



Report on Pandanus and Taro Preservation

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By

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Island Food Community Board Meeting:



The meeting with the Island Food Community of Pohnpei board members was a good start of the workshop. I felt welcomed and encouraged to work with the Island Food Community.

Workshop Objectives:

The workshop objectives are to;

- Demonstrate the preparation of dried pandanus paste,
- Demonstrate the possibilities of making other local food products using simple equipment available in the country.

The workshop objectives were well covered by different activities. On the first day, a brief introduction on how jaankun was used in the Marshall Islands long time ago and today was presented. Samples of traditional wrapped and modern packed jaankun were display including tools for processing. Other local food products such as pandanus juice and dried taro were also on displayed.

Brief Summary of Jaankun:

Preserved pandanus in the Marshall Islands is called, “jaankun”. The method of preserving in the Marshall Islands long time ago and today was compared during the processing and preservation (deBrum 2004). The following points of the importance of making jaankun were highlighted in the board meeting and in the workshops;

Long time ago people travel to one island to another in their outrigger canoes, jaankun was one of the best preserved food for some atolls to take on long journey because it;

- lasts long without spoiling
- light in weight because it contains no water
- takes up little space – shrinks in size and
- food security when not in season

Evidently for some time, jaankun was no longer a food practice in the Marshall Islands. For this reason it was necessary to revive it for the following reason;

- to preserve the culture
- income generation
- high food value in provitamin A and other carotenoids, other nutrients, and fiber
- excellence snack for school children

The inspiration to revive jaankun has brought more attention to preserve other foods as well as to develop good solar food dryer.

Processing:

See Annex 1 for detailed instructions for preparing taro flour and pandanus recipes. In the processing, pandanus were boiled a day before the workshop start because of time allowed. On the first day, a demonstration was done on how to use the traditional tool to extract the juice or the pulp from pandanus. Using of plastic cups and bowls was also demonstrated and all the participants were able to take part in the extraction using the traditional tool and the plastic cups.

The next step in the processing was to cook the pulp in a cooking pot. It was explained to the participants the important of cooking the pulp thoroughly until water content has evaporated and turned little dark in brown color. The kerosene stove used was not very safe when turning more often to low or high. While the pandnaus pulp was cooking under the care of one participant, taro preservation and processing was explained and demonstrated.

After an hour of cooking the pulp it was put in the aluminum tray line with panana leaves than put in the solar dryer outside. Same time the grated taro was ready to put out in the solar dryer.

Jaankun takes more than two weeks to dry, so the preparation was shown and explained to the participants that because of time limit, we will use electric dehydrate to speed up the drying in order for them to see results. Another thing is that the solar dryer had to go back for the carpenter to modify for more efficient.

Cooking Demo:

Cooking demonstration was done by using tried taro and pandnaus juice brought from Marshall Islands. Icecream was made mixing pandanus juice with karat banana and taro soup with coconut cream.

Feedback from Participants:

- Had heard about the word jaankun but first time to see and taste
- Had no idea that pandanus can also be eaten cooked
- Wanted to extend the workshop to other communities and with more time
- Some of the participants would like to continue with what they have learned
- Land Grant participants would like to improve the taro soup by adding fish and green vegetables.
- All likes the taste of the food and juice demonstrated

Recommendation:

I strongly recommend that for next time workshop like this should be held in a kitchen with a proper sink for washing hands and the cooking utensils

Conclusion:

To conclude I would like once again to thank Island Food Community of Pohnpei, the Pohnpei State Agriculture, the financial support of the SPC Forest & Trees Programme especially to Dr. Lois Englberger and Mr. Adelino Lorens who made it all possible for the Small-scale Food Processing in Pohnpei, FSM.

References:

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Englberger L, Aalbersberg W, Schierle J, Marks GC, Fitzgerald MH, Muller F, Jekkein A, Alfred J, Velde NV. 2006. Carotenoid content of different edible pandanus fruit cultivars of the Republic of the Marshall Islands. *Journal of Food Composition and Analysis* 19:484-494.

Annex 1

How to Make Taro Flour:

- Step 1: Cut off the taro root and peel off the skin
- Step 2: Clean taro by scrubbing with a piece of dried coconut husk
- Step 3: Grate taro
- Step 4: Spread out your grated taro under the sun to dry. This may take 3-7 days.
By using designed Food solar dryer speed drying process and keep flies and other animal away.
- Step 5: when dry it will become like flour or powder. Can be store in a sealed container, zip log bag or empty rice bag and use as needed.

Recipe from Taro Flour

- Step 1: Soak dried taro in water over night (just enough for your needs)
- Step 2: Next day, pour out any excess water by washing it out with clean water.
- Step 3: In a medium cooking pot, fill water ½ full, and bring to boil.
- Step 4: Add about 6-7 cups of taro and continue boiling and stir to avoid taro from sticking to the bottom of the pot.
- Step 5: When cooked, the taro will become thicker.
- Step 6: Add sugar to prepared coconut cream to your taste; pour over taro pudding. Continue stirring, allow coconut cream to cook a few minutes and remove from heat.

How to make Jaankun (a traditional food made out of pandanus paste)

- Step 1: Separate ripe keys from the whole pandanus
- Step 2: Clean the keys
- Step 3: Keys can be baked in traditional um or in charcoal made oven whichever way is Use, keys must be kept in basket when cooking in umu for cleanliness purpose. use cooking pan when using charcoal oven.
- Step 4: when pandanus are cooked and cool, extract juice or paste from the keys, using Traditional tool (peka), bowl or cup can be used as well.

- Step 5: In a stainless cooking pot, cook the paste, while cooking use a fork to lift and draw away any fiber that caught during extracting.
- Step 6: continuing cooking and stirring to avoid sticking at the bottom/around pot.
- Step 7: when cooked, the paste will become thick and turn its color to dark brown. Pour And Spread the paste in a baking pan or cookie sheet lined with banana leaves, making a thin layer. The thinner the layer the quicker it will dry. If it is too thick it will not dry well, and later it may spoil. Dry it in the sun until the edge will peel of the leaves and not stick and turn over the other side. It may take 1-2 weeks to dry. You can also use electrical oven on low heat several times to dry.
- Step 8: When dry, the jaankun should be dark brown in color. Slice up into pieces and serve with fresh mature coconut, it helps remove the food from sticking to your teeth and also gives extra flavor. Store in vacuumed food safer to preserve for longer period, or rolled up and wrapped in dried pandanus leaves to preserve it a traditional way which also can kept for many years.

Note: Pandanus keys can also be cooked by using boiling method. Boiling method takes longer time to dry and when dry it is stickier like other crystallized fruits.

Recipe from Jaankun: Jenop – is a drink made from jaankun.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup drinking water
- 1 oz. jaankun

Method: fill one cup with drinking water and soak about 1 oz of jaankun. Leave for 3-4 hours and it is ready for drink.

This is a very refreshing drink that is good for older people with diabetes especially those who have frequent constipation problem.

Jaankun Pudding

Ingredients:

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup drinking water
- 2 oz. jaankun
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup coconut cream

Method: soak jaankun in the water until soft, add coconut cream and mix well. It should be soften enough to feed a baby, you may add more water if needed. This is a very tasty and nutritious weaning food.

Note: electric blender can be used to speed up the process.