



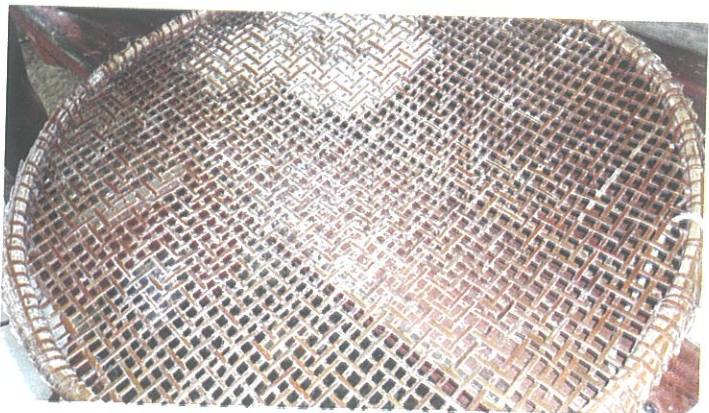
Cassava Mill

CASSAVA - A KALINAGO TRADITION

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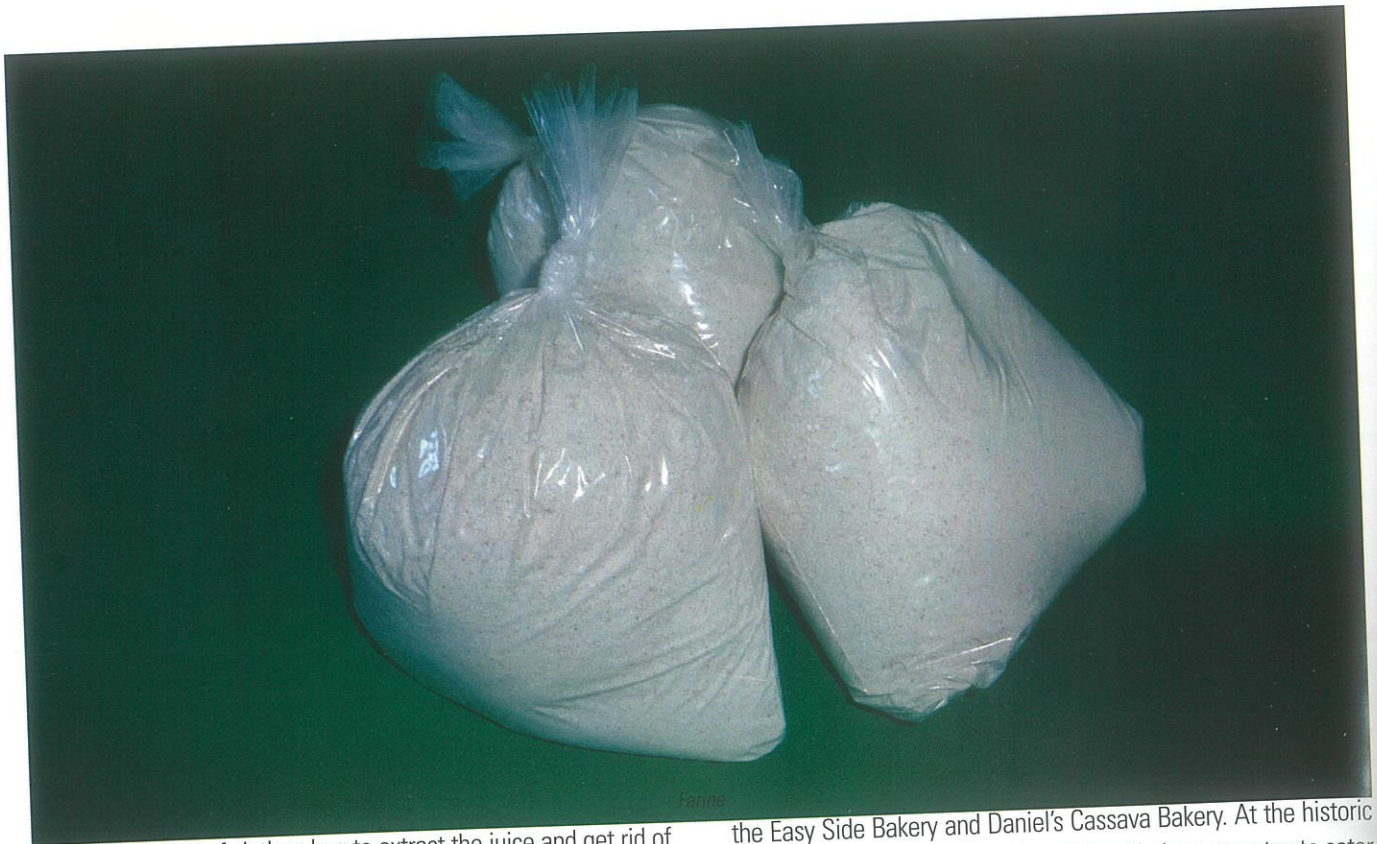
Cassava bread and farine (flour) are important staple food products for the Kalinago people. These are made from the tubers of the manioc plant.

The manioc plant (*manihotesculenta*) is a woody shrub. Twigs from the plant are planted in the soil and anywhere between the nine and thirteen months, the tubers are ready for harvest. The manioc plant comes in two varieties, bitter and sweet. The bitter variety is used for making cassava bread and farine and requires some processing. The sweet variety can simply be cooked and consumed like potatoes.



Hebichet

The process of making cassava bread involves peeling the manioc and grating it into a pulp. The grated manioc is then squeezed using a



Farine

matapi or a piece of cloth or bag to extract the juice and get rid of toxins. The juice is rich in starch. This starch, known in Kweyol as *mouchas*, is allowed to settle. Once settled, the excess water is drained off and the starch is put to dry.

The grated manioc is then sifted using a *hebichet*. The dried starch is also added during the sifting process to give the grated manioc some consistency. To make cassava bread, a small amount of grated manioc is placed on a metal plate called a *platin* which is heated by fire. After 10 to 15 minutes the cassava bread is baked. In earlier times, the grated manioc was baked on heated stones.

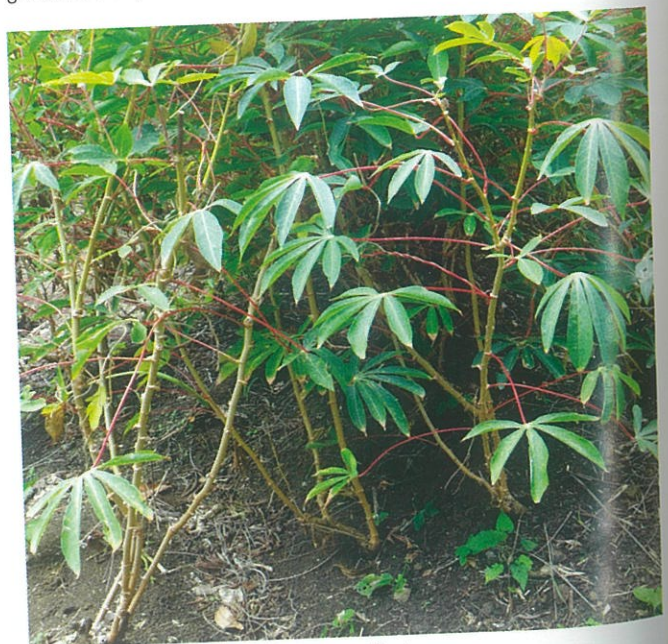
The Kalinago make several types of cassava bread. There is the plain cassava bread in which just salt is added. There are other types of bread to which sugar, salt, grounded coconut or ginger are added for flavouring.

To make farine, the grated manioc is placed in a metal vat which is heated by fire. The grated manioc is shifted around in the vat using a wooden palette. Once the farine makes a crackling sound or does not stick to the fingers, it is ready for consumption.

In early times, cassava production was a subsistence activity and a social affair involving whole families. Nowadays, cassava production is an important economic activity for the Kalinago people. The increased demand for cassava products has resulted in the commercialization of cassava production. In the Kalinago Territory, two cassava bakeries now operate on a commercial basis;

the Easy Side Bakery and Daniel's Cassava Bakery. At the historic Kalinago Barana Aute, a small traditional bakery operates to cater to visitors. Plans are being develop by the Ministry of Kalinago Affairs to construct a modern cassava processing plant in Salybia.

Traditionally, the making of cassava bread and farine is a long and tedious process. The commercialization of cassava production requires a speeding up of the process. In order to do so, the cassava bakeries have introduced new technologies such as electronic grinders, compressors and blenders.

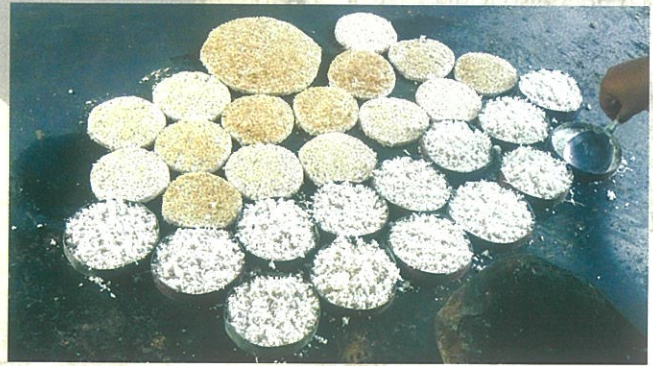


Cassava Plant

The commercialization of cassava production has resulted in farmers planting manioc in greater quantities and thus earning additional income. In some cases, the cassava bakeries contract farmers to plant manioc to meet their needs. The manioc is a hardy plant and very resistant to disease and hurricanes thus making it a viable optional crop for farmers.

While cassava production has become a more commercial activity, the future of the tradition in the Kalinago Territory hangs in the balance. Young people are not involved in cassava production as before. There is increased competition from producers outside the Territory. There is also the need to diversify the products to attract new consumers.

Hopefully, the increasing demand for cassava products in Dominica and beyond will lead to younger Kalinago getting involved in the cultivation of manioc and the making of cassava products and thus perpetuate a long-standing Kalinago tradition.



Cassava Bread Preparation



Cassava Bread



Cassava Chips



Farine Balls



Fried Farine Balls

NEW CASSAVA BREAD PRODUCTS

Traditionally, cassava bread products range from plain cassava bread to bread with sugar, salt, coconut or ginger added. The Easy Side Cassava Bakery in the Kalinago Territory has developed new cassava bread products in order to broaden its client base and appeal to a wider cross-section of the population. Some of the new products include cassava stuffed with one of the following: cheese, smoke herring, codfish, raisins or chocolate. The bakery also caters to the health conscious by offering plain cassava bread with no salt or sugar added. The bakery has installed a mobile platin at the Roseau market where persons can order cassava bread with a combination of ingredients to suit their taste and have it baked right there and then.



Cassava with Salt Fish



Cassava with Smoked-Herring



Cassava with Cheese



Cassava with Raisins



Cassava with Cheese



Cassava with Raisins