

What is 'Soup'?

Exploration of a Staple in Nigerian Food Blogs

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Abstract

Food blogs are literary virtual forms and important ways in which migrants share recipes, stories and ingredients. On blogs, some foods become emblematic of specific spaces linked to concepts of identity, affordability and health. Using text, photos and videos, people express the ways to make authentic dishes with novel ingredients. Over the past several years, food blogs have become valuable means for Nigerian migrants to share recipes, highlighting ways to substitute ingredients and still retaining the essential flavour and perceived nutritional content of the dish. One such important staple dish for Nigerians is 'soup'. By focusing on recipes for 'soup' we ask: what makes 'soup' such an important on Nigerian food blogs? Which soups are most popular and what narratives do popular bloggers share about soups and their ingredients? Using content and narrative analysis, we argue that soup recipes on blogs are part and parcel of food literature that accompanies migration.

Keywords: *food blogs, recipes, Nigerian foods, soups, content analysis*

Introduction

Nigerians have a long history of migration (Heaton 2013) and have taken their recipes along with them. Food blogs have become valuable means for Nigerian migrants to share recipes, highlighting ways to substitute ingredients while still retaining the dish's essential flavour and perceived nutritional content. Recipes can be transmitted orally, through books and other hard copy media but more recently, the internet provides a powerful virtual space for diasporic migrants, to experience foods linked to specific valued places through blogging. On blogs, some foods become emblematic of certain experiences or shared health benefits. One such important dish for Nigerians is 'soup.' Here we ask: what makes 'soup' such an important presence on Nigerian food blogs? What are the most popular soups 'narrated' by bloggers? What are the limits of perceived ingredients, preparation styles and acceptable elements of substitution? Soup recipes shared on blogs, a literary form consumed by millions of Nigerian subscribers, are not only roadmaps to authentic dishes but also snapshots of how people maintain cultural continuity through migration.

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Food, recipes, health

Food habits, knowledge and meaning are social constructs, determined by historical and cultural contexts. Food can be considered an artefact that shapes us physically, socially, and culturally (Caplan 2013; Macbeth and MacClancy 2004). Food is specific to where we have come from, who we are, who we want to become, and how we perceive or represent ourselves (Crowther 2018; Konefal, and Hatanaka 2019). Food knowledge can reveal elements of historical continuity and how people cope with change (Camarena et al 2011). A recipe provides guidance on how to properly prepare a dish to maintain its authentic texture, taste and organoleptic qualities and meanings (Etkin 2008: 30). By providing guidance on one's eating culture, recipes can also change the way that we eat through historical time or space, how what we consider edible changes, or maintains consistency (Crowther 2018: 135). Both food and recipes can be considered cultural artefacts that reveal change and continuity through time and space.

While there is a link between food and culture, there is also a close link between foods and understanding of health, which is often deeply embedded in medical folklore, beliefs, taboos and recipe-based prescriptions (Counihan & van Esterik, P. 2008: 290; Igoli et al 2005; Mafimisebi & Oguntade 2010) Along with perceived pharmacological elements, food is directly related to wellbeing (Etkin 2008; Caplan 2013: 9; Crowther 2018: 8; Macbeth and MacClancy 2004; Pieroni and Price 2006).

Nigeria is a country in West Africa. Though multilingual, the official language is English (Adamo 2007). It has about three hundred and seventy-four (374) distinct ethnic groups, which could be classified into six geo-political zones and deep and rich pre-and post-colonial history (Ene-Obong 2013). Likewise, Nigerians can be found in every continent, and there you will also find variations of Nigerian foods.

An ethnopharmacology of food (Etkin 2008) is evidenced in Nigeria's agrarian economy, which provides virtually all the nation's home-produced foods, and medicines (Anoliefo et al 2003; Adamu 2013). Historically, Nigerians rely almost exclusively on traditional medicines – the combination of plants, or animal products with spiritual therapies, or techniques for healthcare needs (Mafimisebi and Oguntade 2010). Most of Nigeria's traditional foods are plant-based, with little contribution made through faunal products (Adegboye et al 2016: 2485; Ayogu et al 2017: 66). Bark, leaves, roots, flowers, fruits and seeds have remained important sources of health maintenance for most Nigerians (Adamo 2007: 40; Etkin 2008). This belief in traditional medicines then impacts how, what and when Nigerians prepare or/and eat. Studying recipes, therefore, provides profound insights into how recipes have changed over time due to cross-cultural influences and migration (Bodomo and Ma 2012: 18).

Sharing recipes in textual form has a long history, not just in North America and Europe. Several cookbooks have been produced in Nigeria and the diaspora over the past century (Mars and Tooleyo 1961; O'Reilly-Wright 1979; Ogunsanya 1998). These have been explored to a limited extent online (See, for example, the website *Kitchen Butterfly*). With the rapid expansion of the internet, the relationship between humans, food and computers has been burgeoning (Arnold et al 2018). In these conditions, the food blogging culture has proliferated and expanded (Holak, 2013; Schneider et al 2018: 203-219; Min et al 2017). Nigerians, like many others, have created food blogs, where recipes and stories are melded into a unique cultural experience and are presented through multimodal interweaving of extensive use of videos; links; enticing images of selected dishes; and captivating personal and cultural narratives, stories, reviews that attract followers' and readers' comments (Elliott et al 2021; Leena 2016; Lepkowska-White and Kortright 2017). Dominant food blogs, such as *All Nigerian Recipes* (Nigerian Food Blog), *All Nigerian Foods*, and *Dobby's Signature* are notable examples, having many followers. These digital forms of cookbooks are also a means to create, modify, document, display, share and expand recipes to include wider aspects of cultural and historical life beyond the bare recipe book format that was particularly characteristic in the 20th century (Rodney et al 2017; Pires Viera da Rocha 2016). Blogs are "computational artefacts" (Deng et al 2022) and offer powerful "expressive spaciousness" with posts ephemerally appearing day after day (Maitzen 2023).

The top ten Nigerian food blogs sampled in the study were selected because they collectively cater to more than three million subscribers. They are mostly gendered by adult women, common in other food blogs (Rodney et al 2017). This gendering of Nigerian food blogs by women seems to point to the literature that in most African countries like Nigeria, cooking as well as the satisfaction of the culinary needs of the family is the prime role of the woman (Elwert-Kretschmer 2001; Agbasiere 2000). The sampled blogs also emphasised that women play the prominent role of cooking in the family, and as such, end up as the promoters of cultural tradition, providers and managers of what and how the family eats.

Some blogs have become so popular that people also expand them into books as a way to preserve the knowledge of the elder generation and inspire people through times of economic want and displacement (Cannucciari and Cannucciari 2009). Likewise, Nigerian bloggers transform digital content into hard copy materials such as *The Ultimate Nigerian Cookbook: Best Cookbook for Making Nigerian Foods* (2020) by C. Anegbu or *All Nigerian Recipes Cookbook* (2013) by Flo Madubike. Although these media have huge audiences, few studies are focusing on food blogs which offer rich sources of cultural and historical information on change and continuity in global cuisines.

Methods

Since food is a wide cultural domain, this study draws on both qualitative and quantitative methods to increase reliability and validity (Bernard 2017). Specifically, both componential and content analysis were utilised. A purposive/judgment and convenience/haphazard sample (Bernard 2017: 147, 149) was selected using Google as the main search engine and we targeted the top ten Nigerian food blogs (See Website Sources below). A specific search term like “Nigerian food blogs” was used as the “seed term” (Kurtz et al 2017).

Upon evaluation of the sampled Nigerian blogs, it was discovered that some had more categories of recipes than others, thereby reflecting the enormous food diversity (Adegboye et al 2016). For example, one blog had over 186 categories of recipes (Nig). Among this diversity, “soup” was one of the most common food types and among these, – “ogbono” (wild mango) soup is the most common of all, hence, we asked what makes the ogbono soup as articulated on Nigerian food blogs.

Methodology

This study utilised componential and content analysis in order to identify the components (characteristics, elements, main ingredients) of ogbono soup. Componential Analysis had characteristically been associated with linguistics, and we found it useful to study the syntax of soups. This involved developing binaries and scrutinising these binaries for definitive elements, attributes and ingredients that can be included or excluded (Bernard 2017; Goodenough 1956). For the easy identification of the components of ogbono soup recipes and their different variations, the nuances of ingredients noted in the componential analysis of ogbono soup, and their various versions were categorised under essential (or main) and non-essential ingredients. *Essential or main ingredients* are mentioned by all (100%) of the sampled blogs which mention this soup. *Non-essential ingredients* have not been mentioned by all the sampled blogs (less than 100% of the sampled blogs). While the latter could be used to add to the content of the soup, they are optional – one could do without them (Wives; Dobby; Sisi; Don). Additionally, a macro-level content analysis and narrative analysis (Bernard 2017) of the posts on ogbono soup recipes on the sampled Nigerian food blogs was conducted.

Soups and swallows

When considering Nigerian foods and appreciating the diversity (Onabanjo and Oguntona 2003), there are dominant and historically stable food patterns such as a carbohydrate-based meal including vegetables such as roots, tubers and cereals which are consumed with soup (Onabanjo et al 2013: 368). One popular side used in eating soups is “swallows.” These are mostly starchy foods which are regarded as “swallows” and cut in small fractions, rolled into

a ball, dipped into the soup, and rather than being chewed, swallowed. Swallows usually accompany soups.

The English word 'soup' is commonly used by Nigerians to refer to a staple food. Soup is defined as foods made by boiling solid ingredients like animal proteins in liquid until the flavours are extracted, forming a broth that is usually thickened with vegetable-based thickeners and eaten with staple foods.

One additional thing worth mentioning before exploring the content of soups, is to provide a snapshot of some of the endearing ways that soups are described by the bloggers. For example, of Bitter Leaf Soup one blogger says that one will be deemed a bad cook if his/her bitter leaf soup tastes bitter (Rec), and White Soup is referred to as a hearty Nigerian soup (Nig) or a soup with bold flavours. Then there is Egusi Soup, described as well-loved and cooked (IQ), and Afang Soup which "guarantees most people will be present for lunch" (IQ). These narratives capture the hopes of the bloggers to appeal to diasporic Nigerians' desire to experience family, a sense of home, wellness and identity and sometimes humour.



Image A. The "Well-Loved Soup": Melon ("Egusi") Soup

Nigerian recipes are usually named based on the typical elements of the dish, which form the major characteristic of the recipe (Seki and Ono 2014). This makes it easier for a user to grasp the main characteristics and ingredients of a recipe at first glance. For instance, recipes may be named after the major vegetable or ingredient used in their preparation such as *egusi* ("melon") soup (Okeke et al 2009: 271, 279).

Some basic similarities could be referred to as "Nigerian foods" (Ene-Obong et al 2013; Adegboye 2016). These could be defined as foods generally consumed in all parts of Nigeria but bearing in mind too that there may be local regional variations. There may further be variations between households due

to availability, price, season and nutritional knowledge, taste preference food taboos, cultural and religious practices and preferred techniques of preparation (Anoliefo et al 2003; Ayogu et al 2017; Counihan & Esterik 2008; Etkin 2008). “Nigerian foods” then, comprise a varied food supply, and provide a rich source of medicinal materials for therapeutic purposes, which are understood to be essential to maintain the culture, health and wellbeing of Nigerians. It is this nexus of culture and health through food, and how recipes have changed over time, that will, therefore, be explored in this project through the selected food blogs.

Three popular soups: snapshot and portrait

We lack space here to cover the vast array of soups, but we would like to provide a snapshot of two popular soups before diving into the details of the main soup on the menu. First, one of the most popular traditional Nigerian soups is “Afang” (*Gnetum africanum*). It is made of water leaves (which could be substituted with watercress, lambs lettuce, spinach, malabar spinach (“amunututu”), “afang/okazi/ukazi” leaves, meat, smoked/dried fish, palm oil, pepper, crayfish, salt and seasoning cubes. While some of these ingredients could be substituted, the essential quality, as well as the star of this soup is the presence of “afang/okazi/ukazi” leaves which cannot be substituted. As such, if absent, it could render the supposed “afang” soup mere vegetable soup – a soup which could be made with any vegetable. However, traditionally, “afang/okazi/ukazi” leaves must be combined with another essential ingredient, water leaves, with the water leaves being added first. Further, onions would have to be eliminated when making the authentic version of “afang” soup, not because it renders the soup something else, but because it destroys the authenticity, which one of the bloggers describes as the “ancestors’ way of making” “afang” soup.

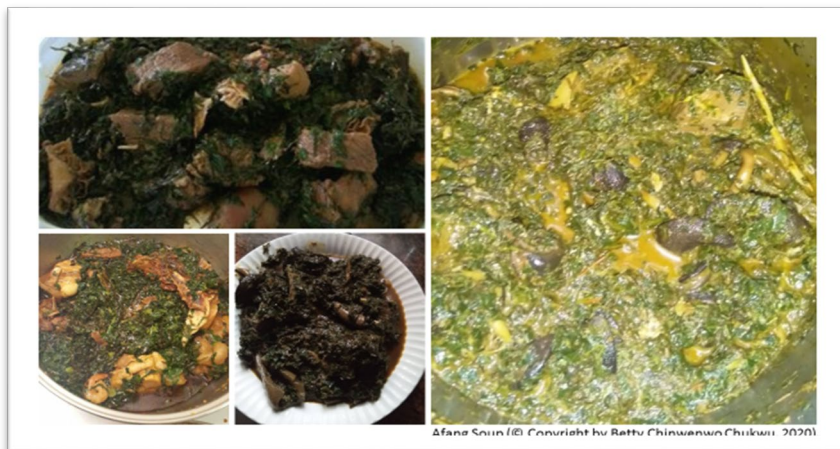


Image B. Afang (*Gnetum africanum*) Soup

As a result of its popularity, one of the bloggers noted that local Nigerian music artists feel obliged to mention this soup in the lyrics of their songs, especially if the song has to do with food, in order to accredit popularity to this soup (IQ). Another blogger said it could ignite people's interest in Nigerian foods (Foods), and yet another affectionately referred to it as a "Soup You Can Never Go Wrong With" (Dob)

"The Ever-giving Tree Soup": Palm Fruit/Nut ("Banga/Akwu/Abak") Soup
Another very popular Nigerian soup is "The Ever-giving Tree Soup": Palm Fruit/Nut ("Banga/Akwu/Abak") Soup. This soup is said to be very popular because it showcases – palm fruit (9ja). The palm nut tree has been described as "the ever-giving tree". All the blog narratives emphasised the durability of the soup as it "seems to improve with age" (IQ) and tastes better with frequent reheating and could even last for months (Don).



Image C. Palm Fruit Soup/Stew

Focus on African wild mango (ogbono) soup

Due to its popularity, all the sampled food blogs typically have at least one recipe for ogbono (wild mango) soup. African wild mango soup, locally called ogbono soup by the Igbos (9ja), and "ugiri" or "apon" soup by the Yorubas (9ja; Dob), is prepared with the nut of African wild mango (Dob; IQ), which is botanically called *Irvingia gabonensis* (Dob) and locally called "oro" by the Yorubas (9ja). African wild mango ("ogbono/apon/ugiri") soup which is generally known as "ogbono/ogbolo" soup in Nigeria (hereafter, ogbono soup), amongst other draw soups like okra soup, is another "offering of draw [or slimy] soup" (IQ; Foods). It has also been noted as one of the most popular local Nigerian dishes in Nigeria (Dob; Sisi; Foods) such that one can find it on many Nigerian restaurant menus' list (Don; 1Q).

From the blog narratives on this soup, ogbono soup has been described as a “very delicious soup” (Afro; Foods) such that one may “over-eat [it] if one is not careful” (Wives). It is also contended that the version of this soup without palm oil tastes great, although its colour is sometimes not very appealing due to the absence of palm oil (Wives). Further, ogbono soup has been described as greatly loved and enjoyed by many because of its slimy consistency texture which makes ingesting morsels of swallow very easy and enjoyable as it makes the lump of swallow slide down the throat easily (Dob; Sisi; Foods; Wives). As a result, when toddlers are first introduced to eating solid foods, they are mostly given this soup since the sliminess of this soup helps them swallow solids with ease (Sisi; Foods). Nevertheless, this soup is consumed by both children and adults mostly at lunch (Don). In fact, it is indicated as one of the most versatile and widely consumed soups in Nigeria since it is very affordable and can be made in large quantities with just a few ingredients. This has earned it the nickname “the poor man’s soup” (Sisi). Simultaneously, it has also been described as very easy and fast to cook (9ja; Wives), but it could also be difficult to cook (Rec). Since it is consumed throughout Nigeria, none of the sampled blogs and bloggers specified its origin story. They generally only mentioned the name of the soup.

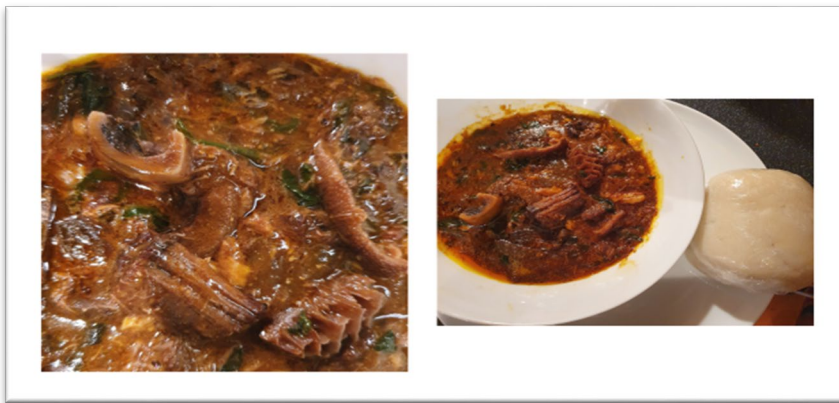


Image D. African Wild Mango (Ogbono “Ugiri” / “Apon”) Soup

The components of ogbono soup and its variations

It was discovered from the blogs that the method of preparing and the taste of the ogbono soup differ from tribe to tribe (Dob; Sisi). Regardless of these variations, as shown in *Table 1* below, in order to make ogbono soup, the methods are similar: The lightly aromatic seeds of African wild mango (ogbono/ “oro” seeds) are typically dried in the sun for grinding or purchased whole or in a powder form (9ja; Sisi). While ogbono seeds in their powdery form could turn into little stones if left for a few hours, once added into liquid, they dissolve completely (Dob). The ground ogbono seeds are mixed with

either hot broth or hot water (9ja). This mixture is then used as a thickener (Dob). When mixing the ground ogbono seeds in liquid (which could be hot broth/water), one must ensure to maintain the high viscosity (Don), the trademark of this soup (Dob).

Just like most Nigerian soups, ogbono soup could also be made plain – with or without vegetables (Don; Wives), as some people might prefer leafy vegetables such as fluted pumpkin (“ugu/ugwu”) leaves (Don; 9ja; Sisi; Foods; Wives), as well as adding other thickeners like okra or “egusi” to their ogbono soup (Dob; Sisi; also noted by Foods; further noted in Wives). However, if using fluted pumpkin (“ugu/ugwu”) leaves, it is advised that it should not be the only vegetable one uses. One could add some bitter leaves such as kale (9ja; Sisi; Foods), basil/scented (“efirin/nchuwun”) leaves, or preferably, “uziza” (false cubeb) leaves, which are the most important leaves for making ogbono soup. As they are believed to make a lot of difference in the soup flavour (Don; Foods; Wives), they could instantly transform the aroma, taste and flavour when incorporated into any soup (Sisi). However, when using “uziza” leaves or seeds, or both, some of the bloggers warn that one must be careful with the quantity of pepper added to the soup because “uziza” leaves or seeds have a somewhat spicy flavour (Sisi; Wives). With regard to the various versions there could be on ogbono soup, when making ogbono soup without oil, some bloggers recommend using red bell peppers, locally known as “tatashe(y)” in Yoruba or “Jan tatasei” in Hausa, to brighten the color of the soup. However, ogbono soup could be made without them (Nig.).

Table 1. Categories of (non)essential ingredients of ogbono soup

7 Essential ingredients	3 Non-essential ingredients
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Ground “ogbono” or “oro” seeds b) Liquid: hot broth or water c) Protein of choice: meat, fish, seafood d) Ground crayfish e) Pepper f) Brand seasonings (“Maggi”) or local seasoning: fermented oil seeds (“ogiri okepi/ogiri”) or fermented locust beans (“iru” or “dawadawa”) g) Salt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Palm oil b) Leaves: (fluted) pumpkin (“ugu/ugwu”) leaves, kale, spinach, “uziza” (false cubeb) leaves etc. c) Onions, which should only be used to steam the proteins

The standard of eating “African wild mango (ogbono) soup”

Within the blog narratives, it was noted that the slimy consistency of ogbono soup is best enjoyed with “morsels of swallow” (Dob; Nig). The blogs also

suggest a wide variety of swallows that could be served with this soup, such as semovita (Afro; Wives), starch or “garri/eba” (Afro; Wives; Don), wheat-meal or “amala” (9ja; Wives), “fufu” (Rec), also spelt “foo-foo” and referred to as “akpu” in Igbo (Foods; Wives), pounded yam referred to as “iyan” in Yoruba (9ja; Afro; 1q; Wives) and many other forms of swallows (Wives).

Image E below illustrates how swallows are eaten with soups in Nigeria. However, one could also eat ogbono soup with other sides like “agidi” (Rec), which is made from fermented maize or rice (Wives), pasta (Sisi), sorghum or millet (Akpapunam et al 2019), “tuwo shinkafa” (Rec) or “tuwo” in short (Wives), a rice pudding common amongst the Hausas in Nigeria (Uwaegbute 1991). To aid weight loss, it has also been advised that it is best for one on a weight-loss journey to eat ogbono soup alone, without adding carbs. However, if one chooses to consume carbs, a fist of swallow is sufficient (Wives).



Image E. Diagram Illustrating the Standard of Eating Staple: Foods/Swallow (e.g. pounded yam (“iyan”) with Soup (as above, ogbono soup) in Nigeria

Throughout the blogs, African wild mango seeds and wild mango soup have been characterised as possessing medicinal qualities. First, it is valued for its fat and rich protein content (9ja). It is also contended to lower one’s cholesterol level (Dob), improve one’s cardiovascular health (9ja), prevent sugars from being stored by the body and aid weight loss (Dob; Afro; 1Q). Due to the perceived pharmacological properties of “ogbono” soup which results from its seeds – African wild mango (“ogbono/oro”) seed, it has been noted across the blog narratives that “ogbono” seeds are now being marketed in capsules (Dob) and will soon be exported for medicinal purposes (IQ).

African wild mango soup is widely enjoyed all over Nigeria, although the methods of preparing it, as well as its characteristics, taste and texture, might differ slightly depending on the region and culture. The health benefits

of the soup are underscored in all the blogs. A close contender with wild mango soup is Okra soup known as “very pocket-friendly” on the blogs.

Spices, flavours, substitutes

Lots of spices and flavours are used in making Nigerian soups, some of which have been franchised in other parts of the world (Foods). Nigerian bloggers highlight the adaptive approach to cooking Nigerian soups, which now often includes non-local ingredients (Dob). This adaptability, noted by bloggers (Don; Nig; Sisi), is due to the versatility of Nigerian cuisine. It allows for adjustments based on personal preferences, the availability of ingredients, and even the possibility of creating new recipes by adding or omitting certain ingredients (Dob; Don). However, while doing so, one does not maintain the authenticity or originality, nor the traditional way of making that dish. As one blogger put it, this means not following “the ancestor’s ways” of making such dishes (Nig).

The information on ingredient substitutes provided by the sampled food blogs can be useful for Nigerians living abroad or in areas where certain local ingredients are unavailable. In doing so, these blogs serve as valuable resources for both diasporic Nigerians and those in Nigeria, offering simplified versions of traditional ingredients that help them reconnect with and adapt their cultural and local recipes (James 2009: 357; Hedge 2014).

Substitutes for unavailable soup ingredients in the diaspora are often chosen based on personal factors like budget, taste preferences, and availability. This is evident in the blogs. For example, a blogger who moved from Nigeria to Canada mentioned that while periwinkle in its shell is considered a luxury in Nigeria, it is challenging to find it abroad. She once found it at a Chinese grocery in Toronto, but it was difficult to find it again (Afro). Another blogger noted that she sometimes omits periwinkles from her soups because they can be expensive in Nigeria (Wives). As a result, people often use ingredients within their “reach” – that are available and affordable. Consequently, many Nigerians abroad use powdered ingredients (like swallows) or dried and frozen forms of ingredients (such as leaves and vegetables like bitter leaf and spinach) (Nig).

Discussion

The blogs analysed feature dashboards, comment sections, and subscription options, allowing users to share their opinions or experiences when bloggers post content, such as recipes. After sharing, bloggers often invite readers to contribute additional information, like their own methods of preparing the dish or comments on specific topics. This practice fosters a virtual community, where not only the blogger shares information but users also participate, similar to blogs about other global cuisines (Hedge 2014). It is noteworthy that

nearly all posts on the selected food blogs had user comments, further reinforcing the idea of community through food. Therefore, Nigerian food blogs are not solely reflections of the individual bloggers; instead, they represent a collective experience of the entire blog community – comprising both bloggers and their readers/users, who co-create these blogs, as seen in other blog genres (Lepkowska-White & Kortright 2017).

Nigeria is rich in vegetation that serves both culinary and medicinal purposes (IQ). Given the vast number of Nigerian dishes, this study focuses on one of the most popular soups, “ogbono” soup, which is enjoyed nationwide and widely among the diaspora. Unlike other soups sampled, none of the blogs or bloggers provided a specific tribe or culture of origin for “ogbono” soup, as it is a dish consumed throughout Nigeria. Therefore, it is considered a traditional Nigerian soup rather than one associated with a particular culture, such as Yoruba or Igbo. The blogs mention the local names for “ogbono” soup in different regions or cultures; for example, the Igbo call it “ogbono/ogbolo” soup, while the Yoruba refer to it as “ugiri” or “apon” soup.

As a result of migration experiences, the cultural practices surrounding the preparation of foods like ogbono soup can change significantly. This can lead to the soup being cooked, consumed, and even named differently among various Nigerian cultures and ethnicities (Etkin 2008: 42). As such, it can be challenging to pinpoint the exact origin of a particular soup, especially when it is widely popular across different regions.

This research revealed that soups are often named after their main ingredient or the vegetables and leaves used in their preparation (Seki and Ono 2014: 489). For example, “African wild mango” (ogbono/ugiri/apon) soup is named after the primary ingredient, the ogbono seed, which serves as a thickener. Variations of this soup are named based on the specific vegetables or leaves used, such as ogbono with pumpkin (ugu/ugwu) leaves. However, if the essential ingredients that give the soup its name are changed or substituted, the name of the soup changes as well. For example, in the preparation of ogbono soup, while some ingredients like vegetables or leaves are optional and can be substituted, the key component is the ogbono/oro seeds. These seeds cannot be replaced with other ingredients, such as okra or melon (egusi), without changing the identity of the soup. If such substitutions are made, the dish is no longer ogbono soup but becomes another type of soup named after the new main ingredient. However, when the primary leaves or vegetables used in making the soup are altered, the generic name of the soup changes to reflect the new ingredient. For example, ogbono soup made with pumpkin (ugu/ugwu) leaves is referred to as “ogbono soup with pumpkin (ugu/ugwu) leaves”. Similarly, ogbono soup made without palm oil is called “oilless ogbono soup”. Therefore, the name of a recipe often indicates the

ingredients used, the location of its preparation, and the availability of those ingredients.

Conclusions

Nigerian food bloggers share their global cuisine with each other and the world. Many of these bloggers are adult women who consider themselves as preserving cultural continuity and authenticity while adapting to their local contexts. Among the various Nigerian soups, we focused on a widely recognised one: African mango soup, which appeared on all the sampled blogs. This soup is prepared by boiling a chosen protein with spices before adding the essential ingredient: ground mango seeds. Although this represents the traditional way of making African mango soup, the flavour can vary depending on the soup base and the different ingredients used.

As a result of migration, substituting ingredients can sometimes lead to a fundamental change in a dish, which may result in a new name since Nigerians often name dishes after their primary ingredient. Whether transmitted orally, textually, or now online, Nigerians have adapted by finding substitute ingredients while striving to preserve the essence of their traditional recipes. As we develop deeper interactions with computers and the internet, food blogging gains prominence as a literary form worthy of investigation. Online recipes not only serve as guides to what people consider authentic dishes but also provide insights into how cultural continuity is maintained and how changes are collectively navigated.

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