



# The Soul of a New Cuisine: A Discovery of the Foods and Flavors of Africa

By Marcus Samuelsson



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## The Soul of a New Cuisine: A Discovery of the Foods and Flavors of Africa By Marcus Samuelsson

"For as long as I can remember, I've had Africa on my mind." Award-winning chef Marcus Samuelsson may be best known for his innovative take on Scandinavian cuisine at New York's Restaurant Aquavit, but his story begins thousands of miles away, in Africa. Born in Ethiopia and raised in Sweden by adoptive parents, his life transcends national boundaries, and his individual approach to cuisine is a global yet personal one that draws freely from many ethnic and cultural influences.

In *The Soul of a New Cuisine*, Marcus returns to the land of his birth to explore the continent's rich diversity of cultures and cuisines through recipes and stories from his travels in Africa. Stunning color images by award-winning photographer Gediyon Kifle bring the breadth of the African experience to life, from fishermen at sunset off the coast of Zanzibar to French baguettes loaded onto a bicycle in Senegal.

Marcus shares more than 200 enticing recipes, including his own African-inspired creations and traditional dishes from all parts of Africa. You can delight in spicy stews and Barbequed Snapper from West Africa and the familiar Mediterranean flavors of dishes like Moroccan Lemon-Olive Chicken, or make your way east and south for the irresistible taste combinations of dishes such as Curried Trout with Coconut-Chili Sauce from Kenya and Apple-Squash Fritters from South Africa's Cape Malay. Using ingredients that are readily available in American markets, the recipes are doable as well as delicious.

Of course, one of the keys to authentic African cooking is the use of spice blends and rubs, which elevate simple cooking techniques to an excitingly varied and intense level. Marcus includes his favorites here, with blends that go from sweet to spicy and feature everything from hot chili peppers and peppermint leaves to sesame seeds and ginger.

As he says, Africa is "a state of mind that I hope this book will help you tap into wherever you are." By cooking with a handful of this and a pinch of that, trying new foods and enjoying old ones in a new way, and lingering over meals with family and friends, you will bring the free, relaxed spirit of African cooking to your table and discover for yourself the soul of a "new" cuisine.

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*By Marcus Samuelsson*

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From Publishers Weekly

*Starred Review.* Born Ethiopian, raised Swedish, and now one of New York City's top chefs, Samuelsson (*Aquavit: And the New Scandinavian Cuisine*) has written an exotic yet accessible book that will hasten the coming of the African fusion cookery he envisions. His 204 recipes and 258 color photos are enriched with personal and political history; as in his many condiments and sauces, the balance is right. While he stresses the diversity and bounty of the second-largest continent, he repeatedly describes African cuisine as poor people's cooking, crafted with simple tools and necessarily emphasizing starches, vegetables and big flavors. Whether it's rosemary for Honey Bread or turmeric, ginger and cinnamon in his Vegetable Samosas, herbs and spices are always sautéed in oil or tossed in a hot dry pan, to intensify and mellow. He even proposes toasting the cinnamon for the whipped cream accompanying his Ethiopian Chocolate Rum Cake. The recipe for the cake is typical: the batter is prepared in a single bowl, mixed with a spoon, and bakes up moist and

gingerbread-like, with great keeping properties. Toasting the cinnamon takes seconds and is impressive in the complexity it delivers. (*Oct.*)

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From [Booklist](#)

Samuelsson established his reputation as one of the foremost exponents of contemporary Swedish cookery through Aquavit, his celebrated New York City restaurant. Now he travels to wholly new territory by returning to the land of his birth and the glorious traditions of African cooking. From his native Ethiopia he prepares *injera*, the country's staple fermented flatbread. Moroccan cooking, one of Africa's most sophisticated, contributes *harissa*, a fiery spice paste that warms many North African dishes. Cassava stuffs shrimp for a satisfying West African meal. Samuelsson substitutes beef for lamb in South Africa's renowned *bobotie* but takes care to preserve the dish's curry-influenced spicing. Jerk chicken, more generally associated with Jamaica, shows how African eating traditions have spread abroad. He does not flinch at using contemporary ingredients such as arugula and Yukon Gold potatoes to make his recipes attractive. The immensity and diversity of Africa make it difficult to comprehend a continent's varied cooking styles in a single book, but Samuelsson's achievement celebrates a little-known cuisine. *Mark Knoblauch*

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