

APIGIGE'

Apigige', pronounced a-pi-gee-gee, is a cassava and mánha (mun-ha)/coconut mixture, wrapped in banana leaves then cooked on the grill. Some folks use niyok (knee-dzuk) or mature coconut, though I do not remember apigige' tasting or having the texture of grated niyok. I prefer mánha or young coconut. To me, apigige' is a thinner, more cooked version of sweet tamales.

The first time I made apigige' was in high school. It turned out great. As I was cleaning the banana leaves, now in my 30's living in the mainland, I was totally brought to tears. This was as close to being on the island as I could be.

If you are on Guam and prefer to order apigige' or manha titiyas, contact Island Food Products at 671-734-0747.

INGREDIENTS

Set 1

1 – 16 oz. bag banana leaves, cut into 8 in. long x 5 in. wide pieces.

Set 2

2 c. chopped / slivered mánha (exactly measured from 2 – 20 oz. cans of mánha....save mánha juice)

Set 3

2 – 16 oz. pkgs. grated cassava (if frozen, thaw overnight – DO NOT soak in hot water)

1 c. mánha juice

½ c. + 2 T. sugar (add 2 to 4 more tablespoons of sugar if you like your apigige' very sweet)

Tools: baking racks, indoor grill pan w/ grill lines or outdoor bbq, medium bowl, colander or strainer

DIRECTIONS

1. Clean the banana leaves with a sponge and water.
2. Wipe leaves with kitchen towel and set atop baking racks to dry.
3. Drain mánha juice, saving 1 cup and set aside.
4. Finely slice or sliver the mánha.
5. In a medium bowl, combine the mánha, 1 c. mánha juice, grated cassava, and sugar to form a thick batter. Depending on the brand of cassava you use, it may be quite watery. If this is the case, pour your batter into a fine-mesh colander and drain out some of the liquid. Preheat griddle or grill to medium heat.
6. Apply 2 tablespoons of mixture at the bottom edge of banana leaf, centered, about 2 inches up from the bottom. Use 3 tbsp. for thick and big apigige'.
7. Spread mix into a 4 inch x 1.5 inch rectangle, or 5 inches long if using 3 tbsp.
8. Fold and roll like a flattened burrito.

9. Cook folded-side down until apigige' has puffed up and bottom of banana leaves are charred, about 8 minutes.
10. You will see that the apigige' has thickened. Flip to the other side for another 8 to 10 minutes, charring as well.

Note: Using 3 flat tablespoons per apigige' yields 19 pieces. Cooking apigige' longer than the time noted above can dry it out. You may also use shorter banana leaves and leave the ends open.

Recipe courtesy Paula Quinene of www.PaulaQ.com