

iSland StYLe

Greetings:

We love living in the islands! We especially enjoy the holiday season and our traditions that make the holidays so special. Also, like every family, we have those little holiday quirks and eccentricities that others may think strange, but we love, look forward to and treasure. Our favorite fun holiday outing is a trip to our sister Thelma's house for one of our favorite foods, curry filled roti.

For those of you unfamiliar, roti is a flour pancake filled with various foods including curried chicken, lamb, goat or vegetables. Roti was brought to the Caribbean region in the early 1800's by East Indian contract laborers. Since then it has been adopted as a local island dish. Variations of roti are popular throughout the Caribbean and parts of South America.

Thelma makes the best roti we have ever had. Her secret technique is great fun to watch and even more fun to try. Roti is cooked in a cast iron frying pan. While other cooks make their roti by laying the dough gently into the pan, Thelma shakes her head at such a crude and lazy technique. Thelma makes her roti by tossing the dough into the air above the frying pan. While the dough is in the air falling to the pan Thelma claps the dough between her two hands three separate times before it lands in the pan. This process forces air into the dough, which makes her roti the lightest and flakiest roti we have ever eaten!

At Thelma's holiday parties everyone gathers in her kitchen, sips her wicked rum punch, and watches Thelma's amazing roti tossing technique. The fun really starts when, after a few glasses of punch, someone decides to give the roti toss a try him or herself. Frankly none of us do this very well, but let's be fair, Thelma has been doing this all her life. And she has a policy of never drinking rum punch until the cooking is done! But we always have a great laugh. Well, almost always, Thelma still complains about the time a family member we shall not mention tossed the roti a little too high in the air and it hit the ceiling fan. Thelma said she found bits of roti dough all over her kitchen for weeks afterwards.

As you go about your holiday traditions with your friends and family, all of us at Island Style wish you the best of health and happiness during this special time of the year

Have a sunny Island Style holiday!

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Holiday Season 2012 Recipe, Part 2

Thelma's Three-Clap Roti Bread

1-cup flour
dash baking soda
milk (1-4 tablespoons), depending on humidity

¼ cup vegetable oil
salt to taste

- 1) In a large bowl, mix flour and baking soda (and salt if you want any.) Mix with your hands and fingers. Add one tablespoon of milk and work the mixture with your hands trying to make a big ball. Once you have the dough in a ball, stop adding milk.
- 2) Make the dough into 3 balls and let them rest for 10 minutes. Put the oil in a little bowl so you can get to it with your fingers. Roll out the dough on a board covered with breadcrumbs or cornmeal or ground chickpeas or flour. Each ball should make a circle 8" wide. Don't worry if its too hard to roll out at this stage the dough may be tough. Brush a thin layer of oil over the top surface of the circle and then scrunch it back into a ball. Do this for all 3 balls and then let the sit for ½ hour to rest. Then roll them out and oil them again. This time should be easier, but they may be a little more sticky, so make sure the board and rolling pin are well floured.
- 3) Now warm a cast iron skillet, even bottom to medium heat, no oil (there is already oil on the roti). Put one of the circles in and cook for about a minute. Turn it over and when the hot surface cools a little, wipe it with oil. When there are some golden spots the bread is done. Keep in between two dishes or under a cloth to keep it soft and warm. Dump the filling on top of the bread and fold the bread around it. You can then eat it with your hands or, if messy, with silverware.

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Holiday Season 2012 Recipe, Part 2

Potato Curry Filling

1/4 cup sunflower oil	1 teaspoon garam masala
2 teaspoons turmeric	1 small onion, cut into small pieces
1 teaspoon cumin	4 cloves of garlic, minced or crushed
½ teaspoon all spice	2 medium sized potatoes, washed, peeled
½ teaspoons ground ginger	and chopped into ¼ inch cubes
	salt to taste

- 1) Heat the spices into the oil on medium heat in either a sturdy, deep frying pan or a heavy bottomed saucepan. Cook stirring for 5 minutes, careful not to burn spices.
- 2) Add onion and garlic and cook for the 1-2 minutes stirring. You may have to turn down the heat a little so the garlic does not burn.
- 3) Add the potatoes and fry them for 1-2 minutes tiring. Add the water so that it covers the bottom to at least ¼ inch of liquid (but not more than ½ inch).
- 4) Cover the pan and simmer for 15 minutes on medium low heat the mixture should gently bubble).
- 5) Taste for salt and be sure the potatoes are soft. Add a little more water if necessary.

NOTE: This is one suggested filling. You may fill your Roti with anything you like.

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