



1

Appetizers

In Caribbean households, while finger foods and snack items are fairly common, the idea of an appetizer as the start of a multi-course meal is primarily entertained among the affluent. For most people, quick bites such as these are what Jamaicans might call a “stop gap.”

Fried snacks called fritters are found on multiple islands, with different key ingredients setting each apart. Most popular throughout the region may be codfish fritters. In Jamaica they are pressed flat and called stamp and go. In Barbados they are denser deep-fried balls called fish cakes. In the Dominican Republic and other Spanish-speaking islands they are made similarly to the Jamaican version and are called *bacalaitos*.

In the Bahamas you’ll find fritters made with the meat of the conch shell-fish. In Haiti, the popular fritters are called *accra*, and are made with grated malanga root as their base, rather than flour. You can try Chef Thia’s version in this chapter. In Puerto Rico, *alcapurria* is a fritter made of a green banana and taro root mixture, stuffed with meat, and deep-fried.

Another very simple, popular take on codfish includes shredding and seasoning the fish and pairing it with crackers, *tostones*, or other light starches. This seasoned codfish mixture is done ceviche-style in Haiti and called *chiquetaille*, lightly stir-fried in Jamaica as pick up saltfish, and in Trinidad as saltfish *buljol*.

Double-fried, pressed, and salted chunks of green plantain are called *tostones* in the Latin countries, and simply fried green plantains elsewhere. You may recognize thin fried chips made of green plantains, green bananas, or breadfruit, especially if you live in an area with a large Latino or West Indian population. You can use Chef Irie’s recipe to create any of these options. You may also have heard of fried or baked savory pocket pies of different varieties, including *pate kode* from Haiti, patties from Jamaica, and empanadas from the Latin islands. Chef Thia puts her own spin on a *pate kode* recipe, which can be prepared with meat, vegetables, or codfish.

Enjoy your quick dive into appetizers within these pages! And we encourage you to continue to explore Caribbean stop gaps to add some delicious tropical variety to your snackable culinary repertoire.



Pate Kode (Haitian Fried Meat Pies)

BY CHEF THIA

In Haiti many people in the rural areas, especially students, buy this deep-fried meat-filled pie from street vendors. It's a complete meal in one pocket. *Pate kode* was thought of only as street food in the past, but in recent years, Haitian chefs have been changing that perception by focusing on foods from our roots and celebrating them with updated approaches. My version has a light, thin crust and a flavorful creole-style shredded chicken filling. The patty is golden and crispy on the outside and soft on the inside.

Traditional *pate kode* has boiled eggs mixed in, but I've left them out. Add them if you like, and feel free to experiment with ground beef, codfish, or herring fillings instead of chicken.

Makes 4 to 6 patties

For the Filling

2 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 tablespoon tomato paste
1 teaspoon salt
3 tablespoons evaporated milk
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup minced red bell pepper
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup minced green bell pepper
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup finely chopped yellow onion
1 teaspoon red pepper flakes
3 teaspoons Chef Thia's Spice (page 66)
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups shredded cooked chicken breast
1 teaspoon black pepper

For the Dough

2 cups all-purpose flour, plus $\frac{1}{2}$ cup to sprinkle on sticky dough
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon baking powder
4 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
1 teaspoon Chef Thia's Spice (page 66)
 $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ cup cold water
Vegetable oil for frying

1. Make the filling: Heat the butter in a large frying pan over medium-high heat. When the butter is melted, add the tomato paste, salt, evaporated milk, bell peppers, and onion and sauté for 3 to 5 minutes, until the vegetables are tender.



2. Stir in the red pepper flakes and Chef Thia's Spice, followed by the chicken. Sprinkle the black pepper over the top and continue to cook for 3 to 5 minutes, until heated through.
3. Remove the pan from the heat and allow the sautéed mixture to cool.
4. Make the dough: Put the flour, salt, and baking powder in a medium bowl and stir well. Make a small well in the center of the mixture and add the butter, Chef Thia's Spice, and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cold water. Stir until a smooth and elastic dough is formed, adding up to $\frac{1}{4}$ cup more cold water by the tablespoon if it's too dry. Cover the bowl and allow the dough to rest for 15 minutes.
5. On a floured surface, roll the dough out to about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick. Use a sharp knife to cut out rectangles that are 4 by 3 inches.
6. For each dough rectangle, place a little of the sautéed mixture in the center, fold, and pinch the sides closed.
7. Heat the oil in a large frying pan or deep-fryer to 350°F. Fry the patties until golden and crispy, 2 to 3 minutes per side, carefully spooning the hot oil over them as they cook.
8. Remove the patties from the oil and place on paper towels to drain. Serve hot.



