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YOLELE! RECIPES FROM THE HEART OF SENEGAL

BY PIERRE THIAM, PHOTOGRAPHY BY ADAM BARTOS

African cuisine is the hottest trend in the culinary world today and Pierre Thiam's **YOLELE! Recipes From The Heart Of Senegal** (Lake Isle Press; September 2008; \$21.95; hardcover) is the first cookbook devoted to Senegalese cuisine. **YOLELE** is one more reason why food critics and food lovers alike are taking notice of the new, exciting recipes, and bold flavors coming out of Africa.

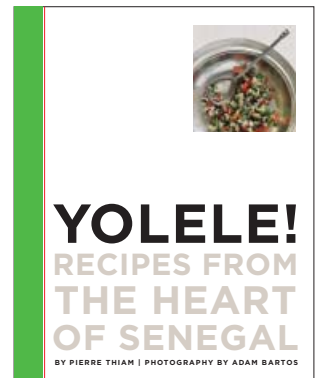
Now, thanks to the pioneering efforts of restaurateur and Senegalese native Pierre Thiam to bring this once little-known cuisine to a wider audience, we are able to explore a cuisine that is at once familiar and exotic, down-home and elegant. Once food lovers try these delectable dishes, they will understand why Pierre Thiam's Le Grand Dakar restaurant in Brooklyn has packed crowds night after night, feasting on such delicacies as Shrimp and Sweet Potato Fritters, Grilled Chicken with Lime-Onion Sauce, Blue Fish with Red Rice and Vegetables (their signature dish), and Roasted Mango and Coconut Rice Pudding.

YOLELE introduces readers to new taste sensations, exotic spins on rice and other familiar ingredients, and foods indigenous to Senegal, such as fonio, an ancient, tiny-seeded whole grain that has been one of the mainstays of Senegalese cuisine. Bursting with delicious taste and extraordinarily healthy, fonio is likely become a major player in home kitchens and top restaurants in the years ahead.

Senegalese cuisine is a sonorous synthesis of native African, French, Portuguese, Creole, and Vietnamese cuisines. Among the many savory recipes to explore:

Tempra: A classic from the shores of Guinea Bissau to the Casamance River, tempra is reminiscent of Peruvian ceviche, the major difference—the shrimp or oysters are grilled before marinating in the lemon mixture.

Fonio & Smoked Tofu Stuffed Tomatoes: The perfect light dinner dish. The smoked tofu and refreshing cucumber are topped with lime juice and oil, then stuffed into large, ripe tomatoes. This unique dish provides a special, irresistible balance of flavors.



"We would have to be grateful for almost any new contribution to the too-sparse literature of African food. But restaurateur Pierre Thiam's book on the richly appealing food of his native Senegal is beyond the call. Fresh, lively, and intelligent, Thiam's **YOLELE** documents, through good strong recipes, fine writing, and much marvelous photography, a fascinating food tradition and the culture in which it is embedded. Reflecting warmth and pride, this highly personal book connects us to those who know, make, and love this food. A most welcome addition to the kitchen shelf!"

Nach Waxman, owner, Kitchen Arts & Letters

Yucassoise: Inspired by the classic recipe for vichyssoise, what's most satisfying about this dish is how the flavor of yuca coaxes out the nuttiness of an ordinary potato. Garnishing this soup with leeks makes for a nice touch.

Vegetarian Spring Rolls: If the Senegalese were to choose only one of their many Vietnamese-inspired dishes, this would be the one. This vegetarian appetizer will be the highlight of any party or dinner.

Bakary Calamari Salad: Named in honor of Chef Bakary Diedhiou at the Casamance hotel, Au Bar de la Mer, this may be the most tender calamari salad to beguile even the most epicurean palate.

Fonio Taboule: This fresh salad is a healthier variation of Lebanese bulgur salad, thanks to the nutrient-rich fonio.

Bluefish with Red Rice and Vegetables: Also known as Thiebou Jen, this unique combination of fish stuffed with vegetables and cooked in a thick tomato sauce is a signature Senegalese dish.

Oyster Elinkine: This simple recipe is similar to a classic mignonette, grilled or broiled, and served with a lime and raw onion dressing.

Five-Spice Duck: Vietnamese and Senegalese influences come together in the marinade for this roasted duck recipe, giving the duck a perfect blend of sweet and savory flavors.

Pierre Thiam's **YOLELE**, the first Senegalese cookbook in English, will surely lead the way as African cuisine emerges and takes its rightful place among the world's favorite culinary traditions.

About the Author

Pierre Thiam is the chef-owner of Le Grand Dakar restaurant in Brooklyn, New York. Previously, he was the owner of Yolele and Sage Catering. He has worked at top restaurants throughout New York City including Garvin's, Jean Claude, Boom, and Two Rooms. His website is www.granddakar.com.

