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Welcome to SAAFoST's
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***Mondia Whitei* steamed idombolo twisted rolls**

Dr Hennie Fisher

Department of Consumer and Food Sciences

University of Pretoria

hennie.fisher@up.ac.za

+27 12 420 3780



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This document serves as an instruction guide for a real-time virtual cooking demonstration, conducted by Dr Hennie Fisher from the Department of Consumer and Food Sciences at the University of Pretoria, on Wednesday 22 September 2021, at 12:30 – 13:15 (SAST).

The aim is that attendees of the SAAFoST 24th Biennial Congress will virtually cook along and make these steamed breads in the style of *idombolo* at home, but with an added indigenous flavour and with a *Huā juǎn* (Mandarin twisted roll) shaped aesthetic. Steamed breads have a long and rich history in the South African cuisine, and these modern versions have been adapted to celebrate a delicious indigenous flavouring, *Mondia whitei*.

Steamed breads are made and eaten in many different South African cultures, particularly in the Free State, Eastern Cape, and in the land-locked kingdom of Lesotho, where they are also called *Leqebekoane* (steamed wheat bread), *Monepola oa poone ea thooko* (maize bread) or *Ntsoanatsike* (sorghum bread) (Coughlan & Hattingh, 2020; Nkhabutlane, du Rand & de Kock, 2014). In South Africa, they are mainly consumed by the Xhosa people and are often referred to as “*idombolo*” by rural communities, who prepare a sweeter version (Garutsa & Nekhwevha, 2016). The main ingredients used in steamed bread is wheat flour, salt, water and yeast. This yields a round, white-grey loaf with a moist, soft inner texture. These breads are mainly steamed over an open fire or a gas ring, in a saucepan or pot. Many South Africans prefer steamed bread for being more filling and heavier than commercially produced bread. Combining the bread with stews and curries (often made on top/inside of such dishes) makes a perfectly paired meal, as the bread soaks up the flavour and sauces of any hearty protein or vegetarian dish (Manley & Nel, 1999).

Mondia whitei, also known as White’s ginger, tonic root or in the Zulu language as “*umondi*” or “*mundi*,” is a woody perennial indigenous to Africa (Aremu, Cheesman, Finnie & Van Staden, 2011). Within South Africa, it is mostly found in KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo. This tuberous rootstock is used as an appetite stimulant or as a tea. Moreover, it is used particularly as a flavour enhancer in cooked meats (Aremu *et al.*, 2011) and preservative (Oketch-Rabah, 2012). The *Mondia whitei* varies in taste depending on whether a young or mature tuber is consumed. A young tuber tends to have a sweeter flavour while a mature tuber is somewhat bitter in taste (Aremu *et al.*, 2011). Additionally, the taste profile has parallels to the flavours of vanilla, ginger, marzipan, cinnamon and liquorice, reasons why it has often been used as an aphrodisiac (Oketch-Rabah, 2012). The tuber contains essential micronutrients which contributes to a decrease in many deficiency diseases. *Mondia whitei* has significant nutritional properties and provides a high intake of the fat-soluble vitamins (A, D, E and K),

magnesium, zinc, iron, calcium and protein, giving us reason to celebrate this African tuber as a potentially novel and natural flavour enhancer.

In preparation for the virtual real-time cooking demonstration, attendees should have the following equipment and ingredients at hand, measured according to the following recipes. Please follow the following link to get access to the virtual demonstration and prepare along to make these delicious, steamed breads:

Recipe ingredients (for 10 steamed buns folded in Mandarin roll – *Huā juǎn* fashion):

1. 400 g cake flour
2. 10 g (1 standard packet South African) instant yeast
3. 15 ml (1 tablespoon) sugar
4. 7,5 ml (½ tablespoon) salt
5. 5 ml (1 teaspoon) ground *Mondia whitei* bark (found in your SAAFoST goodie bag)
6. 240 ml warm water
7. 10 ml oil - sunflower, canola, EVOO (extra virgin olive oil) etc.
8. 60 ml oil - sunflower, canola, EVOO (extra virgin olive oil) etc.
9. 45 ml (3 tablespoons) of any one of the following: sesame seeds, poppy seeds, nigella seeds, chopped parsley

Additional equipment required:

- Freestanding mixer, dough-hook attachment and larger mixer bowl (the dough could also be mixed and kneaded by hand)
- A large flat-bottomed bowl that the mixer bowl can freely stand in
- Kettle with boiled water
- A damp tea-towel
- Rolling pin
- Pastry brush (or just a spoon)
- Large non-serrated kitchen knife
- 1 chopstick (or the handle of a thin wooden spoon)
- A large pot with a heavy lid (such as old fashioned cast-iron or more modern enamelled pots)
- 3 small metal objects with a flat bottom and top, such as small tomato paste tins that are cut open on both sides, that can act as a trivet inside the pot – refer to Figure 1 below – even though this is a custom-made pot steamer, the set-up discussed here will simulate this piece of equipment
- A smaller plate that can rest on the trivet (see previous bullet) with a small cloth on-top
- A larger plate that will fit inside the pot, but that is large enough to rest all 10 steamed buns on
- A stove, induction hob, gas ring

Do in advance:

- Please measure out all the ingredients (nr 1 to 7 in ingredients list) – set aside (the water should be as hot as possible without burning your finger when tested – but the water will cool down, and may need warming up again);
- Mix the oil and your chosen seeds (nr 8 & 9 in ingredients list) together in a cup with a large pastry brush – set aside;
- Have ready and operational a freestanding mixer with a dough-hook attachment and the mixer bowl;
- Have ready all the other equipment, which will be discussed and used in the demonstration.

Order of the cook-along demonstration:

1. Make the base dough
2. Let it proof in warm water
3. Discussion of *Mondia whitei*, bark, roots, leaves, climbers, seed pods
4. Roll out dough
5. Spread on oil and seeds
6. Cut shapes
7. Fold *Huā juǎn* shapes using chopstick (refer to figure 2)
8. Proof for a short period
9. Prepare steamer

- 10. Place *idombolo* in steamer
- 11. Questions and answers
- 12. Remove *idombolo* from steamer and serve



Figure 1: Steamer pot setup (<https://amazon.com/>) (this specific piece of equipment can also be used instead of the pot and trivet set-up explained in the equipment list)



Figure 2: *Huā juǎn* (<https://redhousespice.com/>)

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