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THE BRAZILIAN TABLE

YARA CASTRO ROBERTS
RICHARD ROBERTS

Brazil—exotic, sensual, mysterious—mingles pleasure with high energy, and its cuisine is no different. Recipes in *The Brazilian Table* adeptly blend native ingredients such as manioc, cachaça, pequi, hearts of palm, and dendê palm oil with traditional foods of Portugal, Africa, Japan, and the Middle East to create complex tastes that define this area of the world.

The regions of Minas Gerais, Bahia, the Amazon, and the Cerrado are intimately explored from a food history and ingredient perspective, and a collection of recipes represents each area. A sample of the extraordinary cuisine includes Tucupi Duck Soup, Fish Paupiette with Crabmeat Brazilian-Style, Mango Galette, Chicken Xim-Xim, Black Beans Tutu and Crispy Collard Greens, Giló Puff Pastry Tart, and Guava Paste Soufflé.



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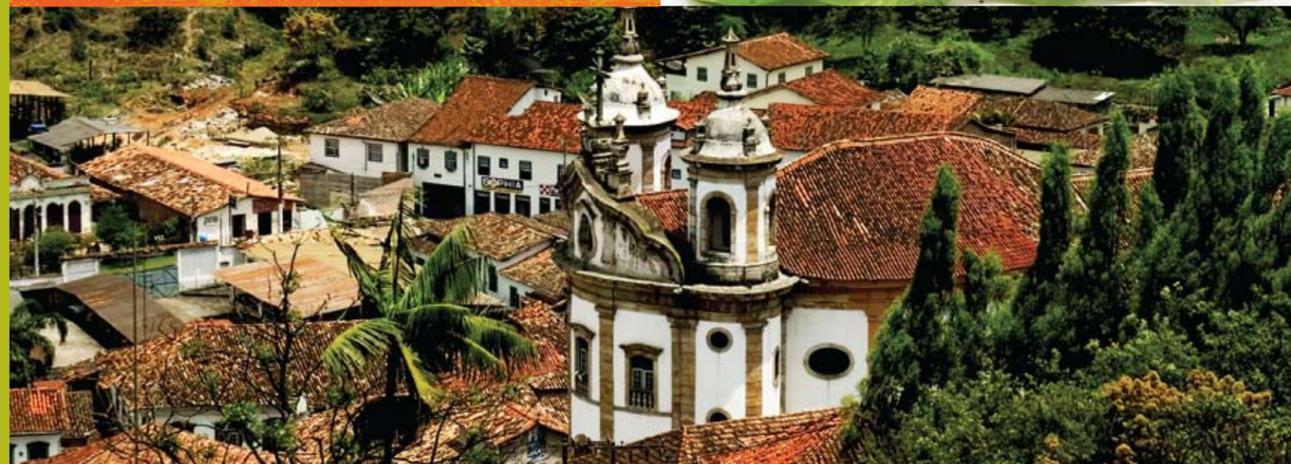


Feast on the exotic flavors of Brazil—a land of lovely people, upscale beaches and resorts, steamy rivers and jungles, and modern high-rise cities. Your palate will savor this fascinating varied cuisine.

Internationally known chef **Yara Castro Roberts**, one of Brazil's most ardent advocates, takes you on a trip through Brazilian culture and history—through its food. She is the first Brazilian chef to write about its cuisine in English. She graduated from Boston University School of Culinary Arts and holds degrees from the Sorbonne and the Ecole du Louvre. Yara was host of the PBS Emmy-nominated *Cook's Tour* television series before she move to Paraty, Brazil, where she operates the Academy of Cooking and Other Pleasures with her husband, Richard. Yara has been featured in *UltraTravel* and the *New York Times*. Currently, she is the subject of *Delicious Brasil*, a new series about Brazilian cooking and lifestyles in production for American and Brazilian television.

Richard Barclay Roberts, born in Paris, was first a photographer, then a successful CEO of multinational companies, and is once more a professional photographer. Educated at both Princeton (B.A.) and Yale, he currently operates Barclay Images out of Paraty, Brazil.

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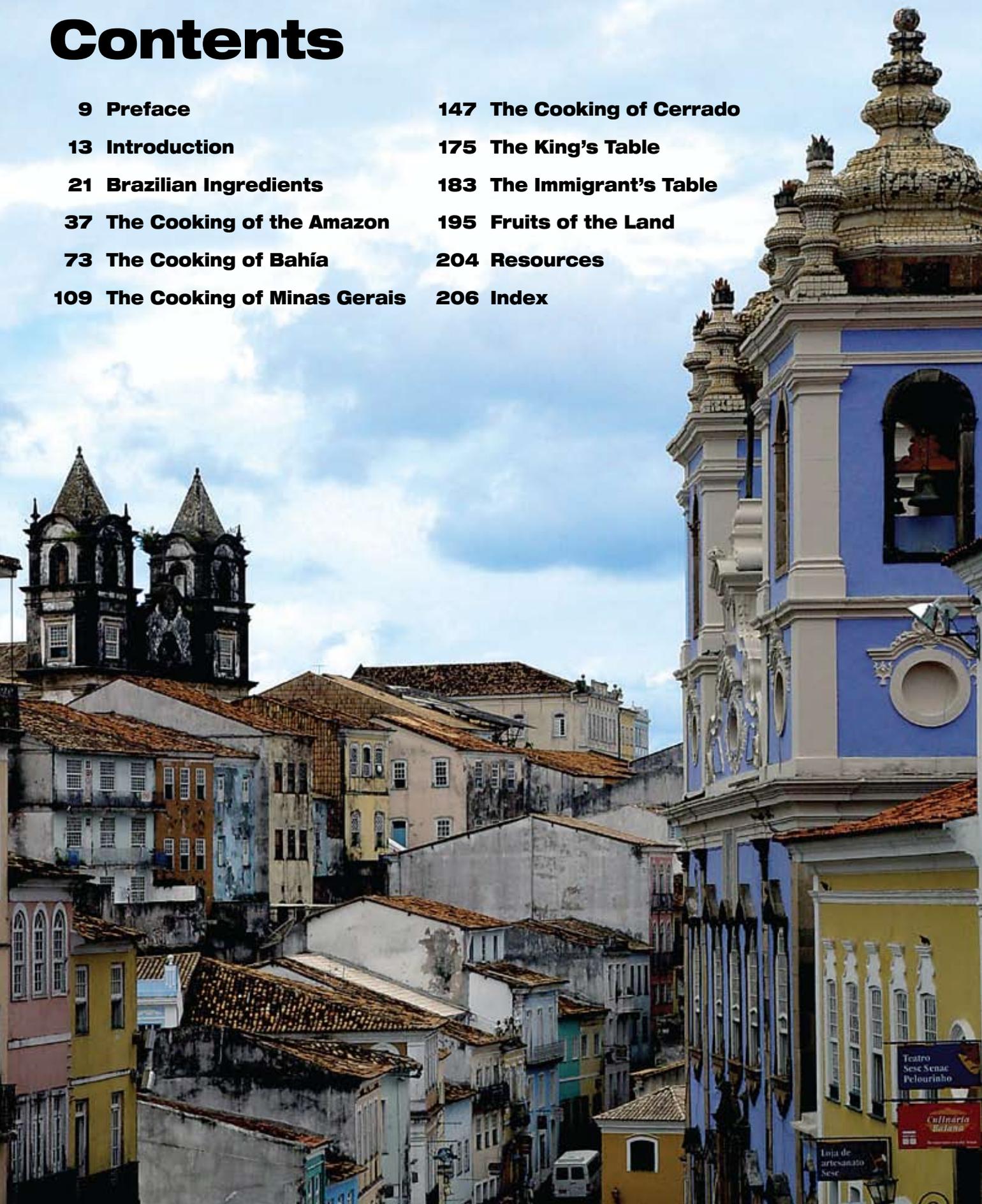


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Vatapá Fish Chowder

4 pounds medium-size shrimp
2 cups water
6 pounds filet of hake, king fish, or red snapper
Juice of 2 limes
10 teaspoons salt, divided
6 teaspoons black pepper, divided
1 loaf white bread
2 cups milk
4 tablespoons oil
2 cups onion, peeled, and diced
5 garlic cloves, peeled and finely chopped
8 tomatoes, peeled, seeded, cored, and diced
3 cups coconut milk
4 tablespoons palm oil
1/2 cup cashew nuts, coarsely ground

1 Peel the shrimp and reserve the shells. Wash the shells, place them in a medium-size saucepan with water, and boil for 10 minutes. Drain the liquid, reserve, and discard the shells.

2 Devein the shrimp and wash them thoroughly. Refrigerate.

3 Preheat the oven to 175 degrees F.

4 Place the fish filets side by side on an ovenproof dish and season with lime juice, 4 teaspoons salt, and 3 teaspoons pepper.

5 Bake fish for 10 minutes, remove from oven, and reserve.

6 Cut off the bread crusts and discard. Tear the bread slices into 6 pieces and place them in a large bowl.

7 In a medium-size saucepan, warm the milk with 3 teaspoons salt and 2 teaspoons pepper; pour over the bread pieces. Add the shrimp broth to the bowl and let the bread soak for 15 minutes.

8 In a large pot, warm the vegetable oil and sauté the onions for 3 minutes or until they become soft. Add the garlic, 3 teaspoons salt, and 1 teaspoon pepper and cook for a couple of minutes. Add the tomatoes, stir gently to mix all the ingredients, and simmer for 3 minutes more. Add the soaked bread and mix everything well, making sure your spoon scrapes the bottom of the pot. When it starts bubbling, add the coconut milk and gently fold in with circular movements. Boil for 3 minutes and then lower the heat. Add the palm oil and cook over low heat for 10 more minutes.

9 Add the shrimp, folding in gently with large strokes. Keep checking the bottom of the pan to keep the vatapá from sticking.

10 Finally fold in the baked fish and cook for 5 more minutes.

11 Serve the vatapá with white rice or açaçá.

Açaí Mousse

SERVES 6

1/2 cup plus 2 tablespoons cold water, divided
2 teaspoons unflavored gelatin
4 eggs, separated
2 tablespoons lime juice
3/4 cup sugar
1 cup frozen açai pulp
2 tablespoons açai liqueur (optional)
Pinch of salt
2 tablespoons confectioners' sugar
Tapioca flour, for garnish

1 Place 1/2 cup water in a bowl and sprinkle the gelatin over it. Let it sit for 5 minutes so the gelatin expands. Place the egg yolks in a separate bowl and beat them vigorously. Whisk in 2 tablespoons water as you continue to beat. Add the lime juice and keep whisking until it foams and becomes white.

2 Place the gelatin mixture in a medium-size saucepan over low heat, mixing with a spoon until it dissolves. Add the sugar all at once and mix well to combine all the ingredients. Slowly add the egg yolk mixture, whisking well to prevent the eggs from curdling. Let it simmer gently until it foams. Turn off the heat and keep whisking for 3 more minutes.

3 Pour the mixture into a bowl and allow it to cool for 10 minutes.

4 Blend the açai pulp with the liqueur.

5 When the gelatin mixture has cooled, fold in the açai mixture, gently mixing them together. Place the bowl in the freezer for 15 minutes or until the sides of the açai congeal and the center of the açai is soft.

6 Beat the egg whites with a pinch of salt into a stiff, shiny peak. Add the confectioners' sugar and beat again for 10 seconds. Take the açai bowl out of the freezer. Gently fold 1/3 of the beaten egg whites into the açai mixture, making circular motions with a spatula. Add another 1/3 of the egg whites and fold in gently. Now, reverse the process and slowly pour the açai mixture into the bowl with the egg white and fold in the same way.

7 Take 6 wine glasses or serving bowls and distribute the mousse equally. Refrigerate for 1 hour and decorate with tapioca flour.

Brazil Nut Cookies

YIELDS 35

1/4 pound Brazil nuts
1/2 cup butter, softened
1/2 cup sugar, plus 1 cup to coat the cookies
1/2 cup flour
1/2 cup cornmeal starch

1 Finely chop the nuts and reserve.

2 In a large bowl, mix the butter with 1/2 cup sugar. In another large bowl, combine the flour with the cornmeal. Add the combined dry ingredients to the first bowl and work well with both hands to mix the ingredients until a large ball is formed.

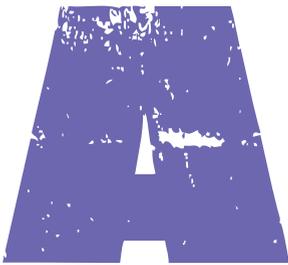
3 Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F. Cover a cookie sheet with parchment

paper (do not grease the cookie sheet). Place 1 cup sugar on a plate.

4 Roll a tablespoon of cookie dough into a ball the size of a large strawberry. Roll the cookies in the sugar and arrange them in a row on the cookie sheet.

5 Bake for 10 minutes or until they are light golden brown. Serve the cookies at room temperature.

The Cooking of Bahía



African culture has a decisive presence in Brazil: it was part of the past, it has sculpted the present, and it has built a permanent path into the future.

It is in the city of São Salvador da Bahía (known to all as simply “Salvador”), in the state of Bahía, that the wonderful African culture has blossomed in all aspects of life. It is here that we can see most directly how these African roots are at the core of the dishes of the region.

To connect to Bahían cooking, it is important to know something of its history and traditions. By the end of the sixteenth century, tens of thousands of Africans were brought to Brazil as slaves to work in agriculture, sugarcane plantations, mines, and as house servants. The African slaves were from several regions of Africa including Angola, Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone, and Cape Verde, and had diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. A common denominator, however, for a great part of them, was that they came from well-developed and well-organized societies. Their people had been part of great empires with armies of warriors known for having fought battles using complex war

strategies. In addition to being lethal, their weapons were finely painted and sculpted. Yet none of their forbearers’ skills were sufficient protection against the weapons of the “advanced” civilizations of the north.

The splendor of Africans’ artistic ceremonies, either to honor their kings or their gods, had motivated the creation of musical instruments, decorative objects, and textiles, as well as chants and collective dances they performed during celebrations.

Africans knew irrigation methods, made wine from the palm tree, and raised cattle and domesticated animals, but, most of all, they were excellent hunters. Hunting was not only an occupation for males, but also a form of amusement and a symbol of pride and dignity.

Their diet included game; cereals such as rice, which they learned how to cook from the Berbers; yams, cooked or baked to accompany fish and meats; and flour, which was used to make cakes.