

Yes, iguana does taste like chicken



According to Boí, a former chef at one of Bonaire's hotels, the main use of iguana is for "sòpi di yuana" or iguana soup. It tastes just like chicken soup and the meat is very soft and tender. But if you use a

very large, old iguana it will be like using a large, old chicken: tough.

Iguana for strength

Locals also believe that sòpi di yuana and "yuana stobá" (iguana stew) are good for the health. They encourage sick or old people to eat it to get stronger. There is also the belief that if a man eats a lot of iguana he will have "hopi forsa" or much strength. Contrary to what many people believe, iguana is not an endangered species and "sòpi di yuana" is a traditional food for special occasions on Bonaire.

Cooking it

You can cook the iguana with or without the skin. But if you leave the skin on, you must clean the iguana like you clean both a chicken and a fish. You dip it in hot water like you would to remove the feathers from a chicken and you must then scrape it to remove the scales, as you would a fish. maybe this is why Boí prefers it without the skin. he says it tastes better, too.

Boí's recipe

Ingredients:

One iguana (at least two feet (60 cm) long prepare and cut up as described below)

One can whole Italian tomatoes

One large onion, chopped

Three stalks of celery, chopped

Three table-

spoons of

Yerba Hole,

chopped. you can sub-

stitute basil for Yerba Hole which is a local herb

Three medium potatoes, diced

Two cups of iguana stock (or substitute chicken or turkey stock)

About six ounces (200 gm) fine noodles

Salt and pepper to taste

Preparation:

First, catch your iguana! This can be done with a long pole with a noose at the end or, if you are quick enough, with your hands.

Next, clean it well (see above).

Cut the iguana into pieces about two inches (5 cm) long.

Put the iguana in a large pot, cover well with water and simmer for about one hour or until the meat becomes soft. Skim the surface several times.

Add tomato, onion, yerba hole, celery, noodles and stock.

Simmer until the vegetables and noodles begin to soften.

Add the potatoes and cook another ten minutes.

Add salt and pepper to taste

Serve hot with bread, crackers or funchi (cornmeal pudding).

Bon appetit!

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