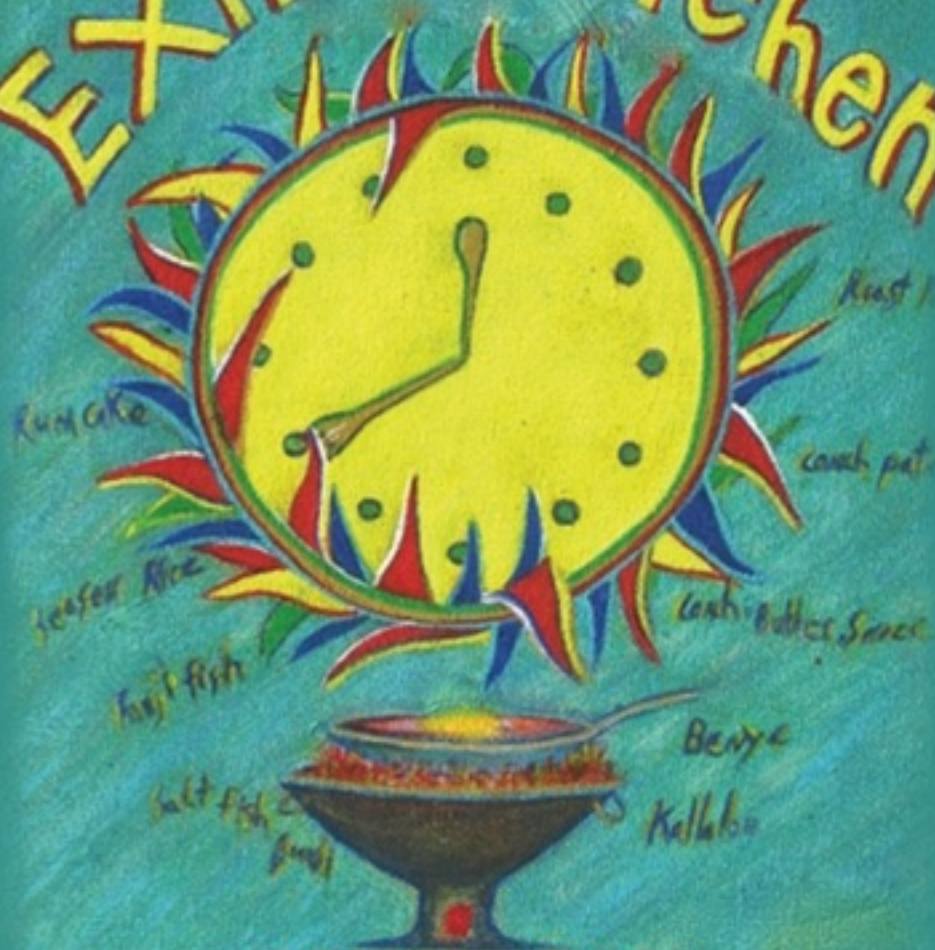


EXIRA'S Kitchen



COOKBOOK

Dr. Catherine Milligan-Terrell

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The content of this cookbook is a collection of Cruzan delectable recipes that celebrates the splendor of yesterday, today and tomorrow.

Dr. Catherine Milligan-Terrell

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FOREWORD

Exira's Kitchen is a cookbook that looks through the food lens of my ancestral past. Through this ancestral research, I found that the journey into the recipes began to take shape in the early 1800s during slavery in St. Croix under seven flags. Some Africans from Ghana arrived on the shores St. Croix around the early 1800's. The dishes in this volume are an extension of the foods these people ate in Africa with some modifications because some specific ingredients were not available.

As you peruse throughout this cookbook, some terms and recipe titles are unusual because it was the only way that I forged a connection with the voices of my ancestors. It was the only way I placed meaning to our cherished culture. In the Breakfast section, I called it "*Morning Glory*." I called it *Morning Glory* because as a child, my ancestors told me that each morning I must give thanks and give glory for the new day. "*Start Up*" is a reminder that before serving a selection of the "*Belly Full*," there are a few dishes such as, *Salt Fish Gundy*, *Salt Fish Harripa*, or *Lobster Salad* that will be able to satisfy any guest.

When I think about eating a great meal, *Belly Full*, comes to mind. Whether my mother prepared *Season Rice*, *Kallaloo*, *Red Peas Soup* or *Conch "N" Butter Sauce*, in the end, I always got a "*Belly Full*." With my belly full, I always needed a "*Wash Me Down*." A "*Wash Me Down*" is having a tall glass of the local drink called *Maubi*, with plenty ice.

It is not unusual in the Cruzan culture to hear someone say at the end of a meal that they have a "*Sweet Tooth*" meaning that after a "*Belly Full and a Wash Me Down*" they are now ready for desert like a piece of *Guava* or *Guavaberry Tart*.

Further, at weddings *Vienna Cake* and *Black Cake* is a staple and go hand in hand. There is no wedding celebration without these two mouthwatering treats.

To really get the pulse of the foods, I often visited and spent time with granny Sackey. Although she could not read or write, she was a masterful cook. She had to be a masterful cook because she was mother to sixteen children. Once when I visited her, she had just finished cleaning a wash pan of *Jax* and had already seasoned a batch to cook. She seasoned the *Jax*, not with salt and pepper, but with her special Cruzan Season Salt. She said, “chile we gonna have fried *Jax* with yu special scrumptious *Cruzan Fried Fish Sauce* and a nice soft ball of *Okra Fungi*.” I knew that I would have a good day and a “Belly Full.” Next, she fetched her coal pot and placed charcoal in it. The charcoal was arranged in a strategic way with a small pit to place the pitch point chips that she used to ignite the fire and catch the coal. If it were a windy day, she would have tried several times. In the end, once the fire got started and the charcoal had sufficient firepower, she was ready to fry her *Jax*. She reminded me that her mother told her that, “before *Fungi* was Cruzan, *Fungi* was African.” *Fungi* made its way to St. Croix in the parcels of African slaves. She said, “Cruzan added okra and you know what? *Okra Fungi* taste better than plain *Fungi*.”

When granny finished cooking and about to eat, she had a visitor, a gentleman by the name of Mr. Luster Tranberg. He was granny's good friend who had brought a sack filled with *Cockle*. Mr. Tranberg had walked barefoot about 3 miles to and from the Bayside, on unpaved roads, where he had picked the *Cockle* from the muddy shoreline to and brought them to granny's house. In exchange for the sack of *Cockle*, Mr. Tranberg always received his lunch. When granny received the *Cockle*, I was more than happy because granny Sackey would later in the day prepare *Cockle 'N' Lime Sauce*.

As you try each recipe, you'll have both a grand time preparing and a grand time eating. For Cruzan's, we love our way of life. Therefore, experience each recipe and enjoy the results!

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About the Author



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