

MEATLESS MONDAY MEALS GUIDE FOR GHANA



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Meatless Monday Meals Guide for Ghana (June 2024)

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Our key partners: Mrs. Catherine Adu Asare (Nutritionist, Ghana Health Service) and Mrs. Naana Anane Adjei (Dietician, Ghana Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (GAND) contributed the section on nutritionally adequate meals and considerations for a healthy diet; Chef Jove N.E.D Ansah and Chef Peter Agbovi of the Chefs Association of Ghana (CAG) served as resource persons at the workshop held to identify and define the various Ghanaian dishes and snacks outlined in this guide. Chef Ansah and Chef Agbovi provided most of the beautiful photographs of the various meals.

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We sincerely hope that this book truly supports all Ghanaians desirous of reducing their meat consumption and adding more vegetables, legumes, fruits and nuts to their meals. This is surely the right choice to make in sustaining the practice of abstaining from meat at least one day in a week for a healthier life.



Participants in the initial Meals Guide development Workshop.
From left: Naana, Catherine, Saul, Joe, Phyllis, Emmanuel, Peter, Sylvester and Akua.

Photo by Gabriel Agbley

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Preface



The Meatless Monday Meals Guide for Ghana

In September 2021, the Center for Communication Programs and the Center for Livable a Future of the Johns Hopkins University introduced the Meatless Monday project to Ghana with the goal of enabling as many Ghanaians as possible to adopt the practice of reducing meat consumption at least one day in a week for their health and the health of the environment. Through sensitization meetings with various organisations and individuals, the Meatless Monday message began to spread. But the critical question being asked by many partners and stakeholders has been; “What local meal options are there for the Ghanaian who chooses to adopt the practice of staying away from meaty meals on Mondays?”

Development of the Meatless Monday Meals Guide for Ghana is a significant response to this question. It is an attempt to provide a comprehensive list of meals from which Ghanaians can make a choice on Mondays. It further provides a framework for promoting healthy lifestyles among Ghanaian Families through the consumption of nutritionally adequate meals while cutting out meat at least one day in a week. Adhering to the guidelines provided in this document and the choice of the meatless meals suggested will enable individuals make informed choices about their dietary habits and therefore improve their overall health and well-being.

In the complete sense of Meatless Monday practice however, meat such as beef, pork, mutton, goat meat as well as fish and poultry are to be taken out of ones menu on Mondays. Meatless Monday Ghana however introduces a moderation to enable Ghanaians who adopt the practice to move gradually from a partial adoption by eating fish and eggs to the full practice of avoiding all meat including fish and poultry. The Meatless Monday Meal Guide therefore presents typical Ghanaian meals some of which have fish and eggs while others are plant-based.



The Meatless Monday Meals Guide for Ghana is divided into five sections:

Section One defines Meatless Monday and also discusses what a nutritionally adequate meal should be and the factors to consider in creating a healthy diet.

Section Two presents a collection of locally known meatless meals that Ghanaians from all walks of life, from the north to the south, can adopt while practicing Meatless Monday to sustain healthy eating.

Section Three discusses a good variety of meatless meals Ghanaians can revert to for lunch and dinner while practicing Meatless Monday.

Section Four focuses on light or snack meals that can easily be prepared and consumed by Ghanaians at home or at the workplace.

Section Five concludes the document with a summary of the key benefits that individuals can derive from reducing meat consumption and increasing the consumption of plant-based foods.

SECTION ONE



Meatless Monday, Nutrition and the Healthy Diet

Meatless Monday

Meatless Monday is a public health initiative that seeks to reduce the incidence of some preventable diseases by dedicating every Monday to healthy eating. Avoiding meat consumption at least one day a week has become a proven practice Ghanaians can adopt.

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that a total of 41 million deaths or over 71% of global deaths are due to Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs). WHO also estimated that in 2016 for example, 94,000 deaths were due to NCDs in Ghana. Currently, about 43% of all-cause mortality in Ghana is due to NCDs such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, cancer and respiratory disease which are becoming very common in health facilities. (MOH Ghana, 2022).

Studies have shown that there is a strong link between eating red meat and heart-disease related deaths. Some of the established facts are as follows:

- One serving of processed meat per day was associated with a 15% higher risk of cardiovascular disease death. 1.
- Consumption of processed meats is associated with 42% higher incidence of coronary heart disease per 50g of serving per day. 2.
- Red meat consumption is associated with an increased risk of total cardiovascular disease while substitution of other healthy protein sources for red meat is associated with lower mortality risk. 3.
- Vegetarian dietary patterns may reduce coronary heart disease (CHD) mortality by 40%. 4.

Plant-based eating which means incorporating more vegetables, fruits, whole grains and plant-based proteins into your diet is an important part of the solution for NCDs being promoted by Meatless Monday. Foods like leafy greens, whole grains, and legumes are associated with lower blood pressure, which is a major risk factor for heart attack and stroke. It is a fact that plant-based foods are also typically lower in saturated fat than foods made from animal products. Replacing sources of saturated fats and trans fats with unsaturated fats, like olive oil, canola oil, avocados, and nuts, has been shown to be beneficial for overall cardiovascular health by raising “good” HDL cholesterol and lowering “bad” LDL cholesterol.

¹(C(Micha R, Wallace SK, Mozaffarian D. Red and Processed Meat Consumption and Risk of Incident Coronary Heart Disease, Stroke, and Diabetes Mellitus. *Circulation* 2010;121(21):2271–83.)

2. DC. National Center for Health Statistics. NHANES 2013-2014)

3. Pan A, Sun Q, Bernstein AM, et al. Red Meat Consumption and Mortality: Results from 4 Prospective Cohort Studies. *Arch Intern Med*. 2012;172(7):555–563. doi:10.1001/archinternmed.2011.2287)

Meatless Monday emphasizes that diets high in red and processed meat have been associated with increased risk of Type 2 diabetes (T2D), cardiovascular disease (CVD), cancer particularly colorectal cancer, obesity and other related ailments. Adopting the Meatless Monday practice is therefore a simple and easy way to begin making small changes in one’s dietary habits to help manage the risk for preventable NCDs.

A Nutritionally Adequate Meal

A nutritionally adequate meal is essential for promoting overall health and well-being. Balanced or nutritionally adequate diets can help manage weight, regulate blood pressure, and blood sugar levels, support digestive health, and promote heart health. An added advantage of adopting healthy eating habits is that individuals can also significantly reduce their risk of developing non-communicable diseases including cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, obesity, and certain types of cancer as stated above.

A nutritionally adequate diet must include a wide range of essential nutrients. These encompass macronutrients, which the body needs in large quantities (such as carbohydrates, proteins, and fats), and micronutrients, required in smaller quantities (such as vitamins and minerals).



In Ghana, a nutritionally adequate diet is also called a four-star diet and contains;

- Staples such as grains such as maize, wheat, rice, millet; roots and tubers such as cassava, yam, cocoyam and potatoes and other staples such as plantain.
- Legumes and seeds such as beans, agushie, werewere, groundnuts and sesame.
- Fruits and vegetables such as mango, pawpaw, orange, banana carrots, tomatoes, African eggplant (*Solanum macrocarpon*) leaves 'gboma,' Cocoyam (*Xanthosoma* spp.) leaves 'kontomire.' and Yellow melon.
- Animal Source Foods such as fish, liver, eggs, milk and milk products, chicken and meat

In addition to these four groups, a balanced or nutritionally adequate meal must contain limited or small amounts of healthy fats and oils to improve the absorption of some vitamins and provide extra energy. Examples are coconut oil, soya oil, shea butter, palm oil, margarine and vegetable oil.

Another important process for achieving a nutritionally adequate meal is the process of food fortification described on page 4d.

To reap the benefits of a balanced diet, it is essential to include a variety of food groups in one's daily meals. Some individuals may however choose to reduce their consumption of some particular foods due to cultural, health, ethical or environmental concerns. These may consist of a reduction in the consumption of carbohydrates or staples, fats and oil or proteins. A typical example is the adoption of "Meatless Mondays," when individuals commit to eliminating meat from their diet one day a week. This Meals Guide aims to explore the components of a nutritionally adequate diet for families and provide guidance on maintaining a healthy lifestyle while participating in Meatless Mondays.

Considerations for Healthy Diet

1. Prioritized Balance Nutrition

a) Incorporate a variety of food groups: Consume a wide range of foods from different food groups to ensure the intake of diverse nutrients. Incorporate fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, dairy or plant-based alternatives, and healthy fats into daily meals. Strive for various colours, textures, and flavours to ensure a whole array of essential nutrients.

b) Seasonal and Local Foods: Choose seasonal and locally sourced foods in daily meals. These foods are often fresher and more nutrient-dense.

c) Moderation of added sodium/salt, and saturated fats: Limit the intake of foods and beverages high in added salt and monosodium glutamate e.g. artificial spices, salted snacks, processed foods, salted fish- 'koobi'. Food high in saturated fat include deep fried foods (fried potatoes, fried yam, fried fish) and 'shito'. Choose healthier alternatives or enjoy these foods in moderation.

d) Food fortification is the practice of adding vitamins and minerals to commonly consumed foods to improve the nutritional quality of the food and provide a public health benefit with minimal risk to health. Fortified foods have essential vitamins and minerals added to them, addressing common deficiencies and promoting overall health. When selecting fortified foods, it is important to read labels to understand which nutrients have been added and in what amounts. Choosing a variety of these foods can help fill nutritional gaps and support a balanced diet. In Ghana flour and vegetable oils are currently the fortified food options locally available. Choose iodized salt for meal preparation as well.

2. Portion Control

a) Practice mindful eating: It's important to be mindful and pay attention when eating: listen to your body's feeding cues such as hunger and fullness, eat when you're hungry and stop when you're full to avoid overeating. Slow down while eating, savour the flavours, and use mindful practices like putting cutlery down between bites.



b) Optimal serving sizes: Understand appropriate portions for different food groups and adjust accordingly. Use tools like measuring cups, food scales, and visual cues to guide portion control. For more information on understanding your portion sizes, refer to the Ghana Food-Based Dietary Guidelines.

3. Timing of Meals

It is recommended that individuals eat three meals a day, with additional snacks in between if needed. Breakfast should be eaten within two hours of waking up, to help boost your body functions and obtain energy for the day. Lunch should be eaten around midday, to help maintain energy levels and prevent overeating later in the day. Dinner should be eaten at least three hours before bedtime, to allow for proper digestion and to prevent acid reflux also known as heartburn. Snacks may be eaten as needed to prevent hunger, improve nutritional intake and keep energy levels stable throughout the day.

4. Meal Planning and Preparation

a) Plan meals: Developing weekly meal plans that include a variety of nutrient-dense foods is essential in ensuring healthy choices in food, reducing reliance on unhealthy options, and saving time and effort.

b) Home-cooked meals: Prioritize home-cooked meals over processed or fast foods. Prepare meals using fresh ingredients to have better control over the quality and nutritional value of the food.

c) Cooking Techniques: Use cooking methods that retain the nutritional value of foods, such as steaming, grilling, baking, or stir-frying with minimal oil. Limit the consumption of fried and processed foods.

5. Hydration

a) Drink adequate water: Stay hydrated throughout the day by consuming adequate water and other fluids. The recommended intake varies depending on age, sex, activity level, and climate.

b) Limit sugar sweetened drinks: Minimize the consumption of sugar sweetened beverages like sodas, processed fruit juices, and energy drinks, as they contribute to excessive calorie intake without providing essential nutrients.

6. Eating Environment

a) Mindful eating practices: Create a peaceful and distraction-free eating environment. Avoid eating in front of screens or while engaging in other activities. Focus on the food and the sensations of eating.

b) Social interaction: Sit together and eat meals with family friends, or colleagues to foster social connections and promote a positive relationship with food.

7. Sustainable Eating

a) Plant-Based Options: Incorporate more plant-based meals into diets, especially for adults, such as legumes, tofu, tempeh, nuts and seeds. Educate individuals about the environmental and health benefits of reducing animal product consumption

b) Local and Organic Choices: Promote the consumption of locally sourced and organic foods whenever possible to support sustainable agricultural practices and minimize pesticide exposure

c) Seek professional advice: Consult a nutritionist registered dietitian or healthcare provider to assess specific dietary needs, receive personalized recommendations, and address any underlying health concerns.

d) Regular monitoring: Monitor weight and overall well-being to track progress and make necessary adjustments to the diet and lifestyle.

Final Points to Note

Adults can improve their overall health and well-being by following these guidelines for nutritionally adequate meals. Individuals are encouraged to adopt these recommendations gradually, making sustainable changes



that align with their lifestyle and preferences. It is recommended to seek support from healthcare professionals or nutritionists/registered dietitians for individualized dietary plans and recommendations.

In order to support those engaged in the practice of reducing meat consumption, Meatless Monday Ghana Meals Guide provides a list of local meatless meals that can help them sustain their efforts to reduce meat consumption. This list covers Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner and even Snacks.

SECTION TWO



Breakfast Meals

Breakfast is defined as the first meal of the day typically eaten in the morning. Some common types of breakfast include Continental Breakfast, English Breakfast and American Breakfast which are popular with hotels and high end restaurants. There are however, local or indigenous breakfast meals seen in the different cultures and ethnic groups in Ghana. The Meatless Monday Meal Guide for Ghanaians focuses on the local or indigenous options which are typically Ghanaian. Some examples of such breakfast meals are hereby presented to help those who practice Meatless Monday in Ghana to make the right choice of meatless breakfast to start the day.

Porridges

A porridge is a popular Ghanaian breakfast meal prepared with flour from cereals such as millet, maize, rice, wheat, oats and sorghum. These could be made as individual cereal meals eg. grated maize porridge 'ekuegbemi', fermented maize dough porridge 'akasaa or koko', oats porridge, wheat porridge and millet dough porridge popularly called 'Hausa koko' etc. In recent times however, a mix of cereals such as maize, rice, wheat sorghum, millet and even sesame etc. called Tom Brown or winimix is being, preferred as a healthier option in view of the great nutritional values of those cereals.

In taking your porridge, you can add toppings such as groundnuts, cashew and dry fruits such as dates. Healthy whole wheat bread with groundnut paste and local beans cake 'koose' or 'masa' are the favourite companions of your porridge that makes it a fulfilling meal loaded with many plant based nutrients. (Calories, Carbohydrates, Fiber, Protein, Fat, Phosphorus, Magnesium, and Folate.)



Millet Porridge 'Hausa Koko' and 'Koose'



Gritted Maize Porridge

Hausa Kooko: <https://youtu.be/qoay33pXX6c?si=Qdgqhn1eipwkxu5q>

Koose: <https://youtu.be/udU7cgR4ZaA?si=4iGd7c68mqd7e0eT>



Oats Porridge with Fruits



Smooth Gritted Maize Porridge
'Oblayo'



Roasted Maize Porridge 'Tom Brown' Porridge



White Maize Koko 'Akasaa' and 'Koose'

Ekuegbemi: https://youtu.be/4AU_9uxc2ps?si=xD5pBRGXLBoTq1PA

Oblayo: <https://youtu.be/qf3Gexh6KeA?si=IO-FAomIvX-4p8a>

Tom Brown: https://youtu.be/5fHw5HaFT2I?si=19aow4M_2G0tBEDj

Cocoa Drink.

Ghana's cocoa bean is regarded as the richest in quality among the cocoa beans of the world. Cocoa powder is becoming a favourite breakfast drink for many Ghanaians especially those wanting to avoid the caffeine of coffee and tea. Hot cocoa drink taken as the pure cocoa powder or its processed forms such as the Milo, Ovaltine, Bourneville or



Top Choco brands taken with whole wheat bread with groundnut paste, the local beans cake 'koose' or 'masa' made from maize flour also serves as a great energy providing breakfast to take you through the first half of the day. Brown bread made with wheat flour is a great choice to accompany the various forms of porridge and cocoa drinks.

However, it's important to consume cocoa drinks in moderation and be mindful of added sugars and calories, especially if you're trying to maintain a balanced/nutritionally adequate diet or manage your weight. Additionally, opting for cocoa made with dark chocolate or unsweetened cocoa powder

and low-fat milk can help reduce added sugars and calories while still providing flavor and nutritional benefits.



Healthy Brown Wheat Bread

The following meals are also taken as breakfast, especially for those whose daily activities require more calories.

Rice and Beans 'Waakye'

'Waakye' popularly referred to as Ghana's super food is the preferred breakfast for those who want to have a heavier breakfast. This meal which is a combination of rice and beans can be served with tomatoes and pepper sauce/ stew with smoked or fried fish and egg. A top-up with vegetable salad (a mixture of green vegetables, onions etc. makes this meal a truly healthy meatless meal. The beans provide a diverse collection of nutrients, vitamins and minerals, and are low in calories, cholesterol, and saturated fat.



'Waakye' with 'Garifortor' and pasta

The green vegetables provide for the plant protein bit while the rice fulfils the carbohydrate component. A truly heavy and heathy breakfast for many Ghanaian workers today.

Waakye: <https://youtu.be/DCwSc1u4VNg?si=RA8PRixFIPOFKxXe>

Waakye: https://youtube.com/shorts/vd4-yC_-qw8?si=-D4T3Kcl0dUtpE0

Beans-based Meals

Some popular beans based meals are presented here: a) 'Yor ke gari,' / 'Gobe' is a simple and popular meal made of beans and 'gari,' just as the name suggests. b) Beans with palm oil 'zomi' taken with fried ripe plantain, popularly called 'red-red' or 'korkor and beans'. c) Beans and 'Tatale'. The 'Tatale' is made with overly ripe plantain mashed with maize flour and added spices - ginger, onions, hot pepper and fried; and d) Bambara beans and 'Tatale'.



Beans and 'Gari' with fried plantain

These beans-based meals fall in the category of rich Ghanaian plant-based foods. Red beans, black eye peas and bambara beans can be used to prepare these meals.

These rich and inexpensive meals are important nutrient sources for the body. Beans, irrespective of the type is a healthy choice of food loved by children and adults alike and could be served for breakfast as well as for lunch.



Beans with palm oil and fried ripe plantain



Beans and 'Tatale'



Bambara Beans and 'Tatale'

'Yorke Gari' and Plantain: <https://youtu.be/mEzpwaoafKk?si=axiUlaAwa25JeT1P>

Bambara Beans and Tatale: https://youtu.be/jkTIPXBUeJ8?si=B-a7_14RWS7VLdBN

Ga 'Kenkey' and Fante 'Kenkey'/'Dorkunu'

These are popular maize dough meals of two brands, the Ga 'kenkey' and the Fante 'kenkey'. 'Kenkey' can also be made using millet dough. The Ga 'kenkey' and the Fante 'kenkey' are typically served with fresh cut tomatoes, hot pepper and onion and freshly fried or smoke fish. Adding vegetables especially lettuce leaves and cabbage as well as avocado to your 'kenkey' meal is becoming fashionable among young workers who seek to gain from plant-based nutrients during their breakfast.

Originally popular in fishing communities, 'Kenkey' in recent times has become the choice morning meal for all manner of people in Ghana including the elite workforce.



Fante 'kenkey' or 'Dorkunu'
with fish and pepper



Ga 'kenkey' with fish and pepper

<https://youtu.be/RyUpD22OLQQ?si=BsJic6rIABDSJgv9>

Ga Kenkey and fish: <https://youtu.be/FZK-XMp8X1Y?si=03YGagyaENvv517h>

'Aboloo'

'Aboloo' is a sweet and slightly sour, steamed maize meal. It is eaten preferably when warm as it gets hardened when cold. Aboloo with fried little white fish popularly called 'one man thousand' is equally an enjoyable on-the-go meatless meal for travelers especially in the Volta and Eastern Regions of Ghana, as it is sold at transport hubs. 'Aboloo' is served with 'kontomire' or 'gboma' stew with fried or smoked fish at celebrations of birthdays, weekend parties and funerals etc.



'Aboloo' and fish with red
and green pepper

'Aboloo': <https://youtu.be/VW597ZbF0vs?si=acDd2EcjrwxF-KuG>

Plain rice

Plain rice, prepared with white or brown rice served with tomato sauce/stew with fish is a favourite breakfast/carry-on to school midmorning meal for school going children in particular. Supported with sliced vegetables such as lettuce, cabbage cucumber and carrots, plain rice with stew is a rich source of protein and minerals for both adults and children.



Plain Rice with Stew and Vegetables

SECTION THREE



Lunch and Dinner Meals

Lunch is the meal taken in the middle of the day. In Ghana, meals eaten at lunch time, whether at home or during work break, are often heavier than breakfast and dinner. Typically, lunch provides substantial nourishment to sustain energy levels for the rest of the day. While the lunch meal and the dinner meal are not vastly different from each other in Ghana, there is often an effort to introduce variety to keep the diet interesting and appetizing.

Dinner typically refers to the main meal of the day, eaten in the evening. It is a more communal meal that brings the family together after various engagements throughout the day. The dinner meal is often heavier than lunch, providing more substantial nourishment after a day of work and activities. Care is taken to avoid repeating what was eaten at lunch, ensuring variety and sustaining one's appetite.

Both lunch and dinner times can be challenging for those following the Meatless Monday principle, aimed at reducing meat consumption for better health. This challenge often arises because alternatives to meat-based meals might be limited. To support this initiative, Meatless Monday Ghana presents the following local meatless meals that can be enjoyed for either lunch or dinner, making it easier to avoid meat at least one day a week for improved health.

Jollof Rice

This dish is typically prepared with long grain rice cooked together in a single pot with a preparation of tomatoes, onions, pepper and other spices. Instead of meat, fried or smoked herrings, anchovies popularly called 'Keta school boys', tuna etc could be used. Fried or steamed mushrooms or 'dawadawa' could also be used to give it the plant-based food twist. Cabbage, carrot and lettuce cuts are served with Jollof rice to increase the nutritional value of this meal which is the choice at most festive occasions. Five varieties of meatless Jollof Rice are presented here to aid lovers of this meal in their bid to eat healthy every Monday.



Jollof Rice and Vegetables



Jollof Rice with 'Dawadawa'



Jollof Rice and Anchovies Stew



Jollof Rice and Red Beans
with Veggies



Jollof Rice and Vegetables

Jollof Rice: <https://youtu.be/LTpYeIJApc?si=iB23wPaOIR43BS8S>

Boiled Plain Rice with Stew

Boiled plain rice is prepared mostly with long grain rice, either white or brown, according to one's choice. It is served with a good variety of stews including vegetable stew, green leafy vegetable such as 'kontomire' stew, beans stew, or garden-egg stew. Instead of meat, fish smoked or fried or soya kebab may be added to the stew. This makes it a truly nutritious meal. The beans, the vegetables - cocoyam leaves and garden egg and the soya kebab provide the needed plant-based nutrients. Boiled rice can be eaten with the local tasty palm soup or groundnut soup with mushrooms, oysters, garden-eggs, smoked or fried fish of various types-tilapia, mackerel, etc. of one's choice



Boiled white rice with 'kontomire' stew

<https://youtu.be/yYTn8CXYai8?si=mJs53pGbNu9XNJX>

'Kontomire' Stew: <https://youtu.be/2bUzeuoYpZc?si=rKlxgbxPN7PjKkM2>



Plain Rice and Palm Soup



Plain Rice with Beans Stew



Light Soup



Plain Rice

Boiled yam, plantain, cocoyam, and sweet potato are among the popular foods that Ghanaians love to have for lunch. These are served with a variety of stews including vegetable stews such as 'kontomire' stew, garden-egg stew and pumpkin seed 'agushi' stew – palaver sauce. Beans stew is another lovely addition.

To maintain your promise of reducing meat consumption for good health, eggs and fried fish of your choice may be added to the stews. Sliced pieces of avocado may be added to provide for the fiber, healthy fats, vitamin C, vitamin E, vitamin B6, potassium, magnesium, and folate the body needs. Taking your boiled yam, plantain, cassava, or sweet potato regularly with avocado adds great improvement to the quality of your diet.



Boiled Yam and 'kontomire' Stew



Boiled Yam and Garden Egg/ 'egusi' stew



Boiled Yam and Beans Stew



Mashed Yam 'Etor' and Egg

Beans Stew: <https://youtu.be/ty-dIanan2Q?si=U-ydolaSMuo3ry6C>

Etor : https://youtu.be/WVD5f6rs3NY?si=Cs9Pk7ehRP6_UxXu



Boiled Cassava and Garden Egg Stew



Boiled Cocoyam and
Garden Egg Stew



Boiled Sweet Potato and 'Egusi' Stew



Boiled Plantain and Beans Stew



Boiled Plantain and 'Kontomire'



Boiled Plantain and Gravy

Garden eggs stew: https://youtu.be/0AY9XsKJ5g0?si=I9cb5Nx9oGqvK_Lr

Garden eggs stew: <https://youtu.be/bUZ5EGclZ7E?si=caR5W3Use4Ihffr2>



Boiled unripe Plantain with palava sauce ('Kontomire' stew)

Maize and Millet-based Meals

Maize is one of the most popular sources of food for Ghanaians and a good variety of meals are prepared with the maize dough. These include 'akple,' 'banku,' 'eworkple,' the Ga 'kenkey,' the Fante 'dorkunu' and 'tuo zafi' which are well known and loved by Ghanaians. Cooked in hot water until the texture assumes a mild hardness as preferred, 'akple,' 'banku' and 'eworkple' are favourite lunch or dinner meals eaten most especially in the southern part of the country.

These are eaten with a wide variety of soups including the popular okro soup/stew, groundnut soup and palm soup, fresh fish in tomatoes light soup, local leafy vegetable soup ('gboma', 'aleefi' and / 'ademe' as well as fresh fish gravy 'fante-fante'. 'Akple' and its relatives 'eworkple' and 'banku' could also be served with a combination of green, red and black pepper known as 'shito'. Various types of fish - tilapia, marckerel, red fish, cassava fish, anchovies, crab and oyster provide the base to support the carbohydrate of the 'akple' family.



'Akple' and Okro Soup



'Akple' and 'Ademe'



'Banku' and Okro Soup



'Akple' and Fresh Pepper



Banku and Gravy 'Fantefante'

'Akple' and Anchovis (aborbitadi) Stew

Okro stew Fetri detsi: https://youtu.be/OpS4EELLkMI?si=eVUKoMUJpmFSH_Tw
 Ademe detsi-Ayoyo soup: <https://youtu.be/45my2VYoLXU?si=i92CLrtjZ86hmzJR>
 Banku: <https://youtu.be/-2tRHtgHHrk?si=oztsuKl3GZPbvIaQ>
 Anchovies stew-Bobitadi and Ewokple: <https://youtu.be/oberWhRU-Mc?si=0Uw936zSmnqFi3a8>

'Dzenkple'

'Dzenkple' is a local Ghanaian dish which is basically made from roasted maize flour, cooked beans together with other ingredients such as onion, tomatoes, pepper and other spices. The palm oil which is added to the boiling water or palm soup in which the roasted corn flour mix is cooked gives 'dzenkple' its distinct reddish brown colour. Fermented salted fish 'koobi', smoked fish and various types of crabs and shrimps are used in preparing the stew that is served with this special meal. 'Dzenkple,' 'akpliji,' or 'aprapransa' is not a regular household meal. It's a type of meal that is served on special occasions such as marriage ceremonies, and birth day celebrations etc.



'Dzenkple', 'Akplijii' or 'Aprapransa'

'Dzenkple', 'Akplijii' or 'Aprapransa' <https://youtu.be/CODxLH47U4g?si=x-WNjzYEB1jLPmJA>

'Tuozaafi'

'Tuozaafi (TZ) is a highly nutritious Ghanaian delicacy prepared with millet or maize dough. Tuozaaf which means 'stir it hot' in the Hausa language is similar to 'Akple,' but TZ is quite soft and less sticky. It is eaten with soup prepared with green leafy vegetables such as 'ayoyo', 'Aleeffi' baobab leaves 'Kuukar', 'Okro' and 'Shuray' leaves. These green leafy vegetables are vital sources of minerals, and vitamins for human health and development.

'Dawadawa' made from fermented African Locust Fruit beans adds a special flavour to the soup. TZ is an all-time favourite dish for Ghanaians in the northern part of the country. Smoked herrings, tilapia and other fried fishes of one's choice and natural spices come together to make you lick your fingers while enjoying the great TZ meal.



'Tuozaafi' and Green Soup

https://youtu.be/bY6WrOVeen0?si=RBQnAaZwoSlb10_7

'Fufu'

'Fufu' is a staple dish for many Ghanaian families and loved by all. 'Fufu' is made by pounding boiled cassava and unripe plantains together. It can also be made with yam or cocoyam. When ready, 'fufu' is moulded in to a ball shape, placed in a bowl and served with the soup of your choice. 'Fufu' floating in a bowl of palm soup with goat meat or chicken on top and around it is a delicacy that will surely whet up your appetite. But in these times when we are concerned with our health, replacing the meat at least one day in a week with fish, snail, mushrooms with pieces of garden eggs and okro joining the float, equally if not, more than makes your day. The popular soups served with 'fufu' are palm soup, groundnut soup, a well spiced light soup, and green soup 'ebunuebunu' a typical Ghanaian soup which is prepared with cocoyam leaves and choice spices.



'Fufu' and Light Soup



Cocoyam 'Fufu' and
Green Soup 'Ebunubunu'



'Fufu' and Palm Soup



'Fufu' with Mushroom and
Vegetables Soup

Ways of preparing 'Fufu': https://youtu.be/i_nMyOSvMf8?si=EGfYQry5Qro7KF3U
Vegan Palm-nut Soup: <https://youtu.be/tgIv6LQ-Lps?si=bgcx6dpgYDILWfnm>
Vegan groundnut (Peanut butter) soup: <https://youtu.be/EYVGXGj-ZxI?si=M67mTMFonljBYJP3>

'Kokonte'

'Konkonte' is a Ghanaian food made from dried cassava flour. Also known as brown 'fufu' or "face the wall," 'konkonte' is a staple swallow food just as 'fufu' is. Dried yam and plantain flour could be used in making 'kokonte'. Like 'fufu', 'kokonte' is floated in a bowl of ground nut soup or palm soup with fish accompanied with pieces of okro and garden eggs. It actually goes well with smoked tuna or fried red fish, mushroom and fried oysters.

A great lunch or dinner meal indeed.

Veggie Palm soup with 'Kokonte': <https://youtu.be/5yAGJJ5SdRk?si=zK3unMHmOiT7P2uU> 'Konkonte' and Palm Soup: <https://youtu.be/IbF7byV0IvA?si=CrvSmFSPZ4dBIWoT>



'Kokonte' and Palm Soup

'Omotuo' Rice Ball

'Omotuo' rice ball is simply boiled rice that is cooked like 'akple' and moulded into a ball shape. Broken rice is well suited for the preparation of 'omotuo.' Like 'fufu,' 'omotuo' is served in a bowl of ground nut or palm soup where it sits like an island surrounded by fresh, smoked fried fish, mushroom, oyster and vegetables such as garden egg, okro, green pepper, and 'kpakposhito' a small reddish or yellowish hot pepper which adds a special heat to the soup.



Rice ball with Palm soup



Rice ball with Ground nut soup

Omotuo-Rice Balls with Peanut/ Groundnut Soup: <https://youtu.be/BRlvqyLNGRU?si=ObwHidx7QwK7SlpT>

'Yakayake'

'Yakeyake' and 'Atseke' are two different cassava based meals with different modes of preparation. In each case, raw cassava is crushed into a fine texture and the starch squeezed out to get the cassava dough. 'Yakayake' is cooked with vapour that exudes from a pot of boiling water over which a plate of the semi dried cassava dough is placed. 'Yakayake' is served with a ground pepper- tomatoes - onion mixture with fried or smoked fish. The best formula however is yakayake and okro soup 'fetridetsi' with fried or smoked fish and fermented dry fish 'koobi. The slimy nature of the okro soup provides a soft base for the 'yakayake' to float through one's throat with ease.



'Yakeyake': https://youtu.be/lmCPWbaHZOw?si=I7L9_ddyUkAQdRnw

'Atseke'

'Atseke' is made with cassava dough prepared in the same mode as 'yakayake'. 'Atseke' is cooked by stirring the semi dried cassava dough in a hot pan and stirred several times to prevent it from sticking to the hot pan. 'Atseke' is served with a mixture of diced onions, pepper and tomatoes and flavoured with spices and vinegar with fried or roasted fish. It is also often served with fruits and vegetables such as avocados and cucumber. 'Atseke' is a delicacy in the Western Region of Ghana and in fact very popular in neighbouring Ivory Coast.



'Atseke': <https://youtu.be/pTYKn111bDI?si=HFZq5xzPW4u1wNYM>

Other Popular Cassava based Foods made with Gari

'Gari' is made from cassava roots that have been crushed into a mash, fermented and sieved into small pieces (known as grits). The grits are then roasted in hot pans to make the final crispy product. 'Gari' is dry, crispy,

creamy-white and granular. The popularity of 'gari' cannot be over emphasised. Some call it 'saviour' and among students from the primary school to the university level, 'gari' is called 'students companion.' This is because it serves as a supplement to whatever food served at the dining hall as snack or even as a main meal. Various types of meals can be prepared with 'gari'. These include 'gari eba', 'gari fortor', gari and soup, gari and beans etc.

'Gari eba' or 'Gari pinon'

'Gar eba' is a typical quick fix food popular among fishing communities. It is prepared with 'gari' cooked in hot boiling water like 'akple.' 'Gari eba' can be served with roasted or fried fish with hot pepper and 'shitor' with vegetables such as red onion and fresh tomatoes. Among the fisher folk in particular, 'gari eba' goes very well with fresh fish light soup. It can equally be enjoyed with palm nut soup, okro soup and ground nut soup with fresh, smoked or fried fish.



'Gari eba' with Red and Green Pepper Stew

'Garifotor'

'Garifortor' is another interesting and tasty gari-based meal which is loved by both adults and children. It is prepared by mashing up or mixing gari with already prepared sauce/stew as the name implies. 'Fortor' in the Ewe language means to mix or mash up, hence the name 'garifortor'. Some also call it gari jollof.



'Garifotor' with egg and vegetables

Garifortor is a delicacy which can be served as a main dish with vegetables or as an accompaniment for plain rice, jollof rice or 'waakye'.

'Garifortor' with Vegetables and Egg: <https://youtu.be/NSoszTf0y1w?si=ndPDKGMwcxX6JPFd>

'Gari' and Soup

When you have your palm nut soup, ground nut soup or okro soup already waiting in the fridge, just heat it up. Pour a quantity of gari into your plate as you wish to eat and sprinkle a few drops of water on it to soften it. After a few minutes add your choice of soup and you are good to go. Enjoy yourself. Gari and soup is such a quick fix meal, a time saver.



'Gari' and Soup

Pasta and vegetables

Pasta of various types even though foreign have gradually become traditional Ghanaian foods loved by both children and adults. Among the common types are stir fried spaghetti, noodles, spaghetti with vegetable sauce etc.

Cucumber and boiled carrot are also served with pasta.



Pasta

SECTION FOUR



Snacks

A

snack is described as a small portion of food or light food generally eaten between the main meals of breakfast, lunch and dinner. Various forms of light food items may be regarded as snacks. These include fresh fruits and items made from fresh fruits and other ingredients at home and packaged snack foods and other processed foods.

Often, cold cuts, fruits, leftovers, nuts, sandwiches, and sweets are used as snacks. With the spread of convenient shops, packaged snack foods have become popular choices for office workers and students. Snack food are typically designed to be portable, quick, and satisfying. However, juices and smoothies which are becoming increasingly popular as components of packaged snack foods in town could be high in added sugars and calories and low infiber. Theses should therefore be consumed with care or in moderation.

In Ghana, various light food items exist for the preparation of meatless snacks for those who have made the choice of reducing meat consumption for a healthy life, the Meatless Monday people.

Fresh Fruits and Fruit Juices

Among the common fruits available to be used in the preparation of snacks are: bananas, oranges, watermelon, African Star Fruit 'alaasa', soursop 'aluguntugui', guava, mangoes, pawpaw, avocado, pear, pineapple, tangerine, cashew, 'shorn' (African black plum), and also grapes and apples. These fruits may be eaten as they are or processed into fruit drinks or combined with other light food items to make snack items such as banana cakes. Selected fruits may also be combined to produce tasty fruit salads for snacks, for example banana, pineapple, watermelon and mangoes are popular mixes for fruit salads.

Some Common Ghanaian Fruits and veges for snacks.





Water melon



Mango



Orange



Apple



Soursop 'Aliguntugui', 'Evo'



Banana



Fresh Coconut



Grape Fruit



Guava



Star Fruit



Tangerine

Fruit Juices.

Among the popular fruit drinks you can use as snack are orange juice, pineapple juice, mango juice, watermelon juice, pawpaw juice, guava juice, lemonade, tangerine juice, lemon ice tea, tamarind juice, cashew fruit juice, tomato juice, yellow melon juice, passion fruit juice and pomegranate juice.



Tomatoes Juice



Pineapple Juice



Orange Juice



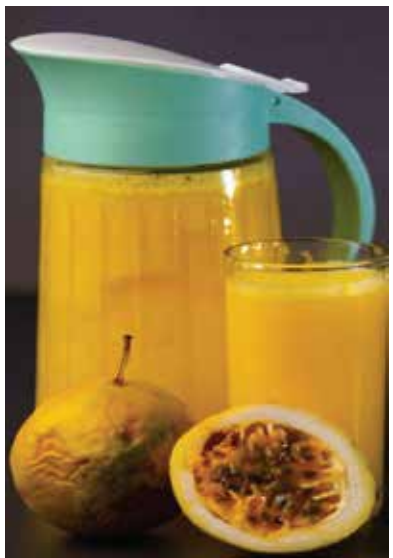
Pawpaw Juice



Watermelon Juice



Mango Juice



Passion Fruit Juice



Tangerine Juice

Plant-based Smoothies and Juices

Some typical Ghanaian plant-based juices are available for choice as healthy snacks for Meatless Monday. These include 'Sobolo' brewed from dried hibiscus and flower petals and other ingredients; and dandelion juice made by blending and straining fresh leaves of the dandelion plant. Tiger nuts can also be blended into a tasty plant-based juice. Mashed 'kenkey' with soya milk and 'gari' soaked in fresh coconut juice or sugary water and taken with roasted ground nuts; 'fula', also known as the Zongo smoothie and 'brukina' both of which are made from millet, a gluten-free grain are all healthy snacks for Meatless Monday.



Mashed 'kenkey' with Groundnuts



'Fula' with Groundnuts



'Brukina' with Groundnuts



'Gari' soaked in coconut juice or sugary water with milk



Tiger nut Juice



Dry Hibiscus Petals Drink (Sobolo)

Pure Fruit Smoothies

Drinking smoothies produced by blending some of these fruits together is gradually becoming a lovey snack brand in Ghana. Such smoothies include: banana smoothie; coconut and banana smoothie; pawpaw smoothie, mango and pawpaw smoothie; pineapple and ginger smoothie; watermelon smoothie; avocado smoothie; watermelon and pineapple smoothie; coconut

and ginger smoothie; pineapple, mango and ginger plus mint smoothie; mango, oats plus cashew /almonds nuts smoothie; and mango, oats plus dates smoothie. Smoothies are taken with nuts such as ground nuts, cashew nuts, sesame seeds, or melon seeds as a complete snack.



Examples of Fruit and Plant Smoothies



Pineapple and Tiger
nut Smoothie



Dandelion Smoothie



Watermelon Smoothie



Watermelon and Pineapple Smoothie



Avocado Smoothie



Banana and Coconut Smoothie

Light Foods to be taken with Juices and Smoothies

Some selected light food items that can be taken with the fruit or plant-based juices or the smoothies to serve as satisfying snacks are as follows: vegetable sandwich, roasted fresh maize on corb, roasted plantain popularly called 'Kofi Brokeman-KBM', plantain chips, boiled fresh corn, beans cake

'koose', spiced fried plantain 'Kekewe', pop corn with ground nuts, tigernut pudding, boiled groundnuts in pods, fruit and vegetable-based cakes such as carrot cake, banana cake and beetroot cake.

Other Healthy Snacks



Vegetable Sandwich



Roasted Plantain and Groundnut



Roasted Fresh Maize on corb



Boiled Fresh Maize on corb



Banana and Groundnut



Plantain Chips



Boiled Groundnuts



Pop Corn and Groundnuts



Cashew nuts



Almonds



Fried over ripe Plantain chips
('Kelewele')



'Agbelikaklo' fried in healthy
coconut oil

'Kelewele': https://youtu.be/c0Bt_1gbko8?si=VDVbZUdXM1HEIhIc

SECTION FIVE



Conclusion

Benefits of Reduced Meat Consumption.

In summary, it is right to state that limiting the amount of meat one eats each week plays an important role in reducing one's chances of developing chronic conditions such as gout, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, and cancer. In a Washington Post blog post (Aug. 2, 2022) McKay Gorse asserts, eating a lot of red or processed meats is linked to a higher risk of developing certain cancers. He further states that, when you ditch meat at your meals one day a week, you will be encouraged to eat other foods that are good for your health.

Plant-based diets that include vegetables, fruits, grains, beans, and nuts which are high in fiber, vitamins, and nutrients should therefore be the choice of everyone for healthy eating and a healthier life.

Here are six great benefits of Meatless Mondays; check them out!

1. Reduced Heart Disease and Stroke: Fruits and vegetables help your body fight cardiovascular disease. If you are excluding meat, be sure to still eat a well-balanced meal. Eating no meat on Mondays will encourage you to increase your intake of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and legumes. It's important to emphasize that a **well-balanced meal** should include a variety of plant-based proteins to fully replace the nutrients typically obtained from meat.

2. Lower Cancer Risk: Red meat or processed meat may increase the risk of colorectal cancer. Having a diet rich in vegetables and fruits may lower your risk of cancer.

3. Prevent Diabetes: Diets low in processed meat, and high in plant-based foods, may reduce your risk for type 2 diabetes. Adding more greens to your diet can help you maintain a healthy weight through a well-balanced diet, which is a key factor in preventing type

2 Diabetes. It might be useful to mention the role of **low-glycemic index foods** in managing blood sugar levels.

4. Prevent Obesity: Because greens are so rich in fiber, those who eat vegetarian diets have a lower risk of obesity. As obesity may lead to other health issues, going green on Mondays may help you maintain a healthy weight. Additionally, discussing the **caloric density** of foods can provide a more complete picture of how vegetarian diets contribute to a healthy weight.

5. Save Money: In these hard times of economic crises, when food prices including the price of beef, chicken etc. continue to soar, not only is excluding meat on Mondays good for your health, but also for your pocket. Save a few Ghana Cedis each week by skipping meat on Mondays!

6. Prepares children for healthier and enjoyable adult Life: "Having children eat red meat in moderation helps them develop healthy eating habits that will stick with them throughout their lives." (Dr. Stephen Hu, Cardiologist, 2020)

7. Reduce your carbon footprint: Avoiding meat just one day a week saves the environment. This is because animal protein sources have been found to be among the largest producers of greenhouse gases which are inimical to the health of the environment.

Therefore;

Reduce meat consumption and eat more plant-based foods on Mondays for a healthier life!

Save your life - Save the environment!



