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# Package 78, Script 1

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Making Traditional Mustard in Moba Country, Togo

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**Notes to Broadcaster**

This script illustrates how we can harness traditional knowledge to make quality food which not only has healing powers, but brings in a good income. As the guest relates in this interview, traditional mustards (along with other traditional foods) are becoming more popular these days, and there are good economic opportunities to make and sell these foods, even exporting them to Europe and other places. This is a good opportunity for women’s groups, for other organizations, and for individuals working together. As a broadcaster, you can help popularize traditional foods by researching which foods are being made in your community and by interviewing those people who are operating small businesses to produce and export these foods.

The scientific name for the African locust plant is *Parkia biglobosa.* See the list of common names for the plant in the information sources after the script.

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**Narrator:** Today’s program explains how to make traditional mustard from African locust bean seeds. The African locust bean is a medicinal plant whose leaves are used for treating fever, bronchitis and intestinal parasitic diseases. Its bark and roots are prescribed as remedies against sterility, bronchitis, tracheitis, pneumonia, leprosy and venereal diseases. Its yellow pulp is sweet and delicious.

To learn more about this wonderful plant, we will speak with Mama Tandjome, a very talented old lady who will tell us how she processes her African locust bean seeds, called “djoni” in northern Togo, into traditional mustard or “touonou” (*use local words*).

**Mama Tandjome:** Thank you, my child. As with everything else, we will work step by step. The first step is to winnow the African locust bean seeds to separate them from the parts of the plant we won’t use. Winnowed seeds are then boiled for at least 24 hours in a large amount of water. After cooking, we pound the seeds in a large mortar with a little bit of fine sand.

**Narrator:** Sand? But why?

**Mama Tandjome:** Sand helps us to quickly separate the seeds from their hull. After pounding the seeds with a little sand, we wash the whole mixture - seeds, sand and hull - with a large amount of clean water in traditional strainers made of baked clay. After washing, the seeds are cooked again but, this time, in a small amount of water for about nine hours. We add potash during cooking to produce bubbles which get rid of more waste materials.

**Narrator:** So after pounding the seeds with sand, we wash the whole mixture in water, then cook it again in a small amount of water with added potash for nine hours. Is this right?

**Mama Tandjome:** Yes. When the cooking is over, the seeds are left to cool, and then we pour them in our baked clay strainers. After that, we crush a fermenting agent called “Touognokt” and sprinkle it over the surface of each strainer containing seeds. Finally, we add two to three peppers, two pieces of charcoal, a kind of thyme called “djanounoubk” – an herb which is supposed to reject bad spirits – and the mixture is left to sit in the strainer for two days.

**Narrator**: Okay, this is a complex recipe and I want to make sure listeners understand each step correctly. So let’s summarize. First, you winnow the seeds, and then you boil them in a large amount of water for 24 hours. After cooking, you pound the seeds in the mortar with a little sand. And then you wash them in a strainer and cook them again, but this time in a smaller amount of water mixed with a little potash. After cooking, you pour the seeds into a strainer and sprinkle a fermenting agent over the surface of each strainer. Finally, you add peppers, two pieces of charcoal and djanounoubk.

**Mama Tandjome:** That is exactly right.

**Narrator:** *(in a surprised tone)* I had no idea that making traditional mustard took so much energy and attention! But, Mama Tandjome, as soon as you talk about adding ingredients like peppers, it sounds to me as if the processing is almost finished.

**Mama Tandjome:** Exactly, my child. This proves that you are listening to me!

**Narrator:** Yes indeed! Let’s take a short musical break. We’ll be back in a minute.

***Musical break: “Touonou gben toukala gben” by Claire Yadou.***

**Narrator:** We are talking with Mama Tandjome, who is explaining how to make traditional mustard. So, after we cook the seeds for the second time, sprinkle the fermenting agent over the strainers and add peppers, charcoal and djanounoubk, are we finished?

**Mama Tandjome:** Almost. After two days of storing the mixture, we are ready for the final step. Remove the peppers, charcoal and djanounoubk from the strainer. Then pour the seeds into a clean pan which has been sun dried. Then we cook peanuts in water for a few hours, adding potash from time to time.

If you have four bowls of African locust seeds, you will need one and a half or two bowls of peanuts. Blend the African locust seeds with the peanuts and potash. Now we have fresh mustard paste! The paste must be well-dried, so as not to spoil later on. After drying, the paste can be worked into different shapes: squares, balls, cylinders, or whatever shape you like. Then your traditional mustard, called “touonou” in our dialect, is ready to use.

**Narrator:** Just to summarize these last steps again, Mama Tandjome … after storing the seeds for two days, we remove the peppers, charcoal and djanounoubk and pour the seeds into a sun-dried pan. We cook peanuts with a little potash and then blend them with the locust seeds, dry and shape them. Is that correct?

**Mama Tandjome:** You really have been listening, my child. Good for you!

**Narrator:** Thank you, Mama Tandjome. Now our listeners should be able to make traditional mustard at home! Today’s lesson is essential, because our ancestral culinary art is being very quickly lost. But, Mama Tandjome, I have just one more question for you. Why should we go to all this trouble to make traditional mustard? What is so important about mustard?

**Mama Tandjome:** Humm! I understand your curiosity. It is true that, beyond its appearance and its simple uses, mustard has other much more noble powers.

**Narrator:** We have to take a quick break, and then I am eager to hear your answer.

***Musical break: “Waatpoôl E kan fit k gnam, a la bin” by Thimothé Yampoo Lari.***

**Mama Tandjome:** Yes, mustard is very important. It is used in almost every dish at home. It is extremely important for our culture. For example, during traditional weddings in our society, the bride prepares a large amount of sauce made only from mustard. This sauce, mixed with millet paste, is shared among families, neighbours or villages. The same holds true for birthday ceremonies or christenings. It is an honour for a woman to always have some in her kitchen.

On top of that, mustard is undoubtedly a product with healing powers. Doctors recommend it often, especially to treat high blood pressure. It is also used as an antibiotic.

**Narrator:** I have heard that traditional mustard is becoming more popular these days.

**Mama Tandjome:** Yes, the production of traditional mustard is growing daily. Many women in both rural and urban areas are becoming prosperous selling it. Nowadays, some women’s groups specialize in processing mustard which is exported regionally and to Europe.

In summary, traditional mustard has many socio‑economic benefits to offer in reclaiming its place in African kitchens.

**Narrator:** Thank you, Mama Tandjome. Thank you very much for all your valuable information. You have helped us to re-discover a part of our own culture. Good-bye everybody! See you next time.

## Acknowledgements

Contributed by: Fati Labdiedo, director, Radio Mecap, Dapaong, Togo.

Reviewed by: Francóis Mazaud, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Agro-Industries and Post-Harvest Management Service.

## Information sources

Rural women’s groups in Kantindi.

Daniel Fortin, Modou Lô and Guy Maynart. *Plantes médicinales du Sahel.* CECI & ENDA, September 1988.

### Common names for Parkia biglobosa

English: African locust bean

Hausa: 'Dorawa.

Kanuri: Runo

French:Néré, arbre à farine, caroubier africain

Bambara: Néré or nété

Mooré: dooaga or rooaga

Gourmantché: budugu

Traditional mustard is called *soumbala* in Mali and *nétérou* in Senegal.

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