



Sugar Apple

Posts From The Caribbean

Buss Up Shut

Just a warning...Devica doesn't measure. I'm not even sure she owns a set of measuring cups and spoons. So her recipes tend to be given in terms of handfuls of this and spoonfuls of that. Making roti is not like making angel food cake so it's not necessary to be too exact in the measuring. If you don't have a tawa or a flame tamer, you can cook your buss up shut in a skillet, preferably cast iron, or on a cast iron grill pan. Devica always uses her own baking powder from Trinidad, the American type not being to her liking. But whatever you find at the store will be fine. She won't use any of my three rolling pins either. She keeps her own Trinidadian version, called a bailna, at our house specifically for roti-making.

1 handful of flour per small roti (we made 6 roti and I'd guess Dede used about 3 cups of flour)

2 tablespoons of butter, at room temperature

2 teaspoons of brown demerara sugar

a palmful of baking powder, probably about 4 tablespoons

water to moisten the dough, about 3/4 of a cup

cooking oil and more room temperature butter

more flour for your work surface

Mix the flour, butter, brown sugar and baking powder in a bowl with your hand, pinching the butter to incorporate it all through the flour. Add the water, a little bit at a time, bringing the dough together with your hand and kneading a few times. According to Devica, the dough should not be too soft or too hard (um, thanks Dede). Basically, you're looking for something similar to a bread dough but still a little sticky. Add a little cooking oil to the dough, about 1/2 to 1 teaspoon. This keeps the dough from sticking to the bowl. Cover the bowl with a kitchen towel and let it sit for about 30 minutes. After 30 minutes, form the dough into balls about 2-3 inches in diameter and roll the balls between your palms to make them smoother. Use a little flour on your hands if the dough is sticking to them. Put them back in the bowl (or on the counter if they won't fit in the bowl) and let them sit for 10 minutes.

After 10 minutes, flour a work surface and begin to roll out your roti. In a small bowl, mix some cooking oil, about 1/3 cup, with a little room temperature butter and mix it together. Roll (or as Dede would say, baily) the roti one at a time to about 1/8 to 1/4 of

an inch thick. Using a pastry brush, or your fingers, spread the surface of the roti with a thin sheen of the butter/oil mixture and then sprinkle with a little flour, just a little. Make a slit in the roti from the middle to one outside edge.

Starting from one of the pointy ends, roll the roti up like a jellyroll and press down on the top a bit. Put the rolled up dough aside and let it rest for a bit while you make your curry (or for at least 15 minutes).

Heat your tawa or skillet over medium high heat. In the meantime, flatten the roti balls and roll them out until they're quite thin, about 1/8 of an inch. Brush the tawa with a little of the oil and butter (but just a little, you're not frying the roti). Put a roti on the tawa and brush the top with a little of the oil/butter mixture. Let the roti cook for about 30 seconds and then turn it over and brush the other side with oil. Let it cook for another 30 seconds and then turn it once more and brush with oil. Let it cook a final 30 seconds or so. The roti will start to puff up in places and will have little browned patches. You may need to adjust the heat if it's browning the roti too much.

Take the roti off the tawa and let it cool for a few seconds. Fold it in quarters and then unfold it. Throw it up in the air (not too high, you're not tossing a pizza) and clap it between your hands a few times. Be careful - it will be very hot. It will start to tear a little and become a little ragged in the middle. That's good.

Finish cooking the rest of the roti and then keep them in an airtight container lined with waxed paper until you're ready to eat.

At a party in Trinidad, you'll find a huge drinks cooler lined with paper and full of buss up shut. That's a good party. One note, these roti are not meant to be wrapped around a filling of curry, as some roti are in the Caribbean. Rather, you tear off small pieces to eat along with your meal. The amount of dough will make 6-7 small roti. Serve with your favorite curry.

<http://www.abigailblake.com/sugarapple>

from the article *Introducing Devica* posted on April 23, 2009