

THE GLOBAL CULINARY HERITAGE PROJECT

Meet graduate student
Victory ChiamaKa Obieke

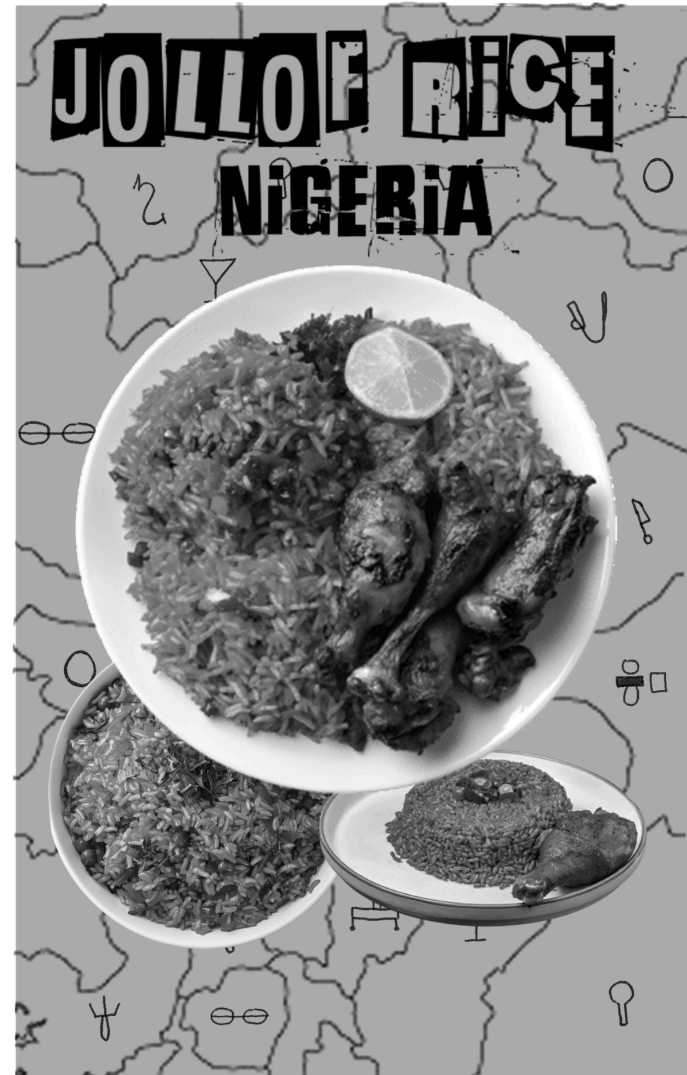
This recipe comes from Victory, a mathematics graduate student and member of the Igbo nation in Nigeria. In our interview she accounts aspects of cuisine present in her upbringing, jollof rice included. She feels that jollof rice represents Nigeria, as not only is it the national dish - but the preparation can depend on tradition, region, ethnicity, and economic class - as corn is cheaper than rice. Some claim that Nigerian food is "too spicy", and although they can sometimes have some heat - to Victory it is accustomed and important to the authenticity of Nigerian food and the memories of coming home to jollof rice on the stove.



Meet Team Nigeria!

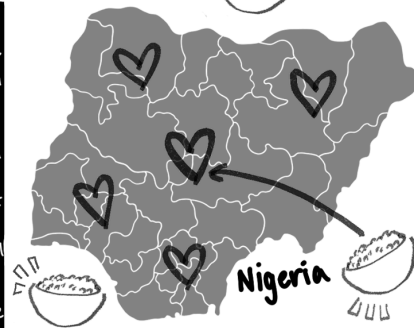
When was the last time you tried something new? This project is in celebration of OSU's International Students as well as a way for students in Anthropology of Food to get OSU thinking about food pathways. Where does your food really come from? How do we develop our preferences? What do we do when what we prefer is unavailable to us? Why do we eat the way we do and what does it mean to us? As you enjoy what we are serving - try to consider these questions!

ENJOY YOUR MEAL!



WHAT IS JOLLOF RICE?

Jollof rice is a West African dish developed by the Wolof empire around the 14-16th century (modern day Senegal, Mali, The Gambia, and Mauritania) with the expansion of rice farming, migration, and colonial influence - jollof rice adopted regional variations and great popularity in West African countries to create the current dish, even becoming the national dish of Nigeria. It's influence is marked by its abundance, as despite the vast regional differences in cuisine within Nigeria and other West African countries, jollof rice can be found and enjoyed everywhere.



Today, the Global Culinary Heritage project students have worked with UHDS and a group of international students at OSU to learn, prep, and serve their cultural cuisine. Our student collaborator selected jollof rice from her home country, Nigeria.



WHAT IS IN IT?

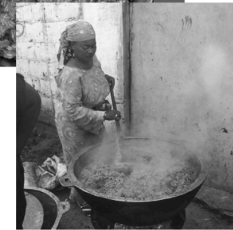
The typical ingredients of jollof rice include rice, tomatoes, onions, ginger, peppers, and spices. Depending on context, preference and/or availability proteins like shellfish, beef or chicken as well as other vegetables or spices may be added. The dish is highly popular in Nigeria and is served at celebrations, during holidays, in restaurants and in homes. No two recipes are identical, and some ingredients can be difficult to access while living in the U.S.

HOW IS IT MADE?

Jollof rice is cooked in one pot - the spices, stock, and vegetables are blended into a sauce and heated until the blend reduces and becomes thick before rice and proteins are added to soak the flavor. The process of reducing the sauce requires patience and lots of preparation when serving large groups, some begin to prep days before a celebration.



The patience is always worth it



* September 2025, Nigerian chef Hilda Baci sets world record with a 19,356 pounds and 9 ounce pot of jollof rice. It took 93 hours and 11 minutes.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?



This dish is important the way many meals and recipes are important - it's not just about sustenance. It's presence symbolizes community and shared joy - it brings people together and extends hospitality to guests. It is also usually served with other cuisine staples of the respective area, in Nigeria this can include fried snacks like plantains and chin chin, stews, and swallows like pounded yam or cassava.

Food in many ways represents home and identity, and our international students taught these recipes to represent home in an environment that does not often acknowledge or give access to the comfort attached to cuisine.

