

**PROUDLY SOUTH AFRICAN CUISINE**  
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# Introduction

South African society multi-cultural



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# Introduction continued

Visual arrival / meeting of east & west & peoples from African continent



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# The first colonisers arrive

- Portuguese first to pass the Cape – never named Table Mountain
- Dutch East India Company sailors regularly anchored at the Cape from 1620
- 1651 – Dutch decided to establish a settlement in the Cape to grow provisions for ships passing
- Permanent farmsteads soon established, needing labourers - Javanese and Malay slaves were brought to the Cape
- French Huguenots fled France after 1685 led to a population explosion – bringing along native Bordeaux rootstock for vines
- Germans, other Europeans and English came, but the French had the biggest influence on the development of the cuisine (the influence was so great that one Dutch governor wanted to prohibit French fashion!)



# The first colonisers arrive - continue

- Contribution of slaves to SA cooking should take priority. The name Cape Malays for this group is a misnomer as they were from Sumatra, Java and other East Indies Islands – but all were Muslims and spoke Malay
- 1685 saw a new way of life in the Cape. Governor Simon van der Stel decided to retire at the Cape and acquired a grant for a large tract of land – Groot Constantia. First time the word “boer” (Dutch for farmer) was used, and Van der Stel laid the foundation for the local wine industry
- Europeans who married or had illicit relationships with Malays, Hottentots, Bushmen and Africans led to the formation of the Cape Coloured population - identifying with their European masters, they adopted Dutch as their language, became Christian and accompanied Europeans into the interior





## Introduction continued

- Reflected in cuisine and food practices
- Rainbow cuisine with roots in Africa, Europe and the Far East



## Introduction continued

- Food practices are part of culture and lifestyle each of the groups had their own authentic traditional dishes
- Variety of cuisines came together and were introduced to each other





# Cuisine

## Cuisine deals with

- Food used
- Preparation / manipulation of ingredients
- Flavouring
- Rules (intangible factors – symbolic value, meanings / significance)



# Traditional cuisines

## Black South African groups



## Staple grain maize



# Traditional cuisines continued



Staple grain sorghum



# Traditional cuisines continued

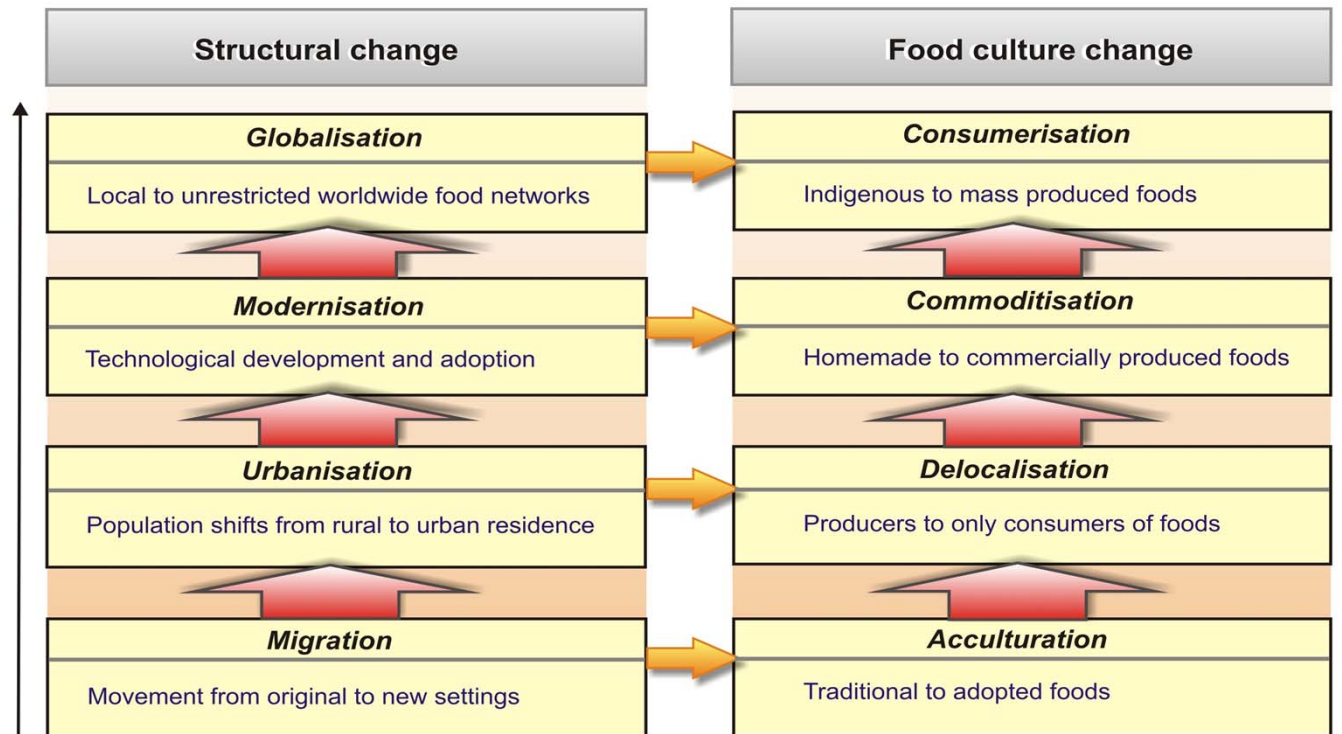
## *Relishes*

- Wild and cultivated indigenous green leafy vegetables
- Indigenous legumes
- Pumpkin and indigenous melons
- Meat “only a visitor”



# Dynamics of food practices and cuisines

## Model of food culture change

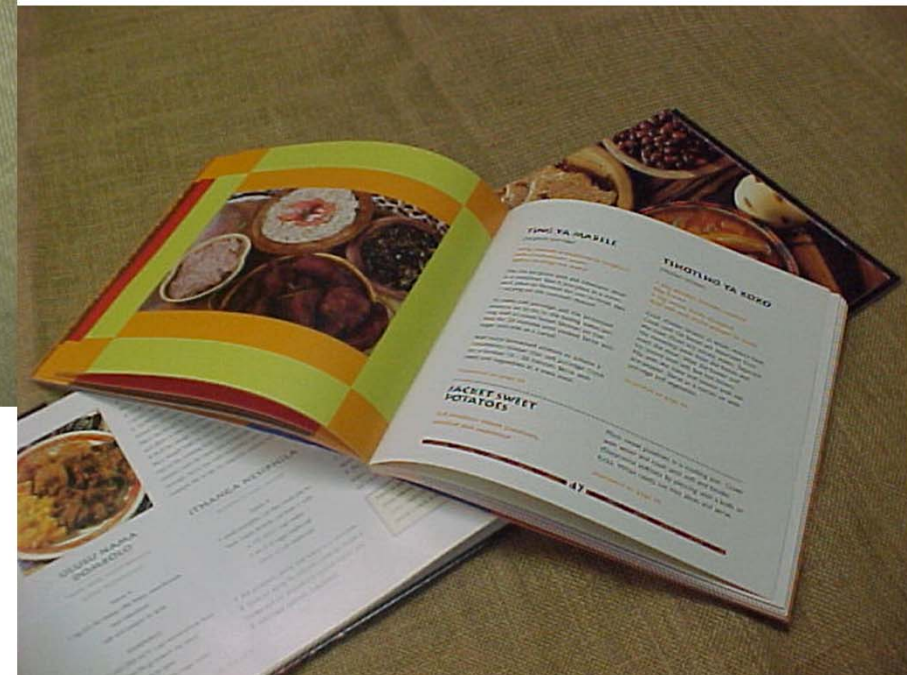
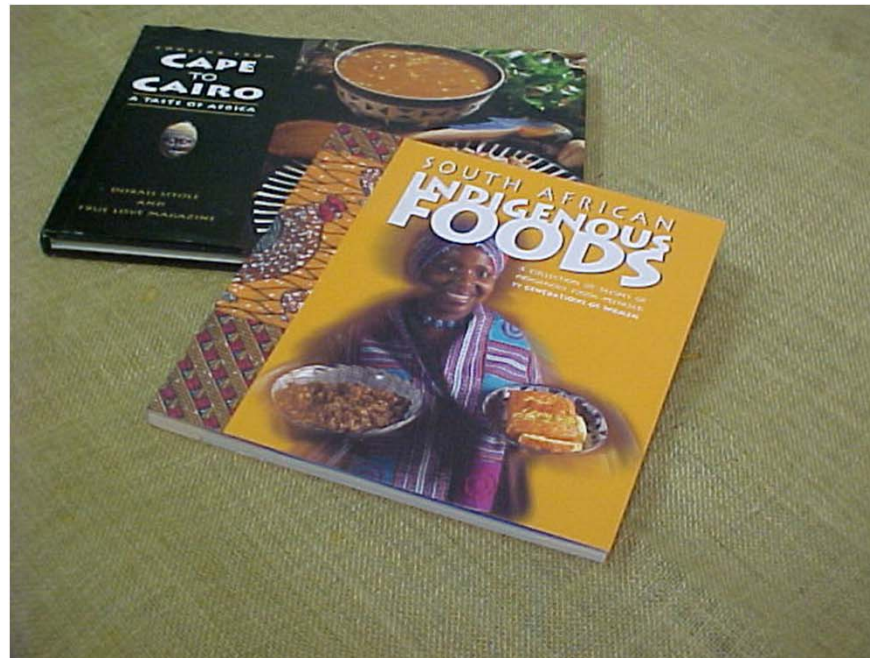


# Dynamic cuisines ?

**HOW ?**  
**WHEN ?**  
**WHERE ?**  
**WHY ?**

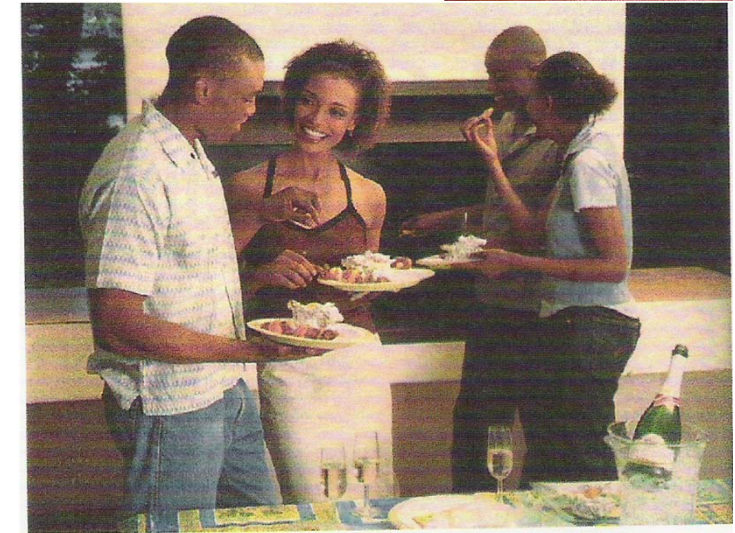
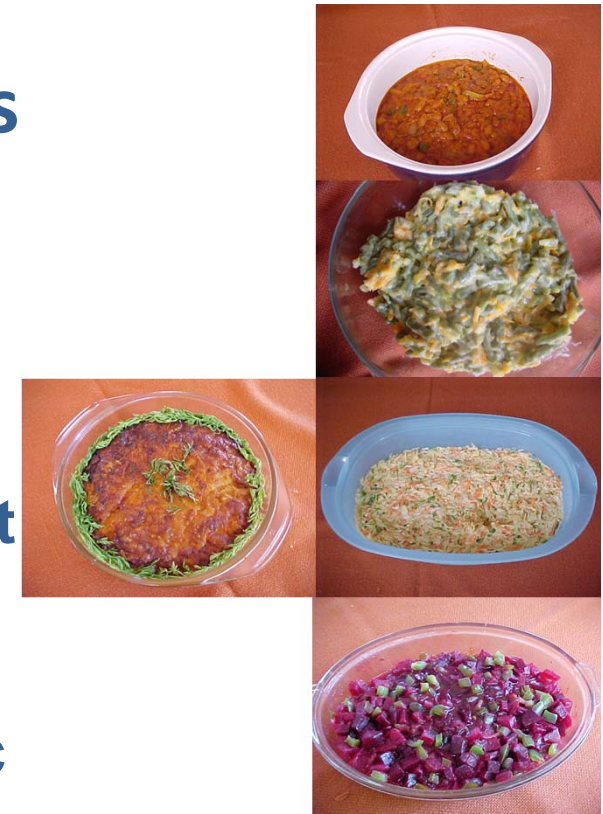


# Recipe books



# Dynamics of food practices

- Black population groups shift from traditional to partially Western-oriented lifestyle
- Gradual shift to Western-oriented diet
- Migration, urbanisation & acculturation
- Education, technological & economic developments

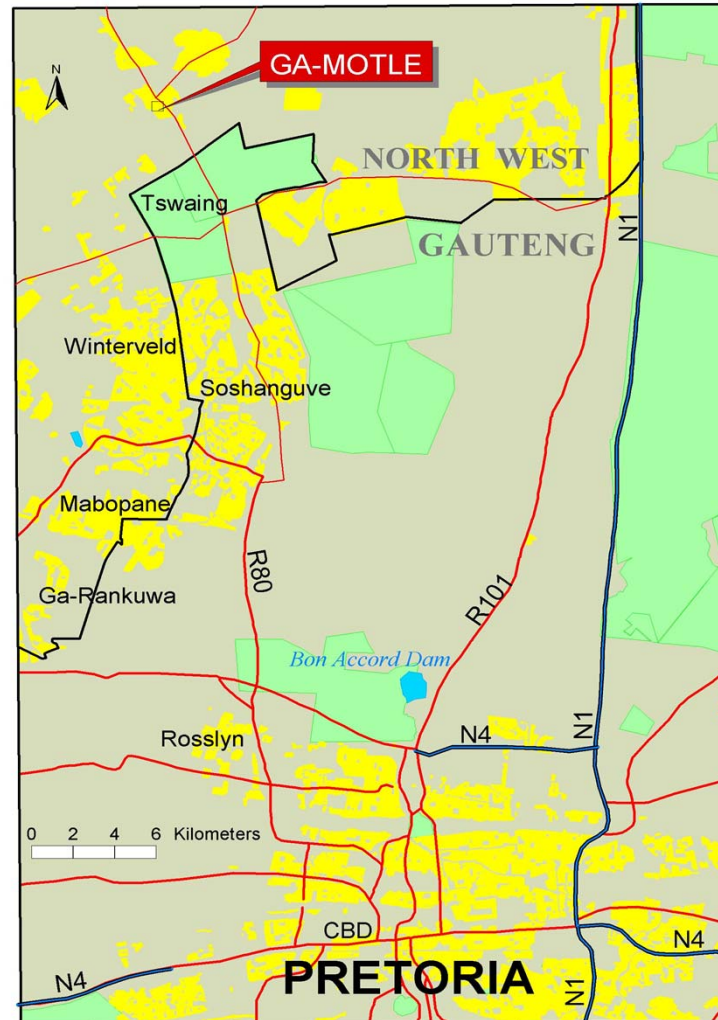


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# Mmotla



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# Traditional dishes

## Ndebele male initiation



Mdogo ithanga / isijeza



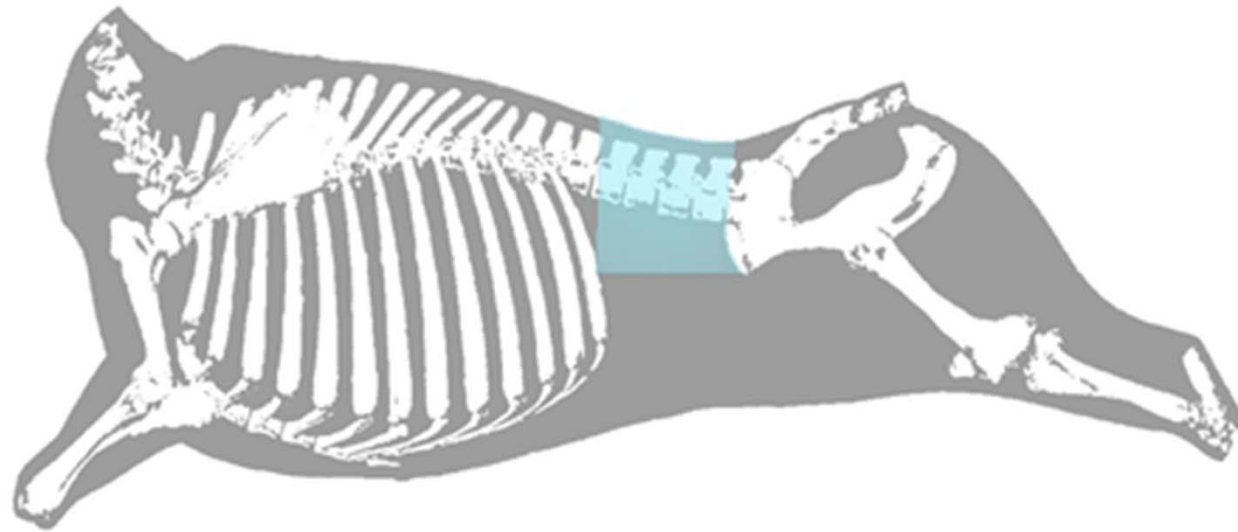
# Traditional dishes continued

## Ndebele female initiation



# Traditional dishes continued

## Ndebele female initiation



Isifunzi



# Traditional dishes continued

## Wedding and associated celebrations

### Isimanye

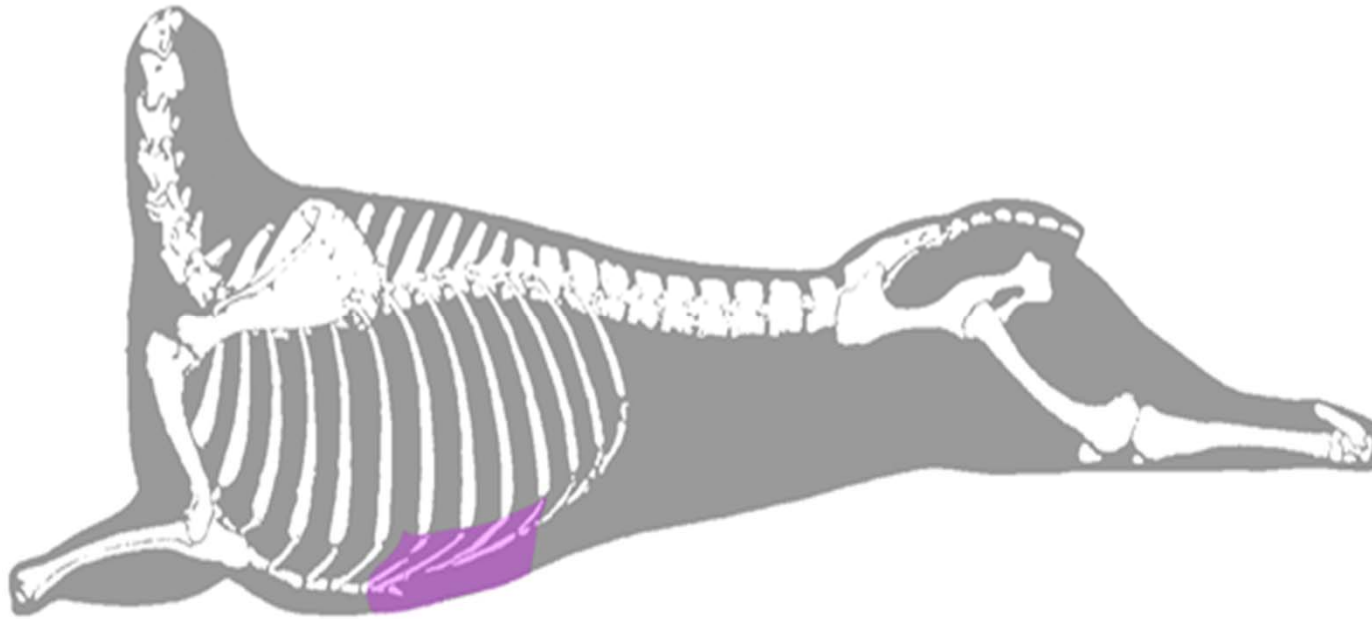


Sdudu



# Traditional dishes continued

Skiri

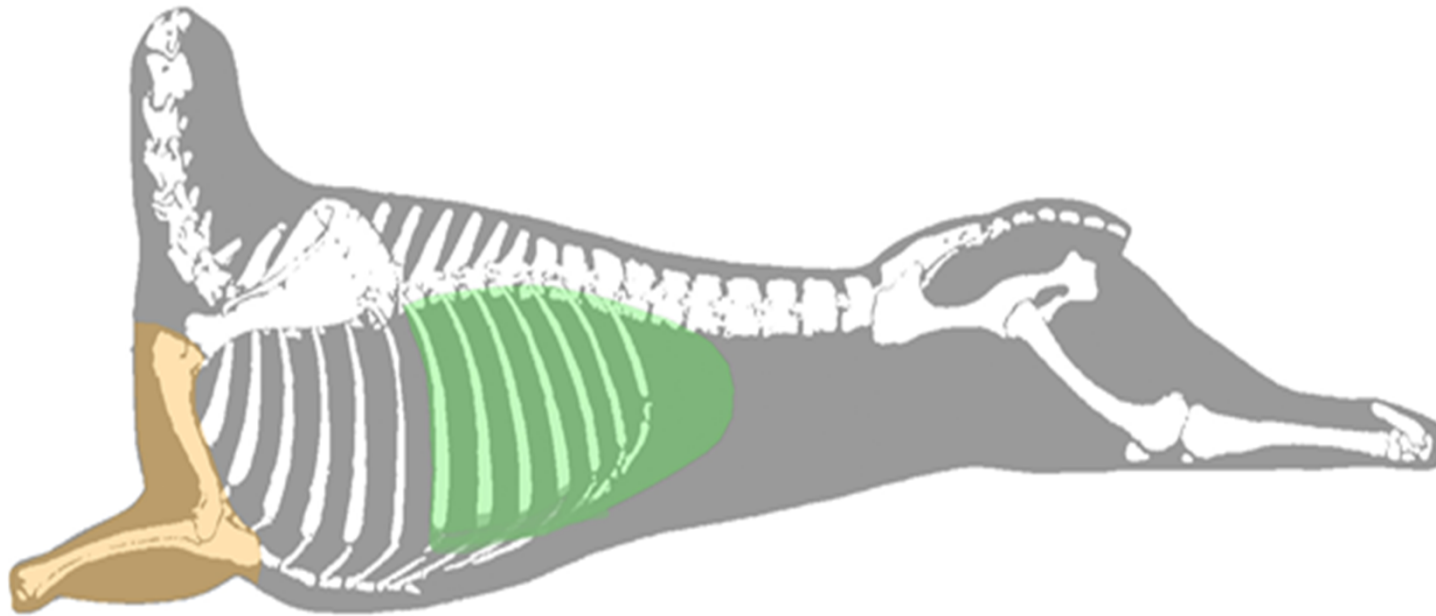


Amavenge



# Traditional dishes continued

## Indwendwe



“Arm of the goat”



# Traditional dishes continued

## Indwendwe





# Traditional dishes continued

Irhayi



# Traditional dishes continued



Thlabalala



Ndini



## Conclusion black South African groups

- Traditional dishes popular and prepared on a regular basis and at celebrations
- Dependent on availability of indigenous ingredients
- Customs and traditions contribute to maintain culinary heritage



## Cape Malay Cuisine

- The Cape Malay culture is jealously guarded to preserve the identity, religion, language, culture, and original homes.
- Ramadan and the beginning of the feast following it, called Lebaran, is a great time to experience the best of Malay cuisine. Dishes carry names that are a mix of Afrikaans, English & Malay: sosatie, bobotie, bredie, koesister, kerrie, pickled fish, yellow rice, blatjang, atjar & sambal. Many of these are now part of the SA food lexicon.



## Cape Malay Cuisine continued

- Another great feast is Moulidu-n-nabi, the feast of the orange leaves (locally known as Rampi Sny, during which mounds of orange and lemon leaves are shredded) – women gather and drink spicy tea and eat coloured cakes. On this day women do not cook, men have the duty of preparing buriyani.
- These grand feasts were probably not how Malays first influenced cooking in SA, but through their skill in preserving and pickling vegetables and fish for the scurvy-ridden sailors of the DEIC. Expert fishermen, they preserved fish in two ways.



## Cape Malay Cuisine continued

- The first is salting and drying butterflied fish, which is also the basis for “smoorvis” (smoor-snoek).
- “Ingelegde vis” (pickled fish) is another South African speciality, and every Malay household had their own way of preparing it. In fact, today pickled fish may be considered a truly cross-cultural dish, with many households in South Africa relishing pickled fish.
- Denningvleis is another spicy meat dish which was derived from the Javanese ‘dendeng’.



## Cape Malay Cuisine continued

- Sambals, atchars and blatjang.
- A “Motjie-kok” is a highly regarded cook engaged for Malay weddings and funerals. Leading a team of women who will clean, fetch and carry while she cooks for more than 100 guests, a motjie-kok works for no remuneration, with the understanding that if she ever needed a favour from a family she has assisted, she will be accommodated.







## Cuisine of white South Africans

- The availability of particular ingredients – seafood like mussels and crayfish – led to the development of particular dishes. The same skill did not apply in the case of meat, which was salted and smoked all the way back home in Holland.
- Efforts to farm with meat were initially less successful, so animal husbandry never became a Cape speciality except for pork and chicken – from there the traditional roast chicken for Sunday lunch.



## Cuisine of white South Africans continued

- Dinner roasts were always served with four to eight accompanying vegetable dishes and in summer even several salads.
- Cabbage and bacon of course were also typical of South African cuisine – the expressions “kool sonder spek” or “die kool is die sous nie werd nie” are indicative of this major role that vegetables played in the Cape
- Lots of vegetables from the veld, such as waterblommetjies (pond weed), became staples of the South African cuisine.



## Cuisine of white South Africans continued

- Grain production only took off after 1657 when the governor forced the “vryburgers” to farm with grains
- Fruit was a major ingredient – van Riebeeck’s granddaughter wrote about preserved fruits such as canned salted quinces, sugared quinces, “Kaapse mebos” (dried salted apricot), dried apples, fruit preserved in brandy (“Boerejongens en Boerenmeisies), and “konfyt” derived from the French word “confiture”



## Cuisine of white South Africans continued

- Baking became another area of distinction. At the end of 1700 more than 17 000 permanent residents lived at the Cape, and the spirit of invention was strong: new variations on “soetkoekies” were invented ; and “bondkoekies” celebrated the political party formed to reconcile the conflicting interests of the English and Dutch. “Mosbolletjies” used grape juice in the first stages of fermentation, and leftovers were made into “mosbeskuit”. “Pannekoek” was made on special long handled pans on open fires, and another treat that is still made is the lovely “oblietjie”





## The Great Trek

- 1835 saw a collective decision among many mostly Huguenot-Dutch descendants to leave the Cape, which resulted in the “Groot Trek”:
  - Under grimmer circumstances, something more authentically African developed than the oddly Mediterranean cuisine of the colony they left behind



## The Great Trek continued

- At first the trekkers encountered mostly millet, but then they planted mielies (and were it not for these two grains the pioneers would have found their new life precarious). Today the word “pap” evokes childhood associations for South Africans of any colour. Boer prisoners on Ceylon sang “daar onder in die mielies by die groen doring boom, daar woon my Sarie Marais”



## The Great Trek continued

- Trekkers started salting, spicing and curing meat, which is where “biltong” made its entry into the local food lore. Large animals like Eland were processed in their entirety to produce items like soap, candles, velskoene, whips and bridles, and cross-woven bases for chairs and beds





## The Great Trek continued

- “Boerewors” made from ox or cow, when the best meat would be preserved by making biltong but also sausage. This was mostly done in winter because with such huge animals the danger of meat going bad had to be managed. To process a single beast all female work power had to be mobilised. With the advent of “boerewors” came the great southern African institution known as “braaivleis”



## The Great Trek continued

- Rusks – biltong & rusks even became the subject of legislation: every male between the ages of 14 – 65 had to be prepared to serve his country and had to have on hand “biltong” and “boerbeskuit” enough for one month
- Vetkoek
- On farms in the interior meat – mostly mutton - was never roasted in the bread/baking oven, but was pot roasted



## The Great Trek continued

- Jams were generally made from whole preserved fruit, resulting in items still part of the local repertoire, i.e. whole fig jam, green fig preserve
- South Africans started eating “melktert”





## Cuisine of Indian South Africans

- From its beginning South Africa was a melting pot of East meeting West – and today dishes such as curry & rice, samosas, chilli bites and chutney form part of the South African culinary heritage.
- Farmers in the British colony of Natal requested the recruitment of labourers from India for their newly established sugar plantations.
- Towards the end of 1860 the Belvedere and Truro sailed from Calcutta with their cargo of men, women and children.



## Cuisine of Indian South Africans continued

- The initial indentured period lasted five years (renewable for another five) and after 10 years immigrants were given free passage back to India or could remain in Natal as free Indians.
- Accompanying these people was of course a consignment of rice, dhal, lentils and dried fish; the immigrants brought their own brass water pots, cooking pots, earthen lamps, hookahs, betel leaves, betel nuts, spices, chillies etc.



## Cuisine of Indian South Africans continued

- The cuisine preserved and passed on from generation to generation - in Indian homes daughters are encouraged to learn how to cook.







# Thank you



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