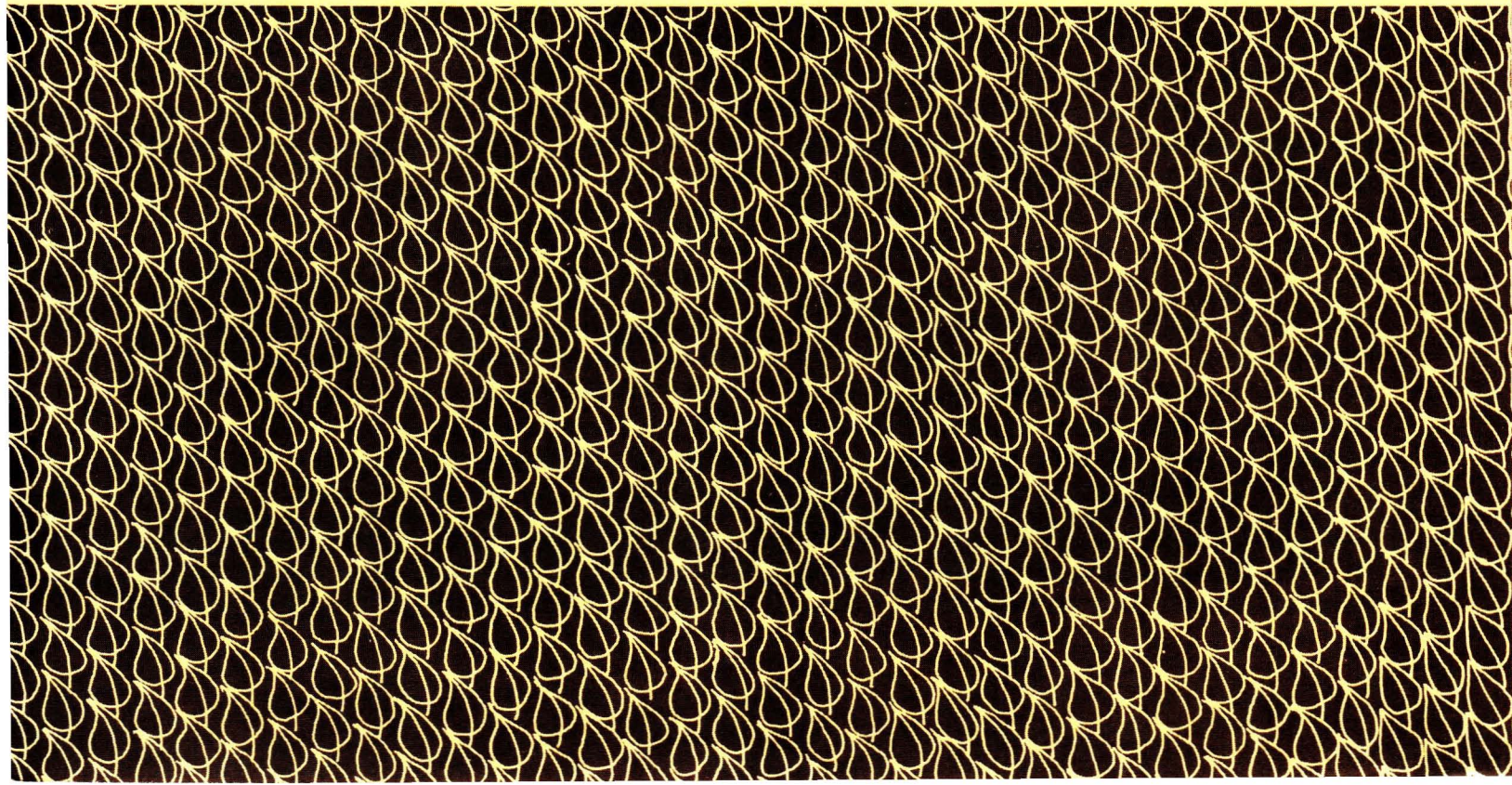
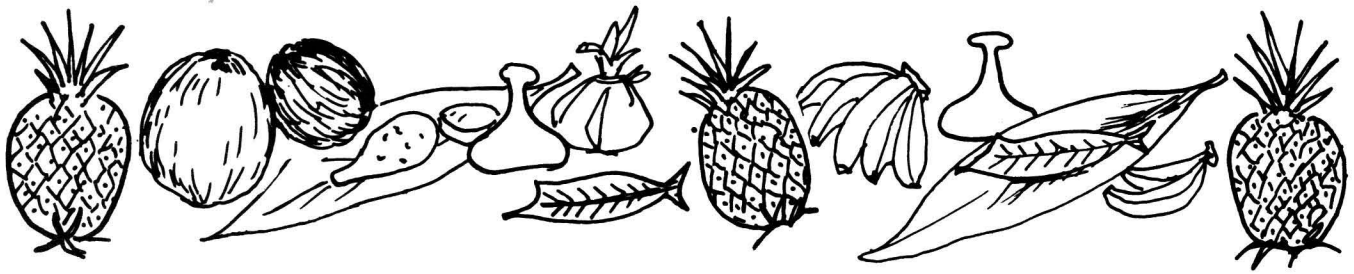


About Hawaiian Foods and Ancient Food Customs

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CERTAIN FACTS about life in old Hawaii affected considerably the diet and eating habits of the people. The Hawaiians were dependent on what the islands and ocean produced. They were splendid physical specimens, so their diet must have been a very adequate one nutritionally. They had no fire-proof cooking utensils, so had to manage to cook without them.

Certain foods were forbidden, or *kapu*, to women. It was *kapu* for men and women to eat together. Consequently preparation and serving of food were complicated by these social organizations and customs of the times.

CHIEF FOODS OF OLD HAWAII AND THEIR FOOD VALUE

The staple foods of the Hawaiians were taro and poi, breadfruit, sweet potato, bananas, taro tops and some other leafy vegetables, *limu*, fish and other sea foods, chicken, pig and dog.

Taro, a starchy food, is a good source of vitamins A and B, calcium, phosphorus, and iron. It leaves an alkaline residue in the body and is easily digested. Fruit was lacking in old Hawaii except for bananas, coconuts, and mountain apples. But in the ocean were many varieties of *limu* or edible seaweeds. Although high in mineral salts, they were used more to add flavor to an otherwise monotonous diet and to serve the useful purpose of preventing constipation.

Opihi, the limpets found on the shoreline rocks, were excellent sources of vitamins A and D. The outdoor living of the old Hawaiians furnished vitamin D from the sunlight.

The diet of the ancient Hawaiians, like that of most primitive peoples, was simple and monotonous. However, except for food shortages, temporary or prolonged, it was one of relatively high nutritive value, capable of developing and maintaining good health. This diet, an active life in the sunshine, combined with the great care given to the children of rulers, produced chiefs or *aliis* of splendid physical development.

FOODS AND COOKING

With no fire-proof cooking utensils, Hawaiians managed to boil liquids by dropping hot stones into a calabash, an oval wooden bowl which contained the liquid. Thus, certain foods were prepared by steaming. Most cooking, however, was done in the *imu* or underground oven, using no containers of any kind.

The *imu* used for today's *luau* is much the same as the *imu* of ancient times. A large hole is dug and special stones are heated red hot. These stones must hold heat for a long time and must not explode. The pit was lined with *hono-hono* grass, or Wandering Jew Vine. In it were placed taro, breadfruit, sweet potato, and bananas covered with ti leaves. The whole pit was then covered with old mats and *kapas*, or *tapa* cloth. It required 3 to 4 hours to cook the taro and the *luau* leaves thoroughly in order to remove all traces of the calcium oxalate that can prickle the tongue and throat if it is still present in the cooked leaves. To cook the ti root, a special confection, required 3 to 4 days!

Besides chicken, the only other land animals used for food were pig and dog. Meat as well as vegetables were roasted in the *imu*. Heated

stones were placed inside the dressed and well-salted animals and allowed to cook $\frac{1}{2}$ hour to $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours.

Family-style cooking of the pig was not done in the imu. The dressed animal was put on a poi board, filled with hot stones, and wrapped in old kapas and mats. It was left then for 48 hours. The family would eat from the inner, or cooked side of the meat first. Any meat which remained or was only partially cooked was sometimes cut up and placed in *laulaus* for re-cooking. The laulaus consist of meat and vegetables bundled and tied in ti leaves and steamed and baked in the imu.

Chicken was wrapped in ti leaves and cooked in the imu. Chicken luau and coconut, an olden time dish, was formerly cooked in a calabash with hot stones. This was particularly delicious!

Fish was one of the chief foods of the Hawaiian people. The Hawaiians raised fish such as the mullet in ponds, as well as caught the many varieties found in Island waters. One way to cook fish was to wrap it in ti leaves in packages called *lawalu* and then put these in coals. Another was to broil the fish over hot coals. A third was to place the fish in a calabash with a little water and add hot stones for steaming—delicious this way!

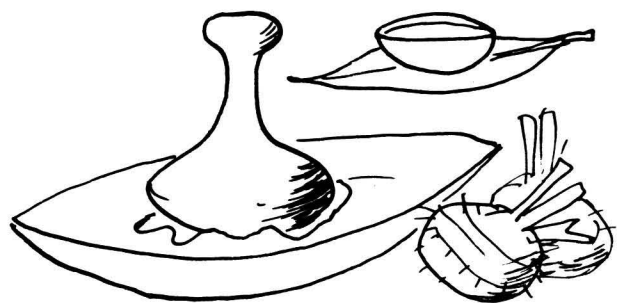
Hawaiians preserved uncooked fish by salting, drying, or both. They never ate raw fish as it came from the ocean. Dried fish and poi were a very good combination and are still a favorite today.

The leaves of several plants were cooked and eaten as greens. Among several, the most popular today is taro tops or *luau*. David Malo, in a publication called 'Hawaiian Antiquities,' points out that sweet potatoes were said "to make the body of a person plump and his flesh clean and fair, whereas the flesh of him who feeds on taro poi is not so clean and wholesome."

Once sugar cane was introduced to Hawaii, it was grown throughout the Islands in little

community patches. Each group of houses had its patch of cane. The Hawaiian people developed no artificial method of extracting the juice from the cane but simply chewed on the stalks and enjoyed them, as Island children love to do today!

Nearly all food was eaten cold in old Hawaii. The practice continues today in Samoa where Polynesian customs of old prevail.



POI-MAKING

The *malihini*, the newcomer to Hawaii, often describes the taste, look, and feel of *poi* as like that of school paste. For the Hawaiian and the *kamaaina*, the oldtimer in Hawaii, it is a staple like bread, potato, or rice, and as tasty and satisfying.

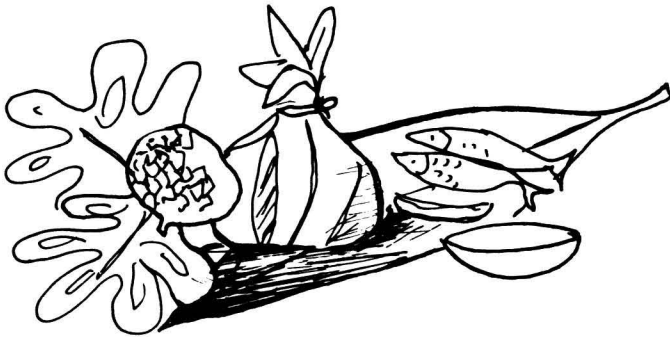
Cooked taro was peeled with shell, sticks, or stone knives. Freshly cooked taro was called *ai paa* and was much liked by the Hawaiians of old. Sometimes it was sliced and sun-dried and used as food on long sea voyages.

Most of the cooked taro was pounded into poi on a carved board with a poi pounder (a heavy, smooth stone). Poi pounding was heavy work and always performed by the men. First the taro was pounded with some water as added moisture to make a dough-like mass called *paiai*. Poi, as commonly eaten, is simply *paiai* thinned to a somewhat fluid consistency by mixing in more water. It may be served fresh or slightly fermented. Breadfruit and sweet potato poi were also made.



THE WATER SUPPLY

The chief drink of the Hawaiians was water. Spring water was the most desired. Water from streams was also drunk as the Hawaiians never dug wells. Gourds were their drinking vessels and water carriers.



ANCIENT CUSTOMS OF FOOD PREPARATION AND USE

David Malo, the Hawaiian historian, reports that in old Hawaii, "the husband was burdened and wearied with the preparation of two ovens of food, one for his wife and one for himself. This was necessary since men and women were not allowed to eat together. The women might not even enter the men's house! As soon as a boy child was weaned he joined the men and no longer was allowed to eat with the women."

Also, certain foods were kapu to women, further complicating the domestic routine. Women were forbidden to eat pork, bananas, coconut, *ulua* and *kumu* (two species of fish), and some other seafoods.

It was not until the time of King Liholiho in 1819 that this kapu was broken. The king himself sat down with the women and ate with them. At the same time he lifted the ban on pork and bananas.

FEASTS AND HOLIDAYS

The early Hawaiians had many feast days, not just for socializing and good times but to follow some religious celebration. There were feasts to celebrate the birth of a child, his weaning, his marriage, and his death. A feast also consecrated a completed piece of work, a canoe, a house, or whatever fruit of labor being dedicated. This custom is still followed today by many Islanders of all races in the dedication ceremonies of a new business, building, or enterprise.

Holidays, as we know them, were also celebrated in ancient Hawaii. The most noted was the *makahiki* or Hawaiian thanksgiving. It lasted four consecutive months, October or November through February or March. It represented a religious ceremony to the God *Lono*. During the *makahiki*, the people stopped work. There were no wars, and offerings were made to the King. Then, the people gave themselves over to sports, feasting, dancing, and having a good time. At the end of the *makahiki*, the King proved himself a fit and able ruler. He would go off shore in a canoe, and when he again stepped on shore, he met and defended himself against a group of men who rushed him with spears!

HAWAIIAN FOODS MENU

LAULAU
(Meat-Vegetable Bundle)

SWEET POTATOES

BAKED BANANAS

LOMI-LOMI SALMON
(Salmon Salad)

HAUPIA
(Coconut Pudding)

FRESH PINEAPPLE

LAULAU
(Meat-Vegetable Bundle)

6 laulau

2 pounds taro leaves or 1 pound fresh pork, half
(3 pounds spinach) lean, half fat
12 ti leaves (2 per ½ pound salted butter-
laulau) or 6 corn husks fish or salmon

Wash taro leaves and remove stem and tough, fibrous part of the rib. Prepare ti leaves by removing stiff rib from underside of the leaf by making a cut almost through the rib and stripping it from the leaf. Wash prepared leaves. Divide pork and fish into 6 parts. Wrap a piece of pork and fish together in 8 to 10 taro leaves. Place the wrapped pork and luau in the center of 2 ti leaves crossed in the center. Pull up the ti leaves and tie the ends securely with the stem ends of the ti leaves. If preferred, the laulau may be wrapped in one large leaf with another leaf wrapped around it in the opposite direction, making a flat package. This should be tied securely with string. Steam the laulau 3½ to 4 hours in a covered steamer; or cook in a pressure cooker 45 minutes to 1 hour at 15-pounds pressure; or bake in covered dish in oven at 300°F. 4 to 5 hours. Serve laulau hot in the ti leaves. Sweet potatoes and baking bananas may be steamed with the laulau during the last 2 hours of cooking.

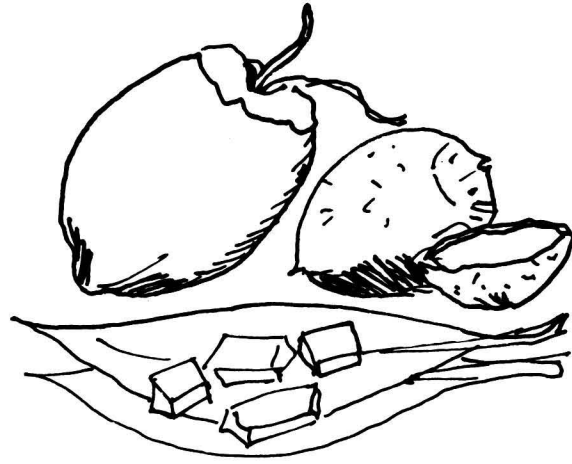
Fifteen spinach leaves may be used in place of the luau leaves; 6 corn husks may be substituted for the ti leaves. If corn husks are used, keep the stem and sheaves intact. Place the pork, fish, and spinach leaves in the corn husk, wrap securely, and tie the tips of the leaves together. Lean beef may be substituted for half the pork, if desired.

LOMI-LOMI SALMON
(Salmon Salad)

6 servings

¾ pound salted or 5 green onions with tops,
smoked salmon thinly sliced
3 large tomatoes, peeled 3 to 4 cubes crushed ice
½ cup onions, finely
chopped

Clean and soak salted salmon in cold water for 3 hours. Drain, remove skin and bones, and shred finely. Mince tomatoes fine or mash to a pulp. Combine all ingredients and chill. Just before serving, add several cubes of crushed ice. The Hawaiians prefer using green onions only.



HAUPIA
(Coconut Pudding)

16 servings

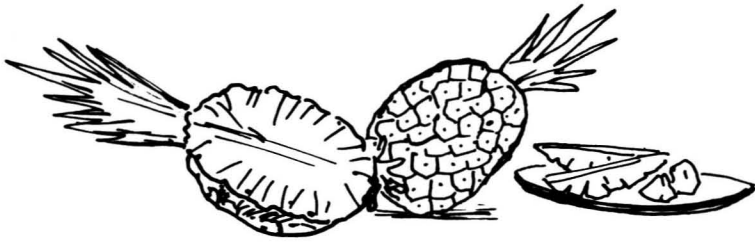
3 cups coconut milk* ½ cup sugar
½ cup cornstarch ¼ teaspoon salt

To 3 cups coconut milk add cornstarch, sugar, and salt; stir until dissolved. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly until it boils. Reduce heat and cook until mixture thickens. Pour into a square 8 x 8 x 2 pan, making a layer about 2 inches thick. Let cool, and cut into 2-inch squares. Serve Hawaiian style on a square of ti leaf.

***TO PREPARE COCONUT MILK:**

6 cups grated fresh coco- 2 cups boiling water and
nut, (2 coconuts or 3 water from coconuts, or
cups prepared coconut, 3 cups hot milk
can or package)

Choose coconuts which are not fully mature. Open the two soft eyes in the end of the nuts with a nail or ice pick. Drain the liquid from the inside and save. Crack the nut with a hammer and take out the meat. Remove the brown skin, grate the meat, or put it through a meat grinder. Pour hot water and coconut water over grated coconut. Let stand 15 minutes and squeeze the liquid through two thicknesses of cheese cloth or a poi cloth. A substitute for fresh coconut milk may be prepared from packaged coconut and hot milk.



FRESH PINEAPPLE

TO PREPARE LUAU STYLE:

1 large fresh pineapple

Cut 1½-inch slices from top and bottom of an unpeeled pineapple. Save these pieces. With a long, slender knife cut around the fruit ½-inch inside the rind. Loosen fruit at top and bottom and then push it out of the rind in one piece. Cut peeled fruit into six or eight wedge-shaped pieces. Reassemble wedges and refill shell. Replace top and bottom pieces. Serve by removing pineapple top and taking out sections with fork or fingers.

TO PREPARE BOATS:

1 large fresh pineapple

Do not remove crown or peel pineapple. Wash fruit and cut lengthwise into quarters or sixths. With a sharp knife cut fruit loose from shell and core, leaving the core attached to the shell. Cut fruit into finger-size sections and put in place on rind to look as if it had not been cut, or alternately extend slices in shell to resemble a boat. May be garnished with a preserved kumquat. Eat with fingers or cocktail pick.

TO PREPARE WEDGES:

1 large fresh pineapple

Wash and dry pineapple. Discard crown. Do not peel. With a sharp paring knife, cut around each eye toward core making a pointed piece that may be pulled away from core. Remove wedges from top and bottom of fruit for each serving so there is an even distribution of sweet and sour pieces. Arrange in a circle on a 6- or 7-inch plate. Just before serving, place powdered sugar topped with finely chopped mint leaves in center of fruit circle. Pick up fruit with fingers, dip into sugar, and bite from the rind.

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