

Articles

[My Food Experiences]

Hungry in Haiti



This is me at the Haitian clinic in the North with my little friend, "Elizabet."

This is a journal entry from my time in Haiti, June 2011.

Yesterday was the first day here that I've felt full. It's not that they don't feed us an abundance of food here at MamaBaby Haiti. It's just that I burn so many calories when I'm here. I spent the first two days of my trip in Port au Prince with some friends. They are newly moved into an apartment of sorts: three small rooms with cement walls and floors, two of which have recently been tiled, and the recent addition of a toilet, sink and shower with running water. There is no kitchen of course. One of my friends cooks eggs on a hot plate when

there's power and eats cold beans from a can when there is not. The other has wonderful meals of Haitian rice and beans brought in by a beautiful woman, Mithou. Incidentally, Mithou and I got to be friends when we both started dancing to Justin Bieber music at an outdoor event we all went to together.

My visit was a surprise to my friends and I didn't want to impose too much so while they offered me bits of their meals, I mostly ate Pro Bars (made in good ol' Park City Utah) one of my most favorite protein/meal replacement bars. I always have several on hand when I'm traveling abroad and when I go to births. They are one of the only bars that really fill me up.

Needless to say, when I arrived here in the North of Haiti at the clinic, I was so excited for the Haitian food of Dieula, the cook here I am so fond of. Sure enough, when I walked through the door, there was a plate of the familiar rice and beans I had been craving. That night I tried to catch up on sleep but the next two nights were filled with births so I found myself hungrier and hungrier as I wasn't sleeping quite enough to keep my body going. Yesterday after an all night birth, Jason, our gate guard and all around extraordinary man, went out and bought Marie (the Haitian staff midwife) and I delicious street food for breakfast consisting of boiled plantains and yellow yams, onions, garlic and a leg of chicken. I have many vegan and vegetarian

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friends who would be upset by this choice, but this animal was humanely raised in a beautiful environment where it was free to roam, it was probably fresh from that morning. I am in a third world country where often meat is the only safe source of protein, and by eating it I'm supporting the local economy which is in a shambles. It was also offered to me out of love and thanks for working here at the clinic. These are all very wise reasons to eat meat.

Part of the reason Jason had bought us the food is that Dieula and Monise, two of the staff were at the market buying food for the next several days and there was hardly any food left in the house. So, for lunch I found some dry quinoa and a couple potatoes, and a beet and a radish from the garden. The cupboards here are bare since we don't have a fridge and since Dieula cooks everything fresh and from scratch and usually only buys ingredients to last for exactly our needs for the next several days. I did, however, find salt and curry powder and a head of garlic, all of which I added to a pot of boiling water along with the veggies, chopped into cubes. After the veggies were nearly tender, I added some quinoa, and let it all simmer while I had a bucket shower. The result was a beautiful vegan and high protein meal with veggies from the garden.

Between the Hataian street food and the quinoa dish, I finally felt full for the first time in several days.

Here is the recipe for the quinoa dish:

1 beet cut into 1/2" cubes
2 small potatoes or one large potato cut into 1/2" cubes
1-2 large radishes (yes these are great cooked!) cut into 1/2" cubes
5 cloves garlic, left whole
3 C water
1 C quinoa
2 tsp. curry powder
1 tsp. salt

In a medium sized saucepan, add all the veggies and the spices. Cook on a simmer for about 15 minutes or until the veggies are almost completely tender. Add the quinoa and cover. Let simmer until the quinoa is cooked through and the water is absorbed. Approximately another 15-20 minutes.

Serve alone or on a bed of greens drizzled with lemon juice and olive oil (two things we definitely DO NOT have here, but will be absolutely delicious with this dish).

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