- he so enjoyed it!' So, my food is doing something good!

I am up early in the morning as I cook everything fresh from scratch. I am also supporting my daughter who is home-schooling, she needs lunch and there is dinner in the evening too- so I am a non-stop cook! But I don't mind- I enjoy it! Time management is a big thing. I think food brings people together, if you come to my house you will always get well fed!

Chickpea and Plantain curry is something that the family can just whip up and find very tasty - it doesn't take long to cook plus it is affordable. It has the plantain, the curry powder too- which is from Jamaica, chickpeas, potatoes- to give it a thickness- there is the coconut cream to make it creamy. My parents go to Jamaica every year, so we get our seasoning from there, its proper Jamaican seasoning.

I picked this curry because I am a meat eater, but this dish works if you eat meat or you don't, if you are vegetarian or vegan everyone can have this and feel satisfied. I often cook it for my family.

This dish is hearty, it's full of flavour and it is satisfying! Enjoy!



# Chickpea and Plantain curry

Preparation time: 15 min

Cooking time: 25–30 min

Serves four to six

## INGREDIENTS

2 tbsp vegetable or olive oil

1/2 onion, peeled and diced

2 spring onions chopped

2 garlic cloves crushed

2 stems fresh thyme

1 sweet red pepper cored  
seeded and chopped

1 sweet yellow pepper cored  
seeded and chopped

4 medium sized potatoes  
(about 400g), peeled and cut  
into half inch cubes

2 x 400g tinned chickpeas,  
drained and rinsed

1/2 or 1/4 scotch bonnet chilli,  
finely chopped

2 tbsp curry powder

1 tsp all-purpose seasoning

1 tsp salt

1 or 2 ripe plantain peeled  
and sliced in circles

1 x 400ml tin full fat  
coconut milk

## Method

Heat the vegetable (or olive oil) in a large sauté flat pan (with a lid for later if possible) add the onion, spring onions, garlic, thyme and sweet peppers, Scotch bonnet pepper, curry powder and All-purpose seasoning gently fry on a medium heat for about 5 minutes, until soft and onions are translucent.

Then add the cubed potatoes and a cup of water-stir in and cook for 5 minutes.

Then add the chickpeas.

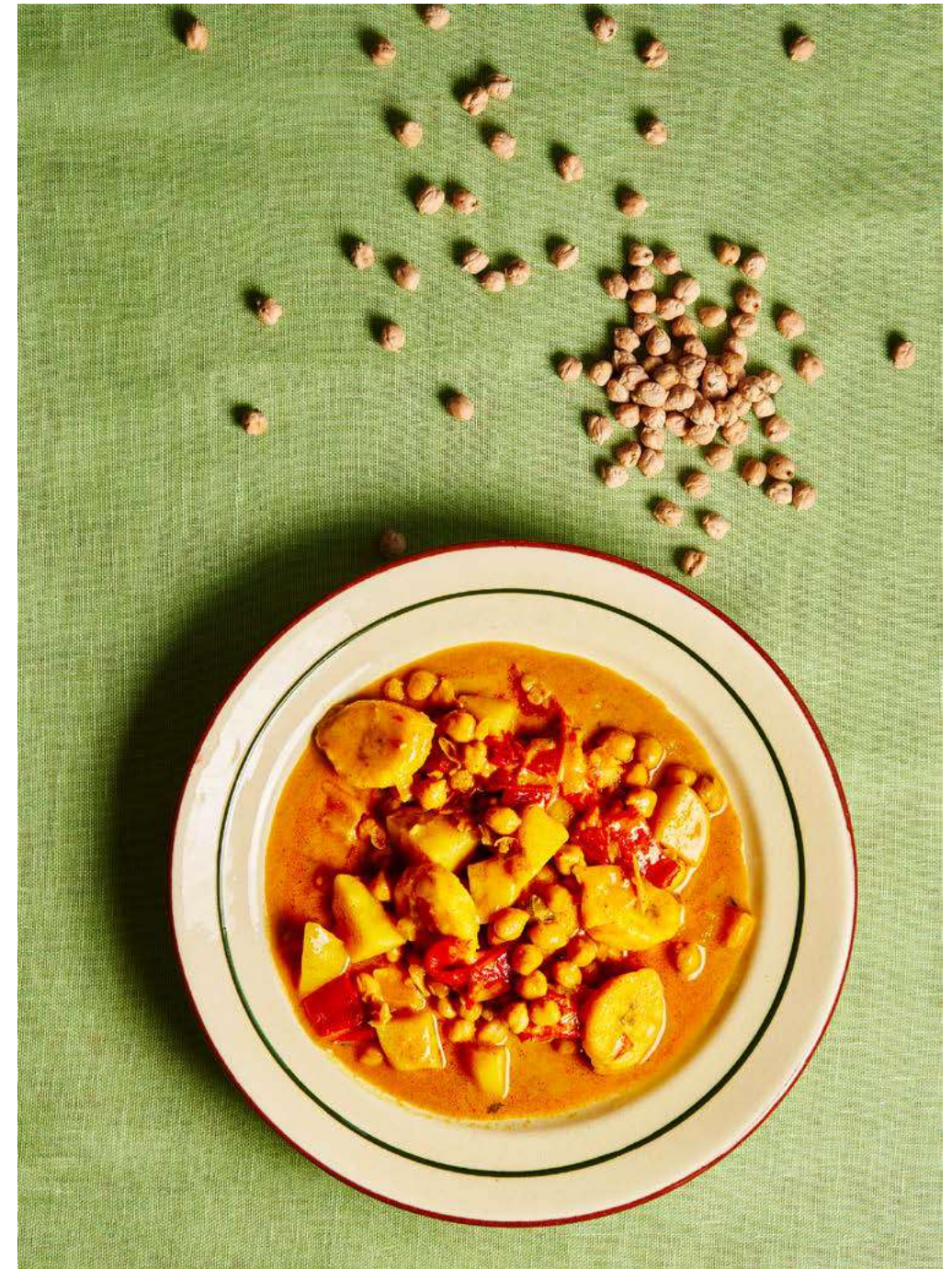
Cover with a lid and leave to simmer for a further 10/15 minutes in 100ml of water -Add the salt and pepper to taste.

Add the plantain, simmer a little until warmed. It is important to add the plantain just at the end, so you maintain the taste and it doesn't become mushy.

Finally add and stir in the coconut cream, simmer for 5 minutes, until warmed through. -The consistency of the curry should be thick and creamy.

Serve with (Jamaican) rice and peas or just plain rice.

Enjoy the delicious creamy curry.



# Temí Adeyemi

— Jollof rice

We came to Thamesmead about seven years ago. I am not the kind of person that buys food outside- at a takeaway or a restaurant- so I don't know that side of Thamesmead. We have an African cash and carry store here, a very big one -that's called Ades - where I buy what I need to cook food myself- it's really tucked away-on Nathan Way (in Thamesmead).

My dish is Jollof rice- I first cooked this dish when I was eight or nine in Nigeria- my mum taught me.

Jollof rice is made with rice, tomatoes, you can put dry fish in it, you can put meats like chicken, oxtail in it, a variety of herbs and spices like bay leaf, ginger, garlic, onions turmeric- King prawns too if you want, it has scotch bonnet in it which is a kind of chilli. We have it at the weekends, the kids love it- I have a ten-

year-old and a seven-year-old so I can't make it too spicy for them!

Cooking for me is fun- I enjoy cooking generally- it's like a hobby for me. I do a cookery club at the Jubilee Community Centre. It's interesting, in Africa we don't use fresh coriander but here we do. I have cooked Jollof rice for a lot of community events here- often for 60-80 people.

The taste is something you can never get tired of, because of the different ingredients in it. The mixture of herbs, three types of tomatoes too: we have the fresh, we have the puree and we have the one in the tin, we have meats and fish, just imagine the flavour, just think, you will be able to imagine how good it tastes.



# Jollof rice with or without chicken

Cooking time: about 40 min

Preparation time: 25 min

Eight people (\*the recipe can be easily halved to serve four)

## INGREDIENTS

### For the sauce:

1 x 400g tinned plum tomatoes

2 1/2 onions, peeled and roughly chopped

2 red peppers, cored, seeded and roughly chopped

1 scotch bonnet chilli, cored  
2 garlic cloves

25g fresh ginger, peeled and roughly chopped

### For the chicken:

8 chicken thighs or drumsticks

### For the rice:

3 tablespoons vegetable oil

1 1/2 onions, peeled and finely chopped, (to be used in different parts of the recipe)

1 chicken or vegetable stock cube

1 tsp teaspoon curry powder

1 tsp teaspoon thyme, fresh or dried

2 bay leaves

1/4 tsp teaspoon salt

750ml water (depending on the type of basmati rice)

100g tomato purée

500g basmati rice

3 fresh tomatoes, roughly chopped

Handful of chopped fresh coriander

## For the chicken

For the chicken (if you are having chicken, otherwise start with the sauce)  
Remove the chicken skins and discard. Place the chicken pieces in a sauté pan with 100ml of water. Cover and simmer for 20 to 25 minutes.

## For the Sauce

While the chicken is cooking, prepare the sauce.

Place the tinned tomatoes (including the juices), onions, red pepper, chilli, garlic and ginger in a food processor or blender. Process until smooth and set aside.

In a pan large enough to cook the rice, fry about half of the finely chopped onion in 2 tablespoons of hot oil until transparent. Crumble in half of the stock cube and stir until dissolved. Add the curry powder, thyme and bay leaves. Cook until the smell of the curry powder really comes through.

Add the blended sauce and season with salt. Simmer, occasionally stirring with a nice wooden spoon and keep reducing until it is like a thick paste. This should take about 15 minutes.

Remove two large spoonfuls of reduced sauce and set aside in a bowl. You will add this sauce to the chicken later.

Add half the water and the tomato puree to the remaining sauce and simmer for a minute.

## Adding the rice

Place the rice in a sieve and rinse in warm water. Drain, add it to the sauce and bring to a simmer.

After five minutes, when the rice has absorbed most of the sauce, pour in the remaining water and use a spatula to raise up the rice making sure some liquid gets underneath. Cover and cook for 15- 20 minutes. You know that the rice is done when all the water has evaporated.

Mix in the fresh tomatoes and coriander and some of the reserved finely chopped onions.

If you are a vegetarian, you can leave it here and not add the chicken below.

## Adding the chicken

Take a separate shallow pan, add the rest of the finely chopped onions and fry in a tablespoon of oil until translucent. Add the cooked chicken and its stock plus the pepper and tomato sauce you had put to one side. Mix altogether to coat the chicken and simmer for about five minutes, until the chicken is heated through.

Serve straight away for all your friends and family to share, hot, spicy and delicious!



# Jay Brown

## — Steamed Jam (Treacle) Sponge Pudding

I grew up in Thamesmead in the 70's and 80's. This recipe for me brings back so many memories as a child living there with my siblings (one brother and two sisters), the four of us raised (dragged up!) by our single mother.

Food was more about survival than anything else due to little or often no money. Egg and chips with bread and butter was a staple. A good day would include sausage or bacon (never both).

Though mum did always try to make it work so there was a Sunday Roast, and although not always a dessert but if there was, it was her home-made Jam Steam Sponge, which was a favourite of mine. Though everyone else would

opt for the traditional custard, if there was any available, I would always prefer mine with ice cream.

I've always had this maybe weird taste for that hot/cold contrast.

When we have this dessert now it tends to be more with treacle than mum's traditional jam. And it always makes me think of being a kid growing up.

It was pretty rough back then and we lived on Maran Way one of the possibly rougher parts. Eating Jam Sponge after a Sunday Roast (albeit a budget Sunday roast) meant we were all together, safe, at home.



# Steamed Jam (Treacle) Sponge Pudding

Preparation time: 20 min

Cooking time: 1 hour and 30 min

Serves four

## INGREDIENTS

100g self-raising flour

1 pinch of salt

100g butter

100g caster sugar

2 large eggs

2 tablespoons of milk

2 tablespoons jam  
of your choice

## Method

Sift the flour and salt into a large bowl.

In a separate bowl, cream the butter and sugar together until it becomes light and fluffy, then add the eggs- one at a time- also adding a tablespoon of flour mixture with each egg. Beat until they all well combined. Then fold in the remaining flour with the milk.

Following this, place the two tablespoons of jam in the bottom of a buttered 750ml pudding basin, then spoon the sponge mixture over the top. Cover this securely with buttered parchment or foil.

Place the basin in a pan of boiling water, cover with greaseproof paper and tin foil and steam for 1 1/2 to 2 hours. It is important to keep checking the water level in the pan, so that it doesn't boil dry.

When cooked, turn out onto a warm plate and serve with cream, custard or ice cream. Lovely.



# Bhajan Hunjan

— Gajerela

We will have been here two years in September / October (2020) - we came as part of the Bow Arts scheme with Lakeside Centre, working with local communities. There are around 40 artists on this scheme. One project I have been working on is The Egg project with artist Steven Turner: a huge egg currently based behind the Lakeside Centre.

I moved from East London near Mile End which is very different - quite vibrant with lots of cafes and restaurants. Thamesmead can actually be quite lonely if you don't know other people - one reason I moved here was because there was already an artist's community.

My parents come from the Panjab- panj means five and aab is river- so it means a land of 5 five rivers. During partition of India, Panjab was divided between Pakistan and India. I was born in Kenya, East Africa, so we are 'twice migrants', as people would say!

My mother used to cook this sweet dish and it is partly about cultivating patience- you have to cook the grated carrots really slowly- normally on a coal fire. For my parents' generation they used to have it as sweet before their main

meal - it would be a very small portion - like an appetiser - to get your sweet buds going first. I think now I've Westernised it a little bit, we have it with fresh cream instead of cooked with milk and as a dessert at the end of a meal rather than the beginning.

It's a sweet dish and nowadays we are quite conscious of the sweetness we are using- whether it's white sugar or brown - brown sugar makes the carrots really dull - and it doesn't look so appetising. I thought to use honey, then you add nuts, cardamom and the flavour is so wonderful.

This dish is comfort food for me because it takes me back to my childhood. It gives me warmth and also it's a healthy food. It does take me to that space when my mother used to make it.

Isn't it quite ironic with food, you look at the photo and you really don't know what it's like until you've actually tasted it?

The whole fun thing about food I think is... you know - all your senses come alive when you are tasting something- there's the smell, the taste and the colour!





## Gajerela (carrot pudding)

Prep time: 15 min

Cooking time: 45–60 min

Serves four–six

### INGREDIENTS

350g peeled and grated Carrots (I use the organic from Lidl) – roughly about 5/6. I also remove the very hard centres especially if green at the top.

25g Salted butter

8 Cardamoms (shelled and ground in powder form)

10–12 Whole Almonds chopped fine lengthwise (use can also add some pistachio nuts alongside – I didn't have any at home)

2 level tbsp honey (for sweetener – you can also use sugar or maple syrup)

Served warm with or without fresh cream

### Method

In a heavy base cooking pot on low heat cook the grated carrots – until most moisture has evaporated and is fairly dry, stirring every few minutes with a wooden spoon to prevent sticking to the base of the pot (20 min or so)

Add butter and cardamom powder, mix well and cover with lid on low heat. You will see the colour of carrots changing to shiny orange. Keep turning / stirring constantly every five minutes or so. (15–20 min)

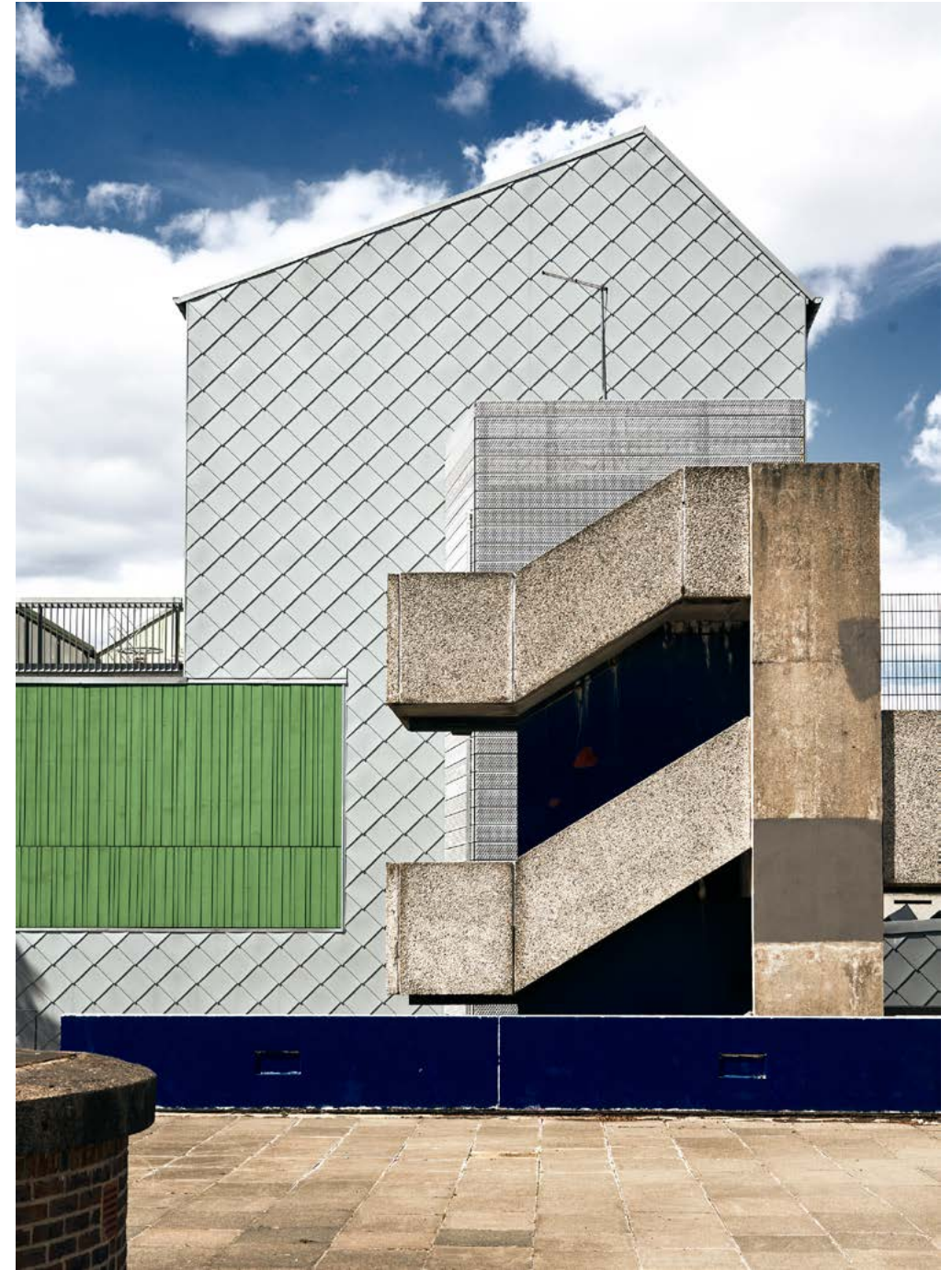
When well cooked, add honey (or sweetener of your choice) and half portion of the almonds, stir and cover for next 5–10 minutes.

Put in serving dish and add the remaining almonds and pistachios on top for decoration.

Serve warm with fresh cream.









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— Floro Azqueta

Floro Azqueta is a well-established photographer and film maker. He has collaborated previously on several cookbooks as well as on projects with renowned chefs such as Jose Pizarro in London and Mugaritz in his hometown San Sebastian in Spain. He has also worked extensively in architecture and interiors. As an artist he has exhibited in many galleries, most recently at the Four Corners photographer's gallery in London. In the last few years, he has collaborated on several community arts projects in the UK.

— Hannah Ringham

Hannah Ringham is a prolific arts practitioner and writer who works across theatre, education and community-based arts projects internationally and in the UK. She co-founded the award-winning SHUNT theatre collective which included 'The SHUNT lounge' an arts led community-based platform project for artists, theatre and arts organisations. More recently, together with Glen Neath she received an Arts in Mind award from Kings College London..



THAMESMEAD™





# A community cookbook

— by Floro Azqueta and Hannah Ringham



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