

several hours.

By now modern technology has altered many traditional village cooking methods. Almost all villagers have large metal cooking pots to place over the open fire and in many villages kerosene stoves are used to supplement or even replace open fires. Sometimes five gallon drums are used for a smaller mumu type meal. Drum ovens are being introduced to many villages so that bread and scone making are becoming popular in some areas.

Many women in towns and cities live in houses equipped with gas or electric stoves. They have adapted many traditional cooking methods to grills and ovens besides learning many new techniques.

Most Papua New Guineans eat a large meal in the evening, a small breakfast and no mid-day meal although many town-dwellers are rapidly adapting to take-out sandwiches and pies at noon.

A woman in Papua New Guinea always cooks a lot of food in the evening so she will have enough food for any wantoks who come by around mealtime besides leftovers for her family's morning meal. Both the cooking and growing of this food is important to her. She is proud that she doesn't waste anything. Scraps can be used to grow new food or to feed the animals.

Currently there is no cookbook published that is exclusively Papua New Guinean. Occasionally groups around the country have put out collections but often these have had more European recipes and ingredients in them than local.

A number of groups and individuals here are actively promoting the collection of distinctively local recipes but recipe collecting is difficult. A village woman here does not think in terms of exact methods and measurements that would be easy to write down. She learned to cook by working with the older women in the village and now young girls are learning by helping her. Women in towns share methods from their home villages by talking and cooking together. Only a very few women with western educations may share cooking ideas by writing recipes down for each other.

A lot of the cooking doesn't need exactly this or that - a woman merely uses what she has. If there's lots of coconuts available that day she'll make a richer soup. If there's no taro -or kaukau then she'll cook up tapioca with whatever else is around.

Often when you ask a Papua New Guinean woman for a recipe she'll give you a description which will only be meaningful if you have had some previous understanding of the basic cooking methods. It's probably best to learn more about Papua New Guinean cooking by following the custom here. Cook with your friends. People are only too eager to teach you once you show an initial interest in both the eating and the cooking.

To get you started cooking with Papua New Guinean foods this recipe collection has a section to describe the most common vegetables, greens and fruits with notes on how to use them. The small selection of PNG recipes is to start you collecting more of your own. Please send new ones