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# A Taste of Guam

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**12-page pullout**

# Ancient Chamorro use of rice

BY  
DOMINICA TOLENTINO,  
GUAMPEDIA

## Ancient Chamorros cultivated rice

In Guam and the other Mariana Islands and other islands throughout the Pacific, rice is considered one of the most important food staples. Bags of rice are shipped to the islands regularly. In the Marianas, rice is served at most every meal or special occasion. Fiesta plates are not complete without rice. Because much of our rice is imported today, many people are surprised to learn that the ancient Chamorros cultivated rice. However, during the Spanish era, another starchy plant, corn, was introduced, and soon tortillas – known in the Marianas as titiyas – replaced some of the traditional starches of rice, taro, yams and breadfruit.

According to early historic accounts, rice (*Oryza sativa*) was produced in large quantities, and was used as a commodity for trade between islands and later, with the Europeans to obtain metal. Rice, however, is significant archeologically because the Chamorros of the Marianas were the only Pacific Island people who cultivated rice in the tropics dating back to ancient times. While the cultivation of rice provides further evidence for the theory of the origin of Chamorros from Southeast Asia, it may also suggest contact between rice-growing peoples from the Philippines or Asia and the Chamorros. The circumstances of these contacts, obviously, are unknown.

In the Chamorro language, there are

different words related to rice that linguists believe show links with other Austronesian cultures. These words include fa'i (rice growing in the field), fama ayan (rice field), timulo (harvested rice stalk piles), cha'guan aga'ga (jungle rice), tinitu (husked rice), pugas (uncooked rice), hineksa' (boiled or cooked rice), and alaguan (rice soup or rice drink).

Historic accounts by early European visitors indicate that rice was grown and used for trade between villages and with European vessels, but the Chamorros cultivated rice long before Ferdinand Magellan's expedition landed in the Marianas in 1521. An archeological report from 1971 included evidence of a rice grain impression on a piece of ancient pottery found in Rota that dated hundreds of years before the arrival of the Europeans.



Rice impression on pottery sherd. Photo provided by the Micronesian Archaeological Research Services(MARS)

Rice crops were grown using swidden (slash and burn) agriculture methods, whereby natural vegetation was cut and burned or buried to clear areas for cultivation and enrich the soil. Rice was planted

by hand in natural swamps with the use of a kind of wooden digging stick or hoe known as a tatum. Swampy areas near the villages of Hagåtña, Agat, Talofof and Merizo were ideal places for planting rice. Planting was done in the Chamorro lunar month of Fa'gualo, the equivalent of late October in the modern calendar, and harvested almost half a year later using bamboo knives or tools fashioned from the edge of conch shells.

The rice was then husked using a wooden pestle called a fa'lu and stone mortar, or lusong. The husked rice was collected on woven mats and stored in baskets or clay pots for later use. One possible method for cooking rice involves wrapping the raw grains in banana leaves and placing them in a green bamboo tube filled with water. The tube was then placed over a low fire, cooking the rice before the bamboo caught fire. Clay pots may also have been used to boil rice, but this is not certain, as no pot sherds (fragments) with residue from rice starch have been recovered yet.

The Spanish who traveled through the Marianas for provisions described rice as a trade item between villages, as

well as one of the items presented to them to trade for iron. Catholic missionaries also observed that rice was a ceremonial food, reserved for special occasions such as funerals, fiestas, war rituals and marriages. Spanish friar Fray Juan Pobre de Zamora, who lived among the Chamorros in Rota in 1602, observed a kind of rice drink mixed with water or coconut milk that was served to the skulls of their ancestral spirits after successful fishing expeditions.

## Ceremonial uses

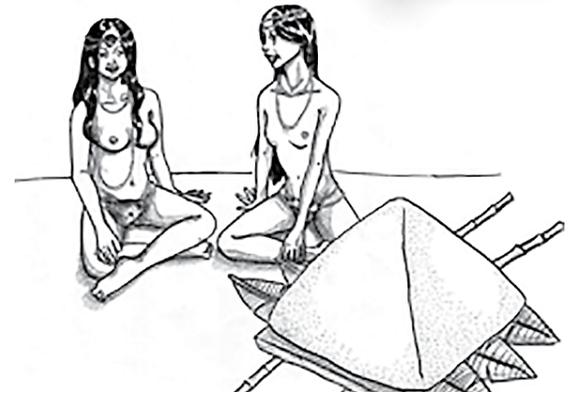
However, Pobre's experience is predated by that of another Spanish missionary, Fray Antonio de los Angeles, who lived among the Chamorros on Guam from 1596-1597. Fray Antonio observed that Chamorros served rice "cooked only with water" during their fiestas. At funerals, the people who sang for the dead would be served rice from the family of the deceased, along with a drink.

The Chamorros also celebrated a yearly fiesta at Fougha rock where the spirit goddess Fu'una had created the Chamorro people. There, the natives prepared rice cakes and presented them as offerings. The blessed rice would then be kept later and taken back to their villages to cure the sick. Ancient Chamorros also used rice in other important ceremonies such as marriages and childbirth rituals and customs.

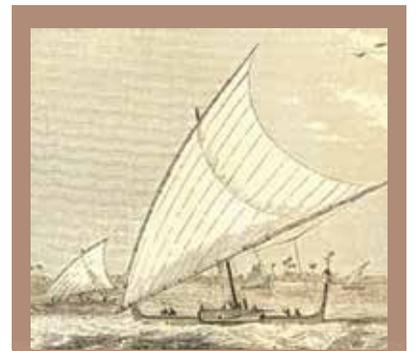
Hineksa' sinagan, for example, were prepared rice cakes formed in the shape of a large pyramid and given as wedding gifts. In addition, rectangular-shaped kottot baskets (made of woven pandanus) filled with rice were also valuable gifts for weddings and childbirth celebrations.

Although not as spiritually significant for Guam society today, the imported, processed rice we eat is used extensively in a variety of dishes, including potu (tuba rice cakes), empanada (a meat and rice turnover), chalakiles (an achote flavored toasted rice soup), champulado (chocolate rice pudding) and hineksa' aga'ga (red rice). Nevertheless, rice is archeologically and culturally significant for the Chamorro people because of its long and unique history in the Mariana Islands.

SEE RICE ON PAGE 5



Hineksa' Sinagan (Wedding Rice Pyramid). Illustrated by Jessica Chan



## Rice as evidence

Linguistic evidence suggests that the first Chamorro migrants may have brought the knowledge of rice cultivation with them when they settled in the Mariana Islands, and archeological evidence shows that rice was an important part of the ancient Chamorro culture.

**While the cultivation of rice provides further evidence for the theory of the origin of Chamorros from Southeast Asia, it may also suggest contact between rice-growing peoples from the Philippines or Asia and the Chamorros.**



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# RICE: Making cakes out of grain

## Description

Potu (also spelled poto) are white rice cakes, distinctly flavored with a local coconut toddy or fermented sap called tuba (known as aguardiente in Spanish).

## History

### Origin

Potu are tuba-flavored rice cakes that were most likely introduced to Guam by Filipino immigrants during the Spanish era, along with other food items such as pancit, lumpia and dinaguan (fritada in Chamorro). In the Philippines this steamed white rice cake is known as puto. There are different varieties and recipes for puto in the Philippines, but for Chamorros, the main ingredients in potu are rice and tuba. Tuba is a fermented drink made from coconut sap.

### Evolution

Rice was cultivated by the ancient Chamorros, and was the preferred grain up through Spanish times, in addition to corn. On Guam, rice was grown primarily in low-lying areas, while in the northern islands, at least through the German era, rice was cultivated along terraced slopes on the volcanic ridges in Rota and in marshes around Lake Susupe in Saipan. This technique of wet cultivation was introduced by Filipino immigrants during the Spanish era. Both men and women participated in the cultivation of rice as a communal activity. During the early American era, however, because rice cultivation was laborious, along with limited space for wet cultivation, rice was grown less and less, and imported rice became more popular.

According to Guam historian Robert Rogers, tuba was introduced to Guam as early as 1668 with the arrival of the Jesuit missionary, Father Diego Luis de

Sanvitores, by his Filipino helpers. Laura Thompson described in her ethnography of the Chamorro people how tuba was produced. Basically, the sap of the coconut plant is collected and fermented to produce a slightly intoxicating substance. The substance could be distilled further to produce a type of rum, called aguardiente.

### Preparation

Most fiestas will feature potu that has been purchased from the local grocery or mom-and-pop stores, as preparing potu with the proper texture and flavor is tricky. Indeed a handful of families are reputed to make good potu, such as the Pablo family in Mongmong and a family in Saipan whose traditional clan name is Familian Potu.

### Placement on table

Although potu is often eaten as a breakfast item, like a pastry, or a snack, these simple-looking rice cakes are still special enough to have a place at a large fiesta, alongside other desserts at the end of the table or on a separate table.

### Recipe

#### Ingredients

- 5 lbs long grain rice
- 1 pint sweet tuba
- 1 pint water
- 5 pounds sugar

Add water to cover the level of rice. Let rice soak for two hours, then rinse. Grind rice to a powder. Mix the remaining ingredients and allow to soak overnight. Stir

## Potu: Tuba Rice Cakes

three times during the night. Pour into poto cups\*\* and steam for ten minutes. May be baked at 350 degrees for 10 minutes or until golden brown. Serve with butter.

\* Recipe by Bell H. Gumataotao from Lepblon Fina'tinas Para Guam: Guam Cookbook, 1985.

\*\* (Poto cups are individual stainless steel cups. A cupcake tray may be used to substitute individual cups.)

- *Dominica Tolentino, Guampedia*



File photo

### Recipe

#### Ingredients

- ½ can Spam luncheon meat, cubed
- 3 cups cooked rice
- 2 tbsp oil
- ½ onion, chopped
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 2 tbsp soy sauce

Fry onions until soft, add luncheon meat and continue frying until

## Spam Fried Rice

golden brown. Add cooked rice and fry for about five minutes or until the rice is shiny. Add soy sauce and continue to fry for another five minutes. Set aside. Saute' beaten eggs in a little oil, scrambling them. Chop the eggs into pieces. Put fried rice in a bowl or platter and garnish with chopped eggs

and green onions, if desired.

*Editor's note: This recipe is from Lepblon Fina'tinas Para Guam: Guam Cookbook, 1985. Reprinted with permission from Congresswoman Madeleine Z. Bordallo, Y Inetnon Famalao'an (Women's Association).*

\* *Y Inetnon Famalao'an was a women's organization composed of cabinet wives and women executives in the government of Guam.*

- *Judith Guthertz, Guampedia*

## Red Brown Rice

My family is making a concerted effort to develop healthier eating habits. We're making small changes in the foods we eat as well as how we prepare them.

One change we definitely like is that we've made the switch from white to brown rice. I admit, it took some getting used to, but we actually like it. Of course, I have to season the brown rice whenever I cook it.

I wanted to see if the classic

Chamorro Red Rice would taste good using brown rice instead of the usual white medium or long grain rice we know and love.

The result? Delicious! Granted, you can definitely tell you're eating brown rice (it's firmer and a bit nuttier than white), but delicious nonetheless.

Give my recipe a try. I think you'll like it.

### Recipe

#### Ingredients

- 3 cups brown rice (use your rice cooker cup)
- 6 1/3 cups water (use your rice cooker cup) (\*See note below)
- 1 packet achote powder (\*See note below)
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 bunch green onions, sliced
- 1 tablespoon Dashida seasoning (or salt, to taste)

You can use achote water made with achote seeds instead of achote powder. Scrub the seeds in the water; strain out the seeds before using.



1. Rinse the rice then place into your rice cooker pot.
2. Add the water.
3. Add the achote powder.
4. Add the olive oil.
5. Add the green onions.
6. Add the Dashida seasoning.
7. Cover the pot then turn it on or place it on "cook." After about 5 minutes, open up the lid and stir the rice, ensuring the achote powder and Dashida seasoning

are dissolved and evenly distributed. Place the cover back on the pot and let it finish cooking. After your rice cooker turns from "cook" to "warm" (or the equivalent for your rice cooker model), be sure to keep the lid closed, letting the rice continue steaming for 10-15 minutes before serving.

8. We love red rice with fried chicken and cucumber salad. Serve with your favorite main dish(es) and enjoy!

- *Army Lt. Col. (Ret.) Annette Merfalen*



# Ancient Chamorro

BY MARILYN C. SALAS, PHD AND DOMINICATOLENTINO,  
GUAMPEDIA

All humans require food in order to survive. People get their food from the natural environment through practices of food collection, farming, and the hunting or raising of animals. But food not only nourishes our bodies—food is culturally important, too. We serve food at both formal and informal social activities, such as fiestas, weddings, rosaries, family meals and barbecues. Our preferences for the things we eat are influenced by what our society or culture designates as delicious, appropriate or acceptable. In the Marianas, for example, fruit bat, or fanihi is considered a delicacy, especially when stewed in coconut milk—fur and all. On the other hand, balati, or sea cucumber, which is abundant all over the island's beaches, is not something most people in the Marianas would place on their dinner tables; however, in countries like China, the sea cucumber is a desirable food item.

Culture not only tells us what kinds of food can be eaten, but also how they should be prepared, processed or stored. We have recipes for cooking, serving and preserving different kinds of foods. Because of the ways different cultures treat food, we often describe dishes with ethnic terms: Chamorro red rice, Japanese sushi, Chinese dim sum, Italian pasta and so on. In addition, culture provides the context or occasions for which certain foods may be eaten—and by whom. We have traditions, rituals, taboos and other customs that we associate with blessing, sharing, distributing or restricting food. Thanksgiving turkeys, Christmas hams and colored Easter eggs, for example, are part of an American Christian cultural context in which these dishes are given socially important meanings and are served only on those special holidays.

In the Marianas, one can argue that food is central to our culture. Visitors to our homes are offered something to eat almost as soon as they walk through the door. Gifts of food are presented at our most festive occasions, like village fiestas and weddings, and at our most solemn ceremonies, such as after evening rosaries or at funerals. In ancient times, Chamorros traded food and provisions with each other, presented food offerings to their ancestral spirits, and used food to help negotiate peace following warfare. Eventually, Chamorros traded food for valuable European commodities such as iron and cloth.

Food preferences also change over time. Delicacies from the past may not seem appetizing or practical anymore. For example, fruit bat, as mentioned above, is rarely served today, not only because of its status as an endangered species, but because our tastes have changed. Our preference for Western or Asian cuisine, and even fast food items, like hamburgers, pizza, fried chicken and doughnuts, over traditional foods of the islands, have taken over the dinner and the fiesta tables. And, for better or for worse, our increasingly modern diets have impacted our health.

As people of the islands, the Chamorro diet traditionally was rich in fruits, tubers (roots) and foods from the surrounding lagoons, reefs and oceans. Fishing and cultivation of food plants were carried out with simple but effective tools and methods. By looking at ancient Chamorro subsistence strategies we can get a sense of the importance of food in shaping the way people in small island communities adapt to and face the challenges of their natural environment.

## Archeology of Chamorro food

Food and the preparation of food has always been an important part of the Chamorro culture. We can all fondly remember our grandparents or other family members being very concerned about making sure we were fed and ensuring any visitors to our homes were offered something to eat. We can also recall times family members would come together to prepare dishes for a party or a fiesta. In a similar way, a look at the diet and cooking methods of our ancient Chamorro ancestors will help us gain insight on food choices and methods of food preparation that were used before Spanish colonization.

There is very little written about the archeology of Chamorro food prior to Western contact. However, reports from ar-



Processing food. Photo from Herman Crisostomo's Guam P...

cheological sites, anthropological observations, and journals of visitors during the Spanish era provide information that, when connected, can tell the story about diet and cooking practices.

In general, these reports describe the kinds of foods that were readily available in the Marianas, as well as plants that the first settlers or early inhabitants likely brought with them. For example, dokdok (seeded breadfruit), pandanus, and fadang (federico palm nuts) were indigenous to the islands. Meanwhile, lemmai (seedless breadfruit), bananas and sugarcane probably were introduced by the ancient Chamorros. Remains, such as fish bones and shells, indicate the kinds of sea creatures the Chamorros ate or actively sought on fishing expeditions. Evidence from pottery, such as pottery types and food residues, reveals storage methods or cooking techniques likely used by the natives. Changes in pottery styles also give a glimpse of the changing subsistence and settlement patterns of the islanders. Skeletal remains give information about Chamorro health and nutrition.

Spanish accounts describe customs related to food, including what kinds of foods were prepared or served at different occasions and the overall importance of food in Chamorro culture. For example, Chamorros were observed serving all their food at one time, as opposed to breaking up meals into different courses. In addition, ancient Chamorros spoke very little, if at all, while eating. Some records claim Chamorros ate a lot of food and ate

quickly, while other sources described Chamorros as moderate eaters. Despite these different descriptions, historic accounts agree that the ancient Chamorros valued sharing food.

## Chamorro health

According to archeological investigations at various sites in Guam, ancient Chamorros had good diets and ate nutritional foods. The earliest European visitors to the Marianas described the Chamorro natives as robust, corpulent and strong. Chamorros ate moderately and were, therefore, healthy, strong and lived to an old age. However, some archeological reports also show that islanders had periods of malnutrition and poor health.

Archeologists look at bones and teeth because they provide indicators of a population's health at a given time. Changes in bone can show when an individual or population is experiencing malnutrition, disease or other stresses. In

the Marianas, most nutritional stress occurred during periods of famine when food resources were scarce due to seasonal weather patterns, or natural disasters, such as flood, drought, typhoons, tsunamis or earthquakes. Skeletal remains of individuals who underwent such stresses would show defects or signs of improper growth—as well as signs of recovery and healing when resources were replenished or abundant.

While Chamorros were not necessarily tall by modern standards, the Spanish remarked upon their



# Chamorro food, diet

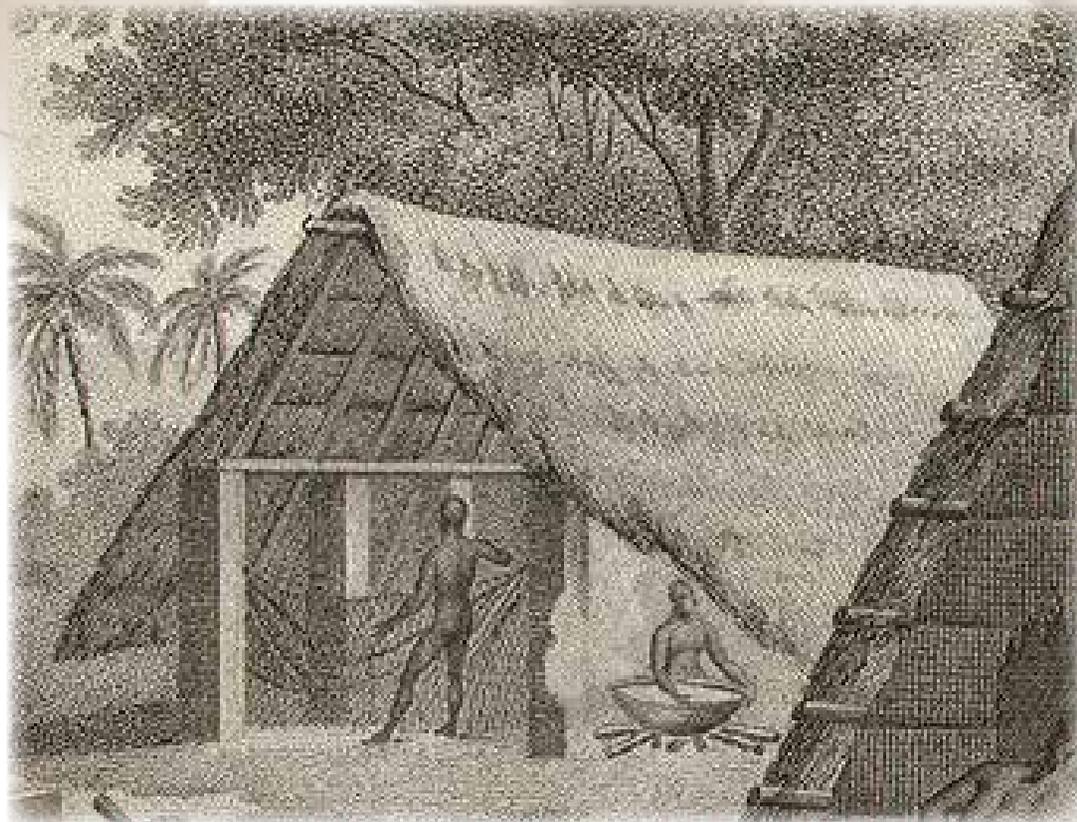


Illustration of a woman cooking. Guam Public Library

mai) varieties—rice, sugarcane (tupu), Federico nuts (fadang), ginger (asno), and different species of fish and other sea foods were frequently mentioned in early accounts of native food. Taro (suni) was a staple, cultivated for both the fiber and the edible leaves.

According to a preliminary archeological report by Takayama and Egami in 1971, rice was cultivated in the Mariana Islands, based on archeological studies of 1937 and 1943 conducted in Rota and Assongsong Islands. There was evidence of rice husk imprints on three sherds (pottery fragments) analyzed by another archeologist, Toshya Sato. The sherds predated the arrival of Europeans to the Mariana Islands.

Rice residues have also been found on stone pestles in an isolated excavation on Rota.

Rice was culturally important and served as a ritual food at different ceremonies, solemn feasts and funerals; it was also an important trade item and payment medium among villages and between islands. Anthropologist Laura Thompson wrote of how rice was the “chief food of the islands,” and Georg Fritz, the first German colonial administrator in the Northern Mariana Islands, wrote that coconuts, bananas, rice, and taro were the only cultivated plants of the ancient Chamorros. Interestingly, the Marianas is the only Pacific island group where rice was cultivated, suggesting a connection between the Chamorros and cultures from Island Southeast Asia.

There were no indigenous, four-legged animals in the Marianas. Domestic animals such as pigs, chickens, cats, dogs, pygmy quails, spotted deer, painted quails, goats, cattle and carabao were introduced to Guam during the Spanish period (1665-1898). The only mammals in ancient times were two species of bats: the large fruit-eating “flying fox” called fanihi and a small insectivorous species called pajesjes. Fanihi were relished by the Chamorros as food. Jungle fowl in the Northern Marianas, freshwater eels, freshwater shrimps and coconut crabs (ayuyu) were other sources of food for ancient Chamorros.

Seafood was the most important protein in the diet of the ancient Chamorro. Chamorros were expert fishermen who knew different and ingenious methods of fishing. Archeological sites have uncovered many fishhooks and stone sinkers (poio). Fish remains (i.e., bones, scales, teeth and more) have been found, and writers of the Spanish period describe different reef fish and inshore fishes, including flying fishes, mañahak (juvenile rabbit fish), atulai (big-eye scad), lagua (parrot fish), clams, sea urchins, and hachuman (*Decapterus* sp.) as important to the Chamorro people. The bones of dolphins, marlins, sharks and other deep sea fish have also been found, along with some reports of turtle remains at archeological excavations.

Early European explorers and missionaries have written and described foods, fishing practices and fishing gear of the Chamorros. In 1565, Spanish explorer Major Esteban Rodriguez talked about their encounter with Chamorros who came alongside their ship and traded rice, fish, yams, bananas, coconuts, ginger, and other products from the land—all for iron nails, which could be used to make tools, such as fishhooks. Further study of this particular account tells us about the rich resources of the land, the desire for new and different tools and implements, and reciprocity or trade between the Chamorros and others.

## Chamorro cooking practices Social roles to do with food

Other than doing household chores and taking care of children, Chamorro women gathered food in the jungle and on the reef, fished with hand nets, made coconut oil, manufactured pots and cooked with other women. Women were also the ones who tilled and planted village garden plots. They made herbal medicines, and wove mats and other articles to display or store food. Chamorro men also tended gardens, as well as fished, built houses and canoes, worked wood and stone to fashion tools and other implements, and navigated the open ocean on deep sea fishing expeditions. They probably also cooked in the earth oven and made or repaired nets.

Although fishing was largely a man’s role, women and children did gather fish and shellfish in the lagoons. Women also worked cooperatively with men in net fishing using the

height and apparent physical strength. The average height of males based on skeletal remains ranged from 168 to 175 centimeters (about 5’5” to 5’10”) and 152 to 160 centimeters (about 5’2” to 5’6”) for females. Chamorro remains also show areas of large muscle attachments, possibly due to strenuous physical activities that were a part of daily life. Their diets probably had much to do with the general good health of the ancient Chamorros, although they did suffer from certain endemic diseases, such as yaws (a tropical skin and bone infectious disease), arthritis and anemia.

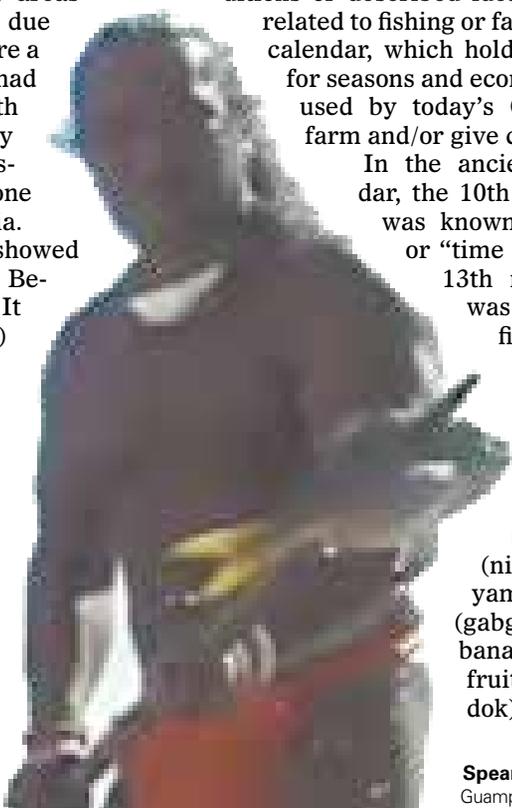
Adult tooth samples of both sexes showed signs of betel nut (pugua) chewing. Betel nut was introduced to the islands. It was chewed with piper leaf (pupulu) and slaked lime (afok), a social practice that had little to do with nutrition. However, chewing betel nut seemed to help prevent dental caries (cavities) because of the excess saliva produced while chewing. With its mildly narcotic effect, betel nut was chewed often and generously shared with others.

**Diet changes during year**

The Chamorro subsistence economy was based on cultivation of small clearings in the bush, as well as food collecting activities in the jungle, and fishing. Some of these activities were scheduled for certain times throughout the year. In the ancient Chamorro calendar, the year (sakkan) was divided into thirteen moons (pulan), similar to months in a Western calendar. Each month was characterized by certain weather conditions or described ideal times for activities related to fishing or farming. The Chamorro calendar, which holds cultural knowledge for seasons and economic pursuits, is still used by today’s Chamorros who fish, farm and/or give cultural advice.

In the ancient Chamorro calendar, the 10th moon, or Fanggalo’ was known as “planting time,” or “time to hoe the field.” The 13th moon, or Umagahaf, was a time to catch crayfish. The third moon, Umatalaf, was the time to catch gatafe, or red snapper.

The diet of ancient Chamorros consisted of coconuts (niyok), yams (nika and dago), wild yams (gado’), arrowroot (gabgab), and other roots; bananas (chotda), breadfruit—both seeded (dok-dok) and seedless (lem-



Spearfishing. Photo from I Tinituhon, Guampedia Collection



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# A Taste of Guam

## WE'RE MOVING!

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California Pizza Kitchen is in the midst of moving to our new home at The Plaza Shopping Center in Tumon. Situated in the heart of Pleasure Island, right across DFS Galleria, CPK will open its doors in mid-February 2019. The new home for hearth-baked pizzas will feature the classic pizza counter in a modern, chic setting that you're going to love, along with a separate bar area that'll be perfect for happy hour cocktails. Follow us on Facebook and Instagram where we'll announce our exact opening date. Stay tuned—CPK reimagination is on the way!

RESTAURANT INFO

# ANCIENT: Healthy diet

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chenchulu (large drag net), the tekken (gill net) and the lagua' (hand net).

Ancient Chamorro society was divided into two different castes: the upper caste was known as chamorri, and the lower caste, mangachang. The chamorri were further divided into two classes: the upper class matua, and the middle class achaot. Some members of the achaot class were matua who had been demoted, and others were assistants to matua.

The chamorri lived along the beaches or close to the sea, while the mangachang lived inland in the jungles and hills.

Labor among the Chamorros was divided by class. Men of the upper class, for example, built canoes and manufactured shell "money." Upper class men also engaged in warfare, sea fishing, sailing and exchange.

Only chamorri owned land in ancient Chamorro society. They did not use slaves but rather, they had servants who worked the land for them. Mangachang, who could not own land, had to ask permission from the chamorri for the privilege to plant food. They cultivated vegetables and fruits, a portion of which they would give the chamorri landowners. They also were forbidden to fish in the ocean or eat fish and shellfish from the sea, nor could they build or use hooks, nets or spears. Instead, they could fish in freshwater rivers and streams by hand or with clubs, and eat eels (asuli) which the upper classes would not touch because of food taboos. The chamorri also would not eat large-scaled fish or shark, which was considered a dangerous enemy.

The interaction between the classes related to food exchanges was described by the Spanish friar Fray Juan Pobre, who lived among the Chamorros in Rota in 1602. He wrote:

*"The people living along the shore have an abundance of fish; those who live inland have an abundance of agricultural produce. Consequently, they arrange exchanges, trading fish for rice, for tubers and for other varieties of fruit that the land produces. They have high regard for the large trees that are called orimayes [i.e., lemmai or seedless breadfruit]—with good reason for the fruit provides their daily sustenance, serving instead of bread."*

## Preparation of food

Evidence of fire has been found in many archeological sites. Blackened pottery sherds (or fragments), earth ovens and rocks that have been set up for fire were found at archeological excavation sites. Evidence

of shells that had either been burned or boiled have also been recovered.

The main methods of cooking used by the Chamorros was baking or roasting in earth ovens (chahan), boiling in earthenware pots, and roasting on embers (peha). Similar to other Pacific island cultures, ancient Chamorros cooked in the chahan by covering their food with hot stones and leaves and placing them on the embers (peha). Few foods were eaten raw. Mañahak (tiny juvenile rabbit fish) were caught in schools at certain periods, dried in the sun and stored for future consumption. Breadfruit was sliced and dried and could be kept for a long time during periods when the fruit was lacking. Turtle, bats and a small number of birds were eaten, but were not the main source of protein for the ancient Chamorros. Rice was the preferred starch and was husked with a wooden pestle (falu') in a mortar (lusong). Boiled rice was called alagan. Cooked rice could also be formed into rice cakes, which were used at special gatherings and ritual ceremonies.

At feasts, rice and grated coconut was made into a broth or stew called atole, in addition to salted fish. The Chamorros baked root crops, such as dagu (yam) and suni (taro). Coconut milk was drunk in ancient

times and coconut cream, made by straining grated, ripe coconut, was used in many dishes, as it is today.

Ancient Chamorros preserved food by drying in the sun, salting, or through a fermentation process of soaking. For example, breadfruit and yams would be soaked in the ocean for hours before burying them in underground pits. Lemon or some sort of citrus was available to the ancient Chamorros, and they could easily have chemically cooked their foods.

During times of famine, less desirable foods, such as fadang (fredrico palm nuts), pandanus fruit, wild taro and wild yams, were eaten. These foods were considered less tasty and more difficult to prepare and process, and so were reserved for times when more desirable foods were scarce. For example, after disasters like typhoons, Chamorros gathered fadang nuts which were soaked in water to extract the poison, dried in the sun, and ground in a stone mortar for flour, and baked.

Many people mistakenly think the intoxicating beverage tuba, formed from the fermented sap of the coconut bud, was present in ancient times. In fact, tuba was introduced by immigrants from the Philippines during the Spanish Era.

## Salt

The Chamorros preserved certain foods using salt formed naturally from evaporated seawater. Salt water from waves breaking along the island's coast could get trapped in depressions in the rocky shoreline. The water would evaporate leaving salt deposits behind which could be collected. Asiga (salt) Point in Malojloj may have been one of the places where natives would have had access to natural sea salt. In addition to using it for preservation, salt may also have been a trade commodity.

and the savannas.

Early historical accounts, such as those by Louis Freycinet in the early 19th century, describe three simple gardening tools that are likely similar to the gardening tools used by ancient Chamorros. The dagau and tanum are pointed wooden digging sticks. Dagau was made of the mangrove or gâgo and served as a mattock, pick and planting stick, a pole for carrying heavy objects, and as a defensive weapon. Tanum was used for planting taro and for breaking coconuts. The akooa, described to be like a fusinos or hoe, was a 5-foot long pole with a flat, sharp stone three inches wide and 1.5 inches thick, fastened to the wood.

One of the most visible ancient objects found at many archeological sites in the Mariana Islands is the stone mortar (lusong), which was used with a pestle (lomok). The stone mortar was used to prepare Chamorro medicine and food. This tool was used even up through 20th century, prewar Guam for husking rice, grinding Federico nuts and crushing herbs.

Although not found in ancient archeological sites, it was noted in historical records that ancient Chamorros had exceptional skills in plaiting and weaving with various plant materials. Mats and baskets, following ancient models, are still made and used, and, to a certain extent, have been retained. Mats (guafak) were woven primarily by women and could be used for drying rice and serving food. Rectangular baskets (kottot) woven from panadanus leaves were used to present ceremonial offerings or gifts of rice. There were also portable baskets woven to carry betel nut, and larger baskets for carrying weapons and food during warfare activities.

## Healthy diet

The diet of the ancient Chamorro people consisted mostly of tree and root starches, fruits and leaves from different plants and trees.

They also ate a variety of seafood, crustaceans, fruit bat and jungle fowl. Archeological data provide evidence that the Chamorro people had a healthy diet and lived relatively long lives.

Their use of fire, pottery, tools and other gathering and cooking implements tell us that they had a complex system of gathering, cultivating, fishing, preserving and cooking.

## Tools for processing

Detail illustration from the Guam Public Library's Rare Illustrations entitled Chamorro Customs

The ancient Chamorros used different kinds of tools for fishing and for cultivating and processing different kinds of fruits and tubers that made up much of their diets.

Archeologists have found red-slipped pottery and marine shell tools and ornaments recovered from small beach and lagoon-side Pre-Latte Era encampments (1500 BC- 1000 AD). Fishing gear used by the natives, including numerous shell hooks and gorges, points and shanks of hooks, stone and shell weights, and bone needles for making and repairing nets have also been found in archeological sites. The rims of the Tridacna gigas (giant clam) shell were used as scrapers or knives.

Late in the Latte Era (1000 to 1521), rice was added to tree and root crops. Larger pottery vessels dating from this period that have been recovered from various archeological sites were most likely signs that the Chamorros were beginning to store food. The ancient Chamorros must have engaged in extensive pottery manufacture because fragments of pottery containers can be found in the jungle, beaches, mountains,



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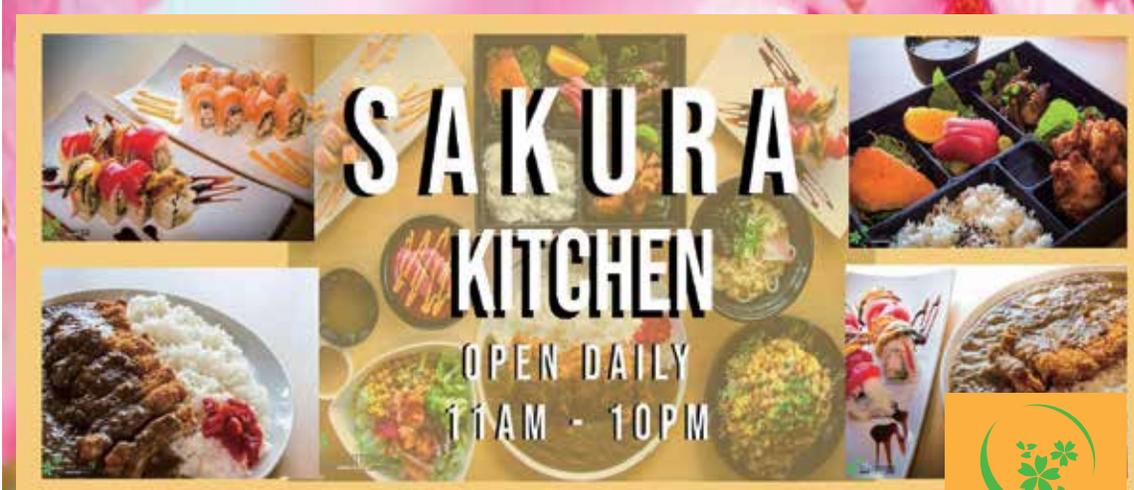
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# Sakura offers taste of Japan!



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# A Taste of Guam

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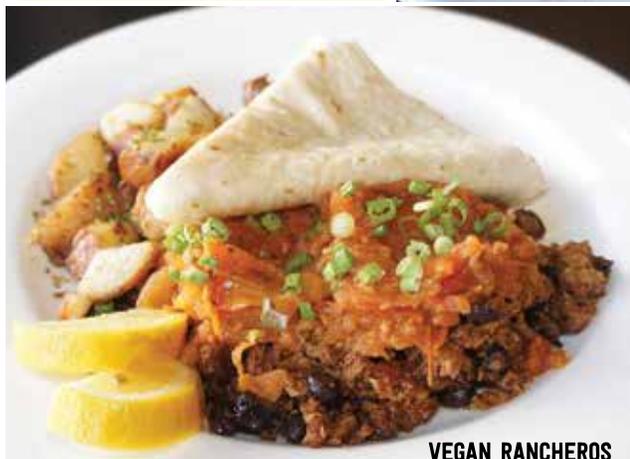


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## Fall in love with our Valentine's dinners

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### Celebrate Love

Share in the romance with a feast at Taste or an intimate Italian-themed dinner at Prego.

For reservations or more information, call 647.1020.



### RESTAURANT INFO

# A Taste of Guam



**Thank you for your service**

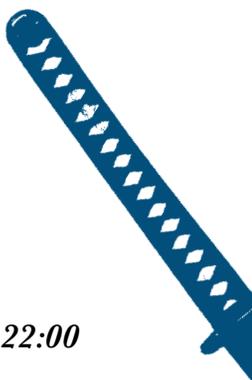


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## Issin Japanese Restaurant

4th floor in The Westin Resort Guam  
Lunch M-S 11:30 to 14:00 Dinner daily 18:00 to 22:00  
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### RESTAURANT INFO