

EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CULTURE AND HEALTH ON  
NIGERIAN FOOD BLOGS

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study explores the relationship between culture and health on Nigerian food blogs through content and componential analysis. I sought to understand what elements constitute certain dishes, such as the staple of “soup” through sampling common Nigerian recipes discussed across selected blogs.

Out of over 54 soups with over 220 variations, it was discovered that only seven of these soups had consistent patterning across the blogs sampled. An additional finding was a strong relationship between food and health emphasized on the blogs.

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS USED**

&	and
%	Percentage
#	Number
e.g	Example
pg	Page
pgs	Pages
CPA	Chartered Professional Accountant
LIN	Lose it Nigeria
BBM	Black Berry Messenger
ID	Identification
Dob	Dobby's Signature
Don	Dooney's Kitchen
9ja	9jafoodie
Afro	Afrolems
Nig.	Nigerian Lazy Chef
Sisi	Sisi Jemimah
1q/1qf	1q Food Platter
Rec.	All Nigerian Recipes
Foods	All Nigerian Foods
Wives	Wivestownhall/Nigerian Women Blog

## GLOSSARY

### Nigerian Vegetables/Leaves

LOCAL NAME	OTHER NAMES	INFORMATION	PAGE NUMBERS
Achara/achala (Igbo)	<b>English Name:</b> elephant grass <b>Scientific/Botanical Name:</b> <i>Pennisetum purpureum</i> <b>Other Local Names:</b> Ireke / Ireke Obo (Yoruba), Takanda/Kara (Hausa), Kangale saudu (Kanuri), Asara (Ibibio), Mbriem (Akwa Ibom).	<b>Substitute:</b> asparagus. <b>Function:</b> For cooking Nigerian soups like: ofe achara (Igbo soup) etc	<b>98, 108</b>
Afang (Efik)	<b>English Name:</b> Wild spinach <b>Scientific/Botanical Name:</b> <i>Gnetum africanum</i> <b>Family:</b> <i>Gnetaceae</i> <b>Other Local name:</b> okazi/ukazi (Igbo)	<b>Substitutes:</b> No similar substitute for afang/okazi/ukazi leaf. Otherwise one could use either spinach or kale leaves. <b>Functions:</b> It could act as a thickener for soups. Could be used in Nigerian soups like: afang soup, okazi/ukazi soup (called “ofe ukazi”/ “okazi” in Igbo), edikaikong/edikang Ikong soup, etc <b>Pharmacological Beliefs:</b> could be eaten to relieve constipation. It is a rich source of protein, essential and non-essential amino acids (See more on pgs. 64-65 & 150).	<b>15, 26, 59, 60-68, 70-71, 74, 97-99, 104-105, 108, 125, 138, 140, 141, 143, 145, 150</b>

<b>LOCAL NAME</b>	<b>OTHER NAMES</b>	<b>INFORMATION</b>	<b>PAGE NUMBERS</b>
<b>Atama leaves (Efik)</b>	<b>English Name:</b> Bush apple leaves <b>Scientific/Botanical Name:</b> <i>Heinsia crinite</i> <b>Other Local Name:</b> Obenetietien/obeletientien/beletete/beletientien ( <b>Niger-Delta/Deltans/Edo</b> )	<b>Substitutes:</b> bitter leaves, scent/basil leaves. <b>Function:</b> Used for local soups like abak atama soup	<b>63, 70, 76-80, 83-86, 139, 140, 143, 150</b>
<b>Efirin/Efinrin (Yoruba)</b>	<b>English Name:</b> Basil leaves, which are called scent leaves in Nigeria <b>Other Local Names:</b> Nchuawn/ Nchuawun/ Nchuawun/Nchanwu/ Nchawu ( <b>Igbo</b> ), Ntong ( <b>Efik</b> )	<b>Substitutes:</b> Curry leaves or parsley leaves	<b>76, 77, 84, 86, 113, 119, 123, 124, 132</b>
<b>Efo Igbo</b>	<b>English Name:</b> Eggplant leaves	<b>Substitute:</b> Garden egg leaves	<b>103</b>
<b>Efo tete or tete for short (Yoruba)</b>	<b>English Name:</b> Green Amaranth popularly known as green or calallo/callaloo by the Caribbeans	<b>Substitutes:</b> Ugu/ugwu leaves, spinach, kale or collard	<b>98 123, 130, 133, 145</b>
<b>Gbure (Yoruba)</b>	<b>English Name:</b> Water leaf <b>Scientific/Botanical Name:</b> <i>Talinum triangulare</i>	<b>Substitutes:</b> Malabar/ceylon Spinach (locally called amunututu in <b>Yoruba</b> ), spinach, watercress, lamb lettuce. <b>Function:</b> Could be used in Nigerian soups like: Ukwogho Etidot (called bitter leaf soup), Ewuro riro	<b>61-65, 67-68, 98, 101, 105, 122-123, 135, 145</b>
<b>Ogbono/Ogbo lo (Igbo)</b>	<b>English Name:</b> African wild mango <b>Scientific/Botanical Name:</b> <i>Irvingia gabonensis</i>	<b>Function:</b> For cooking Nigerian soups like: african wild mango (ogbono/apon) soup, okra soup, etc	<b>9, 16, 70, 110-120, 121-123, 125, 130, 138-141, 150</b>

LOCAL NAME	OTHER NAMES	INFORMATION	PAGE NUMBERS
	<b>Other Local Names:</b> Apon/Ugiri (Yoruba), Oro seeds (Yoruba)	<b>Pharmacological Beliefs:</b> Used locally for treating ailments (See more on pgs. 113-114 & 150)	
<b>Oha/Ora/Uha (Igbo)</b>	<b>Scientific/Botanical Name:</b> <i>Pterocarpus soyauxili</i>	<b>Functions:</b> For cooking and for traditional medicines. Could be used in Nigerian soups like: oha ( <i>Pterocarpus soyauxili</i> ) soup	<b>9, 71, 74, 112, 145</b>
<b>Okra/okro</b>	<b>Scientific/Botanical Name:</b> <i>Abelmoschus esculentus</i> <b>Other Names:</b> lady fingers	<b>Function:</b> For cooking Nigerian soups like okra soup, ogbono soup, etc <b>Pharmacological Beliefs:</b> Used locally for treating ailments (See more on pgs 125 & 150)	<b>16, 70, 94, 111-112, 118-119, 120-138, 140-141, 143-144, 150</b>
<b>Onugbu (Igbo)</b>	<b>English Name:</b> Bitter leaf <b>Scientific/Botanical Name:</b> <i>Vernonia amygdalina</i> <b>Other Local name:</b> ewuro (Yoruba)	<b>Substitute:</b> Utazi. <b>Functions:</b> For cooking and for traditional medicines. Could be used in Nigerian soups like bitter leaf soup (“ofe onugbu”), ogbono, egusi (melon) soup, okro, white soup, banga soup etc <b>Pharmacological Beliefs:</b> A herb used to treat ailments. Greenish water from washing bitter leaf could be used for medicinal purposes (See more on pgs 72 & 150)	<b>9, 16, 68-74, 87, 98, 99, 103, 143, 150</b>
<b>Shokoyokoto/ “shoko/soko” for short (Yoruba)</b>	<b>English Name:</b> Lagos spinach <b>Scientific name:</b> <i>Celosia argentea</i>	<b>Function:</b> It’s actually the main vegetable used in the preparation of the iconic “Efo riro” (Vegetable soup) and also sparingly added when cooking egusi	<b>76, 83, 98</b>

LOCAL NAME	OTHER NAMES	INFORMATION	PAGE NUMBERS
		soup, and palm fruit/nut soup.	
<b>Ugu/ugwu (Igbo)</b>	<b>English Name:</b> fluted pumpkin leaves, or pumpkin leaves <b>Scientific/Botanical Name:</b> <i>Telfairia occidentalis</i>	<b>Substitute:</b> Spinach, kale or collard <b>Functions:</b> For cooking and for traditional medicines (See more on pg 100). Could be used in Nigerian soups like: ogbono, egusi (melon) soup, okro etc	<b>63, 76-77, 84-85, 96, 98-108, 112, 115-119, 122, 124-125, 130, 133, 139-141, 150</b>
<b>Utazi leaves (Igbo)</b>	<b>Scientific/Botanical Name:</b> <i>Gongronema latifolium</i> <b>Other Local Name:</b> Arokeke/awede (Yoruba)	<b>Substitute:</b> bitter leaves. <b>Function:</b> For cooking Nigerian soups like: ogbono, egusi (melon) soup, okro etc	<b>88, 93-94, 97, 99, 104-105</b>
<b>Uziza leaves (Igbo)</b>	<b>English Name:</b> False cubeb leaves <b>Scientific/Botanical Name:</b> <i>Piper guineense</i> <b>Other Local Name:</b> Iyere/Aya Iyere (Yoruba) “etinkene” (Efik and Ibibio)	<b>Substitutes:</b> spinach, scent/basil leaves <b>Functions:</b> For cooking Nigerian soups like: ogbono, egusi (melon) soup, okro etc It also has aromatic flavor, as such, could be used as a flavour enhancer and it is used sparingly.	<b>84, 88, 93-94, 97-99, 103-108, 112-113, 116-119, 122, 124-125, 129-132, 135-136, 139-140</b>



## Other Common Nigerian Soup Ingredients

LOCAL INGREDIENTS	ABOUT INGREDIENTS	KIND OF INGREDIENTS	PAGE NUMBERS
Achara (Igbo)	Elephant grass	Leaves	98, 108
achi	<p><b>Scientific name:</b> <i>brachystegia eurycoma</i></p> <p><b>Substitute:</b> oatmeal blend</p>	Thickener	9, 70, 74, 87, 93-94, 97, 104
Agidi (Yoruba)	<p><b>About:</b> Made from fermented maize, sorghum or millet.</p> <p>It could be used to eat soups like ogbono and okra soup</p>	A side	114, 126
Akaun/kaun/keun/kanwa/akawun	<p><b>English Name:</b> Edible potash or cooking potash</p> <p><b>About:</b> It is a key ingredient which helps with the viscosity of soups mostly okra/ila asepo soups. Kaun helps with the stickiness of okra. Without it, your okra is likely to be flat.</p> <p><b>Substitute:</b> baking soda</p>	Thickener	124, 128, 134
Akpu (Igbo)	<p><b>Other Names:</b> Also called “santana” or “loi loi” or fufu/foo-foo in Nigeria.</p> <p><b>About:</b> It is solid/swallow made from fermented cassava paste.</p> <p>It is used to eat soups like bitter leaf (onugbu) soup, egusi soup, palm fruit soup, etc</p>	Swallow	65, 68, 69, 71, 80-81, 91, 96, 101, 114, 126
Akwu (Igbo) Banga (Niger Delta/Delta/Edo/Benin)	<p><b>English Name:</b> Palm fruit or nut (kernel)</p> <p><b>About:</b> Acts as a softener to most vegetables so cannot be</p>	Fruit/Nut	15, 16, 26, 59, 63, 70, 74-86, 113, 119, 121,

LOCAL INGREDIENTS	ABOUT INGREDIENTS	KIND OF INGREDIENTS	PAGE NUMBERS
<b>Abak (Efik/Akwa Ibom)</b>	used with any soft vegetable like water leaves.		<b>138-141, 143-145, 150</b>
<b>Obe eyin (Yourba)</b>	<b>Function:</b> Used for “banga” soup, “abak atama” and “ofe akwu” (banga stew)		
<b>Obey-ekpo (Itshekiri)</b>	It also has some pharmacological properties		
<b>Amiedi/abak mbakara (Urohobo)</b>	<b>(See more on pgs 81 &amp; 150)</b> <b>Substitute:</b> Tinned palm fruit extract/cream		
<b>Amala (Yoruba)</b>	<b>About:</b> Solid made from yam flour  It is used to eat soups like egusi, ogbono, okra soup, etc	Swallow	<b>72, 80-81, 91, 101, 114, 126</b>
<b>Ariwo (Yoruba)</b>	<b>English Name:</b> Calabash nutmeg/ African nutmeg	Spices	<b>89, 93, 94, 129</b>
<b>Ehuru/Ehu (Igbo)</b>	<b>Substitute:</b> Pepper soup spice		
<b>Ikpoosa/posa</b>			
<b>Iwo</b>			
<b>Iwun/Iyun</b>			
<b>Gudan Miya (Hausa)</b>			
<b>Asa fish (Igbo)</b>	<b>Scientific Name:</b> <i>Gymnarchus</i>	Fish	<b>85, 109, 117, 134</b>
<b>dansarki (Hausa)</b>			
<b>Eja osan (Yoruba)</b>			
<b>Asanka</b>	<b>English Name:</b> Native/clay pot	Local/traditional cooking utensil	<b>79</b>
<b>Assorted meat</b>	<b>About:</b> It is a combination of goat meat and its offals and cow parts like cow skin (kpomo/ponmo/canda/kanda), cow leg, cow foot, cow tripe (shaki) etc	Meat	<b>84-85, 93, 94, 103-105, 107, 109, 116-119, 130-131, 134-135</b>

<b>LOCAL INGREDIENTS</b>	<b>ABOUT INGREDIENTS</b>	<b>KIND OF INGREDIENTS</b>	<b>PAGE NUMBERS</b>
<b>Ata ijosi</b>	<b>English Name:</b> Dried pepper	Pepper	<b>83</b>
<b>Atagungun/atagigun (Yoruba)</b>	<b>English Name:</b> Cayenne or dried chilli pepper	Pepper	<b>83, 85, 119, 134</b>
<b>Ata-rodo (Yoruba)</b> <b>Ata-rugu (Hausa)</b> <b>Ose-oyibo/ose nsukka (Igbo)</b>	<b>English Name:</b> Habanero/scotch bonnet pepper	Pepper	<b>67, 73, 83-85, 93-94, 103-105, 107-109, 116-118, 128-129, 134-136</b>
<b>Atiako</b>	<b>Scientific Name:</b> <i>Aframomum subsericeum</i>	Spices	<b>78</b>
<b>Bendel chicken</b>	<b>English Name:</b> Stewing hen	meat	<b>89</b>
<b>Dogoyaro</b>	<b>Scientific Name:</b> <i>azadiracta indica</i>	Herbal (medicinal) leaves	<b>78</b>
<b>Ede (Igbo)</b>	<b>English Name:</b> Cocoyam <b>Substitute:</b> oatmeal blend, cocoyam flour or potato flour/puree or yam flour/powder – as substitutes for cooked cocoyam or cocoyam paste	Thickener	<b>8, 64, 70, 73-74, 87, 93-94, 138, 141</b>
<b>Egusi</b>	<b>English Name:</b> Melon seeds <b>Substitute:</b> Pumpkin seeds, almond seeds, Sesame seeds (benniseed), sunflower seeds or cashew nut seeds	Seed/thickener	<b>9, 16, 70, 73, 79, 90, 95-110, 112, 120, 139-144, 150</b>
<b>Eja aro (Yoruba)</b>	<b>English Name:</b> Clarias	Fish	<b>109</b>
<b>Eja Kika (Yoruba)</b>	<b>English Name:</b> Smoked Hake/used to refer to any specie of fin-fish	Fish	<b>117</b>
<b>Eja sawa/eja shawa (Yoruba)</b>	<b>English Name:</b> Dried Sardines/herring	Fish	<b>117</b>
<b>Ero belebelenti</b>	<b>English Name:</b> Black fungus mushroom	Vegetable	<b>133</b>

LOCAL INGREDIENTS	ABOUT INGREDIENTS	KIND OF INGREDIENTS	PAGE NUMBERS
<b>Evwere (Delta)</b>	<b>English Name:</b> Native/local clay bowl/plate <b>Substitute:</b> Wooden bowl	Local/traditional utensil	<b>79</b>
<b>Garri/eba</b>	<b>English Name:</b> Fried fermented cassava <b>Other Name:</b> Also known as cassava flakes <b>About:</b> It is one of the commonest swallows served with soups like afang soup, bitter leaf soup, palm fruit soup, egusi soup, ogbono soup, okra soup, etc amongst Nigerians	Swallow	<b>65, 71, 80, 91, 93, 101, 114, 126</b>
<b>Iru (Yoruba)</b> <b>Dawadawa (Hausa)</b>	<b>English Name:</b> Locust beans <b>Scientific name:</b> <i>parkia biglobosa</i> <b>Substitute:</b> Ogiri okpei	Local/traditional seasoning/spices	<b>9, 79, 83-84, 90, 93, 104-105, 108-109, 116-119, 124, 128, 131, 133-136, 146</b>
<b>Isam/mfi</b>	<b>English Name:</b> Periwinkle/periwinkle <b>Scientific name:</b> <i>Cerithidea obtuse</i> <b>Substitute:</b> Whelks/sea snails	Seafood	<b>67, 73, 83, 85, 93, 94, 117, 133-134, 146</b>
<b>Iyan (Yoruba)</b>	<b>English Name:</b> Pounded yam <b>About:</b> It is eaten with all kinds of Nigerian soups like bitter leaf soup, palm fruit soup, egusi soups, etc	Swallow and soup thickener	<b>71, 80, 101</b>
<b>Jan tatasei (Hausa)</b> <b>Tatashe(y) (Yoruba)</b>	<b>English Name:</b> (Red)bell pepper or sweet pepper <b>Scientific name:</b> <i>Capsicums</i>	Pepper	<b>85, 103, 105, 107-109, 113, 117-119, 123,</b>

LOCAL INGREDIENTS	ABOUT INGREDIENTS	KIND OF INGREDIENTS	PAGE NUMBERS
			129-130, 133-134
<b>Kpomo/ponmo/pomo/ kanda/canda/ganda</b>	<b>English Name:</b> Cow skin	Meat	93, 98, 104-107, 109, 116-119, 131, 134-135
<b>Ngolo</b>	<b>English Name:</b> clams	Seafood	129
<b>Nko nko</b>	<b>English Name:</b> Edible whelks or sea snails  <b>Scientific name:</b> <i>Littorina littorea</i>	Seafood	67, 129
<b>Oburunbebe/ obunrubebe stick</b>	<b>Scientific Name:</b> <i>liquorice root</i>	Spices	78, 83, 85
<b>Ofor/ófó (Igbo) Ibaba (Efiks)</b>	<b>Scientific name:</b> <i>Detarium microcapum</i>  <b>Substitute:</b> oatmeal blend	Thickener	70, 73-74, 97, 104
<b>Ogiri/Ogili Ogiri egusi</b>	<b>English Name:</b> Fermented melon/pumpkin seeds  <b>Scientific name:</b> <i>Citrullus Vulgaris</i>  <b>Substitute:</b> iru/dawadawa/ogiri okpei	Local/traditional seasoning/spices	70, 73, 79, 83, 84, 90, 93, 100, 104, 105, 108-109, 116-117, 136, 146
<b>Ogiri okpei (Igbo)</b>	<b>English Name:</b> Fermented castor bean  <b>Substitute:</b> iru/dawadawa/ogiri	Local/traditional seasoning/spices	73, 79, 83, 84, 90, 93, 103, 104, 106, 108, 116-117, 136, 147
<b>Okporoko (Southerners) Panla (Westerners)</b>	<b>English Name:</b> Stock fish	Fish	67, 73-74, 83-85, 93, 98, 103-107, 109, 116-119, 130-131, 133-136
<b>Oporo</b>	<b>English Name:</b> Prawns	Seafood	83, 85

<b>LOCAL INGREDIENTS</b>	<b>ABOUT INGREDIENTS</b>	<b>KIND OF INGREDIENTS</b>	<b>PAGE NUMBERS</b>
<b>Ose nsukka (Igbo)</b>	<b>English Name:</b> Yellow pepper	Pepper	<b>83-85, 93, 105, 135</b>
<b>Point and kill</b>	<b>English Name:</b> Catfish <b>Substitute:</b> Conger Eel	Fish	<b>77, 83, 89, 93, 105, 132, 134</b>
<b>Shaki</b>	<b>English Name:</b> Beef/cow tripe	Meat	<b>93, 98, 103-106, 109, 116, 118-119, 129-130, 134-135</b>
<b>Shombo (Yoruba)</b>	<b>English Name:</b> Fresh cayenne pepper/fresh chilli pepper	Pepper	<b>103 &amp; 104</b>
<b>Swallow(s)</b>	<b>Definition:</b> swallows are starchy foods which are cut in small fraction, rolled into a ball or “morsel,” dipped into the soup, and then swallowed. E.g. garri/eba, pounded yam, amala, akpu/fufu/foofoo, semovita/semolina, etc  Thus, swallows are served with soups	Carbohydrate	<b>8, 64-65, 69, 71, 74, 80-81, 89, 101, 111, 114, 122, 125-126, 146-148</b>
<b>Tuwo shinkafa/tuwo for short (Hausa)</b>	<b>English Name:</b> rice pudding <b>About:</b> It is eaten with all kinds of Nigerian soups like ogbono or okra, etc	A side/swallow	<b>114, 126</b>
<b>Uda/Uda pods (Igbo)</b>	<b>English Name:</b> Negro pepper/African guinea pepper <b>Substitute:</b> Pepper soup spice	Spices	<b>93 &amp; 94</b>
<b>Uyayak (pod) (Efik)</b>	<b>English Name:</b> Aridan/Adian fruit	Spices	<b>78, 85, 89-90, 93-95,</b>
<b>Tyko prekese</b>	<b>Scientific name:</b> <i>Tetrapleura tetraptera</i>		

<b>LOCAL INGREDIENTS</b>	<b>ABOUT INGREDIENTS</b>	<b>KIND OF INGREDIENTS</b>	<b>PAGE NUMBERS</b>
<b>Zobo leaves</b>	<b>Scientific Name:</b> <i>Hibiscus sabdariffa</i>	Leaves	<b>78</b>

### Some Nigerian Words/Language (From this Thesis)

<b>LOCAL WORDS</b>	<b>ENGLISH TRANSLATION</b>	<b>PAGE NUMBERS.</b>
<b>Afia (Efik)</b>		<b>88</b>
<b>Nsala (Igbo)</b>	white	<b>87, 88</b>
<b>Efere (Efik)</b>		<b>88</b>
<b>Ofe (Igbo)</b>	Soup	<b>69, 76, 88, 96</b>
<b>Afia efere (Efik)</b>	White soup	<b>63, 87-91, 93-95, 139, 141, 143, 147, 150</b>
<b>Ofe nsala (Igbo)</b>		<b>87-95, 139, 141, 143, 150</b>
<b>Asepo/ alasepo (Yoruba)</b>	To cook together	<b>121</b>
<b>Ila (Yoruba)</b>	okra	<b>16, 70, 94, 111-112, 118-119, 120-138, 140-141, 143-144, 150</b>
<b>Ila asepo/alasepo/alasekpo (Yoruba)</b>	Mixed okra soup	<b>121, 124-126, 133-134, 137, 140, 143,</b>

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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

Since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Nigerians published recipe books in English to maintain their culinary knowledge, and to deal with food-related challenges such as the unavailability of specific ingredients. Accessing these older cookbooks was difficult due to their rarity and expense, hence, I have opted to explore Nigerian food blogs that are available free online and available in the public domain. With the expansion of the Internet, and the rise of blogging culture, Nigerians, like many others, have created a number of food blogs where recipes and stories are melded into a unique cultural experience. Online environments have offered new opportunities to preserve and experience cultural values through food and are a rich source for social research. In this Master's project, I embarked on a systematic evaluation of Nigerian food blogs to better understand the relationship between Nigerian foods, culture and health. Additionally, I sought to understand what elements constitute certain dishes, such as the staple of “soup” through sampling common Nigerian recipes discussed across selected blogs. The following questions guided my exploration: (1) what are the components of Nigerian recipes on Nigerian food blogs?; (2) how do Nigerian food blogs express cultural ideals of Nigerians as a whole and ethnic variation among Nigerians?; and finally, (3) what is the relationship between the recipes (and their specific ingredients) and conceptions of health? In examining these questions, the structure of the thesis is as follows: I first contextualize Nigeria, and then provide a brief literature review on the relationship between food, culture and health, and on food blogging. Secondly, I discuss the methodology and methods used. Thirdly, I report the results of this study. Finally, I conclude with practical or policy implications of the findings and suggestions for further research.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1: Food as Culture and Health**

#### **2.1.1 “We Are What We Eat”: Food as Culture**

Food is a cultural artifact that is consumed and literally *becomes us* both physically, socially and culturally (Caplan, 2013, p.9; MacClancy, Henry, & Macbeth, 2007, p. 3). Food as a cultural artifact has become prominent in the social sciences and many other disciplines (Macbeth & MacClancy, 2004, p.6). Food is sometimes consumed to mark who we are, where we come from, who we want to become, or how we perceive or represent ourselves (Macbeth & MacClancy, 2004; MacClancy et al., 2007, p. 205; Mintz & Du Bois, 2002; Crowther, 2018; Caplan, 2013; Rocha, 2018, p.16; Herranz et al., 2018; Garnsey, 1999, p. 7; Konefal & Hatanaka, 2019). In other words, food is culture. Foods that are consumed to express one’s culture including aspects of beliefs, values, traditions, taboo, practices, heritage, religion and spirituality are often referred to in the literature as “*traditional*” or “*cultural*” or “*ethnic foods*” (Sebastia, 2018; Camarena, Sanjuán, & Philippidis, 2011, p.121; Etkin, 2006, p. 34 and 207-208; MacClancy et al., 2007, p. 1; Pieroni & Price, 2006, p. 78, 153 Kwon, 2015, p. 1; Corooran, 2018; Nordström, Coff, Jönsson, Nordenfelt, & Görman, 2013, p.362; Caplan, 2013, p.178). Yet, every human society has a strong link between food and who they believe they *are* and who they are *not* (Crowther, 2018; Counihan & Van Esterik, 2008). Beyond a basic need to satisfy our nutritional needs, food, bridges many divides. It marks "...social differences, boundaries, bonds and contradictions" since it can also designate perceived outsiders (Pieroni & Price, 2006, p. 118; MacClancy et al., 2007).

Likewise, food as expressed in recipes serves as a form of visual communication, condensed with culinary knowledge, cultural ideas, meanings, symbol, messages on how people think, live and aspire (Fortunati, 2015, p.28, 42). Recipes, or how elements are rendered into acceptable forms of food, define individuals and communities in profound ways, both gastronomically and culturally (Bodomo & Ma, 2012, p.18). By providing guidance on one’s eating culture, recipes can also change the way that we eat (Crowther, 2018, p.135; Hertzler & Bruce, 2002). Studying recipes, therefore, provides insight into a culture’s culinary classifications, rules, prohibitions and taboos; for example, what is

edible and inedible (Fortunati, 2015, p.31-32; Crowther, 2018, p.133-135; Counihan & Van Esterik, 2008) and an array of cultural norms.

### **2.1.2 Food as Health**

While there is a link between food as culture, there is also a close link between foods and understandings of health, which are often deeply embedded in medical folklores/beliefs/taboo and recipe-based prescriptions (Counihan & Van Esterik, 2008, p.290; MacClancy et al., 2007, p. 53; Nwankwo, 2014, p.183-185; Igoli, Ogaji, Tor-Anyiin, & Igoli 2005; Mafimisebi & Oguntade, 2010; Hsu & Harris, 2012). Some have referred to this as ethnopharmacology of food (Etkin, 2006). While food has perceived pharmacological elements, it is also directly related to wellbeing (Pieroni & Price, 2006; Caplan, 2013, p.9; Nordström et al., 2013; Macbeth & MacClancy, 2004, p.190-191; Crowther, 2018, p.8; Etkin, 2006, p.37-38, 46).

An ethnopharmacology of food is evidenced in Nigeria's agrarian economy which provides virtually all of the nation's home-produced foods, oil, and medicines, and the means of life through livelihood of 90% of rural dwellers (Anoliefo, Isikhuemhen, & Ochije, 2003, p.284; Adamu, 2013). Indeed, many Nigerians rely almost exclusively on traditional medicines – the combination of plants, or animals with spiritual therapies, or techniques for healthcare needs (Heaton, 2013; Adamu, 2013; Mafimisebi & Oguntade, 2010, p.2). Fauna and flora parts like, bark, leaves, roots, flowers, fruits and seeds still remain important perceived sources of health maintenance for most Nigerians (Etkin, 2006; Adamu, 2013, p.6-7, 44 & 50). Most of Nigeria's traditional foods are plant-based, with little contribution made through faunal products (Adegboye, Smith, Anang, & Musa, 2015, p.2485; Ayogu, Edeh, Madukwe, & Ene-Obong, 2017, p.66; Kuhnlein, Erasmus, & Spigelski, 2009, p.279). This belief in traditional medicines then impacts how, what and when they prepare or/and eat. This will further be explored in the recipes analyzed via the selected food blogs.

## **2.2: Recipes and Food Blogging**

There is increasing wide popularity and pervasiveness of the use of online recipes. Like cookbooks, they allow for an unlimited diffusion of recipes that cannot be held in

memory and may not be easily transmitted through oral means. By oral recipes, I refer to recipes passed on through “embodied apprenticeship” which involves watching, listening, tasting and participating (Counihan & Van Esterik, 2008; Crowther, 2018, p.133-135).

However, being written down, rather than transferred orally, written recipes are powerful conveyers of culinary knowledge, gender norms and roles, and dietary habits and patterns revealing what, when, and how people actually eat (Sebastia, 2018) whether in book form, television (Swenson, 2009) or online. They also make it easier for one to easily extend the number of dishes, which can be prepared by following the instructions available (Philip, 2016; Dumas, Lemieux, Lapointe, Dugrenier, & Desroches, 2017, p.86). Thus, written recipes occupy an important presence in many homes (Fortunati, 2015, p.30).

Sharing recipes in textual form has a long history, and not just in the west. As noted above, quite a few cookbooks have been produced in Nigeria and the diaspora over the past century (O’Reilly-Wright, 1979; Williams, 1957; Ogunsanya, 1998; Mars & Tooley, 1965). These have been explored to a limited extent online (Kitchen Butterfly, 2016).

With the rapid expansion of internet Apps, and the rise of blogging culture (Holak, 2013; Schneider, Eli, Dolan, & Uljaszek, 2017; Herranz et al., 2018; Min, Jiang, Wang, Sang, & Mei, 2017), Nigerians, like many others, have created a number of food blogs, where recipes and stories are melded into a unique cultural experience, and are presented through multimodal interweaving of extensive use of videos; links; enticing images of selected dishes; and captivating personal and cultural narratives/stories/reviews that attract followers’/readers’ comments (Active History, 2019; Elliott et al., 2014; Philip, 2016; Mohan & Punathambekar, 2018; Lepkowska-White & Kortright, 2018). Dominant food blogs such as *All Nigerian Recipes*, (n.d); *All Nigerian Foods*, (2012); *Dobby's Signature*, (2010); *Afrolem*, (2016) are notable examples with many followers. These digital forms of cookbooks are also a means to create, modify, document, display, share and expand recipes to include wider aspects of cultural life beyond the bare recipe book format that was particularly characteristic in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Rodney, Cappeliez, Oleschuk, & Johnston, 2017; Rocha, 2018; Ransom & Wright, 2013, p. 672; Hedge 2014). They are also becoming objects of inquiry for diasporic individuals who explore

these digital forms of cookbooks to recapture and rework their cultural/locale recipes to suit modernity and transnational consumption (Holak, 2013; Hegde, 2014; Grønseth, 2016). This is because they offer streamlined versions of traditional procedures suitable for the demands of global living (Holak, 2013; Hegde, 2014; Grønseth, 2016) and for establishing connections with others in their home country, in the diaspora and beyond.

Some of these online recipes, whether video or text, may also become so popular that people also expand them into a book as a way to preserve the knowledge of the elder generation and inspire people through times of economic want and displacement (see, for example Cannucciari & Cannucciari, 2009; see All Nigerian Foods who have also transferred its online recipes into a cookbook: Anegbu, 2013b: “Top Ten Easy Nigerian Recipes (cookbook),” Anegbu, 2013a: “50 Delicious Nigerian Food Recipes (cookbook),” Anegbu, 2015: “Ultimate Nigerian Cookbook: Best Cookbook for Making Nigerian Foods,” Anegbu, 2017: “Beginner's Guide to Nigerian Cooking - Nigerian Cookbook.” Also see All Nigerian Recipes who has also transferred its online recipes into a cookbook: Madubike, 2013: “All Nigerian Recipes Cookbook: A Step by Step Guide to Mastering how to Cook Nigerian Food”). What seems more important to most users/audiences of food blogs, however, is the ability to demystify, translate, interpret, understand and mainly simplify culinary knowledge reproduced by these written forms of recipes (Agarwal, Liu, Tang, & Yu, 2008; Cox & Blake, 2011, p.205; Philip, 2016; Rodney et al., 2017, p.688; Rocha, 2018, p.16). Food blogs’ audiences have attributed their increasing readership, and sheer volume of comments, first, to bloggers’ frequency in posting, candid storytelling and approachable personalities, or reputation. Further, increasing readership and volume of comments have been attributed to blogs which are easy to use, and present personalities/contents that relate to/resonate with blog users’/readers’ needs, values and cultures (Philip, 2016; Rodney et al., 2017, p.688). This increase in readership and followers could also be understood to be broad indicators of the popularity and successfulness of the food blog/blogger (Cox & Blake, 2011, p.207; Agarwal et al., 2008).

In return, successful bloggers earn name-brand recognition, and gain exposure in other forms of media like television appearances, where they are cited as “experts” (Rodney et al., 2017, p.686, 700), even though they aren't celebrated chefs/cooks or

professional gastronomers (Johnston, Rodney, & Chong, 2014; Rocha, 2018, p.16-17). It is in this light that studies have critically examined the healthiness and nutritional value of utilizing online recipes (Müller, Harvey, Elswailer, & Mika, 2012; Pollard, Pulker, Meng, Kerr, & Scott, 2015; Dumas et al., 2017; Dumas, Lapointe, & Desroches, 2018; Trattner, Elswailer, & Howard, 2017; Schneider, McGovern, Lynch, & Brown, 2013; Schneider et al., 2017; Olivero et al., 2017). For instance, Cox and Blake (2011) criticized food blogging for a failure to use reliable information and professional standards, which may lead to sharing harmful nutritional information. On the other hand, Dumas et al., (2017) compared the nutritional content of vegetarian recipes written and published in food blogs by registered dietitians (RDs) and those by laypeople (non-RDs), and found that no significant differences were observed between the nutritional content of the recipes provided by RDs and those by non-RDs or lay person.

Nevertheless, other existing studies on food blogs have wide thematic content such as, how cultural ideals of race and class are revealed and reproduced through celebrity chefs' public identities or the gendering of food blogs (Hart, 2018; Gersch, 1998; Rodney et al., 2017; Johnston et al., 2014; Hegde, 2014; Lepkowska-White & Kortright, 2018; Fortunati, 2015, p.42. Some have focused on women's use of food blogs to turn leisure pursuits into professional careers (Cox & Blake, 2011; Chen, 2012) in portraying cooking as adventurous, fun, fulfilling, stylish/attractive (Rodney et al., 2017, p.685-687; Hegde, 2014; Johnston et al., 2014, p.1; Boepple & Thompson, 2014), or as a way to exhibit love and care for close ones and family (Lepkowska-White & Kortright, 2018; Elwert- Kretschmer, 2001, p.220; Ene-Obong, Onuoha, & Eme, 2018; Reynolds & Agbasiere, 2001).

There are also numerous content analyses of food blogs or online recipes for other nations (Seddon, 2011; Lee, Samdanis, & Gkioussou, 2014; Holak, 2013; Hegde, 2014; Hassibi & Sayadabdi, 2013; Fortunati, 2015; Herranz et al., 2018; Dumas et al., 2017 & 2018; Trattner et al., 2017; Min et al., 2017; Seki & Ono, 2014), as well as some "academic" food blogs that try to analyze other food blogs (Ketchum, 2017); in other words, they try to be "scholarly". Content analysis has been done on Nigerian political and fashion blogs (Nkem Anusiem, 2017) and there are many studies that analyze the nutritional content of Nigerian foods (Alozie & Ene- Obong, 2018; Adegboye et al.,

2015, p.2492; Ene-Obong et al., 2013; Oguntona, Odunmbaku, & Ottun, 1999; Ayogu et al., 2017; Onabanjo, Sanni, Afolabi, Oyawoye, & Obanla, 2013; Okeke et al., 2009; Okoye, Ekweogu, & Oruna, 2017). There are also some materials on the link between food and “African” nationalism (Cusack, 2000; Ojo, 2016; Okorafor, 2009; Robert, 2007), and on business hubs or developers in Nigeria which could facilitate the implementation of food blogs business plans, and other food services or food business ideas like agric-consulting services (See: Adetiloye, 2018), but as yet, there have been no published studies of Nigerian food blogs.

### **2.3: Contextualizing Nigeria and Its Culinary Culture**

Nigeria is a nation in West Africa. Though it is multilingual, English is her official language (Adamo, 2007). It has about three hundred and seventy-four (374) distinct ethnic groups (Ene-Obong et al., 2013, p.540; Mustapha, 2006, p.iv), which could be classified into six geo-political zones:

- i. **North Central** which consists of states like Benue, Federal Capital Territory, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau
- ii. **North East** which consists of states like Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, Yobe
- iii. **North West** which consists of states like Kaduna, Katsina, Kano, Kebbi, Sokoto, Jigawa, Zamfara
- iv. **South East** which consists of states like Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, Imo
- v. **South West** which consists of the following states: Ekiti, Lagos, Osun, Ondo, Ogun, Oyo
- vi. **South-South** which consists of the following states: Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross-River, Delta, Edo, Rivers

(Okorie et al., 2013; Ene-Obong et al., 2013, p.540).

The three major ethnic groups in Nigeria are: the *Igbos*, who are concentrated in the Southeast or Eastern part of Nigeria; the *Yorubas* who are concentrated in the Southwest or Western part of Nigeria, and the *Hausas* who are concentrated in the Northern part of Nigeria (Adegboye et al., 2015, p.2483; Heaton, 2013).

Given the broad ethnic diversity, there are an array of different cultural and culinary practices, as well as their own traditional/cultural foods. (Adegboye et al., 2015, p.2485; Onabanjo et al., 2013, p.368). Etkin 2006 calls them “**discrete cuisines**” because they are socially rooted based on locally produced foods that are traditionally eaten by the groups sharing a cultural domain (p.42; See: Bernard 2017). While these cultural groups have “discrete cuisines,” there are also salient patterns of food selection, preparation (*how ingredients should be sequenced or combined in meals preparation*), presentation (*what appearance, texture and taste the finished dish should be*), and consumption (Etkin, 2006, p.42). Migration is one reason why diets associated with a particular ethnic group in a particular region are also being consumed by other groups in another region (Adegboye et al., 2015, p.2484). For instance, Lagos State which is in the Southwestern region of Nigeria is greatly made up of Nigerians from other cultures/tribes and ethnic group of Nigeria. Thus, Lagos state is made up of multicultural diets, which cut across all regions in Nigeria (Adegboye et al., 2015, p.2484).

### **2.3.1 Nigerian Soups**

Despite the diversity, there are dominant patterns such as staple foods, which are mostly a carbohydrate-based meal including vegetables like cassava flour, rice, cocoyam, potatoes, yam or plantain which are consumed with soup or stew (Onabanjo et al., 2013, p.368). One popular side used in eating soups are “swallows” – these are mostly starchy foods which are regarded as “swallows” particularly because of the way they are eaten (Onoise, 2018). Swallows are starchy foods which are cut in small fraction, rolled into a ball, dipped into the soup, and rather than being chewed, they are swallowed (Onoise, 2018). The English word “soup” is commonly used by Nigerians to refer to a staple food. Soup is defined as foods made by boiling solid ingredients like animal proteins in liquid until the flavors are extracted, forming a broth that is usually thickened with vegetable-based thickeners and eaten with Nigerian staple foods. Being a dominant staple, “soup” is one of the foods that will be explored in detail in the thesis. “Stews” and “sauces”, on the other hand, are made the same way as soups, however, they are made without thickeners, and the ingredients may be fried in oil (Ayogu et al., 2017, p.67) and so on. As we will see, in Nigeria, a major source of variation in the preparation of common Nigerian



dishes/recipes is in the use (differences in cooking/preparation method) and quantity of ingredients which further differs across the various Nigerian cultures (Ene-Obong et al., 2013, p.539, 544; Ayogu et al., 2017, p.75).

Another pattern is that each Nigerian recipe, just like other forms of recipes are usually named based on the typical elements/characteristic of the dish, which also forms the major characteristic of the recipe (Seki & Ono, 2014, p.489). This makes it easier for a user to grasp the main characteristic/ingredient of a recipe at first glance. For instance, sometimes, recipes may be named after the major vegetable or ingredient used in their preparation such as: Onugbu (bitterleaf/*Veronia amygdalina*) soup; okazi (*Gnetum spp.*) soup; oha (*Pterocarpus soyauxili*) soup; egusi (*melon*) soup; ogbono (dikannt/*irvingia gabonensis*) soup; achi (*Brachystegia eurycoma*) soup, to name a few (Kuhnlein et al., 2009, p.271, 279). On the other hand, some characteristics of a recipe could change or be different based on the differences in local name, type and use of a particular ingredient available within the region, culture or locality. Hence, similar ingredients or recipes may have different names based on culture and regions (Oguntona et al., 1999; Etkin, 2006). For example, locust beans are called "dawadawa" by the Hausas and "iru" by Yorubas (Etkin, 2006; Oguntona et al., 1999).

There are then, some basic similarities that could be referred to as "Nigerian foods" (Ene-Obong et al., 2013, p.540; Adegboye et al., 2015, p.2488; Oguntona et al., 1999). These could be defined as foods generally consumed in all parts of Nigeria but bearing in mind too that there may be local regional variations (Oguntona et al., 1999). There may further be variations between households due to availability, price, season and nutritional knowledge, taste preference food taboos, cultural and religious practices and preferred techniques of preparation (Ayogu et al., 2017, p.66; Oguntona et al., 1999; Etkin, 2006; Anoliefo et al., 2003; Counihan & Van, 2008; Adegboye et al., 2015, p.2484). "Nigerian foods" then, comprise a varied food supply, and provide a rich source of medicinal materials for therapeutic purposes, which are understood to be essential to maintain the culture, health and wellbeing of Nigerians (Ene-Obong et al., 2013, p.544; Adamo, 2007). It is this nexus of culture and health through food that will, therefore, be explored in this project through the selected food blogs.

## **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND METHODS**

### **3.1: Project Rationale**

Since food is a wide cultural domain, I drew on both on qualitative and quantitative methods (Bernard 2017; Bernard, Wutich, & Ryan, 2017) to increase reliability and validity. Specifically, both componential and content analysis will be utilized.

While qualitative data on food provides the background and the context of any food related study, it also directs the focus for collection, and interpretation/analysis of quantitative data (Bernard, 2017, p.41, 43 & 232). For instance, ethnography could tell us that foods are used as medicines in some cultures (Etkin, 2006; Adamu, 2013; Sebastia, 2018; Pieroni & Price, 2006; MacClancy et al., 2007). Meanwhile, survey data tells us how often cultural rules are obeyed or ignored (Bernard, 2017, p.232).

The data collection phase of this project started in June 2019 upon approval of Master's thesis proposal. Contents of food blogs posted from when the blogs were created until the end of June 2019 were gathered and examined from June to August. Data analysis and report were written by January 2020.

### **3.2: Sample & Sampling Technique**

A purposive/judgment and convenience/haphazard sample was selected using Google as the main search engine (Bernard, 2017, p.147, 149). The sample is purposive in that I am targeting the top ten Nigerian food blogs. It was also a convenience sample as the blogs are free and in the public domain, unlike the recipe books noted at the beginning of this thesis (Bernard, 2017, p.147 & 149). A specific search term like "Nigerian food blogs" was used as the "seed term" (Kurtz, Trainer, Beresford, Wutich, & Brewis, 2017). This search generated a broad selection of results mainly on ranked Nigerian food blogs like "the top ten" or "top fifteen" Nigerian food blogs.

#### **3.2.1 Sample Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**

Sampled Nigerian food blogs were chosen based on the following criteria:

- 1) They have been ranked by popular Nigerian blog/website on the internet designating cultural fields such as gastronomy, status, legitimacy, and popularity (Rodney et al., 2017);
- 2) They are authored by Nigerian(s), whether in Nigeria or abroad;
- 3) They discuss Nigerian foods and recipes, whether in the cultural sense to meet Nigerians' needs, or modified sense to meet the needs of Nigerians in the diaspora.

### **3.2.2 Applying Sample Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**

Based on the first criteria, some popular Nigerian blogs/websites which provided a ranking of Nigerian food blogs are:

- a) Oasdom, 2017 – a Nigerian website, which compiled its information based on alexa ranking;
- b) Tatashey, 2014 – a Nigerian food blog;
- c) Nigerian Infopedia, 2019 – a Nigeria information website;
- d) Nigerian Finder, 2015 – a Nigeria information website;
- e) Nigerian Bulletin, 2016 – a Nigeria information website;
- f) Hot Vibes Media, 2019 – a Nigerian information website;
- g) Zikoko, 2018 – a Nigeria information website;
- h) Legit Nigeria, 2016 – a Nigeria information website;
- i) Connect Nigeria, 2018 – a Nigeria information website.

Please see: **Table B.1 in Appendix B:** for the rankings.

Following the exclusion and inclusion criteria, an example of a website with high legitimacy and popularity is Amazon Alexa – an intelligent, cloud-based service, digital and virtual assistant developed by Amazon (Orr & Sanchez, 2018; Chung, Iorga, Voas, & Lee, 2017). “As a global pioneer in the world of analytical insight founded in 1996” (Amazon Alexa, n.d), this website could be regarded as a “robust and accurate web analytics service provider” (Amazon Alexa, n.d). Affirming the company’s own claims, a recent study (Orr and Sanchez, 2018) has shown that its data could be of evidentiary

value in any investigation, and if used with other collateral sources of evidence, its data may also be used to confirm or disprove theories (Orr & Sanchez, 2018, p.77-78).

Furthermore, the analytical data are not based on personal opinions like the other Nigerian websites which ranked these blogs. Rather, its analytical data is based on “a global traffic panel, which is a sample of millions of internet users using one of many different browser extensions” (Amazon Alexa, n.d) and hence, its data are directly sourced from a range of sites. Thus, its traffic rank is “calculated using a proprietary methodology that combines a site's estimated average of daily unique visitors and its estimated number of pageviews over the past 3 months” and this rank reveals “how a website is doing relative to all other sites on the web” (Amazon Alexa, n.d). Hence, this study selected blogs which have been ranked by Amazon Alexa. While this ranking by Amazon Alexa is not directly accessible via Amazon Alexa website except by payment, its ranking of Nigerian food blogs has been provided by another Nigerian website – Oasdom, 2017. Therefore, the selected Nigerian food blogs was first assessed based on which ones were ranked by Oasdom, 2017 and by another Nigerian websites/blog. Based on this criteria, the Nigerian food blogs that were ranked by Oasdom, 2017 (and Amazon Alexa, n.d) as also provided in **Table B.1** in **Appendix B** are:

- i. All Nigerian Recipes
- ii. All Nigerian Foods
- iii. Dobby’s Signature
- iv. 9jafoodie
- v. Wivestownhall/Nigerian Women Blog
- vi. Nigerian Food TV
- vii. Dooney’s Kitchen
- viii. Knorr cube
- ix. 1q Food Platter
- x. Sisi Jemimah
- xi. Afrolems
- xii. Mamasdish
- xiii. Nigerian Lazy Chef

- xiv. Matse Cooks
- xv. My Belle Don Full

Some of the above food blogs which were also ranked by other Nigerian websites as shown in **Table B.1** in **Appendix B** are:

- i. All Nigerian Recipes: ranked by Oasdom, 2017 and three other Nigerian websites
- ii. All Nigerian Foods: other than Oasdom, 2017, this blog was not ranked by other Nigerian websites
- iii. Dobby's Signature: ranked by Oasdom, 2017 and eight other Nigerian websites
- iv. 9jafoodie: ranked by Oasdom, 2017 and three other Nigerian websites
- v. Wivestownhall/Nigerian Women Blog: other than Oasdom, 2017, this blog was not ranked by other Nigerian websites
- vi. Nigerian Food TV: ranked by Oasdom and one other Nigerian website
- vii. Dooney's Kitchen: ranked by Oasdom and eight other Nigerian websites
- viii. Knorr cube: other than Oasdom, 2017, this blog was not ranked by other Nigerian websites
- ix. 1q Food Platter: ranked by Oasdom and three other Nigerian websites
- x. Sisi Jemimah: other than Oasdom, 2017, this blog was not ranked by other Nigerian websites
- xi. Afrolems: ranked by Oasdom and seven other Nigerian websites
- xii. Mamasdish: other than Oasdom, 2017, this blog was not ranked by other Nigerian websites
- xiii. Nigerian Lazy Chef: ranked by Oasdom and five other Nigerian websites
- xiv. Matse Cooks: ranked by Oasdom and three other Nigerian websites
- xv. My Belle Don Full: ranked by Oasdom and four other Nigerian websites

Having applied the exclusion/inclusion first criteria, it was then assessed to ensure that the above Nigerian food blogs met the other two exclusion/inclusion criteria: (2) they are authored by Nigerian(s), whether in Nigeria or abroad, (3) They must discuss Nigerian foods and recipes, whether in the cultural sense to meet Nigerians' needs, or modified sense to meet the needs of Nigerians in the diaspora. In the course of doing so, it was found that the following blogs: Matse Cooks and My Belle don full no longer existed. Mamasdish was not easily accessible, and it was difficult to find an actual

Nigerian food blog for Knorr Cube that discussed Nigerian foods rather than the actual brand or seasoning's website – Knorr. Hence, the following blogs were eliminated from the list: Knorr Cube, Mamasdish, Matse Cooks, and My Belle Don Full, as such, they have been highlighted in red in **Table B.1** in **Appendix B**. Thus, we were left with eleven of the Nigerian food blogs below:

- i. All Nigerian Recipes: ranked by Oasdom, 2017 and three other Nigerian websites
- ii. All Nigerian Foods: other than Oasdom, 2017, this blog was not ranked by other Nigerian websites
- iii. Dobby's Signature: ranked by Oasdom, 2017 and eight other Nigerian websites
- iv. 9jafoodie: ranked by Oasdom, 2017 and three other Nigerian websites
- v. Wivestownhall/Nigerian Women Blog: other than Oasdom, 2017, this blog was not ranked by other Nigerian websites
- vi. Nigerian Food TV: ranked by Oasdom and one other Nigerian website
- vii. Dooney's Kitchen: ranked by Oasdom and eight other Nigerian websites
- viii. 1q Food Platter: ranked by Oasdom and three other Nigerian websites
- ix. Sisi Jemimah: other than Oasdom, 2017, this blog was not ranked by other Nigerian websites
- x. Afrolems: ranked by Oasdom and seven other Nigerian websites
- xi. Nigerian Lazy Chef: ranked by Oasdom and five other Nigerian websites

Upon review of the blogs, Nigerian Food TV was eliminated because it requires that one obtains permission from the blogger in order to use the materials on the blogs.

Thereby leaving us with the following ten selected food blogs below:

- i. All Nigerian Recipes: ranked by Oasdom, 2017 and three other Nigerian websites
- ii. All Nigerian Foods: other than Oasdom, 2017, this blog was not ranked by other Nigerian websites
- iii. Dobby's Signature: ranked by Oasdom, 2017 and eight other Nigerian websites
- iv. 9jafoodie: ranked by Oasdom, 2017 and three other Nigerian websites
- v. Wivestownhall/Nigerian Women Blog: other than Oasdom, 2017, this blog was not ranked by other Nigerian websites
- vi. Dooney's Kitchen: ranked by Oasdom and eight other Nigerian websites

- vii. 1q Food Platter: ranked by Oasdom and three other Nigerian websites
- viii. Sisi Jemimah: other than Oasdom, 2017, this blog was not ranked by other Nigerian websites
- ix. Afrolems: ranked by Oasdom and seven other Nigerian websites
- x. Nigerian Lazy Chef: ranked by Oasdom and five other Nigerian websites

### 3.3: Unit of Analysis

#### 3.3.1 Common Nigerian Soups

Upon evaluation of the blogs, it was discovered that some of the blogs had more categories of recipes than others (as shown in: **Table B.3 in Appendix B**), for example, Nigerian Lazy Chef had over 186 categories of recipes. Resultantly, this study chose to focus on analyzing the most common categories mentioned amongst all the selected ten food blogs. From **Table B.3 in Appendix B**, it was found that the most common category mentioned by all of the bloggers was the Soup category. Hence, as opposed to focusing on commonly consumed Nigerian dishes (as done in Onabanjo et al., 2013), or essential Nigerian recipes (as analyzed on New York Times Cooking, 2019) which could be more cumbersome and time consuming for a study like this, which is the first to analyze Nigerian food blogs, this study chose to focus on common or essential soups in Nigeria.

Common or Essential Nigerian soups were determined by first listing out the soups discussed on the blogs and noting how many of the selected blogs discussed that soup (See: **Table B.4 in Appendix B**). For instance, “afang” (*Gnetum Africanum*) soup was discussed by ten of the selected blogs (See: **Table B.4 in Appendix B**). Palm fruit/nut soup and white soup have various versions. While all of the versions were not discussed by the ten sampled blogs/bloggers, they discussed at least one of those versions, thus, they consist the category of soup discussed amongst all ten selected food blogs. On that note, only common soups – soups discussed by all of the selected ten Nigerian food blogs were analyzed (See: **Table B.4 in Appendix B**). From **Table B.4 in Appendix B**, one would notice that out of the fifty-four (54) different Nigerian soups, with over two hundred and twenty (220) different ways or variations of making those soups, discussed by the Nigerian food blogs, only seven of these soups (“Afang”

(*Gnetum Africanum*) soup, Bitter leaf soup (“ofe onugbu”), “Egusi” (melon) Soup, “Ogbono” (African wild mango) Soup, “Okra/Okro soup,” “Palm fruit/Nut soup,” and “White soup”) were discussed by all of the ten selected food blogs, and thus can be regarded as popular or essential or common Nigerian soups.

However, **Table B.5 in Appendix B** shows the various versions/variations of the common/popular Nigerian soups and which of the blogs discussed those versions/ variations. This study, in most cases, evaluates only one variation/version of the sampled – soup from each of the blogs. Where more than one variation/version of a soup was provided by a blog and both variations/versions discussed, as in “oiless okra soup,” it is because sufficient information was not provided by the other sampled blogs to constitute an analysis. However, soups that have been analyzed in this thesis have been highlighted in “green” X and they amount to about one hundred and thirty (130).

Thus, while seven essential Nigerian soups have been sampled, the sampled blogs/bloggers provide one hundred and sixty-seven (167) recipes in total of these essential Nigerian soups. However out of these one hundred and sixty-seven (167) recipes on the sampled soups discussed across the blogs, one hundred and thirty (130) recipes were analyzed in this study, while thirty-eight (38) of them were not analyzed. Out of the 130 soup recipes analyzed, Dooney’s Kitchen provides most (sixteen) of the recipes (See: **Table B.5 in Appendix B**).

Of one hundred and sixty-seven (167) soup recipes on the selected Nigerian soups, twenty-six (26) of them were Igbo (Eastern) soup recipes, thirty-seven (37) of were Efik (Southern) soup recipes, only twelve (12) were Yoruba (Western) soup recipes while fifty five (55) were other Nigerian soups that were not classified as either Igbo, Yoruba, or Efik, because they are consumed across Nigeria (See: **Table B.6 in Appendix B**).

### **3.3.2 Number of the Selected Recipes Discussed by Each of the Blogs**

#### **1. DOBBY’S SIGNATURE**

Out of the selected soups, this blog provides eighteen (18) recipes of the selected soups, fifteen (15) of which will be analyzed while three (3) were not



analyzed (See: **Table B.5 in Appendix B**). Out of these fifteen (15) recipes analyzed, four (4) of them were Efik soup recipes, three (3) of them were Igbo soup recipes, and only one (1) was Yoruba soup recipe. Meanwhile seven (7) of the recipes were other Nigerian soups which were neither Yoruba, Igbo, nor Efik soup recipes (See: **Table B.6 in Appendix B**), and thus are regarded as commonly consumed Nigerian soups. This also means that out of the thirty-seven (37) selected Efik recipes, four of them were provided by Dobby's Signature (Hereinafter: this blog is referred by its blog ID: Dob). Out of the twenty-six (26) selected Igbo recipes, only three of them were provided by Dob. Out of the twelve (12) selected Yoruba soup recipes only one was discussed by Dob (See: **Table B.6 in Appendix B**). Thus, despite the blogger of this blog being Igbo (as noted in **Table B.2 in Appendix B**) this blog provides more soups which are generally consumed across Nigeria, followed by Efik recipes.

## **2. DOONEY'S KITCHEN**

Out of the selected soups, this blog provides twenty-one (21) recipes of the selected soups, sixteen of which will be analyzed while five (5) were not analyzed (See: **Table B.5 in Appendix B**). Out of these sixteen (16) recipes analyzed, five (5) of them were Efik soup recipes, three (3) of them were Igbo soup recipes, and only two (2) were Yoruba soup recipe. Meanwhile six (6) of the recipes were other Nigerian soups which were neither Yoruba, Igbo, nor Efik soup recipes (See: **Table B.6 in Appendix B**), and thus are regarded as commonly consumed Nigerian soups. This also means that out of the thirty-seven (37) selected Efik recipes, five (5) of them were provided by Dooney's Kitchen (Hereinafter: this blog is referred by its blog ID: Don). Out of the twenty-six (26) selected Igbo recipes, only three (3) of them were provided by Don. Out of the twelve (12) selected Yoruba soup recipes only two (2) were discussed by Don (See: **Table B.6 in Appendix B**). Despite the blogger being Delta-Igbo and Yoruba (as noted in **Table B.2 in Appendix B**), this blog provides more soups which are generally consumed across Nigeria, followed by Efik recipes.

## **3. 9JAFOODIE**

Out of the selected soups, this blog provides fifteen (15) recipes of the selected soups, twelve (12) of which will be analyzed while three (3) were not analyzed (See: **Table B.5 in Appendix B**). Out of these twelve (12) recipes analyzed, four (4) of them were Efik soup recipes, two (2) of them were Yoruba recipes while only one (1) was Igbo soup recipe. Meanwhile five (5) of the recipes were other Nigerian soups which were neither Yoruba, Igbo, nor Efik soup recipes (See: **Table B.6 in Appendix B**), and thus are regarded as commonly consumed Nigerian soups. This also means that out of the thirty-seven (37) selected Efik recipes, four (4) of them were provided by 9jafoodie (Hereinafter: this blog is referred by its blog ID: 9ja). Out of the twenty-six (26) selected Igbo recipes, only one (1) of them was provided by 9ja. Out of the twelve (12) selected Yoruba soup recipes only two (2) were discussed by “9ja” (See: **Table B.6 in Appendix B**). Despite the blogger of this blog being Yoruba (as noted in **Table B.2 in Appendix B**), this blog provides more soups which are generally consumed across Nigeria, followed by Efik recipes.

#### **4. AFROLEMS**

Out of the selected soups, this blog provides twelve (12) recipes of the selected soups, eleven (11) of which will be analyzed while only one (1) was not analyzed (See: **Table B.5 in Appendix B**). Out of these eleven (11) recipes analyzed, five (5) of them were Efik soup recipes, two (2) of them were Igbo soup recipes, and another two (2) were Yoruba recipes. Meanwhile two (2) of the recipes were other Nigerian soups which were neither Yoruba, Igbo, nor Efik soup recipes (See: **Table B.6 in Appendix B**), and thus are regarded as commonly consumed Nigerian soups. This also means that out of the thirty-seven (37) selected Efik recipes, five (5) of them were provided by Afrolems (Hereinafter: this blog is referred to by its blog ID: Afro). Out of the twenty-six (26) selected Igbo recipes, two (2) of them were provided by Afro. Out of the twelve (12) selected Yoruba soup recipes only two (2) were discussed by Afro (See: **Table B.6 in Appendix B**). Considering the blogger of Afro is from Cross Rivers States (as noted in **Table B.2 in Appendix B**), this blog portrays more of

its blogger's cultural recipe – Efik recipes than other cultural recipes – Igbo and Yoruba recipes as well as other recipes consumed across Nigeria.

## 5. NIGERIAN LAZY CHEF

Out of the selected soups, this blog provides thirteen (13) recipes of the selected soups, twelve (12) of which will be analyzed while only one (1) was not analyzed (See: **Table B.5 in Appendix B**). Out of these twelve (12) recipes analyzed, four (4) of them were Efik soup recipes, three of them were Igbo soup recipes, while two (2) of them were Yoruba recipes. Meanwhile three (3) of the recipes were other Nigerian soups which were neither Yoruba, Igbo, nor Efik soup recipes (See: **Table B.6 in Appendix B**), and thus are regarded as commonly consumed Nigerian soups. This also means that out of the thirty-seven (37) selected Efik recipes, four (4) of them were provided by Nigerian Lazy Chef (Hereinafter: this blog is referred by its blog ID: Nig.). Out of the twenty-six (26) selected Igbo recipes, three (3) of them was provided by Nig.. Out of the twelve (12) selected Yoruba soup recipes only two (2) were discussed by Nig. (See: **Table B.6 in Appendix B**). Nig., despite the blogger being Igbo (as noted in **Table B.2 in Appendix B**) provides more Efik soup recipes followed by its blogger's cultural recipe – Igbo as well as other recipes generally consumed across Nigeria.

## 6. SISI JEMIMAH

Out of the selected soups, this blog provides eleven (11) recipes of the selected soups, all of which will be analyzed (See: **Table B.5 in Appendix B**). Out of these eleven (11) recipes analyzed, three (4) of them were Efik soup recipes, another three were Igbo soup recipes, while two (2) of them were Yoruba recipes. Meanwhile three (3) of the recipes were other Nigerian soups which were neither Yoruba, Igbo, nor Efik soup recipes (See: **Table B.6 in Appendix B**), and thus are regarded as commonly consumed Nigerian soups. This also means that out of the thirty-seven (37) selected Efik recipes, three (3) of them were provided by Sisi Jemimah (Hereinafter: this blog is referred by its blog ID: Sisi). Out of the twenty-six (26) selected Igbo recipes, three (3) of them was provided by Sisi. Out of the twelve (12) selected Yoruba soup recipes only two (2) were discussed by

Sisi (See: **Table B.6 in Appendix B**). Despite the blogger of this blog being Yoruba (as noted in **Table B.2 in Appendix B**), this blog provides more Efik, Igbo and other recipes generally consumed across Nigeria than its blogger's cultural recipe – Yoruba recipes.

## 7. 1Q FOOD PLATTER

Out of the selected soups, this blog provides twenty-one (21) recipes of the selected soups, fifteen (15) of which will be analyzed while six (6) were not analyzed (See: **Table B.5 in Appendix B**). Out of these fifteen (15) recipes analyzed, five (5) of them were Efik soup recipes, three (3) of them were Igbo soup recipes, and only one (1) was Yoruba soup recipe. Meanwhile six (6) of the recipes were other Nigerian soups which were neither Yoruba, Igbo, nor Efik soup recipes (See: **Table B.6 in Appendix B**), and thus are regarded as commonly consumed Nigerian soups. This also means that out of the thirty-seven (37) selected Efik recipes, five (5) of them were provided by 1q Food Platter (Hereinafter: this blog is referred to by its blog ID: 1q). Out of the twenty-six (26) selected Igbo recipes, only three (3) of them were provided by 1q. Out of the twelve (12) selected Yoruba soup recipes only one (1) was discussed by 1q (See: **Table B.6 in Appendix B**). After portraying mostly Nigerian soups generally consumed across Nigeria, 1q portrays more of its blogger's cultural recipes – Efik recipes as its blogger is from Cross Rivers State (as noted in **Table B.2 in Appendix B**).

## 8. ALL NIGERIAN RECIPES

Out of the selected soups, this blog provides eighteen (18) recipes of the selected soups, fifteen (15) of which will be analyzed while three (3) were not analyzed (See: **Table B.5 in Appendix B**). Out of these fifteen (15) recipes analyzed, only fourteen of them had full recipes while one of the recipes had only list of ingredients without cooking instructions for the recipe. Also, out of these fifteen (15) recipes analyzed, three (3) of them were Efik soup recipes, and another three (3) of them were Igbo soup recipes. Meanwhile nine (9) of the recipes were other Nigerian soups which were neither Yoruba, Igbo, nor Efik soup recipes (See: **Table B.6 in Appendix B**), and thus are regarded as

commonly consumed Nigerian soups. This also means that out of the thirty-seven (37) selected Efik recipes, three (3) of them were provided by All Nigerian Recipes (Hereinafter: this blog is referred to by its blog ID: Rec.). Out of the twenty-six (26) selected Igbo recipes, only three (3) of them were provided by Rec.. Out of the twelve (12) selected Yoruba soup recipes none was discussed by Rec. (See: **Table B.6 in Appendix B**). After portraying most Nigerian soups generally consumed across Nigeria, Rec. also portrays more of its blogger's cultural recipes – Igbo recipes as its blogger is Igbo (as noted in **Table B.2 in Appendix B**), as well as Efik recipes.

## **9. ALL NIGERIAN FOODS**

Out of the selected soups, this blog provides ten (10) recipes of the selected soups, all of which will be analyzed (See: **Table B.5 in Appendix B**). Out of these ten (10) recipes analyzed, three (3) of them were Igbo soup recipes, while two (2) of them were Efik soup recipes. Meanwhile five (5) of the recipes were other Nigerian soups which were neither Yoruba, Igbo, nor Efik soup recipes (See: **Table B.6 in Appendix B**), and thus are regarded as commonly consumed Nigerian soups. This also means that out of the thirty-seven (37) selected Efik recipes, two (2) of them were provided by All Nigerian Foods (Hereinafter: this blog is referred by its blog ID: Foods). Out of the twenty-six (26) selected Igbo recipes, only three (3) of them were provided by Foods. Out of the twelve (12) selected Yoruba soup recipes none was discussed by Foods (See: **Table B.6 in Appendix B**). After portraying most Nigerian soups generally consumed across Nigeria, Foods also portrays more of its blogger's cultural recipes – Igbo recipes as its bloggers are from Igbo (as noted in **Table B.2 in Appendix B**).

## **10. WIVESTOWNHALL/NIGERIAN WOMEN BLOG**

Out of the selected soups, this blog provides twenty-eight (28) recipes of the selected soups, thirteen (13) of which will be analyzed while fifteen (15) were not analyzed (See: **Table B.5 in Appendix B**). Out of these thirteen (13) recipes analyzed, only eleven of them had full recipes while two of the recipes had only list of ingredients without cooking instructions for the recipe. Also, out of these

thirteen (13) recipes analyzed, two (2) of them were Efik soup recipes, and another two (2) were Igbo soup recipes. Meanwhile nine (9) of the recipes were other Nigerian soups which were neither Yoruba, Igbo, nor Efik soup recipes (See: **Table B.6** in **Appendix B**), and thus are regarded as commonly consumed Nigerian soups. This also means that out of the thirty-seven (37) selected Efik recipes, two (2) of them were provided by Wivestownhall (Hereinafter: this blog is referred by its blog ID: Wives). Out of the twenty-six (26) selected Igbo recipes, only two (2) of them were provided by Wives. Out of the twelve (12) selected Yoruba soup recipes none was discussed by Wives (See: **Table B.6** in **Appendix B**). Wives provides more soups which are generally consumed across Nigeria, followed by Efik and Igbo recipes.

### **3.4: Methodology**

#### **3.4.1 Componential Analysis**

In order to successfully evaluate the blogs, componential analysis, a qualitative tool that has been used to analyze the smallest units of meaning or the unique features of things that exist in cultural domains (Otteneimer, 2013, p.26) was utilized.

Developed in the field of Anthropological Linguistics, componential analysis has been used in previous analysis to pinpoint the nuances of sound and meanings in phonemes and morphemes or lexemes (Naeem, 2010). For instance, what is the difference between an aspirated and unaspirated /p/ phoneme in English for example? What does this distinction mean to those who believe in the idea of the letter (P) in the English alphabet? It has also been used to study the intricacies of kinship systems (Pericliev, 2013), such as, the difference between “mother” and “mother’s sister” or “brother” and “father’s brother’s son” to people who believe in these categories?

With a focus on the nuances of meaning and cognition then, componential analysis has been employed in other disciplines to understand the nuances of facial attractiveness (Yoder, Ault, & Mathews, 2017), health literacy (Chin et al., 2011), reading comprehension and interpretation (Steenbergen, 2002), translating metaphors (Al-Zoubi, 2009) and to analyze recipes and food (Hymes, 1964; Otteneimer, 2013).

The meanings of categories for members of a shared culture or group can be revealed using this method, for example:

“... sounds, kinship terms, names of plants, names of animals...can be distinguished by exactly one binary feature that either occurs (+) or doesn't occur (-) ...” thing 1 can be (++), thing 2 can be (+-), thing 3 can be (-+) and thing 4 can be (--)...with three binary features, you can distinguish eight things; with four, 16; with five, 32, and so on (Bernard, 2017, p.433-434).

One can use a binary as per above to overtly mark distinctions made between things and then delve deeper into the associated meanings to develop the syntax of the associated folk taxonomy. A folk taxonomy is the manner in which a group of people conceptually organize their world, how concepts are related to one another, and may consist of overt and covert categories (Bernard, 2017, p.427; VanPool & VanPool, 2009; Ottenheimer, 2013, p.26). There are a number of ways to explore the syntax of a folk taxonomy such as through pile sorts, or free listing and frames or componential analysis (Bernard, 2017, p.42). Componential analysis helps reveal how concepts are distinguished from one another, rather than just how concepts are connected as is often the case with rendering a folk taxonomy alone (Ottenheimer, 2013, p.26).

Hence, in this study, componential analysis was conducted on a selection of the recipes of common or essential Nigerian soups discussed on the blogs in order to identify the characteristics/elements/main ingredients/components of the soup. This involved developing binaries as suggested by Bernard (2017, p. 436) and then scrutinizing the definitive elements/attributes that can be included or excluded (Goodenough, 1956 & 1967; Newman, 1975; Gerhardt, Frobenius, & Ley, 2013; Chen-Chen, & Jin-zhu, 2016) in order to distinguish nuances of ingredients and their meanings within each recipe, as well as analyze acceptable elements or techniques that maintain the essence of a recipe, or render it into something else (See: Allison, 2008, p.156; Ottenheimer, 2013, p.26).

In this study, recipes of each of the selected soups was distinguished by binary features, in this case, ingredients, that either exists/could be included in the recipe (represented by 1– 1) or does not exist/should be excluded from the recipe

(represented by 2 – 2). The list of ingredients that were scrutinized for whether or not they were present in a recipe was provided by the sampled blogs. This list of ingredients expanded when one blog mentions an ingredient that has not been mentioned by the previously examined blogs. For instance (just as noted by Bernard, 2017, p. 434), if in determining the characteristics of a stallion, a blog, say *BLOG A*, mentions that a stallion is an “adult horse,” then the initial classification table will be (See: **Table 1**):

**CHARACTERIZATION  
OF A STALLION**

<b>BLOG ID</b>	<b>adult</b>	<b>horse</b>
<b>BLOG A</b>	1	1

*Table 1: Componential analysis of a stallion*

If another blog, say, *BLOG B*, then notes that a stallion is an “adult male horse,” then the initial table above expands into (See: **Table 2**):

**CHARACTERIZATION OF A  
STALLION**

<b>BLOG ID</b>	<b>adult</b>	<b>horse</b>	<b>male</b>
<b>BLOG A</b>	1	1	2
<b>BLOG B</b>	1	1	1

*Table 2: Componential analysis of a stallion*

According to **table 2**, the “adult” and “horse” category marked, 1 for both *BLOG A* and *BLOG B* means that both blogs mentioned that a stallion is an adult horse. Meanwhile the “male category” marked as 2 for *BLOG A* means that *BLOG A* did not mention that characteristic in its classification of stallion. Meanwhile, it has been marked as 1 for *BLOG B* because that blog mentioned it as a characteristic of a stallion.

Further, if another blog, say, *BLOG C*, then notes that a stallion is “an uncastrated adult male horse,” then the table above (**table 2**) further expands into (See: **Table 3**):

**CHARACTERIZATION OF A STALLION**

<b>BLOG ID</b>	<b>adult</b>	<b>horse</b>	<b>male</b>	<b>uncastrated</b>
<b>BLOG A</b>	1	1	2	2
<b>BLOG B</b>	1	1	1	2
<b>BLOG C</b>	1	1	1	1

*Table 3: Componential analysis of a stallion*



Likewise, in **table 3**, the “adult” and “horse” category were marked, **1** for *BLOG A*, *BLOG B* and *BLOG C* because they all mentioned that a stallion is an adult horse. Meanwhile the “male category” marked as **2** for *BLOG A* means that *BLOG A* did not mention the “male” feature in its classification of stallion. However, it has been marked as **1** for both *BLOG B* and *BLOG C* because they both mentioned it as a characteristic of a stallion. Also, the “uncastrated category” marked as **2** for both *BLOG A* and *BLOG B* means that both did not mention that characteristic as a characteristic of a stallion. Meanwhile, it was marked **1** for *BLOG C* because that blog mentioned it as part of the characteristic of a stallion.

Based on the final table, it could be concluded that the following are characteristics of a stallion – adult, horse, male, uncastrated. Hence, a stallion is an uncastrated adult male horse (See: Bernard, 2017, p. 434).

However, to further represent the data, the statistics of the above classification could be provided as in **table 4**:

CHARACTERIZATION OF A STALLION				
BLOG ID	adult	horse	male	uncastrated
BLOG A	1	1	2	2
BLOG B	1	1	1	2
BLOG C	1	1	1	1
	3	3	2	1
	30%	30%	20%	10%

*Table 4: Statistical analysis of the componential analysis of a stallion*

**Table 4** then shows that: 30% of the blogs note that one of the characteristics of a stallion is that it is an adult, the same 30% also note that it is a horse. Meanwhile only 20% note that another characteristic of a stallion is that it is “male”. While only 10% note that a characteristic of a stallion is that it is “uncastrated”. Thus, from the above characteristics, while a stallion is an uncastrated male, it is an adult horse. Also, from the above, one can deduce that the major characteristics of a stallion is that it is an adult horse. This is regarded as a major/common characteristic because it’s been mentioned by all/majority (in this case, 30%) of the blogs. The other characteristics mentioned by the blogs could be regarded as a minor/uncommon characteristic of a stallion, which are that a stallion is male and uncastrated. In this thesis, where a characteristic was not mentioned

by majority of the sampled blogs, the result(s) of the represented blogs was used to represent the minor/uncommon characteristics even though they could typically be the characteristics of a particular soup.

Specifically, using componential analysis, this study explores what, for example, is “afang” soup, “bitter leaf soup,” “ofe akwu,” etc.? What are the essential elements that constitute each of these soups and how does it cease being “afang soup,” “bitter leaf soup,” “ofe akwu”? Is it when “wrong” ingredients are used? The nuances of ingredients as well as the components of the sampled soups are well known to people within the cultural domain and this thesis will explore these elements and their representation on the blogs using componential analysis in subsequent chapters.

While doing so, this study points out the functional importance of the different recipes – how people substitute items that are unavailable in some locations and whether these substitutes could also maintain or destroy the authenticity of a dish.

### **3.4.2 Content Analysis**

Additionally, to successfully evaluate each of the sampled food blogs, I employed content analysis to evaluate and highlight themes and patterns broadly relating to “food as culture” and “food as health” (Lin & Mao, 2015, p.23; Adler & Clark, 2010; Kurtz et al., 2017; Bryman, Bell, & Teevan, 2012, p.293; Bernard, 2017, p.459). By doing so, this study hopes to point interconnections within and between posts (Elliott et al., 2014). This was done through constant memoing – continually writing down of thoughts and observations about what has been read both from the reviewed blogs and reviewed in the literature. This is very similar to “field notes” as I detailed my observations about the blog content and considered how themes were connected (Bernard, 2017, p.466).

By continual memoing, this study aims to underline: (1) the characteristics/essential components of Nigerian soups on the selected Nigerian food blogs – what Nigerian food blogs reveal about the cultural norms or rules, manners or standards of eating the selected soups, and the meanings associated to eating particular soups (Etkin, 2006, p.42); (2) how Nigerian food blogs express cultural ideals of Nigerians. In doing so, this study aims to discover whether the food blogs express Nigeria

as a whole or based on ethnic variation among Nigerians; (3) the relationship between the recipes (and their specific ingredients) and conceptions of health.

The data will then be cross-checked with quantitative variables, codes and patterns, which were generated prior to data collection from reviewed literatures (Lepkowska-White & Kortright, 2018, p.265-267; Schutte, 2018, see **Appendix A**), in order to further examine patterns and differences, and predict trends amongst the sampled food blogs. These elements in **Appendix A** were then entered into Google Forms in order to allow for easy compilation of data into respective categories. Responses to each variable were then provided based on my evaluation of each sampled blog. These data were then transferred to Microsoft Excel for data analysis. Complimentarily, quantitative content analysis was utilized by counting the amounts of visual themes and narratives (Bernard, 2016; Adler & Clark, 2010; Kirby, Greaves, & Reid, 2010).

### **3.5: Data Reliability and Validity**

As noted above, the study will draw on mixed methods approach to enhance the reliability and validity of data produced (Bernard, 2017, p. 231-232). To further increase the reliability of data, the inclusion and exclusion categories and coding rules will consistently be applied to the sample (Bryman et al., 2012, p.292) to eliminate pseudo-selection of materials supporting this research hypotheses (Hassibi & Sayadabdi, 2013; Adler & Clark, 2010, p.358). A mixed methods approach to web-based research is generally successful in producing comprehensive data extracted from blogs, while taking account of the different types of cultural contexts in which such data are constructed (Kurtz et al., 2017; Bernard, 2017). Also, this method is unobtrusive – less likely to be influenced by anticipation of being scrutinized (Bryman et al., 2012, p.306; Adler & Clark, 2010).

## **CHAPTER 4: NIGERIAN FOOD BLOGS**

This chapter presents the results of an overview of Nigerian food blogs, to provide sufficient overview of the characteristics and patterns of Nigerian food blogs under discussion. Data analysis was based on information elicited via the quantitative variables entered into Google Forms and the responses to each variable provided based on my evaluation of each sampled blog. Data analysis was also based on the evaluation of the individual sampled food blogs. Hence, this chapter will focus on the sample characteristics of the study, the purpose for which each of the sampled blogs have been created as well as an overview of their contents.

### **4.1: Sample Characteristics**

The “About Me” pages of the sampled food blogs were utilized in collecting background information on the blogs, and the contents and purpose for which they have been created. Also, the demographic information of these blogs’ authors/bloggers will be provided from the “about me page”, following Kurtz et al. (2017).

#### **4.1.1 Background Information of Sampled Food Blogs: About Nigerian Food Blogs and their Purpose**

From assessing the “about page” of the blogs for more information about the blogs/bloggers, and the contents and purpose for which they have created their blogs (as done in Kurtz et al., 2017), I have provided below a brief information about each of the sampled blogs.

##### **1. DOBBY’S SIGNATURE**

According to the Nigerian websites/blog who ranked this blog, this blog is owned by Dobby Okonkwo Adaobi (Oasdom, 2017 & Nigerian Bulletin, 2016). However, on the “about page,” this blogger used only Dobby.

Being unable to find Nigerian cookbooks with visual tutorials on how to prepare various Nigerian meals, this blogger began to create her own recipe book from weekend newspaper cutouts, which provided weekend recipe with visual representation of Nigerian meals. This then stirred up her “love affair for cooking” (Dobby’s Signature, 2015). She became a “culinary enthusiast with a

flair for local Nigerian cuisines and recipes around the globe, while also creating her own food and lifestyle brand” (Dobby’s Signature, 2015). It was from these, her blog, Dobby's Signature, which she calls “her online food diary” was founded in 2010 with the purpose of exploring, showcasing and sharing everyday lifestyle and experiences with food and dishes in order to inspire others (Dobby’s Signature, 2015). Thus, the purpose of her blog was to focus on “showcasing Nigerian dishes, exploring traditional or continental food recipes and flavors with strong emphasis on photography, diversity, and health benefits” (Dobby’s Signature, 2015).

## 2. **DOONEY’S KITCHEN**

This blog is owned by Danni Obata (identified on the blog, and also noted by: Oasdom, 2017; Nigerian Bulletin, 2016; Legit Nigeria, 2016; Connect Nigeria, 2018). This blogger started this blog in order to document her recipes. As a result, this blog has now grown to the “premier Nigerian food site,” which the blogger describes as “the home of Nigerian centric food” (Dooney's Kitchen, n.d.). As “the home of Nigerian centric food,” the motive of this blog is to promote Nigerian foods, while giving it, its own identity that it deserves – the identity of having its own unique entity rather than being hidden under the general classification of African foods, which this blogger acknowledges, though are very similar but different cuisines. Hence, this blog aims to redefine Nigerian foods as a unique entity of its own. While doing so, Dooney’s Kitchen also introduces new and exciting dishes to the Nigerian food repertoire. With its inventive recipes using Nigerian ingredients, this blog has received attention from both Nigerian food communities’ home and abroad (Dooney's Kitchen, n.d.).

## 3. **9JAFOODIE**

9jafoodie is owned by Ronke Edoho (also noted by Oasdom, 2017; Nigerian Bulletin, 2016; Connect Nigeria, 2018), who works as a Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA), Certified Nutritionist and Clinical Weight Loss Specialist. She is also the author of the book and nutritional plans, "Lose it Nigeria (LIN)" (9jafoodie, 2015). Through her blog, Edoho aims to provide simplified healthy Nigerian food recipes, and alternatives to unhealthy cooking

habits, which may seem complicated, but are “easy to follow” and are still rooted in Nigerian tradition, even though they are “often presented with a little modern flair” (9jafoodie, 2015). By doing so, this blogger, through her blog, aims to improve wellbeing.

#### 4. **AFROLEMS**

According to the Nigerian websites/blog who ranked it, this blog is owned by Atim Ukoh (blogger’s name was identified by Oasdom, 2017; Tatashey, 2014; Connect Nigeria, 2018). This name was also mentioned on one of the blog’s post but not outrightly mentioned as the author of the blog (Afrolems, 2011).

Described by the blogger as “an African food blog with a specialization in Nigerian food” (Afrolems, 2009), this blog discusses Nigerian foods and also discusses other interesting recipes from over Africa with some modifications to them. Doing so, the main focus of this blogger is to stylize African food so it can be internationalized, while also educating its users on kitchen tips, cooking or culinary knowledge (Afrolems, 2009).

#### 5. **NIGERIAN LAZY CHEF**

According to the Nigerian websites/blog who ranked this blog, this blog is owned by Nma Okpara (Oasdom, 2017; Nigerian Bulletin, 2016) although she used just Nma on her “about page” (Nigerian Lazy Chef, 2015). During early stages of this blogger's life, she notes that she didn’t enjoy cooking much but was forced to due to her role in the family and her late-life enjoyment of cooking shines through on this blog. This passion for cooking has inspired her project – “Dine Africa” which “shows Africa's culinary culture and exotic cuisines alongside its wide variety of ethnicity and cultures” (Nigerian Lazy Chef, 2015). Sharing traditional Nigerian delicacies which she notes are mostly her mother's recipes, the Nigerian Lazy Chef admits to tweaking the recipes to fit her choices and taste. She also indicates that her blog is also about celebrating and loving life through food (Nigerian Lazy Chef, 2015).

#### 6. **SISI JEMIMAH**

The author of this blog is Jemimah Adebisi (also known as Sisi) (Sisi Jemimah, 2015). She first began her passion for writing, developing recipes and

posting photos of the foods she prepared via Facebook and Instagram. Being implored by friends and followers to start blogging so they could keep up with her recipes, her blog was birthed. The aim of her food blog was to feature delicious, "family-friendly" recipes with thoroughly detailed step-by-step preparation methods, supported with step-by-step photos. On her blog, one can find Nigerian meal preparation undertaken with utmost ease and simplicity (Sisi Jemimah, 2015).

#### 7. **1Q FOOD PLATTER**

Iquo Ukoh, the founder of 1q Food Platter is one who loves cooking and entertaining (1q Food Platter, 2012). Through her blog, she shares food experiences as well as collection of recipes with a twist to make them healthier. By doing so, she not only creates variety and excitement in maintaining a "sensible healthy lifestyle" (1q Food Platter, 2012), but she also provides these twists without compromising on the taste and flavor of the recipes.

#### 8. **ALL NIGERIAN RECIPES**

All Nigerian Recipes is owned by Flo Chinyere (provided on the blog), who claims to have a deep passion for cooking, which she developed at a very early age due to her active role in the kitchen while under the supervision of her mother (All Nigerian Recipes, n.d.). Through her blog, she shares all the cooking skills that she has acquired from her mother, aunties and cousins that she notes are great Nigerian cooks. Being from the Igbo tribe, she notes that she mostly knows how to cook Eastern Nigerian meals, although she has learnt other Nigerian recipes from traveling across Nigeria. Focusing mostly on Nigerian recipes while providing substitutes to Nigerian ingredients that are sometimes difficult to access, she also incorporates other recipes from traveling around the world. Hence, she admonishes that anyone could prepare and enjoy her recipes irrespective of their country of origin. She also emphasizes that she provides free cooking advice via her blog, indicating that the knowledge has potential monetary value (All Nigerian Recipes, n.d.).

#### 9. **ALL NIGERIAN FOODS**

While this blog as well as its video contents are managed by David Anegbu, a food enthusiast, most of the articles on the blog are noted on the “about page” have been written by Chy Anegbu, a professional chef (All Nigerian Foods, 2012). However, both are authors of the popular Nigerian cookbook “Ultimate Nigerian Cookbook” (Anegbu, 2015). Through this blog, Anegbu shares “quick, simple and easy Nigerian recipes, as well as popular Nigerian recipes” (All Nigerian Foods, 2012). While doing so, the aim of this blog is to provide information on all foods eaten in Nigeria.

#### 10. WIVESTOWNHALL/NIGERIAN WOMEN BLOG

This blog is owned by Eya Ayambem, a teacher by profession (Nigerian Women Blog, n.d.). While she notes that she is not a professional chef, she cooks traditional Nigerian dishes and easy international recipes for her family using her own twist, which she shares on her blogs. Her blog, therefore, focuses mainly on Nigerian food recipes (Nigerian Women Blog, n.d.). However, this blogger also shares information on relationships and other entertainment news.

#### 4.1.2 Blogs’ & Bloggers’ Demography

Upon evaluation of the “about me” pages of the sampled Nigerian food blogs, it was discovered that all of the bloggers made their blog’s “about page” not just about them, the blogger, but also about the blog, where they informed their followers the purpose of their blogs. While providing information about themselves, 90% of the bloggers included their picture and name. The pictures were then used to ascertain the gender of the bloggers. From **figure 1**, 90% of the bloggers are females, while one (10%) of the blogs is owned by both a male and female.

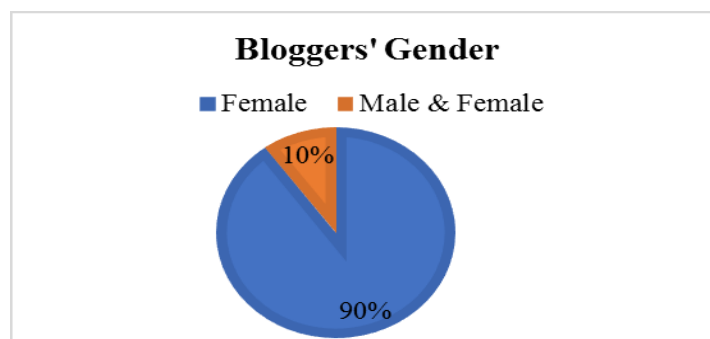
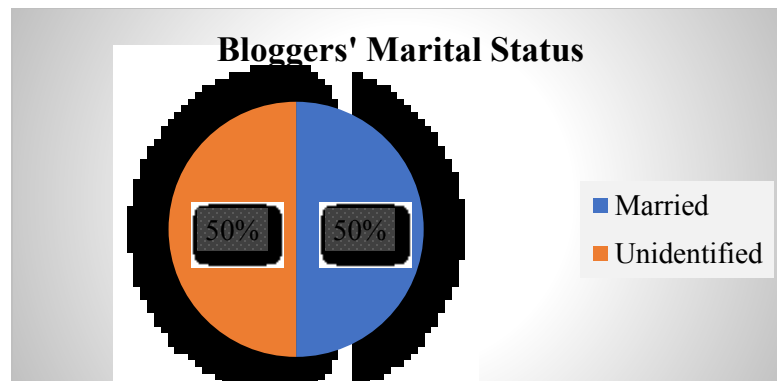


Figure 1: Diagram showing the gender of the bloggers



Also, it was noticed from the “about page” that most (80%) of the blogs were owned by an individual. While the blog, All Nigerian Foods is owned by a team of two, it is unclear whether Afrolems is owned by a team or a single individual although it could be presumed that Afrolems is owned by a single individual as information on this blog note only one blogger’s name. If so, Afrolems is part of the percentage of blogs owned by females (see: Afrolems, 2014 – on a recipe she dedicates to her grandmother; Afrolems, 2011: where she talks about how she started this blog). However, if owned by a team, then it is uncertain what the other team member’s gender is.

From the blog narratives, it has also been ascertained that 50% of the bloggers are married while the marital status of the other 50% was unidentified (see: **Figure 2**).



*Figure 2: Diagram showing the marital status of the bloggers*

In fact, three of the bloggers note in one of their blog narratives that they have children (See: **Table B.2** in **Appendix B**). While it has been ascertained that all of these bloggers are Nigerians, majority (four) of them are Igbos, two of them are Yorubas, another two are from Cross Rivers State, one is Delta-Igbo and Yoruba, while the other bloggers’ cultural group was unidentified (See: **Figure 3**).

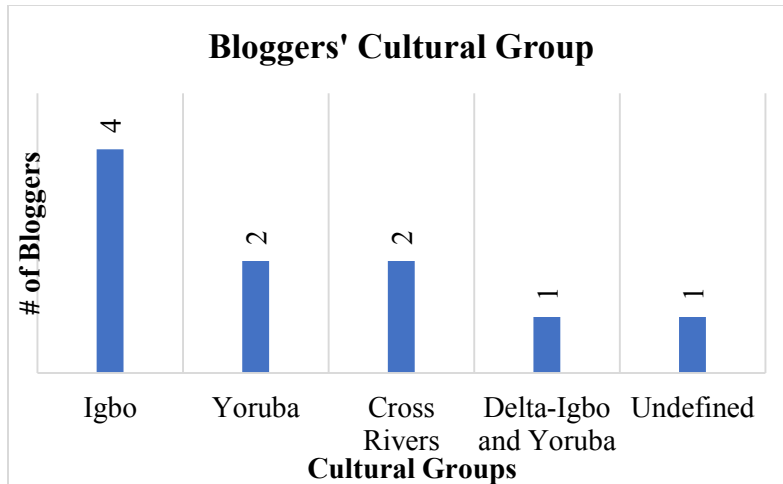


Figure 3: Diagram showing the cultural group(s) of the bloggers

However, majority (60%) of these bloggers reside outside Nigeria, while 40% of them reside in Nigeria (See: **Figure 4**). Please also see **table B.2** in **Appendix B** for summary of the sampled-bloggers' demographic characteristics.

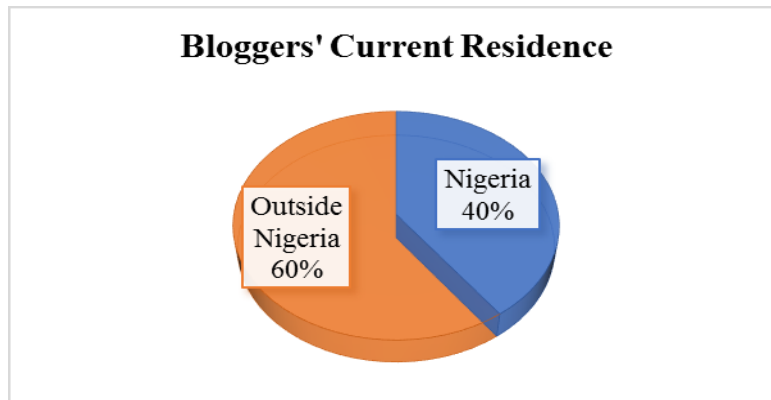


Figure 4: Diagram showing the current residence of the bloggers

## 4.2: The Content and Structure of Nigerian Food Blogs

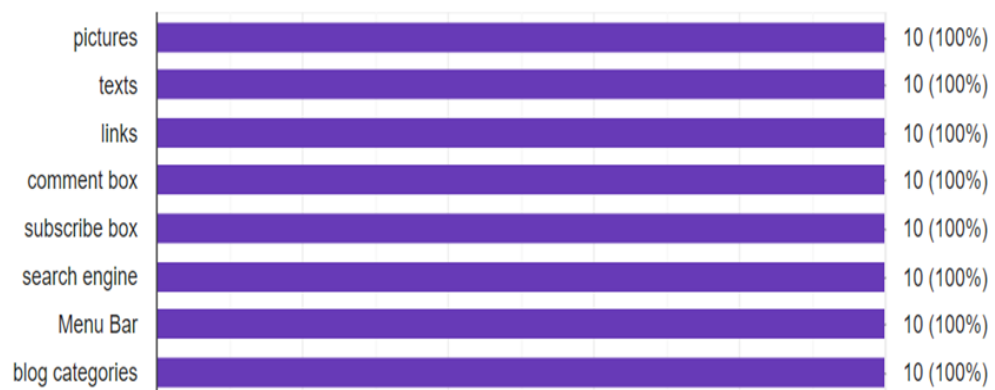
### 4.2.1 General Overview of Nigerian Food Blogs

From assessing and evaluating the selected Nigerian food blogs, it has been discovered that Nigerian food blogs, just like other food blogs, include online personal journals or diaries (as one of the bloggers, Dob described its blog) about kitchen themes, which are dated and are written by one or more authors (Dumas et al., 2017, p.86; Nkem Anusiem, 2017, p.83; Kurtz et al., 2017; Dumas et al., 2017, p.86). A person who writes these posts related to food or blogs about food discourses is widely referred to as a food

blogger (Schutte, 2018). Hence, the authors of the sampled blogs are henceforth, referred to as bloggers of their blog.

Also, it was observed that Nigerian food blogs revolve around preparing, writing and sharing as well as photographing foods and drinks of all kinds. Thus, it could be deduced that the general purpose of Nigerian food blogs is to showcase and promote Nigerian culinary culture alongside its “wide variety of ethnicity and cultures” (also noted by Nigerian Lazy Chef as one of the purposes of her blogs). While doing so, these blogs aim to simplify the processes of cooking Nigerian dishes by providing cooking tips; introduce new recipes to the Nigerian food repertoire, as well also sometimes modify Nigerian recipes in order to suit the needs of its users both home and abroad (as noted by some of the bloggers’ – Dooney’s Kitchen, n.d.; Afrolems, 2009 as one of the purposes of their blogs; and in fact would be discovered in latter chapters that they alongside other bloggers served this purpose). While focusing on Nigerian foods, these blogs also explore other continental food recipes (e.g. Dooney’s Kitchen, n.d.; Afrolems, 2009).

In sharing its kitchen themes, most Nigerian food blogs have used a combination of videos, enticing images, texts which sometimes contain hyperlink and are sometimes repeated or adapted in other blogs of the same nature as a reference for building posts (See: **Figures 5 & 6**; Hedge, 2014, p.89; Cox & Blake, 2011, p.207, Rodney et al., 2017, p.691; Rocha, 2018, p.16; Johnston et al., 2014).



*Figure 5: Blog Features I – Diagram showing features commonly used by the sampled blogs*

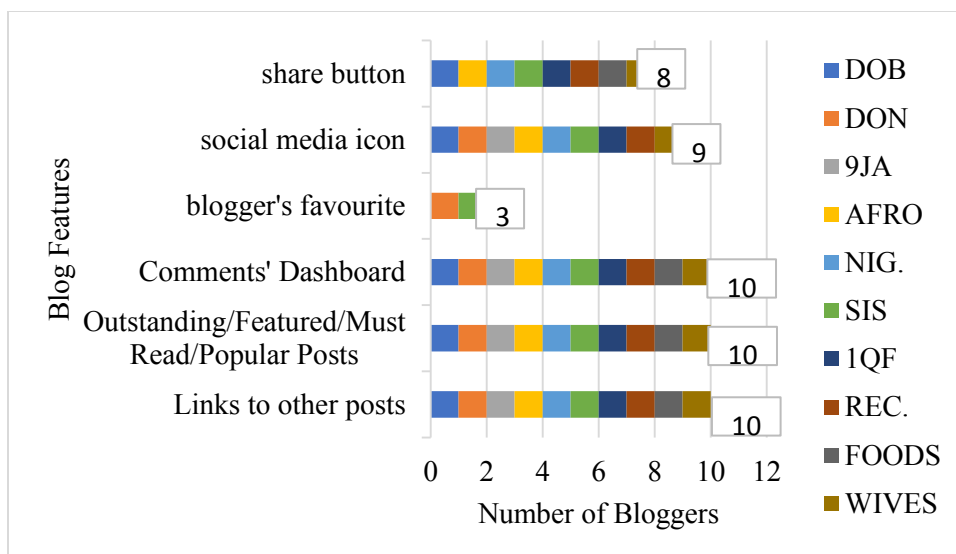


Figure 6: *Blog Features II – Diagram showing other features used by the sampled blogs*

Also, these blogs provide captivating personal and cultural narratives or stories on the individual blog posts, which sometimes recount an event or the preparation of a dish and sometimes the reason for preparing a particular dish (e.g as one of the blogs shared a story behind a recipe while noting that her reason for cooking a particular soup was to remember her grand-mother (Afrolems, 2014). Or as in another case, shares a recipe to memorialise her father (Nigerian Lazy Chef, 2015)). The narratives provided on some of the blog posts will be discussed later in subsequent chapters.

The blogs also contain social spaces like dashboards, comment boxes and subscribe box to enable followers/users share their opinions or/and experiences on the blogs (Also see: **Figures 5 & 6**). Thus, when most of the bloggers share their posts e.g. recipes, at the end of sharing, they also invite their users/readers to provide complimentary information (e.g. their own ways of making the soup, or their comments on particular topics, etc.) on their posts/recipes. Thereby promoting a virtual community fostered by the practice of not just the blogger sharing information but also the users commenting (Hedge, 2014, p.90). It is important to note that almost all of the posts on the selected food blogs had comments from users, again reinforcing the idea of community through food. Therefore, Nigerian food blogs cannot be reduced to the character of the individual bloggers even if the centerpiece of blog information are on the personal reflections of the bloggers. This is because the reality is that these blogs do not strictly

represent the blogger's reality but an aggregate world of the entire blog-community – the community of bloggers and their readers/users who co-create these blogs (also noted in Lepkowska-White & Kortright, 2018, p.260).

#### **4.2.2 Structure of Nigerian Food Blogs**

Structurally, a typical Nigerian food-blog has at the top of the page, the name of the blog (e.g Dobby's Signature, 2010; Dooney's Kitchen, n.d.; 9jafoodie, n.d., also see: **Figure 7**) or/and the blog's logo (as in Afrolems, 2016 who has just the blog's logo). Beside (as in Dooney's Kitchen, n.d.; Afrolems, 2016; also see: **Figure 7**) or below (as in most of the sampled-blogs e.g. Dobby's Signature, 2010; 9jafoodie, n.d., Nigerian Lazy Chef, n.d.; 1q Food Platter, 2014; Nigerian Women Blog, n.d.) or below and above (as in Sisi Jemimah, n.d.; All Nigerian Foods, 2011) the blog's name or logo, is the menu bar – which provides the list of the blog's contents/sections, in order to assist or guide blog-users on how to navigate or find resources on the blogs (See: **Figure 7**). Below that, there is usually the title of the post. After that, the main text/body of the post, which of the recipe-posts analyzed consists of three elements: background information, often in the form of a narrative; the recipe proper, readers' comments; and other typical elements of a blog or website in general, namely advertisements, the blog archive and links to other blogs, which are sometimes situated next to or below the main text-body. While these elements are represented amongst the blogs, not all of the elements (e.g a share button or social media icon for sharing posts, search engine – to search for information on the blog, and blog category) are automatically present in all blogs (See: **Figure 6** above illustrating this). For instance, one might find a post without a recipe (e.g Nigerian Women Blog, 2016 and Nigerian Women Blog, 2019, while these posts provide some information on a particular soup, it does not provide an actual recipe for the soup). Moreover, these elements do not necessarily appear in the same position. For instance, one might find the blog menu bar above the blog's name (as in Dooney's Kitchen, n.d. and All Nigerian Foods, 2011; also see: **Figure 7**).

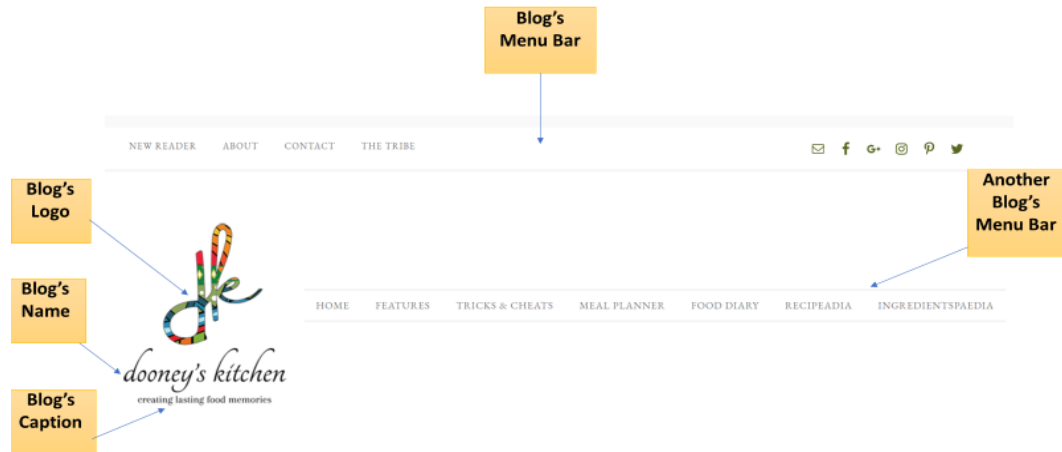


Figure 7: Layout of “Dooney’s Kitchen” (Dooney's Kitchen, n.d.)

#### 4.2.3 Structure of the Selected Nigerian Food Blogs and Assessing the Consistency in the Structure of Food Blogs’ Recipe-Post and their Writing Style.

Having provided an overview of the structure of the selected Nigerian food blogs, this section discusses the structure of the sampled-recipe-posts as well as the writing style of these recipes. The aim of doing so is to (1) provide an overview of the content and writing style of sampled recipe posts on the selected Nigerian food blogs and (2) evaluate the consistency in the structure of these recipes on the Nigerian food blogs as well as the writing style of these blogs. By doing so, this study seeks to answer:

- A. whether the way Nigerian food bloggers write their blogs and recipe post is consistent
  - i. **within their blogs:** in other words, do the blogs maintain same writing style across their posts and
  - ii. **across the other evaluated food blogs:** in other words, are there similarities or differences in the way blogs write their posts or present recipes?

In order to collect this information, questions were asked about the structure of posts and writing style of the recipes on the selected soups (See: **Appendix A**, questions 27-30). Responses to these questions were then provided based on my evaluation of each of the individual posts and analyzed.

#### 4.2.3.1 An Overview of the Content and Writing Style of Sampled Recipes on the Nigerian food blogs

From the analysis, it was found that:

- 1) Amongst all of the fifteen (15) sampled posts from **Dobby's Signature**, a heading was provided for each of the recipe analyzed. All, except one of the recipes were categorized. The categorization of each of the recipes will be provided later when discussing the recipes in subsequent chapters.

The author of, and the date of publication for each of the sampled recipes was always provided on the blog. The author of this blog (referred to as Dob, as well as her blog's name in this thesis) always provided a story or background information for each of the sampled recipes from her blog. The blog was consistent in providing mostly written recipes rather than oral recipes via videos.

Out of the fifteen sampled recipes from this blog, the preparation time for thirteen of the recipes was included, while the cook time was provided for only six of the recipes and the total time for preparing recipes was provided for only eleven of the recipes. Meanwhile, ten out of the fifteen sampled recipes had the number of servings its ingredients could serve.

As for the writing style of recipes, all of the fifteen sampled recipes had a list of ingredients and the blogger provided measurements as well as pictures for each of the ingredients. These lists of ingredients were mostly (fourteen out of fifteen of the sampled recipes) written in bullet form (See: **Table B.7** in **Appendix B** for an illustration of this writing style). Also, each of the fifteen sampled recipes had cooking instructions/directions as well as a picture of the cooking stages/instructions that could be followed in producing/creating the featured dish. These cooking instructions were mostly (fourteen out of fifteen) numbered (See: **Table B.7** in **Appendix B** for an illustration of this writing style). For each of the sampled recipes, a picture of the finished/prepared dish was also provided by this blogger; and all of the sampled recipes had followers' comments.

- 2) Amongst all of the sixteen (16) sampled posts from **Dooney's Kitchen**, a heading was provided for each of the recipe analyzed. All, except one of the recipes were

categorized. Again, the categories of each of the recipes will be provided later when discussing the recipes in subsequent chapters.

None of the sampled recipes from this blog had a date of publication or a date when they were published on the blog, or the author of the recipe. Although, the blogger (referred to as Don, as well as her blog's name in this thesis) sometimes mentioned whom had inspired her preparation of the recipes or taught her how to prepare the recipe. This blog also always provided a story or background information for each of the recipes.

This blog, most of the time (fifteen out of sixteen sampled recipes) provided written recipes rather than oral recipes via videos (which was provided only once). Furthermore, this blog most of the time (fifteen out of sixteen), never provided a preparation, or cook time or total time for preparing its recipes.

As per writing style of the sampled recipes, all of the sixteen sampled recipes had a list of ingredients of which only twelve of these list of ingredients had measurements for the ingredients, and only fourteen of the recipes had pictures of its ingredients. Most (fourteen out of the sixteen) ingredients of the sampled recipes were listed, one of them was numbered and only one was bulleted (See: **Table B.7** in **Appendix B** for an illustration of this writing style: listed, bulleted and numbered ingredients). However, this blog does not provide how many people its list of ingredients could serve.

Also, each of the sixteen sampled recipes had cooking instructions/directions that could be followed in producing/creating the featured dish, and pictures of the cooking stages/instructions were provided for only fourteen of those recipes. These cooking instructions were mostly (fifteen out of sixteen) numbered, while only one was written in paragraph (See: **Table B.7** in **Appendix B** for an illustration of this writing style: numbered and paragraphed cooking instructions).

Out of the sixteen sampled recipes, only twelve of the recipes had a picture of the finished/prepared dish; and all of the sampled recipes also had followers' comments.



- 3) Amongst all of the twelve (12) sampled posts from **9jafoodie**, a heading was provided for almost all except one of the recipes analyzed. All, except one of the recipes were categorized. Again, these categories of recipes will be provided later when discussing the recipes in subsequent chapters.

All of the sampled recipes had a date of publication or a date when they were published on the blog as well as the author of the recipe. This blogger (referred to as 9ja, as well as her blog's name in this thesis) most times (eleven out of twelve of the sampled recipes) provided a story or background information for each of the recipes. While this blog always had written recipes, most of the time (eight out of twelve), this blog also had oral recipes via videos.

This blog most of the time (nine out of twelve), never provided a preparation, cook time or total time for preparing any of the sampled recipe. As per the writing style of the sampled recipes, all of the twelve sampled recipes had a list of ingredients and the measurements for each of the ingredients needed in preparing the recipe. However, only nine of these recipes had pictures of the ingredients needed for preparing the recipe. Most (eleven out of the twelve) ingredients of the sampled recipes were provided in bullet points while only one of them was numbered (See: **Table B.7** in **Appendix B** for an illustration of this writing style: bulleted and numbered ingredients). However, this blog most times (nine out of twelve) never provided how many people each list of ingredients could serve.

All of the sampled recipes had cooking instructions/directions that could be followed in producing/creating the featured dish, and only eight of these sampled recipes had pictures of the cooking stages/instructions. These cooking instructions were mostly (eight out of twelve) provided in bullet points, while two were numbered and the other two were listed (See: **Table B.7** in **Appendix B** for an illustration of this writing style: bulleted, listed, and numbered cooking instruction).

Out of the twelve sampled recipes, eleven of the recipes had a picture of the finished/prepared dish, while only one did not. All of the sampled recipes also had followers' comments

- 4) Amongst all of the eleven (11) sampled posts from **Afrolems**, a heading was provided for all of the recipes analyzed. All of the recipes were also categorized. All of the sampled recipes had a date of publication or a date when they were published on the blog as well as the author of the recipe. This blogger (referred to as Afro, as well as her blog's name in this thesis) most times (ten out of eleven of the sampled recipes) provided a story or background information for each of the recipes.

This blogger was consistent in providing written recipes for all of the sampled recipes, rather than providing oral recipes via videos. This blogger never provided the preparation, cook time or total time for preparing any of the sampled recipe.

Ten out of the eleven sampled recipes had a list of ingredients as well as the measurements for each of the ingredients needed in preparing the recipe. However, only seven of these recipes had pictures of the ingredients needed for preparing the recipe. Most (ten out of the eleven) ingredients of the sampled recipes were merely listed while only one of them was provided in bullet points (See: **Table B.7** in **Appendix B** for an illustration of this writing style: listed and bulleted ingredients). However, this blogger most times (eight out of eleven) never provided how many people each list of ingredients could serve. The number of servings for the recipe was only provided thrice amongst all the sampled recipes.

All of the sampled recipes had cooking instructions/directions that could be followed in producing/creating the featured dish, and only seven of these sampled recipes had pictures of the cooking stages/instructions. These cooking instructions were mostly (eight out of eleven) also listed just like its ingredients, while two were provided in paragraphs and one was provided in bulleted steps (See: **Table B.7** in **Appendix B** for an illustration of this writing style: listed, paragraphed and bulleted cooking instructions/steps).

Out of the eleven sampled recipes, eight of the recipes had a picture of the finished/prepared dish, while only one did not. All of the sampled recipes also had followers' comments.

- 5) Amongst all of the twelve (12) sampled posts from **Nigerian Lazy Chef**, a heading was provided for all of the recipes analyzed. Five out of these twelve sampled recipes were categorized.

All of the sampled recipes had a date of publication or a date when they were published on the blog as well as the author of the recipe. This blogger (referred to as Nig., as well as her blog's name in this thesis) most times (eleven out of twelve of the sampled recipes) provided a story or background information for each of the recipes. This blog mostly (eleven out of twelve) had written recipes for all of its sampled recipes, rather than oral recipes via videos, which was provided only once. This blog always had a preparation, cook time or total time for preparing any of its sampled recipe.

All of the twelve sampled recipes had a list of ingredients as well as the measurements, but not pictures for each of the ingredients needed in preparing the recipe. All ingredients of the twelve sampled recipes were provided in bullet points (See: **Table B.7** in **Appendix B** for an illustration of this writing style: bulleted ingredients). This blogger also always provided how many people each list of ingredients could serve.

All of the sampled recipes had cooking instructions/directions that could be followed in producing/creating the featured dish, with only two of these recipes having pictures of the cooking stages/instructions. These cooking instructions were mostly (eleven out of twelve) numbered while only one of them was provided in paragraphs (See: **Table B.7** in **Appendix B** for an illustration of this writing style: numbered and paragraphed cooking instructions).

Out of the twelve sampled recipes, nine of the recipes had a picture of the finished/prepared dish, while only one did not. All, except one of the sampled recipes had followers' comments.

- 6) Amongst all of the eleven (11) sampled posts from **Sisi Jemimah**, a heading was provided for all of the recipes analyzed. Only one of these eleven sampled recipes was categorized. None of the sampled recipes had a date of publication or a date when they were published on the blog as well as the author of the recipe.

This blogger (referred to as Sisi, as well as her blog's name in this thesis) always provided a story or background information for each of the recipes. This blog mostly (nine out of eleven) had written recipes for all of its sampled recipes, rather than oral recipes via videos, which was provided only twice. This blog never provided a preparation, cook time or total time for preparing any of the sampled recipe.

All of the eleven sampled recipes had a list of ingredients as well as the measurements for each of the ingredients and the pictures of the ingredients needed in preparing the recipe. All ingredients of the eleven sampled recipes were merely listed (See: **Table B.7** in **Appendix B** for an illustration of this writing style: listed ingredients). This blogger also never provided how many people each list of ingredients could serve.

All of the sampled recipes had cooking instructions/directions and the pictures of the cooking stages/instructions that could be followed in producing/creating the featured dish. These cooking instructions were mostly (eight out of eleven) provided in paragraphs while only one of them was numbered and two were listed (See: **Table B.7** in **Appendix B** for an illustration of this writing style: numbered and listed cooking instructions).

Out of the eleven sampled recipes, ten of the recipes had a picture of the finished/prepared dish, while only one did not. All of the sampled recipes had followers' comments.

- 7) Amongst all of the fifteen (15) sampled posts from **1q Food Platter**, a heading was provided for all of the recipes analyzed. All of these sampled recipes were categorized. None of the sampled recipes had a date of publication or a date when they were published on the blog but seven of these sampled recipes had the author of the recipe.

This blogger (referred to as 1q, as well as her blog's name in this thesis) always provided a story or background information for each of the recipes. This blog mostly (thirteen out of fifteen) had written recipes for all of its sampled recipes, rather than providing oral recipes via videos, which was provided only

twice. This blog never provided a preparation, cook time or total time for preparing any of the sampled recipe.

All of the fifteen sampled recipes had a list of ingredients as well as the measurements for each of the ingredients needed in preparing the recipe and pictures of the ingredients needed for preparing the recipe was provided for twelve out of the fifteen sampled recipes. All ingredients of the fifteen sampled recipes were merely listed (See: **Table B.7** in **Appendix B** for an illustration of this writing style: listed ingredients). Only three out of the fifteen sampled recipes had number of servings for its recipe.

All of the sampled recipes had cooking instructions/directions that could be followed in producing/creating the featured dish, while seven out of the fifteen sampled recipes also had pictures of the cooking stages/instructions. These cooking instructions were mostly (fourteen out of fifteen) numbered while only one of them was listed (See: **Table B.7** in **Appendix B** for an illustration of this writing style: numbered and listed cooking instructions).

Out of the fifteen sampled recipes, thirteen of the recipes had a picture of the finished/prepared dish, although the other two had inactive links to pictures of the finished/prepared dish. All of the sampled recipes had followers' comments.

- 8) Amongst all of the fifteen (15) sampled posts from **All Nigerian Recipes**, a heading was provided for all of the recipes analyzed. All of these sampled recipes were categorized. None of the sampled recipes had a date of publication or a date when they were published on the blog as well as the author of the recipe, however, this information was provided in the *YouTube* videos of these recipes. This blogger (referred to as Rec., as well as her blog's name in this thesis) always provided a story or background information for each of the sampled recipes. This blog had both written and oral recipes for fourteen of its sampled recipes. This blog never had a preparation, cook time or total time for preparing any of the sampled recipe on its blog.

All of the fifteen sampled recipes had a list of ingredients, while the measurements for each of the ingredients needed in preparing the recipe was provided for only fourteen of the sampled recipes. However, pictures of the

ingredients needed for preparing the recipe was provided for only two out of the fifteen sampled recipes. All ingredients of the fifteen sampled recipes were provided in bullet points (See: **Table B.7** in **Appendix B** for an illustration of this writing style: bulleted ingredients). None of its sampled recipes had number of servings for its recipe.

All, except one of the sampled recipes had cooking instructions/directions that could be followed in producing/creating the featured dish, while only five out of the fifteen sampled recipes also had pictures of the cooking stages/instructions. All of the recipes with cooking instructions were numbered (See: **Table B.7** in **Appendix B** for an illustration of this writing style: numbered cooking instructions).

Out of the fifteen sampled recipes, nine of the recipes had a picture of the finished/prepared dish although, for the other six recipes, the pictures of the finished/prepared dish could be seen on the posted video on the blog. All of the sampled recipes lacked followers' comments on its blog but on the videos provided.

- 9) Amongst all of the nine (9) sampled posts from **All Nigerian Foods**, a visible heading was provided for only three of the recipes, while the other six could be deduced from the links of the posts. Only two of the sampled recipes were categorized. None of the sampled recipes had a date of publication or a date when they were published on the blog as well as the author of the recipe, however, this information was provided on the YouTube videos of these recipes.

These bloggers (referred to as Foods, as well as their blog's name in this thesis) always provided a story or background information for each of the recipes. This blog had both written recipes, as well as oral recipes via videos, for nine of these sampled recipes.

This blog never provided a preparation, cook or total time for preparing its recipes for eight of the sampled recipes. All of the nine sampled recipes had a list of ingredients, as well as the measurements and pictures for each of the ingredients needed in preparing the recipe. The ingredients of six out of the nine sampled recipes were listed while the other three were provided in bullet points

(See: **Table B.7** in **Appendix B** for an illustration of this writing style: listed and bulleted ingredients). Only six out of the nine sampled recipes had number of servings for its recipe.

All of the sampled recipes had cooking instructions/directions as well as the pictures of its cooking stages/instructions that could be followed in producing/creating the featured dish. All of the cooking instructions provided for the sampled recipes were provided in paragraphs (See: **Table B.7** in **Appendix B** for an illustration of this writing style: paragraphed cooking instructions). All of the sampled recipes had a picture of the finished/prepared dish. All of the sampled recipes had followers' comments on its blog.

- 10) Amongst all of the fourteen (14) sampled posts from **Wivestownhall/Nigerian Women Blog**, a heading was provided for all of the recipes analyzed. However, only two of these sampled recipes were categorized.

All of the sampled recipes had a date of publication or a date when they were published on the blog as well as the author of the recipe. This blogger (referred to as Wives, as well as her blog's name in this thesis) mostly (thirteen out of fourteen of the sampled recipes) provided a story or background information for each of the recipes.

This blog had only written recipes for all of its sampled recipes, rather than oral recipes provided via videos. This blog never had a preparation time, cook time or total time for preparing any of the sampled recipe on its blog.

All except one of the fourteen sampled recipes had a list of ingredients, and all except two of these sampled recipes have measurements for the ingredients needed in preparing the recipe and all except three of these sampled recipes have pictures of the ingredients needed. The ingredients of the sampled recipes were mostly (seven out of fourteen) listed while four of them were provided in bullet points and the other two were numbered (See: **Table B.7** in **Appendix B** for an illustration of this writing style: listed, bulleted and numbered ingredients). Only one out of the fourteen sampled recipes had number of servings for its recipe.

Only twelve out of the fourteen sampled recipes had cooking instructions/directions and only eleven of these twelve cooking instructions also had pictures of its cooking stages/instructions that could be followed in producing/creating the featured dish. Most (eight out of the fourteen) of the cooking instructions provided for the sampled recipes were numbered, while two were provided in bullet steps, one was listed and one was also provided in paragraph (See: **Table B.7** in **Appendix B** for an illustration of this writing style: numbered, bulleted, listed and paragraphed cooking instructions). All of the sampled recipes have a picture of the finished/prepared dish. Ten out of the fourteen sampled recipes have followers' comments on its blog.

#### 4.2.3.2 Evaluating the Consistency in the Structure of and Writing Style of Sampled Recipes on the Nigerian food blogs

From the above, in summary, all of the blogs except one (Foods) mostly had a recipe heading for the sampled recipe posts. Most of the blogs (Dob; Don; Afro; Nig.; 1q; Rec.) categorized/classified the sampled recipes on their blogs.

Most of the blogs also had the author of the sampled recipes except Don, Sisi; Rec. and Foods who did not outrightly provide the author of the recipe on their blogs. However, sometimes, this information could be found in other social media where the recipe was shared.

Only half or 50% of the bloggers (Dob; 9ja; Afro; Nig.; Wives) provided the date when the sampled recipe was published on the blogs. Meanwhile all of the bloggers mostly provided a story or background information for the recipe shared on their blogs.

Occasionally, some of the bloggers of the sampled blogs (Don; 9ja; Nig.; Sisij; 1q) shared recipes through oral forms via videos. However, some of the bloggers (Rec. and Foods) mostly shared both written and oral recipes. Only two of the bloggers (Dob and Nig.) mostly provided the preparation or cook or total time for preparing each of the sampled recipes. Few of the bloggers (9ja; Afro; 1q; Wives) sometimes provided the number of servings for each of the sampled recipes on the blog. However, some of the bloggers (Dob; Nig.; Foods) most times provided the number of servings for each of these sampled recipes.



Also, in providing a recipe on the selected soups shared on the blogs, all of the blogs provided the ingredients, sometimes with its measurement, and cooking instructions/methods needed for preparing most of these sampled recipes. While some of the bloggers (Don; Afro; Sisi; 1q; Foods; Wives) mostly **listed** the ingredients, some (Dob; 9ja; Nig.; Rec.) mostly provided the ingredients in **bullet** forms (Again, see: **Table B.7** in **Appendix B** for an illustration of these writing styles).

Also, while some of the bloggers (Afro) mostly **listed** the cooking instructions as if they were ingredients, some (9ja) provided the ingredients in **bullet forms**, others (e.g Dob; Don; Nig.; 1q; Rec.; Wives) mostly **numbered** them and some (Sisi; Foods) mostly provided them in **paragraphs** which were sometimes separated by pictures (Again, see: **Table B.7** in **Appendix B** for an illustration of these writing styles).

From the above, it could be deduced that most of the bloggers of the blogs (six out of the ten sampled blogs) were more likely to list the ingredients of the sampled recipes than provide them in bullet forms which was done by the other four blogs. Also, most of the bloggers of the sampled blogs (six out of the ten sampled blogs) were more likely to number their cooking instructions than provide them in paragraphs (which was done by two of the blogs) or list, or bullet forms (which were done by only one of the blogs).

While some of the bloggers (Don; 9ja; 1q; Rec; Wives) sometimes provided some pictures for the cooking instructions/methods of the sampled recipes, some of the bloggers always did so (Dob; Sisi; Foods) for all of the sampled recipes. However, some bloggers (Afro) never provided pictures for the cooking procedures of the recipes.

All of the bloggers tended to provide a picture of the finished dish prepared i.e. a picture of the dish of the sampled recipe after it has been prepared. While some of the blogs (Don; 9ja; Afro; Nig.; 1q; Rec.; Wives) sometimes provided some pictures of the ingredients, some of the blogs always did so (Dob; Sisi; Foods) for all of the sampled recipes. All of the bloggers had some followers' comment on most of their recipe posts except one of the bloggers (Rec) who had them on the youtube vidoes.

### **4.3: Nigerian Food Blogs and Social Media**

As noted in the literature, it has also been observed that while Nigerian foods are gaining more visibility through Nigerian food blogs, they are also gaining more visibility in social media such as *Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Google+, Twitter, LinkedIn* or *Youtube* (Rodney et al., 2017, p.686, 688; Nkem Anusiem, 2017, p.81; Rocha, 2018, p.16). This has been revealed in the social media of these sampled food blogs where they further share information on Nigerian foods and recipes from their food blogs.

Thus, while data was collected from the sampled food blogs – the “top ten” Nigerian food blogs, some information was collected from the major social networks of these sampled Nigerian food bloggers in order to determine the number of followers/page viewers of these food blogs. This is because sometimes this information was not provided on the actual food blogs but on their social networks. By doing so, it was then assessed whether these selected food blogs were gaining wider social dimension through other social networks. Besides, it has been noted in the literature that readership and followers both on the food blogs and other of its social networks could also be indicators of the popularity and successfulness of the food blog/blogger (Cox & Blake, 2011, p.207; Agarwal et al., 2008). Hence, to determine the number of users/followers of the sampled blogs, aside from the sampled blogs, the major social networks of the blogs were also assessed for the number of followers/page-viewers they had on each of them.

#### **4.3.1 Number of Page-Viewers/Followers on the Sampled Food Blogs**

First, on the sampled blogs, only four of the bloggers noted the number of subscribers on their blogs (See: **Figure 8**). Of these bloggers, Wives has more (over eighty-one thousand) subscribers than her counterparts, Afro, who has less than fifty thousand subscribers, 1q, who has less than four thousand and Nig who has less than a thousand subscribers (See: **Figure 8**).

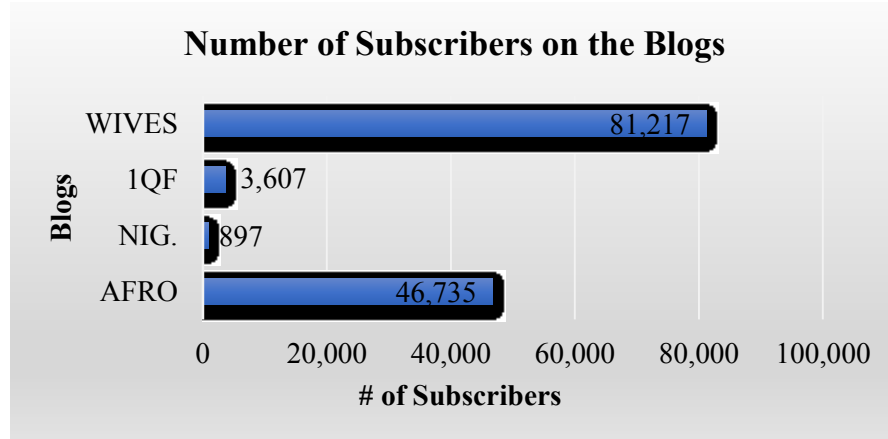


Figure 8: Diagram showing the number of subscribers on the sampled blogs

Aside from using blogs, the sampled food bloggers have also used other forms of social media in sharing the content of their food blog (See: **Figure 9**). While all (100%) of the bloggers used Facebook, 90% used Instagram and Twitter, 80% used emails and Pinterest, 60% used YouTube, 30% used Google+, which are, as of today, unavailable, and 10% used Blackberry Messenger (BBM), and Tumblr (See: (See: **Figure 9**).

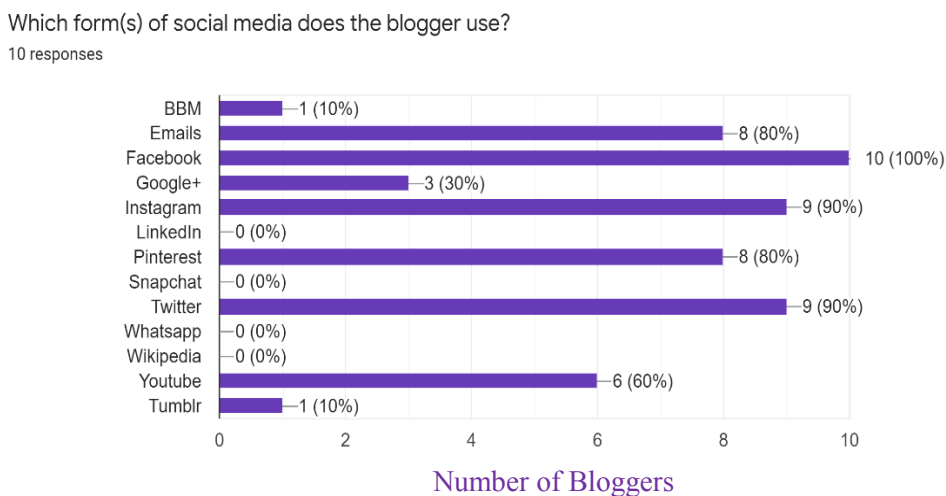


Figure 9: Showing bloggers' use of other forms of social media

Of those (100% of) bloggers who used Facebook (as seen in **figure 9**), Rec., with over three hundred and fifty thousand followers, had the highest number of Facebook followers while Wives with less than a thousand followers had the lowest number of Facebook followers (See: **Figure 10**).

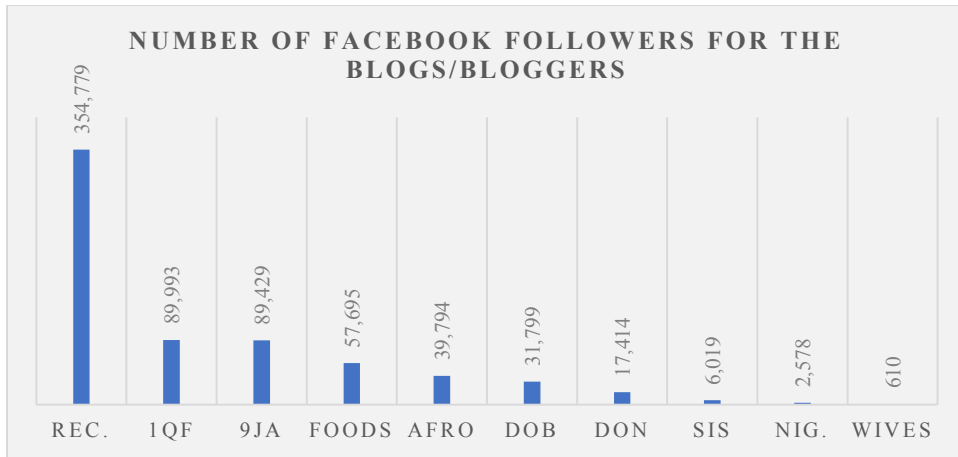


Figure 10: Showing the number of Facebook followers for each of the sampled blogs/bloggers

Of the 90% which used Instagram (as seen in **figure 9**), 9ja had the highest number of followers on Instagram with over two hundred and eighty thousand followers while Foods ranked the lowest with less than five thousand followers (See: **Figure 11**).

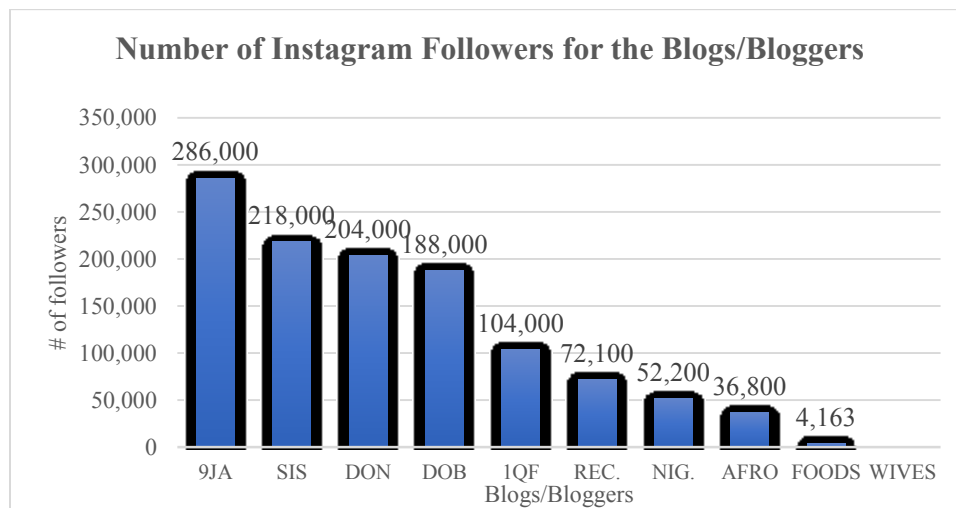


Figure 11: Showing the number of Instagram followers for each of the sampled blogs/bloggers

Also, of the 90% which used Twitter (as seen in **figure 9**), 9ja again ranked highest with over thirteen thousand Twitter followers, while Foods, again, ranked lowest with only less than twenty followers (See: **Figure 12**).

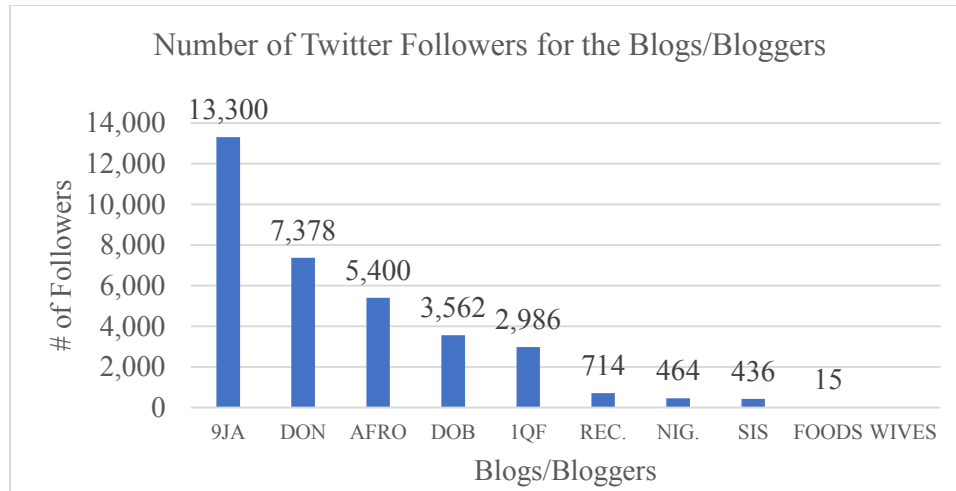


Figure 12: Showing the number of Twitter followers for each of the sampled blogs/bloggers

Of the 80% which used Pinterest (as seen in **figure 9**), only 40%'s (four of the bloggers') Pinterest unique viewers were visible. Thus, with over sixty-four thousand unique viewers, 9ja again had the highest Pinterest viewers, while Dob ranked the lowest with less than four thousand viewers (See: **Figure 13**).

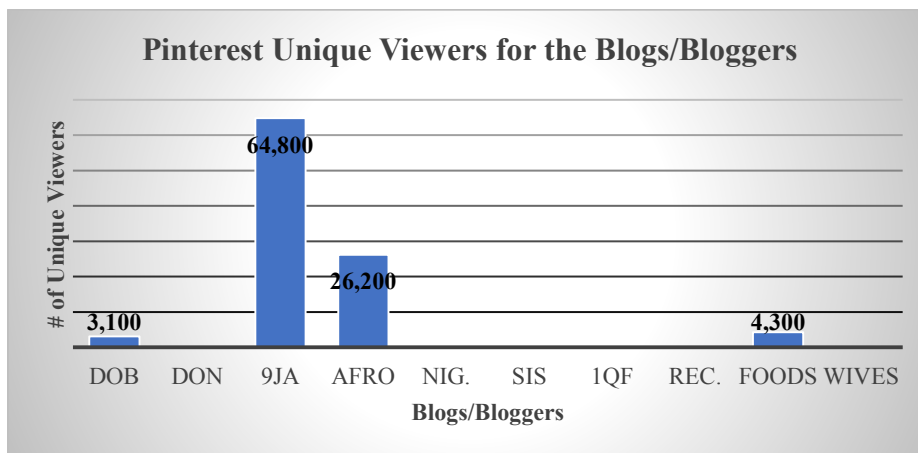


Figure 13: Showing the number of Pinterest uniue viewers for each of the sampled blogs/bloggers

More so, 9ja also had the highest Pinterest followers with over four thousand followers, while Nig. with less than ten followers had the lowest number of Pinterest followers (See: **Figure 14**).

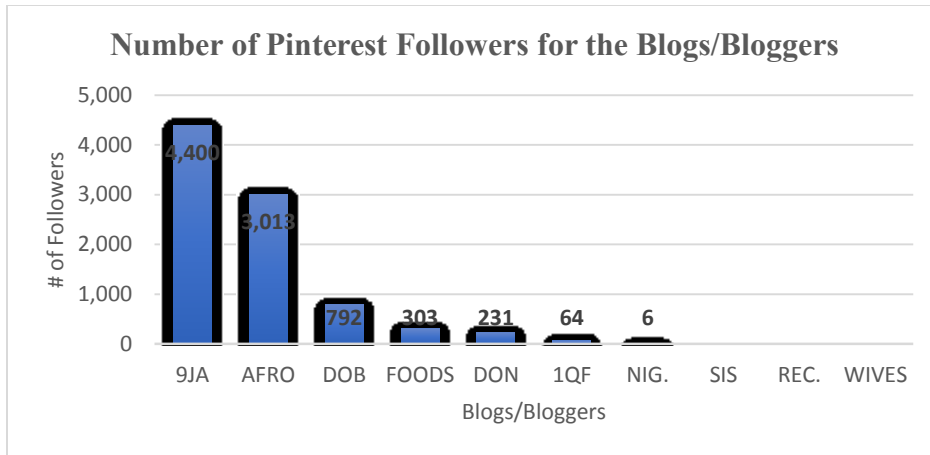


Figure 14: Showing the number of Pinterest followers for each of the sampled blogs/bloggers

Of the 60% which used YouTube (as seen in **figure 9**), Rec had the highest YouTube views with over thirty-five million views, followed by Foods who had over two million views, and 1q who had over one million but less than two million views, while Dob had the lowest YouTube views with less than four hundred thousand views (See: **Figure 15**). This could probably be because Rec and Foods use this social forum more (as noted earlier, they produce more of oral recipes via YouTube videos) than their other counterparts.

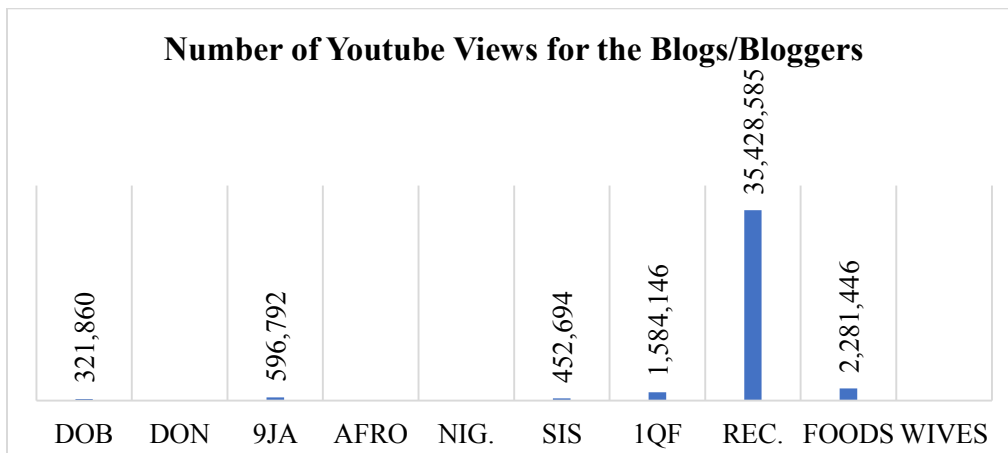


Figure 15: Showing the number of Youtube views for each of the sampled blogs/bloggers

However, only 50% of the bloggers' number of YouTube subscribers/followers were visible to the public. As seen in **figure 16**, with over two hundred subscribers/followers, Rec. again had the highest number of YouTube subscribers/followers followed by 1q

who had over thirty two thousand YouTube subscribers as opposed to Foods who had less than eleven thousand subscribers despite having more YouTube viewers than 1q.

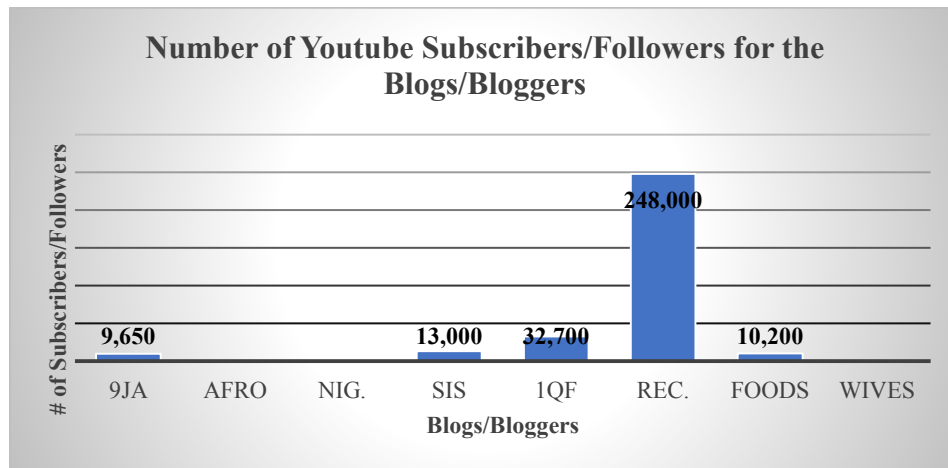


Figure 16: Showing the number of Youtube subscribers/viewers for each of the sampled blogs/bloggers

#### 4.3.2 Assessing the Popularity of the Sampled Nigerian Food Blogs

As noted earlier, while it has been noted in the literature that readership and followers both on the food blogs and other of its social networks could also be indicators of the popularity and successfulness of the food blog/blogger (Cox & Blake, 2011, p.207; Agarwal et al., 2008), considering that:

- a. not all of the sampled food blogs provided the number of subscribers/followers/viewers on their blog and
- b. they used other forms of social media in sharing their blog's content, and these social media also have some subscribers/followers/viewers on them,

to access the popularity of the sampled food blogs, the number of page viewers/followers on each of the sampled food blogs (if that information was provided), and on their other social networks used by the bloggers in sharing their blog's contents were summed up. (Boepple & Thompson, 2014, p.362).

By doing so, by having over thirty six million subscribers/followers/viewers, Rec ranks first, as the most popular Nigerian food blog amongst its counterparts followed by Foods (2,358,122), 1q (1,817,496), 9ja (1,064,371), Sisi (690,149), Dob (549,113), Don

(229,023), Afro (157,942) Wives (81,827) while Nig. ranked tenth with less than sixty thousand (56,145) subscribers/followers/viewers (See: **Figure 17**).

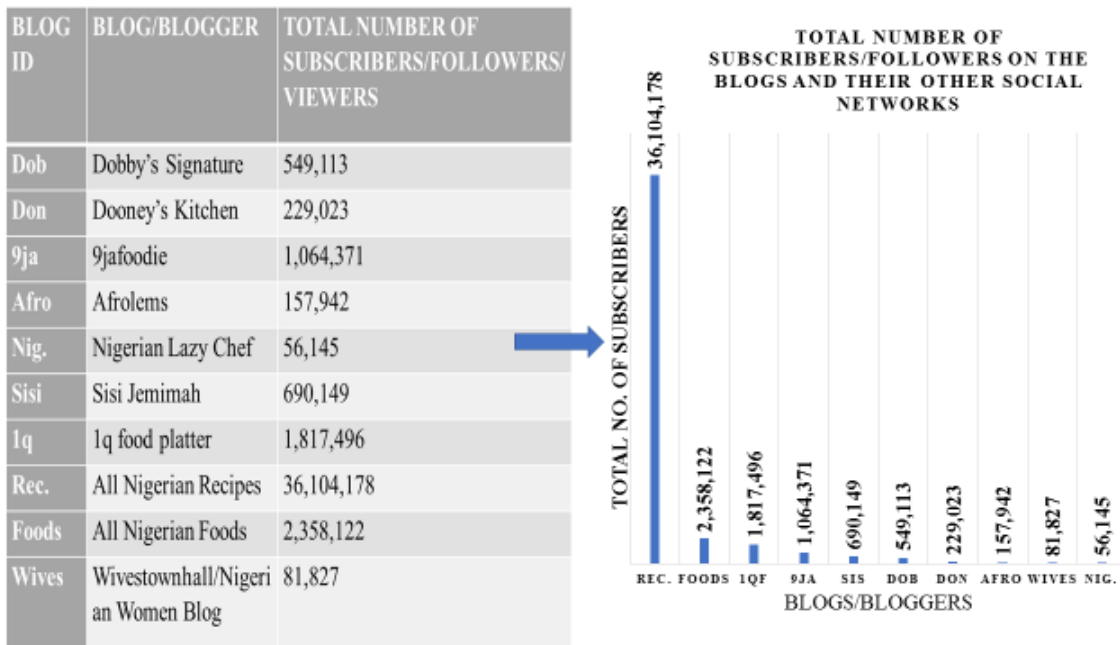


Figure 17: Assessing the popularity of the sampled food blogs by the total number of subscribers/followers/viewers

#### 4.4: Chapter Conclusion/Summary

This chapter discussed how Nigerian food blogs are personal online diaries that have been created to document Nigerian recipes, which most of the blogs share captivating stories about these recipes. In documenting Nigerian recipes, it is interesting to note that Nigerian food bloggers most times provide the ingredients and their quantities/measurements for creating a recipe as well as the cooking instructions or procedures for creating the recipe – dish.

It was also discovered that Nigerian food blogs are also indeed expanding to other social dimensions, which they use to also share contents of their food blogs. These social dimensions, like their food blogs, are also getting more visibility from users/followers. Therefore, it could be concluded that these selected Nigerian food blogs are indeed popular as they have received some visibility in other social dimensions other than their blogs. Resultantly, Nigerian foods and recipes are also getting visibility across the media.



Most importantly, a least surprising attribute of Nigerian food blogs is that they are mostly gendered by women. It is less surprising because this is a popular finding across literatures on other food blogs (Rodney et al., 2017, p.688; Fortunati, 2015, p.42). This gendering of Nigerian food blogs by women seems to point to the literature that in most African countries like Nigeria, cooking as well as the satisfaction of the culinary needs of the family is the prime role of the woman (Elwert- Kretschmer, 2001, p.220; Reynolds & Agbasiere, 2001; Crowther, 2018). These roles of women seem to also be depicted in some of the Nigerian food blog narratives. For instance, in describing their target audience, some of the sampled blogs note that information shared on their blogs could be useful to “new wives” who want to learn to cook, or a woman looking to impress her man with delicious Nigerian foods (noted by All Nigerian Recipes, n.d.; All Nigerian Foods, 2011; Nigerian Women Blog, n.d). This seems to imply that women play the prominent role of cooking in the family, and as such, end up as the promoters of cultural tradition, as seen in the Nigerian food blogs, as well as providers and managers of what and how the family eats (Counihan & Van, 2008, p.67; Crowther, 2018, p.111).

Nigerian food blogs also seem to portray the art of cooking as interesting. This is depicted by the pictures displayed of these shared recipes, which most times are well garnished and artistically displayed. Having analyzed the structure of the selected Nigerian food blogs, the next chapter will focus on analyzing the selected posts – selected recipes – common/essential Nigerian soups.

## CHAPTER 5: COMPONENTIAL & CONTENT ANALYSIS OF COMMON/ESSENTIAL NIGERIAN SOUPS

### 5.1: Introduction

This chapter initially focuses on the componential analysis of the selected Nigerian recipes of common or essential Nigerian soups in order to identify the components (characteristics/elements/main ingredients) of these soups. This will involve developing binaries as suggested by Bernard and discussed earlier, and then scrutinizing the definitive elements/attributes/ingredients that can be included or excluded (Goodenough, 1956 & 1967; Bernard, 2017, p.436; Newman, 1975; Gerhardt et al., 2013; Chen-Chen, & Jin-zhu, 2016) in each of the selected recipes (also explained in the methods section). The list of ingredients that will be scrutinized for whether or not they are present in a recipe will be provided by the sampled food blogs. This list of ingredients will expand when one blog mentions an ingredient that has not been mentioned by the previously examined blogs (see methods section for detailed illustration). Following Bernard (2017), ingredients that could constitute/be included in the recipe have been represented by 1 – 1 while those that could be excluded from the recipe are represented by 2 – 2. Likewise, the ingredients listed by each of the blogger which discussed each variation can be identified by the rows, and characters marked 1 within each row. While the ingredients not mentioned by the blogger within the row has been marked 2. Again, the sampled blogs/bloggers' ID has been used rather than their full names (e.g. "Nig." rather than *Nigerian Lazy Chef*, or "Sisi" rather than *Sisi Jemimah*, etc). By doing this analysis, this study aims to distinguish:

- a) nuances of ingredients required for preparing the selected Nigerian soup recipes;
- b) the general components (the definitive elements/attributes/ingredients/main ingredients) of the selected Nigerian soup recipes;
- c) acceptable elements that maintain the essence of the selected soup recipes, or render it into something else;
- d) how the components/ingredients of the selected soup recipes are identified/named across the sampled blogs.

Specifically, using componential analysis, this study explores what, for example, is “afang soup,” “bitter leaf soup,” “ofe akwu,” etc.? What are the essential elements that constitute each of these soups and how does it cease being “afang soup,” “bitter leaf soup,” “ofe akwu”? Is it when “wrong” ingredients are used? The nuances of ingredients as well as the components of the sampled soups are well known to people within the cultural domain. Thus, this chapter will explore these elements and their representation on the blogs using componential analysis.

For easy identification of the components of each of the selected soup recipes and their versions, the nuances of ingredients/components noted in the componential analysis of the soups and their various versions will further be categorized under essential/main, and non-essential components/ingredients. *Essential/Main components/ingredients* are those ingredients mentioned by all (100%) of the sampled blogs which discussed this soup. *Non-essential components/ingredients* are those ingredients that have not been mentioned by all of the sampled blogs (less than 100% of the sampled blogs). While they could be used to add to the content of the soup, they are optional – one could do without them.

By exploring these points, this study will also reveal:

- what Nigerian food blogs express about the cultural ideals of Nigerians;
  - Do the food blogs express Nigeria as a whole, or based on ethnic variation?
- the relationship between the sampled recipes (and their specific ingredients or methods of preparation) and conceptions of health.

In order to explore these elements, a macro-level content analysis of the posts on selected recipes of essential Nigerian soups will be conducted. By doing so, memos on the origin of recipes, as well as the different names the components of the recipes are called based on culture or region will be provided. This will be used to evaluate whether Nigerian food blogs express the cultural ideals of Nigerians, and whether Nigerian food blogs express Nigeria as a whole or based on ethnic variation. Also, some descriptions as to the taste, texture and popularity of the soup will also be discussed and some of the rules for maintaining the authenticity or essence of the sampled recipes will also be provided. Content analysis of the posts on selected recipes of essential Nigerian soups

will also provide memos on the standard and ways of eating each soup as well as the relationship between the selected recipes to health. Having provided an overview of how the selected Nigerian recipes are analyzed, subsequent sections will embark on exploring the common/essential Nigerian soups in detail.

## 5.2: “One Soup You Can Never Go Wrong With”: “Afang” (*Gnetum Africanum*) Soup



Afang Soup (© Copyright by Betty Chinwenwo Chukwu, 2020).

### 5.2.1 Background Information on “Afang” (*Gnetum Africanum*) Soup

Upon reviewing the sampled food blogs, it was discovered that “afang” (*gnetum africanum*) soup hereinafter called “afang” soup is “one of the most popular traditional Nigerian soups” (Sisi), which is growing to the top of not just the list of popular Nigerian soups, but also the list of Efik delicacies (Foods). As a result of its popularity, one of the blogs note that local Nigerian music artists feel obliged to mention this soup in the lyrics of their song, especially if the song has to do with food, in order to accredit popularity to this soup (1q).

Due to the popularity of this soup, all of the sampled food blogs include a recipe for “afang” soup. From the blog narratives on this soup, “afang” soup has been described as a soup with no distinctive smell, when cooked (Dob.). While its deliciousness is indescribable (Wives), it could be said that this soup is very “tasty” (Dob.) and

“extremely delicious” (Foods). It is also described as a Nigerian soup with “robust” (Nig.) and “great” (Wives) taste or that, its deliciousness will spur one's interest in Nigerian foods (Foods).

Being interested in preparing this soup (“afang” soup) will require one to have “afang” leaf, which is botanically called “*Gnetum Africanum*” (9ja; 1q; Rec). Hereinafter, would be called “afang” or “afang” leaf. “Afang” leaf, as the people of Efik tribe call it is also known as “okazi” (also spelt “ukazi”) by the Igbos (Don; 9ja; Afro; 1q).

“Afang/okazi/ukazi” (*gnetum africanum*) leaf has been noted to have a “tough (hard) papery glossy texture” (Dob). As such, it is usually sold pre-sliced (Rec.; Foods; Dob; Wives) by vendors in Nigerian markets (Dob) and later, could be ground with either a kitchen blender (Foods; Rec.), hand grinding machine (Foods) or commercial mill (Dob), such that when cooked, it becomes “well moistened and squishy” (Don) or soft (Wives) to touch (Don). Above all, it is believed that this process brings out the taste of the leaf more when used in soups (Dob) than when it is pounded (Wives).

In preparing the “afang” soup, the blogs inform us that the “afang/okazi/ukazi” leaves must then be combined with water leaves (*talinum triangulare*) (9ja; Rec.; Foods) and the ratio of “afang/okazi/ukazi” leaves to water leaves must be one is to two (1:2) (Don). Also, when cooking “afang” soup, the blogs also note that traditionally, the waterleaf should be added first before the “afang/okazi/ukazi” leaves (Don). In regard to this order, it was discovered that seven (Don; Afro; Nig.; Sisi; 1q; Foods; Wives) out of the ten sampled blogs observed that order, and were thus, in alignment with the order noted by Don as the traditional and acceptable order (adding water leaf before “afang/okazi/ukazi”). Meanwhile Dob and Rec went contrary to that order. However, 9ja blog mentioned vegetables without specificity as to which one should be added first. Despite the traditional and acceptable order in which “afang” and water leaves should be used, Don still notes that it is sometimes justifiable to break this rule (Don). However, if one chooses to do so, one chooses not to make traditional or the authentic “afang” soup. Thereby implying that for one to make authentic “afang” soup, one must observe the order – water leaves must be added first before the “afang/okazi/ukazi” leaves. This could be, as one of the blogs note, to ensure that the water leaves are parboiled till dry in order

to remove its excess water content (Wives). However, while doing so, one of the bloggers notes that “the green color of the vegetables” must not be overcooked (1q). To avoid overcooking the vegetables, this blogger advises that once the waterleaves have cooked, the heat should be turned off before the “afang” is added (1q). This leaves one to wonder how “afang” leaves, which are regarded as a tough vegetable, are to cook when the heat is turned off? One of the bloggers notes that this issue could be resolved if the “afang” leaves are soaked in water before adding them into the soup (Don).

Further, to ensure that one cooks authentic “afang” soup, one of the blogs note that it would be taboo to add onions to the soup (Nig). This is because, adding onions breaks the authenticity of this soup (Sisi) and does not preserve “the ancestor's methods of making” this soup or other local dishes (Nig.). Hence, while onions could be used in steaming the meats to be used in preparing this soup (Wives), they should not be added into the “afang” soup if one seeks to maintain the authenticity of this soup (Nig; Sisi; Wives). More so, the blogger further notes that onions are not needed in any local dish if one must maintain the ancestor’s methods of making any local dish (Nig).

Despite these rules for making “afang” soup, “afang” soup has been described as **"one soup you can never go wrong with"** (Dob), as it "never disappoint[s]," it "never fails" “whether cooked with meat, snails or fish, it always turns out very delicious and great for the bowels" (Wives). In fact, it is “fast and very easy” (Wives) to make because, “its cooking processes are not complicated” (Wives). Although, another blogger notes that sometimes she is afraid of cooking “afang” soup because "any little mistake ruins the entire pot" (Nig). However, it has been described as one vegetable soup that is in high demand (Sisi) and never gets reserved as “everyone always seems to want more” (Dob;). Correspondingly, one of the authors of the sampled blogs notes that in her home, her family members would clear the bowl of soup (Wives). Thus, a blogger has acknowledged that “afang” soup is one soup that “guarantees most people will be present for lunch” (1q).

As a popular Nigerian soup, which is greatly loved by many, despite noting that “afang” soup originates from Efik tribe (Don; Afro; Nig; Sisi; Rec), who are people of Akwa Ibom and Cross Rivers states of Nigeria (Rec.; The Editors of Encyclopaedia

Britannica, n.d.), which are located in the South-south of Nigeria (9ja & Dob), “afang” soup is also consumed by other cultural groups within Nigeria such as Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba (Afro; Rec; Foods; Wives) other than the South-south of Nigeria. In fact, it has also been noted to be consumed by other African cultures (Afro) like Cameroon, who is a direct neighbor to the part of Nigeria (Efik tribe) where this soup originates from (Don).

Due to its consumption across Nigeria, “afang” soup is called differently across the Nigerian cultures (Afro). For instance, while amongst the Efik tribe, where this soup originates from, it is called “afang” soup, amongst the Igbos, it is called "ofe okazi" (Dob) or "Ukazi"/"Okazi" soup (Afro). This therefore supports the literature that Nigerian soups have various variations that are also called differently due to the region, or locality where it is consumed, and cultural differences (Oguntona et al., 1999; Etkin, 2006; Adegboye et al., 2015).

Hence, “afang” soup is similar to “ofe okazi” – the Igbo version of “afang” soup (Don; Afro). While both soups are cooked with “afang/okazi/ukazi” vegetable, for the former, the “afang/okazi/ukazi” leaves are combined with water leaves, while the latter is cooked with only “afang/okazi/ukazi” vegetable (Rec.). Thus, it has been noted that both soups should not be confused with each other (Rec.). Another Igbo soup likened to “afang” soup is “ofe owerri” (Nig.). Also, the common Yoruba soup, “efo riro” has been likened to “afang” soup (Nig.).

Another Efik soup very similar to “afang” soup is “edikang ikong” also spelt “edikaikong” (Don; Afro; Rec; Foods). While they are both similar in that they originate from the same tribe – Efik tribe, their difference lies in the vegetable used in their preparation. While “afang” soup uses the tough vegetable – “afang/okazi/ukazi” leaves, “edikang ikong/edikaikong” uses the soft vegetable – fluted pumpkin (*telfairia occidentalis*) leaves which is locally called “ugu”/ “ugwu” leaves in Nigeria (Don.). As such, “afang” soup tends to cook longer than “edikang ikong/edikaikong” (Don). Due to their similarity, while “afang” has been regarded as the “*the queen* of all Efik soups” (like “afia efere,” “efere abak” (Afro), “atama” soup (Foods)) by one of the blogs (Nig.), it has also been regarded as “*the sister version*” of “edikang ikong soup” by another blog (Don).

### **5.2.2 The Relationship between “Afang” (Gnetum Africanum) Soup to Health**

Most importantly, across the sampled blogs, “afang” soup has been attributed to possessing pharmacological properties, and as such, its herbal vegetable, “afang/okazi/ukazi” and water leaves or the soup made with these leaves, e.g “afang” soup, have been used to treat ailments. First, it has been noted that “afang” soup is very nutritious (Sisi; Rec.; Foods) due to its consistence of herbal vegetables (Rec.; Foods), which are noted as rich sources of vitamins, minerals (1q); and protein (Dob). Also, “afang” soup is rich in both essential and non-essential amino acids (Dob), as well as a rich source of fiber, which helps the body cells to function properly (Foods). It is also perceived to have anti-carcinogenic, anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties (Dob). Hence, it has high levels of laxatives (1q). It is also noted as a rich source of folic acid, as such, used by most pregnant women (Foods).

Due to the pharmacological properties associated with “afang” soup, it has been observed that one could eat “afang” soup if one is constipating (1q), since it is great for the bowels (Wives). Also, it is one Nigerian soup that could be consumed if one wishes to engage in a weight loss journey. However, if one chooses to do so, it has been advised by one of the bloggers that one would still need to check the quantity of carbs served with this soup or better still, one could just lick the soup without swallows (Wives).

In this regard, there are particular standards of eating “afang” soup in order to benefit from its pharmacological properties. One such way, as noted above is that it could be eaten alone rather than with any swallow (Wives), which is mostly a carbohydrate-based meal (cassava flour, rice, cocoyam, potatoes, yam or plantain) (Onabanjo et al., 2013, p.368).

Nevertheless, as noted earlier, just like most Nigerian soups, “afang” soup could be accompanied by a side, which are mostly carbohydrate-based meals (Onabanjo et al., 2013, p.368). One popular side that has been noted are used to accompany most Nigerian soups like “afang” soup are swallows. As noted earlier, swallows are starchy foods which are cut in small fraction, rolled into a ball or as one of the blogs call it “morsel” (Nig; 1q), and are dipped into the soup, and swallowed (Onoise, 2018). While



any favorite swallow (Dob; Nig; Sisi), or any choice of starchy solids (Don) or morsel (1q) could be used in eating “afang” soup, the most common swallow/starchy solid/morsel served with this soup, as mentioned by most (60%) of the bloggers is “eba” also known as “garri” or cassava flakes (Afro), which are fried form of cassava (Ayogu et al., 2017, p.67) followed by fufu locally called “akpu” by the Igbos, which is the solid made from fermented cassava (Ayogu et al., 2017, p.67) and pounded yam which was mentioned by 50% of the bloggers. Semovita and wheat were also mentioned could be eaten with “afang” soup. Another side mentioned that could be used to eat “afang” soup are boiled rice.

Culturally, the standard of eating “afang” with any swallow, as noted in one of the blogs, is with hands (Dob; Nig). This activity of eating soups with hands is described by one of the blogs when she notes that she “molds each morsel of swallow into the soup” (Nig). Thereby describing that one would have to mold a swallow, e.g. garri (Onabanjo et al., 2013, p.368) into a ball/morsel, dip it into the soup, and then swallow (as illustrated in **figure 46**).

### **5.2.3 Componential Analysis of “Afang” (Gnetum Africanum) Soup**

Due to the popularity of “afang” soup to Nigerians, and the above background on “afang” soup, the next section of this analysis will turn to examine the components of “afang” soup. Are water leaves and “afang/okazi/ukazi” leaves the essential components or ingredients of this soup? Or could one do without them when making “afang” soup? Are there other definitive elements/attributes/ingredients/main ingredients of “afang” soup?” If so, what are the nuances of ingredients required for preparing “afang” soup? Which of these elements maintain the essence of “afang” soup or render it into something else? While uncovering answers to some of these questions, this study will take note of how the components/ingredients of “afang” soup are identified or named by the sampled blogs.

#### **What then makes “Afang” (Gnetum Africanum) Soup?**

All the sampled food blogs have taken part in listing the various ingredients required for preparing “afang” soup. Their list of the ingredients has been classified into

the table below (See: **Table 5**) following Bernard, 2017 in order to assess what ingredients could be included into, or excluded from “afang” soup.

COMPONENTIAL ANALYSIS OF AFANG SOUP													
BLOG ID	INGREDIENTS												
	water leaves	okazi/afang leaves	meat	stockfish	smoked/dry fish	palm oil	pepper	periwinkle	crayfish	prawns (smoked/fresh)	salt	seasoning cubes	onion
DOB	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2
DON	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
9JA	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	2
AFRO	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
NIG.	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
SISI	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
1Q	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2
REC.	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2
FOODS	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2
WIVES	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	10	10	10	8	10	10	10	9	10	4	10	10	1
<b>%</b>	100	100	100	80	100	100	100	90	100	40	100	100	10

Table 5: Componential analysis of “afang (gnetum africanum)” soup

Based on the componential analysis of “afang” soup (See: **Table 5**), the components/nuances of ingredients of “afang” soup listed in **table 5** have been grouped under essential components/ingredients (ingredients that should be included in making this soup), and non-essential components/ingredients (ingredients that could be excluded in making this soup) of “afang” soup in **figure 18**.

SOUP	ESSENTIAL/MAIN INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS	NON-ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS
<i>Afang Soup</i>	a) “afang/okazi/ukazi” ( <i>gnetum africanum</i> ) leaves, b) water leaves which could be substituted with lamb's lettuce, watercress, spinach, malabar spinach (“amunututu” in Yoruba), c) meat, d) smoked/dried fish, e) palm oil, f) pepper (e.g. fresh pepper like scotch bonnet/habanero pepper, (“ata rodo”) or ground dried pepper e.g chilli pepper) g) ground/powdered crayfish, h) salt to taste and i) seasoning cubes either the chicken-“maggi” or Knorr brand	j) pepper k) stock fish (“okporoko”/ “panla”), l) periwinkle ( <i>cerithidea obtuse</i> ) or “whelks” (“nko nko”) m) dried/smoked/fresh prawns n) onions (optional).
	9 essential components of “afang” soup	5 non-essential components of “afang” soup

**14 nuances of ingredients could be used in the preparation of “afang” soup**

*Figure 18: Illustrating the essential and non-essential ingredients/components of "afang" soup*

**About the Above Ingredients:** It has been noted across the sampled blogs that while water leaves could be substituted with other leaves like spinach, watercress, etc, “afang/okazi/ukazi” leaf remains without substitute. This is because if “afang/okazi/ukazi” leaf is substituted, or is absent in “afang” soup, one has made mere vegetable soup rather than “afang” soup (Don). This is because one would naturally make vegetable soup with any vegetables, but what distinguishes “afang” soup from other vegetable soup is the presence of “afang” leaf. As such, if this leaf is absent, the soup, cannot be, or be called “afang” soup (Don) but vegetable soup if made with other vegetables. As such, “afang” is the star of “afang” soup. Also, while onions could be used to steam the meats needed for the soup, it cannot be used in the actual preparation of “afang” soup if one aims to maintain the authenticity of this soup (Don; Nig; Sisi).

**5.2.4 Summary/Conclusion on “Afang” (*Gnetum Africanum*) Soup**

In summary, “afang” soup originates from the South-south of Nigeria. Although it is notably consumed by other Nigerian cultures, and other African countries. It is essentially constituted of water leaves (which could be substituted with watercress, lambs lettuce, spinach, malabar spinach ("amunututu")), “afang/okazi/ukazi” leaves, meat,

smoked/dried fish, palm oil, pepper, crayfish, salt and seasoning cubes. While some of these ingredients could be substituted, the essential quality, as well as the star of this soup is the presence of “afang/okazi/ukazi” leaves which cannot be substituted. As such, if absent, could render the supposed “afang” soup mere vegetable soup – a soup which could be made with any vegetable. However, traditionally, “afang/okazi/ukazi” leaves must be combined with another essential ingredient, water leaves, with the water leaves been added first. Further, onions would have to be eliminated when making the authentic version of “afang” soup, not because it renders the soup something else, but because it destroys the authenticity, what one of the blogger describes as the “ancestors’ way of making” “afang” soup. More so, while onions are used to season and steam the meats for the soup, they are not needed in any local dish.

### 5.3: “One will be deemed a bad cook if his/her bitter leaf soup tastes bitter”: Bitter Leaf Soup (“Ofe Onugbu”)



#### 5.3.1 Background Information on Bitter Leaf Soup (“Ofe Onugbu”)

Just like “*afang (gnetum africanum) soup*,” bitter leaf (*vernonia amygdalina*) soup has been indicated as “one of the most popular traditional Nigerian soups” (Sisi; Rec; Foods). As such, it was observed by one of the bloggers as one of the top five eaten dishes sold in most restaurants in the Eastern part of Nigeria (1q). Being popular, it is not uncommon to see bitter leaf soup served with “akpu” (Igbo word for cassava-paste-

swallow commonly called “fufu” in Nigeria which is the solid made from fermented cassava (Ayogu et al., 2017, p.67)) as a meal in some Igbo Nollywood movies (noticed by Wives). Due to its popularity, all of the sampled food blogs have at least a recipe on bitter leaf soup.

This popular Nigerian soup, bitter leaf, has been identified as a native or peculiar soup to the Igbo tribe (Dob; 9ja; Nig.; Sisi; Rec.) who are in the eastern part of Nigeria (Dob; Don; 9ja; Nig.; Sisi; Rec; Wives). Originating from Igbo land, the eastern part of Nigeria, this soup is locally called “ofe onugbu” (Dob; Foods). While “ofe” in Igbo translates into soup, and this word preludes most native soups that are specific to the Igbos, “onugbu” is used to identify the bitter leaf plant which is botanically called *vernonia amygdalina* (Dob; 9ja; Nig.). Hence, “ofe onugbu” means bitter leaf soup in English (Dob; 9ja; Sisi; Wives). On the other hand, the Efiks/Calabars call bitter leaf soup, “ukwogho etidot” (Don; 1q) while the Yorubas call it “efo ewuro” (9ja) while the stewed version of this soup – stewed bitter leaf soup is called “ewuro roiro” in Yoruba (1q).

Considering that this soup is made with bitter leaf, one misconception noted about this soup from the blog narratives is that it is true to its name, as such, it is a very bitter soup (Dob; Sisi). As a result of that misconception, it has been noted by one of the bloggers that a lot of non-Igbos shy away from this soup (Sisi). However, the truth revealed by some of the bloggers is that while the name of this soup is quite misleading, a well-prepared bitter leaf soup should not have an unbearable bitterness (Dob; Rec). In fact, **“one will be deemed a bad cook if his/her bitter leaf soup tastes bitter”** (Rec), as one mishap that has been noted could occur from preparing bitter leaf soup unrightly is that it might have an unbearable bitter taste (Dob). Though the leaf is bitter, it is to be washed thoroughly (Dob), such that when used in the soup, it should be very tasty (Dob; Don) with peculiar tastes (9ja) and also, delicious (Foods).

While this soup might pose some difficulties in ensuring that it is without a bitter taste, one of the bloggers admonish that one could actually become a professional in preparing bitter leaf soup (Dob) as it is as a simple (9ja) and easy recipe to prepare. Contrarily another blogger notes that it is also quite easy to get this soup wrong (Nig). In

fact, one of the bloggers described how when she started making this soup, she used to have phobia for preparing the soup because the very first time she cooked the soup, she ended up throwing the whole pot of soup away due to the unbearable bitter taste (Dob). Thus, one needs experience for one to find this soup quite easy to prepare.

Hence, in order to properly cook this soup, it would have to be seasoned correctly and the best way, as advised by some of the sampled bloggers, is by using “ogiri” – a local seasoning made from fermented melon seeds botanically called *citrullus vulgaris* (Oguntoyinbo et al., 2010, p.870; Solis-Oviedo & Pech-Canul, 2019). While “ogiri” may have an awful smell, it has been stated that it adds so much great and “distinctive flavor to the soup” (Nig). It also gives the soup its “traditional taste” (Rec). When this local seasoning is used, seasoning cubes is omitted by some of the bloggers (e.g 1q). However, “ogiri” has been noted as optional (Rec; Foods).

Also, one would also need cocoyam (which is locally known as “ede”) in order to make this soup. While the fun part of making bitter leaf soup is the liberty to use whatever thickener one prefers whether “ofo” (1q) also spelt “ofor” (Nig; Foods) (botanically called *detarium microcapum*) (Aviara, Onaji, & Lawal, 2015; Uhegbu, Onwuche, Iweal, & Kanu, 2009), “achi” (*brachystegia eurycoma*) seed (as noted by 1q; Foods, also see Ikegwu, Okechukwu, & Ekumankana, 2010; Khalid et al., 2018), “egusi” (melon) seeds (Foods), oatmeal blend (Nig) or even “ogbono” (African wild mango) seed (Foods), cocoyam is the most popularly used thickener for bitter leaf soup (9ja; Nig; 1q; Foods). To further thicken this soup, it has been recommended that one could also add crayfish, which is also a thickening agent, after the cocoyam has completely dissolved in the soup (Don). Above all, one of the main characteristics of this soup is the bitter leaves which are allowed to remain in the soup (1q). To maintain the authenticity of bitter leaf soup, just like “afang” soup, one must avoid adding onions, curry or thyme (Sisi) as they do not preserve the ancestor’s methods of making local dishes/soups (Nig.).

Other than bitter leaf soup (“ofe onugbu”), it has been observed that bitter leaves could also be used in other Nigerian soups like “egusi” soup, “ogbono” soup, okra soup, “banga” soup and “abak atama” soup (also observed by Don and Nig.). However, there are some Nigerian soups very similar to bitter leaf soup. One of which is the popular Igbo

soup called “oha/uha” or “ora” (*pterocarpus soyauxili*) soup (Kuhnlein et al., 2009, p.271, 279; mentioned by 9ja). This soup has been noted as very similar to the bitter leaf soup in that they have almost the same cooking process but vary in terms of the vegetable used (9ja). While “oha/uha” or “ora” (*pterocarpus soyauxili*) soup is made with “oha/ora” (*pterocarpus soyauxili*) leaves, bitter leaf soup (“ofe onugbu”) is made with bitter leaves. Thus, when one substitutes bitter leaves with “oha/ora” leaves, one will get “oha (ora) soup” (9ja). Hence, both soups – “oha (ora)soup” or “bitter leaf soup” could be cooked up to the point of adding the leaves, then one could divide the soup, add “oha (ora)” leaves to one and bitter leaves to the other (Foods).

Another similar Igbo soup to bitter leaf soup is “ofe owerri” – this soup is similar to both “oha (ora)” soup and bitter leaf soup. Similarly, once one substitutes “oha (ora)” leaves used in “oha (ora) soup” and the bitter leaves used in bitter leaf soup with “afang/okazi/ukazi” leaves, one would get “ofe owerri” (9ja).

Bitter leaf soup (“ofe onugbu”) just like other Nigerian soups (e.g “afang” soup), are also accompanied with a side/swallow (Onabanjo et al., 2013, p.368). Just like “afang” soup, one popular side used to accompany bitter leaf soups are swallows. These swallows are eaten with hands (Wives). This is depicted by one of the blogger’s description when she ate this soup. She described that she ate her bitter leaf soup with "one ball of akpu following **leaking of fingers** in between" (Wives). This again depicts that the swallow, in this case “akpu,” which is one of the popular swallows of the Igbos, is rolled in ball, dipped into the soup and put into the mouth using fingers, and this causes the blogger to leak her fingers” (described by Wives). This blogger also notes that when eating this soup, some men proceed to dilute this dish with palm wine – a local Nigerian wine (Wives).

However, any favorite or preferred swallow (Dob; Afro; Nig.; Wives), or any choice of starchy additions [sides] (Don) could be used in eating bitter leaf soup. The most common swallow/starchy additions served with this soup, as mentioned by most (40%) of the bloggers is “eba” also known as garri followed by “fufu”/cassava fufu/ “akpu” and pounded yam (“iyan”) which was mentioned by 30% of the bloggers. Semovita or semolina fufu also could be called “semo” for short has been mentioned by

20% of the bloggers. Other sides mentioned that could be used to eat bitter leaf soup are “amala.” Culturally, the standard of eating bitter leaf as noted earlier is with hands (as illustrated in **figure 46**).

### **5.3.2 The Relationship between Bitter Leaf Soup (“Ofe Onugbu”) to Health**

Due to the use of bitters like bitter leaves, bitter leaf soup (“ofe onugbu”) has been associated with many pharmacological properties (Afro; Nig). First, it is regarded as having nutritional benefits (Afro). Just like many vegetables, bitter leaves are rich in fiber and Vitamin C (Wives).

Also, it has been noted that in Nigeria, bitter leaves are used as a herb (Nig) to produce medicines. Thus, bitter leaves are mostly purchased for two uses – to cook Nigerian soups and for medicine (Don). To produce this herbal medicine, fresh bitter leaves are squeezed and washed (also described by Don). The first wash from the leaves, described by a “greenish liquid” called “bitter leaf juice” (Don) are then drunk to savour the taste of the leaf and to cure all kinds of ailments (Don; Nig; Afro, who narrates how bitter leaf juice was drunk by her father to regulate his blood sugar levels). As medicines, bitter leaves are eaten because they are believed to: “be good for the skin, be immune boosters, help with resistance against cancer, be responsible for strong teeth, be responsible for a “sturdy and powerful manhood that could impregnate many wives”” (Nig) and be good for regulating blood sugar levels (Afro & Nig). In fact, the medicinal value of bitter leaf especially its juice has been associated with long living and healthy lifestyle not just amongst the ancient Nigerians but also other Africans, American Indian tribe, Australian aboriginals, who also use bitters (Nig).

### **5.3.3 Componential Analysis of Bitter Leaf Soup (“Ofe Onugbu”)**

As a popular Nigerian soup, a componential analysis was conducted on recipes on bitter leaf soup (“ofe onugbu”) from the sampled food blogs in order to identify what constitutes bitter leaf soup (“ofe onugbu”) (See: **Table 6**).



COMPONENTIAL ANALYSIS OF BITTER LEAF SOUP ("OFE ONUGBU")															
BLOG ID	INGREDIENTS														
	cocoyam	Bitterleaf	Meat	Periwinkles	Prawns	Ogiri	Pepper	Palm oil	Crayfish	Stockfish	Dried/Smoked fish	Salt	Seasoning cubes	Onion	Egusi
DOB	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
DON	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
9JA	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
AFRO	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2
NIG.	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
SISI	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
1Q	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2
REC.	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
FOODS	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
WIVES	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	10	10	10	1	3	9	10	10	10	10	10	8	9	1	1
<b>%</b>	100	100	100	10	30	90	100	100	100	100	100	80	90	10	10

Table 6: Componential analysis of bitter leaf soup (“ofe onugbu”)

Based on the componential analysis of bitter leaf soup (See: Table 6), the nuances of ingredients required for preparing bitter leaf soup have been grouped under essential components/ingredients (ingredients that should be included in making this soup), and non-essential components/ingredients (ingredients that could be excluded in making this soup) in figure 19.

SOUP	ESSENTIAL/MAIN INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS	NON-ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS
<b>Bitter leaf Soup</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) bitter leaves,</li> <li>b) cocoyam, which could be substituted with cocoyam flour, potato flour, “ofor,” or oatmeal blend</li> <li>c) meat,</li> <li>d) pepper (e.g fresh pepper like scotch bonnet/ habanero pepper (“ata rodo”) or ground dried pepper e.g chilli pepper,</li> <li>e) palm oil,</li> <li>f) powdered/ground crayfish,</li> <li>g) stock fish and</li> <li>h) dried/smoked fish (optional)</li> </ul> <p>8 essential components of “ofe onugbu”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) periwinkles (“isam”),</li> <li>j) prawns,</li> <li>k) fermented oil seeds like “ogiri/ogiri okpei” (optional)</li> <li>l) salt to taste</li> <li>m) seasoning/bouillon/stock cubes, which could be either “maggi” or “knorr” cube, which comes in chicken flavor.</li> <li>n) onion and</li> <li>o) melon (“egusi”).</li> </ul> <p>7 non-essential components of “ofe onugbu”</p>

**15 nuances of ingredients could be used in the preparation of “ofe onugbu”**

Figure 19: Illustrating the essential and non-essential ingredients/components of bitter leaf soup (“ofe onugbu”)

**5.3.4 Summary/Conclusion on Bitter Leaf Soup (“ofe onugbu”)**

In summary, one can conclude that bitter leaf soup (“ofe onugbu”) originates from the Eastern part of Nigeria – the Igbo. Bitter leaf soup (“ofe onugbu”) is essentially

constituted of bitter leaves, which could be fresh or dried, cocoyam/cocoyam flour/potato flour/ “ofo”(r)/ “achi”/oatmeal blend, meat, pepper, palm oil, crayfish, stock fish and dried/smoked fish. While some of its ingredients are optional, and could be substituted, the essential quality, as well as the star of this soup is the presence of “bitter leaves,” which are left in the soup. If this star ingredient, bitter leaf is substituted with other leaves, then the supposed bitter-leaf soup is rendered another soup. For instance, if the star/major ingredient/vegetable of this soup, bitter leaf, is substituted with another vegetable, say “afang/okazi/ukazi” leaf, it will become “ofe owerri” (9ja) and if substituted with “oha” (*pterocarpus soyauxili*) leaves,” it will become “oha (*pterocarpus soyauxili*) soup” (9ja; Foods) rather than bitter leaf soup.

Essentially, the presence of this herbal vegetable – bitter leaf in soups also makes the soup medicinal. To benefit from its medicinal properties, the “greenish liquid” from the washed bitter leaves are consumed like juice. Bitter leaf soup (“ofe onugbu”) could be served with any side, but mostly with swallows, which are eaten with hands (as illustrated in **figure 46**).

Additionally, to maintain the traditional and acceptable way of making this soup, or as one of the bloggers describe it “the ancestors way of making this soup,” which could also be defined as authenticity or originality of bitter leaf soup (“ofe onugbu”), one must avoid adding onions, curry or thyme when cooking bitter leaf soup (“ofe onugbu”).

#### **5.4: “The Ever-giving Tree Soup”: Palm Fruit/Nut (“Banga/Akwu/Abak”) Soup**



Palm Fruit Soup/Stew (© Copyright by Betty Chinwenwo Chukwu, 2020).

#### **5.4.1 Background Information on Palm Fruit/Nut Soup**

Palm fruit/nut soup has been identified as another very popular Nigerian soup (Sisi; 1q) and it is even notable in the African continent (Don; 9ja; Nig.; 1q). This soup is very popular in Nigeria because it is one soup that truly showcases one of Africa's local produce – palm fruit (9ja). The palm nut tree has been described as “**the ever-giving tree**” as all of its parts from the bark, to the leaves, to the nuts (which are called kernel/palm kernel/palm nuts) and branches are very useful (Don). Thus, it has been noted that in Yorubaland (one of Nigeria's cultures), there is a prayer associated with this tree as “a source of wealth, strength, love, and health, which are continuously replenished just as the palm nut tree is ever-giving” (Don). More so, this soup has been marked as incredibly popular across the blog narratives on this soup, because it is one soup that “seems to improve with age” (1q) as it does well with and tastes better with frequent reheating (1q). As such, after cooking palm fruit/nut soup, it is usually allowed to sit for at least an hour and again reheated before serving, as this improves the taste of the soup and taste better than when initially cooked (Don – her grandma's tip). Due to the durability of this soup – the ability of the soup to taste better even when frequently heated, palm fruit/nut soup is said, could last for months (Don).

Despite being a popular soup, and thus widely enjoyed all over Nigeria (9ja; Foods), palm fruit/nut soup has been indicated as a native/traditional staple soups to the people of the Southern part of Nigeria; e.g. Niger-Delta (Dob; Rec; Wives), Delta State (Don; 9ja; Nig.; Sisi; 1q; Foods), Benin (9ja) or Edo (Foods), Urohobos (Don; Afro; Sisi) and also to the people of the Eastern part of Nigeria like the Igbos (Dob; Don; Nig; Sisi; 1q; Rec; Foods) (See: **Table B.8 in Appendix B** for summary on the origin of palm fruit/nut soup). Palm fruit/nut soup has been noted as a staple soup in these areas because palm fruit is abundantly grown and harvested everywhere within these Nigeria cultures, and thus are easily accessible everywhere in those Southern and Eastern areas including their markets (Don; 1q; Foods). In fact, they also have the local machines used for processing these palm fruits into the extracts needed for palm fruit/nut soup. Sometimes, this palm fruit extracts are also made into the common Nigeria ingredient – palm oil (Sisi) when at high temperatures (Rec). Meanwhile, at very low temperature, the palm fruit extract is mixed with water and used for preparing the palm fruit soup (Rec).

Originating from different cultures of the Southern part of Nigeria, as well as the Eastern part of Nigeria, palm fruit soup is called differently amongst the different cultures (supporting Oguntona et al., 1999; Etkin, 2006; Adegboye et al., 2015). For instance, the palm fruit/nut soup is locally called “banga soup” by the Niger-Deltas (Dob; 1q; Rec), the Deltans (Don; 9ja; Nig.; Sisi; Foods), the Benins (9ja) and the Edos who also call it “black soup” (1q; Foods). Meanwhile, it is called “ofe akwu” by the Igbos (Sisi; Rec; Foods). As noted earlier on in this chapter, “ofe” is the Igbo word for soup or stew (Rec), while “akwu” is the Igbo word for palm fruit (Rec). Hence, “ofe akwu” means palm fruit soup/stew (Dob). In a typical Igbo family with core traditional values, it is not unusual to see this soup prepared every Sunday afternoon (as mentioned by Dob), and it is used as a “good dish for Christmas rather than having rice every time” (Nig). On the other hand, palm fruit/nut soup is called “Obe eyin” by the Yorubas (9ja), obey-ekpo” by the Itshekiris (9ja), “amiedi” or “abak mbakara” by the Urohobos (9ja; Afro), “abak atama” by other members of the Efik tribe (Dob; Don; Sisi; 1q) like the Ibibios (1q; Rec). The Urohobo or Efik/Ibibio word, “abak” simply means palm fruit extract (Dob; Rec), while “atama” is a local vegetable for this soup which is scientifically called *heinsia crinite* and bush apple in English (Grygus, n.d). It is also locally called “obeletientien/beletete” in Delta state (Dob; Don; Foods). See: **Table B.9** in **Appendix B** for a compilation of the local names of palm nut/fruit soup in the various Nigerian cultures. This, therefore, supports the literature that similar recipes across Nigerian cultures could be called different local names depending on the region, culture or locality (Oguntona et al., 1999; Etkin, 2006; Adegboye et al., 2015).

Due to the consumption of palm nut/fruit soup in the different Nigeria cultures, while the local name of this soup varies across cultures, they are somewhat different in the vegetable used in their preparation. For instance, the Igbo version of the palm fruit/nut soup – “ofe akwu” is mostly made with basil leaves which are called scent leaves, and locally called “nchuawn/efinrin” in Nigeria (Dob; Don). These leaves add unique flavor to the “ofe akwu” (1q). Alternatively, it could be made with pumpkin (locally called “ugu”) leaves or Lagos spinach (“shoko leaves”) (1q). While “ofe akwu” could be cooked with a combination of scent/basil leaves and pumpkin (“ugu”) leaves (Dob), it is not the norm for preparing “ofe akwu” (Nig). Meanwhile, the Niger Deltas/Deltan/Benin/Edo

version of palm fruit/nut soup – “banga” soup is made without “ugu” or scent/basil leaves (Dob; Rec) but with “obeletientien/beletete” (bush apple) leaves (Dob). Similarly, the Efik version of palm fruit soup – “abak atama” is made with “atama” (bush apple) leaves (Dob; Afro; Don; Foods). Additionally, the Efik version of palm fruit/nut soup – “abak atama” is also very similar to the Igbo and Deltas/Deltan/Benin/Edo version of palm fruit/nut soup in that they all have the same palm fruit base (Rec), while the difference between the former and the latter are the spices, herbs and vegetables used in their preparation (Dob; Don; 1q; Rec) which though very similar (Dob; Foods).

Regardless of the various versions of palm fruit/nut soup across the various Nigerian cultures, one thing is certain, all palm fruit/nut soups are cooked with the juicy pulp which are extracted from boiled and pounded pulp of palm nuts/fruits (Dob; Nig; Wives), and not palm oil (Dob). Hence, rather than use palm oil (Dob; Nig; Rec), alternatively, tinned/canned palm fruit extract/juice could be used.

Traditionally, palm fruit soup, specifically “banga” and “abak atama” soup are made with fresh ingredients (Don), which are then seasoned with very aromatic spices (Nig), and then, cooked to perfection mostly with fresh fish (Don; Nig; Sisi; Rec), especially catfish (Don; Sisi) or any kind of fish like tilapia (Don; Sisi). “Banga” and “abak atama” soups are mostly cooked with fish rather than meat because of the flavor fish adds to the palm fruit juice that cannot be ignored (Dob; Don). On the other hand, one could choose to use an array of seafoods (Dob; Nig; 1q), or even add meats if one chooses (Dobby; Dooney; Sisi) in order to contribute to the content of the soup (Sisi). For instance, one could use fresh catfish with smoked turkey, because of the flavor smoked turkey contributes to the soup (as done by Sisi). Another could use a combination of cow head, cow foot and red meat in preparing this soup (as done by Foods). However, one blogger advises that if one must use meat, "bush meat is best" (Don). While one could choose to add meats to “banga” or “abak atama” soup, this is not an authentic/traditional way of cooking “banga” and “abak atama” soup, “banga” and “abak atama” soup cooked with meat is never the same as those cooked with fish (Don).

Additionally, “banga” and “abak atama” soups are mostly cooked with different aromatic and flavorful spices which makes the soups so special (Dob; 1q). These

aromatic and flavorful spices consist of a mixture of spices which are blended together to form “banga spices” (Don; Sisi). For instance, one could create banga spices with a blend of: (a) “tyko” also known as “uyayak” which is known as aridan fruit, (b) bush apple leaves (*heinsia crinite*) locally called “obeletientien/beletete” in Delta State and “atama” leaves amongst the Efik tribe (Dob; Don; Foods), (c) rogojie/ erereje, (d) oburunbebe stick (identified as *liquorice root* by Kitchen Butterfly, 2018; Sisi), (e) *Aframomum subsericeum* locally called “atiako” (Nig; Sisi; 1q; Grygus, n.d.; Kitchen Butterfly, 2018). However, already blended and packed “banga” spices could be purchased from any Nigerian local market or at the African shops (Don; Nig; Foods). In Nigerian local markets, the “banga” spices and “banga” stick called oburunbebe stick (*liquorice root*) are usually sold by women who sell traditional roots and herbs/herbal medicines like “zobo” (*Hibiscus sabdariffa*) leaves (Nwachukwu, Onovo, & Ezeama, 2007; also mentioned by Foods) and “dogoyaro” (*azadiracta indica*) (Anyaehe, 2010, p.157; Onyenenkwa, 2017, p.36; also mentioned by Foods). Hence, if one does not have these individual spices but has “banga” spices (which is a combination of the different banga spices), one is covered (9ja). One tip noted for using “banga” spices is that it should not be used in large quantity to avoid making the palm fruit soup taste bitter. Rather, one should start with one or two tablespoons when adding the “banga” spices (Don).

However, when making “banga” soup, one can either cook this soup with, or without vegetables like dried and crushed “beletientien/obeletientien” (bush apple) leaves, which are also called “atama” leaf in Efik (Don; Foods). Alternatively, one could use dried and crushed bitter leaves (Rec.). The “beletientien/obeletientien/atama” leaves or bitter leaves could be blended in a mill till it becomes powdery and then a tablespoon or slightly more, could be sprinkled into the soup to add a slightly bitter twinge to the soup (Don). On the other hand, if cooking “abak atama,” one must add “atama” (*heinsia crinata*) leaves, which is a characteristic ingredient of this soup (1q; Rec.). “Atama” (*heinsia crinata*) leaves (Akpanabiatu, Basse, Udosen, & Eyang, 1998) are said to give the soup its unique aroma and taste (Rec) and they could easily be purchased at the Nigerian market where soup ingredients are sold (1q; Rec). However, it is unsure if one could find “atama” leaves easily in African stores in the United Kingdom or North America (1q).

However, to add some excitement to “abak atama” soup, one of the bloggers suggest that unripe plantain or “egusi” balls could be added (as done by 1q).

Nevertheless, while other versions of palm fruit soup (“banga” and “abak atama” soups) are traditionally cooked with fresh fish and not meat, “ofe akwu” is mostly cooked with meats (Don). Most importantly, some bloggers have noted that it is important to add some fermented local seasonings – “ogiri” (Nig.) or “ogiri okpei” in order to enhance the taste of the stew/soup (Sisi). In place of these local seasonings, one could use locust beans, which is locally called “dawadawa” in Hausa or “iru” in Yoruba (Sisi). Though “iru” is close to “ogiri okpei,” it has been noted that “iru” won’t give one the same taste as the latter (Sisi). However, if using these local seasonings, one must be careful how one adds salt and any other seasonings. Alternatively, one could choose to eliminate salt and other seasonings when using these local seasonings (as advised by Nig).

#### **5.4.2 The Standard of Eating Palm Fruit/Nut Soup**

The blogs observed have clearly noted the cultural standards and ways of eating produce from the palm fruit tree e.g. palm fruit as well as its soup. As for palm fruit, it is instructed they could be roasted in open fire, and the pulp of the fruits could be eaten (Nig). One blogger describes that the way the juices from chewing the pulp of the roast palm fruits which have a nutty smell melts in one's mouth is just indescribable. She further affirms that there is something “comforting about its smell and taste” (Nig).

As per soups made with palm fruit/nut, they are traditionally cooked in a regular pot and then transferred to a native/clay pot called “**asanka**” which are believed to make the soup thicker and taste better (Nig). This native pot, when brand new and untreated, has to be treated in order to make it appropriate for use (Nig.). To treat these native pots, one could either pour some water into it and allow the water to boil, or leave the empty native pot on a low heat until it is very hot. Afterwards, one must rub palm oil into the pot before use. However, one could purchase the already treated native pots that are being sold in Nigeria (Nig).

After preparing the palm fruit/nut soup, it is informed that it is traditionally served in a local clay plate/bowl known as “**evwere**” mostly amongst the Deltans (Dob). This

clay plate/bowl is further believed to make the soup tastier (Dob). In mimicking the clay plate/bowl, a blogger served her palm fruit soup in a big wooden bowl (Nig).

Regardless of the version of palm fruit/nut soup cooked, all palm fruit/nut soups are usually cooked and ready to be served when the oil floats on top of the soup (Don; Rec.). Also, considering both the Efik (“abak atama/mbakara”) and Niger-Delta’s/Deltan/Benin/Edo (“banga” soup) version of palm fruit/nut soup are regarded as soup, it has been noted that there is no better pairing with these soups than starchy solids (Don; Sisi; Foods). While any favorite or choice of swallow (Dob; Nig.; 1q), or any carbohydrate of one’s choice (Afro) could be used, the most common swallow/carbohydrates served with “banga” soup or “abak atama,” as mentioned by most (60%) of the bloggers is “eba” which is also called starch, made from fried form of cassava (Ayogu et al., 2017, p.67) followed by boiled white rice which were mentioned by 40% of the bloggers. Pounded yam (“iyan”) and fufu/cassava fufu (“akpu”) which is the solid made from fermented cassava (Ayogu et al., 2017, p.67) were mentioned by 30% of the bloggers. Other solids that could be served with these soups are semolina, “amala,” made from yam flour (Somorin, Bertuzzi, Battilani, & Pietri, 2012, p. 53 & 54), wheat meal, or corn meal etc. (mentioned by Dob; Rec.; Foods; Wives). More specifically, “abak atama” could also be served with unripe plantain (as done by 1q). Meanwhile, if “banga” soup is cooked with bitter leaves, it should be served with solids (as noted by Rec.) while, if cooked with scent leaves, it should be served with boiled white rice (Rec.).

On the other hand, the Igbo version of palm fruit/nut soup (“ofe akwu”) is usually regarded as “stew,” and this stew sometimes called “banga stew” amongst other Nigerian cultures, has over the years, “topped the list of Nigerian stew recipes due to its uniqueness and blend of natural ingredients” (Dob; Sisi; Foods). Unlike other Nigerian stews, which constitute boiled tomatoes and peppers fried in oil (either vegetable or palm oil) to remove all traces of water and its sour taste (Adegboye et al., 2015, p.2484; Rec), “banga stew” is prepared as soups which are made by boiling animal proteins in liquid until its flavors are extracted to form a broth that is usually thickened with thickeners, in this case palm fruits (Ayogu et al., 2017, p.67; Adegboye et al., 2015, p.2484). However



as stew, it is served mostly with boiled rice (as mentioned by Dob; Sisi; 1q; Rec; Foods) or with yam or cooked beans (Foods). However, when “ofe akwu” is used as soup in other cultures, it is eaten with swallow (noted by Dob) like pounded yam, semolina, “amala” (Rec), or “fufu”/ “akpu” (Nig.; Rec).

### **5.4.3 The Relationship between Palm Fruit/Nut Soup to Health**

There are controversies as to whether palm fruit/nut extracts and its by-product – e.g. palm oil are healthy or unhealthy (Nig.). For instance, some Nigerians have demonized most Nigerian soups made with palm nut/fruit extract or its by-product (e.g. palm oil), as unhealthy (1q). This could be, as one of the bloggers noted, because the amount of oil used in Nigerian cooking is “way too much” (9ja). But as one of the bloggers noted “healthy meal means different things to different people” (1q). While for some, palm oil could be unhealthy, yet “they justify consuming French Fries with avocado and tomatoes because the French fries contains the healthy factor – avocado and tomatoes,” (1q) for some, consuming palm fruits or its by-product, e.g. palm oil in minor rather than large quantity is still healthy and more sustainable than none (1q). Besides, oil made from palm fruits – kernel oil or palm oil are one of the most naturally healthy oil one could ever use (Nig.). As such, it has been said that one can benefit from the nutrients of palm fruit/nut soup depending on how one cooks it (whether by bleaching or not bleaching), as well as how much palm fruit extract one uses in cooking the soup (Nig). This is because, cooking good palm oil or palm extract in its healthy temperature rather than bleaching it, is all one needs (Nig; Rec.), and as with all things, consuming the right portions/quantity also matters (Nig). Thus, one of the bloggers advises that palm oil should be significantly limited in our use not only from a weight loss perspective but from an overall cardiovascular health viewpoint (9ja). Thus, while some of these blogs tend to validate palm oil, others advise caution (as affirmed also by 9ja; Nig.; Wives).

On the other hand, it has been noted that palm fruits/nuts are beneficial to health in that when used to make palm kernel oil, which is used as local body lotion, they are believed to help keep one’s skin shiny and moisturized (Nig). In fact, I can remember my own grandmother using palm kernel oil to treat various ailments.

#### 5.4.4 Componential Analysis of Palm Fruit/Nut Soup

Due to the popularity, high consumption, and importance of the palm tree as well as its produce – palm fruit/nut soup to Nigerians, (9ja; Nig; Foods; Wives), and being described by the blog narratives on this soup, as one of the most tasty (Dob), delicious soups (9ja; Nig; Foods; Wives), with gorgeous taste (Afro), this section will conduct a componential analysis on the list of the ingredients of the different versions of palm fruit/nut soup provided by the sampled food blogs, in order to identify what could constitute/be included (represented by 1) or could be excluded from the recipe are (represented by 2) (See: **Tables 7-9**).

COMPONENTIAL ANALYSIS OF PALM FRUIT/NUT SOUP: BANGA SOUP																					
BLOG ID	palm nuts/fruit	INGREDIENTS																			
		pepper	obunrub	banga	beletenti	bitter	water	spinach	crayfish	Dry/Fresh	Fresh/Dry	periwinkle	fresh fish	dried fish	meat	stockfish	smoked fish	seasoning	salt	onion	Ogiri/Ogiri
DOB	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	2
DON	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	2
9JA	1	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	2
AFRO	1	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	2
NIG.	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2
SISI	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
IQ	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	1
REC.	1	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1
FOODS	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2
WIVES	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2
TOTAL	10	9	6	6	5	7	1	2	9	3	5	5	5	7	9	7	5	10	10	4	2
%	100	90	60	60	50	70	10	20	90	30	50	50	50	70	90	70	50	100	100	40	20

Table 7: Componential analysis of “banga” soup (the Niger Deltas/Deltan/Benin/Edo version of palm fruit/nut soup)

Based on the componential analysis of “banga” soup (See: **Table 7**), the components of this soup have been grouped under the essential components/ingredients (ingredients that should be included), and non-essential components/ingredients (ingredients that could be excluded) in **figure 20**.

SOUP	ESSENTIAL/MAIN INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS	NON-ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS
<i>Banga Soup</i>	a) “banga” (palm fruit/nut), b) seasoning/bouillon/stock cubes like “maggi/knorr” and c) salt	d) pepper (which could be fresh pepper like scotch bonnet, or habanero pepper, which are locally called “ata rodo” or “ose nsukka” or ground dried pepper which is locally called “atagungun”/ “ata ijosi” e.g chilli pepper), e) obunrubebe stick (optional), f) banga spices, g) beletientien/beletete, also known as “atama leaf”: bitter leaves, water leaves or spinach, local spinach (“shoko”) are its substitute h) crayfish, which could be dried or ground crayfish i) dried/smoked/fresh shrimps (optional), j) fresh/dried prawns (“oporo”) k) periwinkles (optional), l) fresh fish like tilapia, cod, catfish, or dried fish or smoked fish, m) meat, n) stock fish (“okporoko”) (optional) o) onion, p) “ogiri/ogili/ogiri okpei/iru”.
	3 essential components of “banga” soup	13 non-essential components of “banga” soup

**16 nuances of ingredients could be used in the preparation of “banga” soup**

Figure 20: Illustrating the essential and non-essential ingredients/components of “banga” soup

COMPONENTIAL ANALYSIS OF PALM FRUIT/NUT SOUP: OFE AKWU																	
BLOG ID	INGREDIENTS																
	palm fruit	meat	crayfish	fresh fish	dried fish	smoked fish	stockfish	seasonin g cubes	pepper	ogiri	salt	scent/ba sil leaves	pumpkin leaves	uziza leaves	Dried/Smoked Prawns	Onions	
DOB	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2
DON	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2
9JA																	
AFRO																	
NIG.	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	2
SISI	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2
1Q	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	2
REC.	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	1
FOODS	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1
WIVES																	
TOTAL	7	7	7	2	4	5	5	7	7	7	7	7	7	4	1	2	2
% (7/10)	70	70	70	20	40	50	50	70	70	70	70	70	70	40	10	20	20
% (7/7)	100	100	100	29	57	71	71	100	100	100	100	100	100	57	14	29	29

Table 8: Componential analysis of “ofe akwu” (the Igbo version of palm fruit/nut soup)

Likewise, from **table 8** on the componential analysis of “*ofe akwu*,” the nuances of ingredients of “*ofe akwu*” have been categorized under essential, and non-essential components/ingredients in **figure 21**.

SOUP	ESSENTIAL/MAIN INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS	NON-ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS
<i>Ofe Akwu</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) “akwu” (palm fruit/nut),</li> <li>b) meat/assorted meat,</li> <li>c) ground/powdered crayfish,</li> <li>d) seasoning/bouillon/stock cubes like “knorr chicken cubes” or “maggi” (optional),</li> <li>e) pepper, (e.g fresh pepper like scotch bonnet/habanero pepper, (“ata rodo”/ “ose nsukka”) or ground dried pepper e.g chilli pepper)</li> <li>f) fermented local seasonings like “ogiri/ogiri okpei/dawadawa/iru” (optional)</li> <li>g) salt, and</li> <li>h) fresh/dried scent/basil leaves (“nchuawun” in Igbo/ “enfirin” in Yoruba) which could be substituted with pumpkin/fluted pumpkin (“ugu”) leaves, “uziza” leaves or spinach or kale</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) fresh/dried/smoked fish,</li> <li>j) stock fish (“panla”/ “okporoko”) (optional)</li> <li>k) dried/smoked prawns and</li> <li>l) onions.</li> </ul>
	8 essential components of “ <i>ofe akwu</i> ”	4 non-essential components of “ <i>ofe akwu</i> ”

**12 nuances of ingredients could be used in the preparation of “*ofe akwu*”**

Figure 21: Illustrating the essential and non-essential ingredients/components of “*ofe akwu*”

COMPONENTIAL ANALYSIS OF PALM FRUIT/NUT SOUP: ABAK ATAMA																						
BLOG ID	INGREDIENTS																					
	palm fruit	meat	fresh fish	periwinkle	crayfish	dried fish	smoked fish	stockfish	seasoning cubes	pepper	uyayak	salt	atama leaf	beletientien	bitter leaf	Fresh/Smoked Prawns	(Fresh)shrimps	rogojie	tyko	Obunrub ebe stick	banga spices	
DOB	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	2	2
DON	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
9JA																						
AFRO	1	1	2	2	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
NIG.																						
SISI																						
IQ.	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2
REC.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
FOODS WIVES																						
TOTAL	5	4	3	4	5	2	4	4	5	5	4	5	5	1	1	2	3	1	1	1	1	1
% (5/10)	50%	40%	30%	40%	50%	20%	40%	40%	50%	50%	40%	50%	50%	10%	10%	20%	30%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%
% (5/5)	100	80	60	80	100	40	80	80	100	100	80	100	100	20	20	40	60	20	20	20	20	20

Table 9: Componential analysis of “*abak atama*” (the Efik/Calabar version of palm fruit/nut soup)

Meanwhile, from the componential analysis of “*abak atama*” (See: **Table 9**) the nuances of ingredients of “*abak atama*” have been categorized under essential, and non-essential components/ingredients (See: **Figure 22**).

SOUP	ESSENTIAL/MAIN INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS	NON-ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS
<i>Abak</i>	a) “ <i>abak</i> ” (palm fruit/nut),	g) meat or assorted meat,
<i>Atama</i>	b) ground/powdered crayfish,	h) fresh fish,
	c) seasoning/bouillon/stock cubes, like crayfish seasoning cubes,	i) periwinkle,
	d) pepper, (e.g. fresh pepper like: scotch bonnet/habanero pepper (“ <i>ata rodo</i> ”/ “ <i>ata rugu</i> ” by the Yorubas or “ <i>ose nsukka</i> ”/“ <i>ose oyibo</i> ” by the Igbos) and red bell pepper (“ <i>tatashe</i> ”); ground dried pepper (“ <i>atagungun</i> ”) like chilli pepper	j) dried/smoked fish (“ <i>eja osan</i> ”),
	e) salt to taste, and	k) stock fish,
	f) “ <i>atama</i> ”/ “ <i>beletientien</i> ” leaves which could be substituted with bitter leaves	l) “ <i>uyayak</i> ”/ “ <i>prekese</i> ” (aridan/aidan/aiden/adian fruit)
		m) fresh/smoked prawns (“ <i>oporo</i> ”)
		n) shrimps,
		o) “ <i>banga</i> ” spices like “ <i>rogojie</i> ,” “ <i>tyko</i> ,” and “ <i>obunrubebe stick</i> ”
	6 essential components of “ <i>abak atama</i> ”	9 non-essential components of “ <i>abak atama</i> ”

**15 nuances of ingredients could be used in the preparation of “*abak atama*”**

*Figure 22: Illustrating the essential and non-essential ingredients/components of “*abak atama*”*

From the componential analysis of the various versions of palm fruit/nut soup (See: **Tables 7-9**), one can deduce that to generally make palm fruit/nut soup, palm fruit (“*banga*”/ “*akwu*”/ “*abak*”), seasoning cubes and salt are essentially needed. This is seen as these were commonly mentioned as the essential characteristics of all the versions of palm fruit/nut soup. However, if one chooses to make any of the versions of palm fruit/nut soup, then one would refer to the essential/main ingredients required for making that version of palm fruit/nut soup.

**5.4.5 Summary/Conclusion on Palm Fruit/Nut Soup**

In summary, palm fruit/nut soup is a traditional staple soup to the Southern part of Nigeria (e.g Niger-Delta, Delta State, Benin, Edo, Urohobos and other Efik tribes) as well as the Eastern part of Nigeria (like the Igbos), it is also widely enjoyed all over Nigeria tribe and culture even. Given this wide distribution, palm fruit/nut soup is locally called

“banga” soup by the Niger-Delta, Delta State, Benin, Edo, “ofe akwu” by the Igbos and “abak atama/abak mbakara/amiedi” by the Urohobos and other members of the Efik tribe.

Moreover, palm fruit/nut soup is cooked differently across Nigeria and thus consists of different components/ingredients as per the blogs. While it is generally made with palm fruit/nut extract/cream/juice, seasoning cubes, and salt, the different versions of palm fruit/nut soup consist of similar yet fundamentally different components. In the course of making this soup, while some of its ingredients are optional, and could be substituted, the essential property, as well as the star of this soup is the presence of “palm fruit/nut” (locally called "banga, akwu or abak") which if not present, or substituted with palm oil, could render the supposed “palm fruit/nut soup” mere Nigerian traditional soup, as palm oil defeats the authentic nature and taste of this soup. Likewise, authentic “banga” or “abak atama” soup are defiled when cooked with meats rather than with fish. Further, to maintain the traditional and acceptable way of making palm fruit/nut soup, or as one of the bloggers describe it “the ancestors way of making this soup,” “abak atama” must be made not just with "abak" (palm fruit/nut) alone but with “atama”/ “obeletientien/beletete” (*heinsia crinite*) leaves also known as bush apple leaves. Meanwhile “ofe akwu,” must be made with both "akwu" (palm fruit/nut) and scent /basil leaves (“nchuawun”/“enfirin”).

### 5.5: “Soup with Bold Flavors”: Nigerian White Soup



White Soup (© Copyright by Betty Chinwenwo Chukwu, 2020).

### **5.5.1 Background Information on White Soup**

Across the blog narratives on white soup, white soup has been noted as a very popular delicacy in the Eastern and Southern parts of Nigeria (Dob; Foods). As a result of its popularity, it is been noted that it is served in most Nigerian restaurants (Don), and all of the sampled food blogs have at least a recipe on white soup. From the blog narratives on this soup, while it is certain amongst most consumers of “white soup” that “white soup” is very tasty (Afro; Rec; Wives) and delicious (Foods), it is usually misconceived that by the name of this soup, “white soup,” this soup is white in color (Don; 9ja; Afro). Meanwhile, it has been emphasized across the sampled blogs that there is nothing white about “white soup” (Don; Afro). Rather, this soup is called “white soup” due to the use of pounded yam – the major and traditional thickener of this soup (9ja), which is also white in color. Thus, in maintaining the traditional or authentic way of cooking white soup, the proper thickener used for white soup is pounded yam (Dob; Sisi) particularly older yams which are best for thickening this soup (1q), but if one cannot source for yam, cocoyam can be substituted (9ja; Sisi; Wives – like the one used in the preparation of “ofe onugbu” (bitter leaf soup)). Alternatively, one could use potatoes (Nig.), “achi” (*Brachystegia eurycoma*) seeds (Sisi; Ikegwu, et al., 2010), ground oats (1q – which is also good for “those looking for low glycemic index carbohydrates”), plain flour (9ja) or yam flour/powder (Sisi). However, the thickness of white soup depends on one's preference, as some may like thick white soup (as Don) or slightly fluid white soup (like Afro), the more pounded yam or cocoyam or any of the soup thickeners used, the thicker the white soup (Don; Afro; Wives).

Unlike other Nigerian traditional soups where palm oil is prevalent/required (Dob; 9ja; Sisi; Foods), all white soups (whether ofe nsala or afia efere) are made without oil (Don; 9ja; Nig.; Foods; Wives). This is also another reason for the peculiar name – “white soup.” However, it has been noted that just like pepper-soup, and the Yoruba soup locally called “ewedu” (jute) soup, where the use of palm oil is not very necessary, and as such optional (Foods; Wives), one could also choose to use a few drops of, or very little palm oil in the preparation of “white soup.” Especially, in order to prevent the soup from changing color (Dob; Wives).

Again, “white soup,” unlike most Nigerian soups whose common ingredient is the presence of leaves, it is cooked without leaves (Don). However, one could add false cubeb (scientifically called *piper guineense* and locally called “uziza”) leaves (Franca & Ibiwari, 2019), which are said to be very hot and peppery leaves which add pleasant aromatic flavor and taste to the soup (Don; Wives) or one could add “utazi” (*gongronema latifolium*) leaves (Eleyinmi, 2007), which could add a slightly bitter flavor to the soup (Dob; Sisi; Rec). Whichever leaf one chooses to use, it has been recommended that the leaves are to be added sparingly (Dob) or as needed (Nig). Considering the peppery taste of “uziza” (false cubeb) leaves, when adding “uziza” leaves, one must be careful with the quantity of pepper one chooses to add into the soup (Wives). Again, these leaves are optional, and one could choose to do without them if one is having difficulty sourcing for the leaves (“uziza” or “utazi” leaves) (Sisi; Rec).

As a popular Eastern and Southern Nigeria delicacy, “white soup” has been noted as originating from the Igbos who are the Eastern (Dobby; Don; 9ja; Foods) and Efiks which are the Southern (Dob; Foods) parts of Nigeria. While, the Igbos (e.g Anambra state (Sisi) and Efiks are the top makers and consumers of “white soup” (Don; Afro; Nig.; Foods), due to the taste and popularity of “white soup,” it is also consumed by other Nigerian cultures (9ja; Afro). However, as originating from both the Eastern and Southern part of Nigeria, “white soup” is referred to by different names in those cultures. For the Igbos, “white soup” is locally called “ofe nsala” (Dob; Don; Afro; Nig; 1q; Foods). As we already know from previous sections, “ofe” is the Igbo word for soup. It precludes most native soups specific to the Igbo people of eastern Nigeria (9ja), meanwhile “nsala” means white in English. Hence, the common English description of the Igbo word, “ofe nsala” is “white soup” (Dob; Don; Sisi). On the other hand, the Efiks/Calabars call “white soup” “afia efere” (Dob; Don; Afro; Nig; Sisi; 1q). While the Efik/Calabar word, “afia” means white, “efere” means soup. Thus, “afia efere” translates directly into “white soup” in English (9ja; Afro; Sisi). However, some Nigerian cultures know “white soup” as “white pepper-soup” (Afro). Hence, these similar recipes of white soup which are called differently across Nigerian depending on the region, culture or locality supports Oguntona et al., 1999; Etkin, 2006; Adegboye et al., 2015. This also means that there are different variants of “white soup” depending on the tribe (1q).



Traditionally speaking, “ofe nsala” (Igbo version of white soup) is best made with fish (Dob; Sisi; 1q), particularly catfish which adds a unique taste to the soup (Sisi). Again, if one is having difficulty sourcing for catfish, another fish that has been suggested by one of the bloggers as close to catfish is conger eel (Rec.). Otherwise, one could use other kinds of fish like smoked fish “which provides something to "escort" one's swallow to the mouth” (1q). However, “ofe nsala” could still be made with hard or old chicken (Dob; Sisi; 1q; Wives) or what Nigerians call "native chicken," which contains less fat as opposed to broilers or “agric” fowl which could affect or change the unique taste of this soup (Wives) as well as add so much oil or fat into the soup such that one may not like it and it (Wives). Also, one could use smoked turkey (Dob). Mutton or goat meat (Sisi; Wives) are also noted as been used for optimum flavor (Dob) and its distinctive taste (Don – who notes that ever since she relocated from Nigeria, she’s used mutton to cook than goat meat, as mutton is a bit mild so does not affect the strong flavors of chicken or crayfish etc.) Additionally, one could use other proteins like seafood (Dob) especially if one does not like fresh fish (Sisi).

On the other hand, “afia efere” (Efik/Calabar version of white soup) is traditionally made with chicken particularly with stewing hen (Nig), which is known in Nigeria as “bendel chicken” (Afro). This type of chicken “takes longer to cook,” but it has been glorified as “totally worth the wait” due to the taste it adds to the soup (Afro). However, it has been observed by one of the bloggers that these days, just like “ofe nsala,” people make “afia efere” with any type of protein like goat meat and other parts of beef (as also done by Nig.– although she sticks to the original traditional spices for this dish). However, if using other proteins like chicken parts e.g. gizzard, kidney, heart, liver etc. (as mostly used in the preparation of “afia efere”), one’s “white soup” cannot be as “white” as the authentic “white soup” cooked with fresh fish (like “ofe nsala”) (Wives).

In addition to the meat or fish used in the preparation of white soups (Nig.), considering “afia efere” is a soup with “bold flavors” (Nig), the only spices needed for “afia efere” are pepper (1q), african nutmeg which is locally known as "iwun" (1q), and aridan/aidan/aiden/adian fruit which is differently spelt across the blogs (Dob; Don; Afro; 1q), and noted as locally known as "uyayak" or "uyayak pod" (Nig.; 1q).

Aridan/aidan/aiden/adian fruit is a major seasoning for “afia efere” (Dob), thus has been mentioned by all of the bloggers; this is because it gives “afia efere” a little more aroma, thus making it more aromatic than “ofe nsala,” which does not use this ingredient (Don). Meanwhile, traditionally, “ofe nsala” does not involve the use of any type of local seasoning like “ogiri” (Don), however, based on personal preference (as used by Don, who chooses to because she likes the taste of it in her soup), one could add some local seasonings such as "ogiri egusi, ogiri okpei or dawadawa" (Dob; Don; Wives). However, for the Igbos, “ogiri egusi” (fermented melon seeds) is mostly preferred because of its very strong aroma, but if one doesn’t have it, one could simply use “ogiri okpei” (which is also used by most Igbos) or “dawadawa” (used by most Hausas). Whichever type of local seasoning one uses, the local seasoning has to be simply dissolved in a little amount in water (Dob).

Due to the gloriousness of this soup to families (Dob; Don; Nig; Wives), while it has been noted that some Nigerian soups are consumed daily, some have been reserved for the weekends or for ceremonial occasions/events like Christmas (Don; Afro), and some of which are mostly served to the elders. One such soup includes “light” soups such as “white soup” (1q). In fact, it has been noted by one of the bloggers that most Efik events are incomplete without the popular “white soup” – “afia efere.” As such, in traditional events like in the coronation of a paramount ruler, “afia efere” is usually served. During which one would perceive the roasted spices and aroma of roasted goat or chicken cooking, while also hearing women slamming away on mortars filled with yams, in order to make mounds of pounded yam (as described by 1q).

### **5.5.2 The Relationship between White Soup to Health**

Most importantly, the popular Nigerian “white soup” has been attributed to having pharmacological properties. First, it has been noted to be good for the winter (Nig) or cold/rainy weather (Rec) as its peppery (Afro) or spicy taste (Don; Rec) could cure cold (Afro; Nig; Rec). As described as “a hearty Nigerian soup” (Nig), “white soup” is good for a low calories diet (Nig) or when one needs a break from palm oil, especially during recovery from malaria or other ailments (1q). Due to its health benefits, white soup is advocated for anyone breastfeeding or one who just gave birth (Don), and as such, most

Nigerian women carry this soup along when visiting friends who just gave birth or one who is breastfeeding (Don).

When used for low calories diet (Nig), or by one who is “calorie-conscious” (Don), white soup could be eaten alone without any side, as they are very filling (Don; Nig – who has done her “clean-eating” with white soup). Otherwise, just like other Nigerian soups, are accompanied with a carbohydrate-based meal (Onabanjo et al., 2013, p.368). One popular side used to accompany white soups are pounded yam. In fact, it was mentioned by 80% (Dob; Don; 9ja; Afro; 1q; Rec; Foods; Wives) of the sampled blogs. Yet, some Nigerians do not seem to understand why white soup which is being thickened with pounded yam should be served with pounded yam (Don). The answer to this suspicion was provided by one of the bloggers who tried this side – pounded yam with white soup and discovered that it seems to be “the best and perfect side to be served with white soup” (Dob; Don – who realized this from its taste with the soup; 9ja; Nig; Foods; Wives) as “it pairs excellently well” with white soup (9ja). Aside from pounded yam, white soups could also be served with “eba”/ “garri” (Dob; Rec; Foods; Wives), semovita, wheatmeal, “fufu,” “amala” (Wives), plantains (Nig.) and even with peanuts and white rice (Afro).

Culturally, the standard of eating most Nigerian soups and side, as it is with “white soup” is with hands (as demonstrated in **figure 46**). This activity of eating soups with hands is described by one of the blogs when she notes that she dipped her ball of pounded yam into her “white soup” (Don).

### **5.5.3 Componential Analysis of White Soup**

With regards to the glorification of white soup amongst Nigerians, this section will conduct a componential analysis on the list of ingredients of the different versions of white soup – “ofe nsala” (the Igbo version of white soup), and “afia efere” (the Efik/Calabar version of white soup) provided by the sampled food blogs, in order to identify what could constitute the different versions of white soup (See: **Tables 10 & 11**).

COMPONENTIAL ANALYSIS OF NIGERIAN WHITE SOUP: OFE NSALA SOUP																						
BLOG ID	INGREDIENTS																					
	meat	african nutmeg	uda	Uyayak pod	peppers up spice	uziza seeds	uziza leaves	ogiri	utazi leaves	pepper	crayfish	periwinkle	yam	seasoning cubes	salt	Onion	fresh fish	Stockfish	dried fish	smoked fish	prawns	palm oil
DOB	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2
DON	1	2	2	2	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2
9JA																						
AFRO	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
NIG.	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	2	2	2
SISI	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	2	2
IQ	1	2	1	2	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	1	2	2
REC.	1	2	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	2	2
FOODS	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	2
WIVES	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	1
TOTAL	8	4	5	1	3	8	6	6	5	9	8	1	9	9	9	9	4	6	3	4	5	1
% (9/10)	80%	40%	50%	10%	30%	80%	60%	60%	50%	90%	80%	10%	90%	90%	90%	40%	60%	30%	40%	50%	10%	10%
% (9/9)	88.88%	44.44%	55.55%	11.11%	33.33%	88.88%	66.66%	66.66%	55.55%	100%	88.88%	11.11%	100%	100%	100%	44.44%	66.66%	33.33%	44.44%	55.55%	11.11%	11.11%

Table 10: Componential analysis of “ofe nsala”

Based on the componential analysis of “ofe nsala” (See: Table 10), the components of “ofe nsala” listed in table 10 have been grouped under essential components/ingredients (ingredients that should be included when making this soup), and non-essential components/ingredients (ingredients that could be excluded when making this soup) in figure 23.

SOUP	ESSENTIAL/MAIN INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS	NON-ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS
<i>Ofe nsala</i>	a) yam/cocoyam/flour/irish potato/ “garri”/ “achi”/yam flour/yam potato/potato puree b) pepper (e.g fresh pepper like scotch bonnet/habanero pepper (“ata rodo” in Yoruba or “ose nsukka” in Igbo); or dried ground pepper like chilli pepper/flakes, ground Cameroun pepper) c) seasoning cubes (either the “maggi” or “knorr” brand like “maggi” crayfish flavour) to taste and d) salt to taste	e) meat like chicken, beef or assorted meat, which refers to a combination of goat meat and different parts of a cow like “ponmo” (cow skin), “shaki” (cow tripe) f) African or calabash nutmeg (“ehuru seeds”) g) “uyayak pod” (aridan/aidan/aiden/adian fruit) h) pepper-soup spice, like “uda pods” (negro pepper/African guinea pepper), “uziza” (false cubeb) seeds i) “uziza” (false cubeb) leaves or “utazi” ( <i>gongronema latifolium</i> ) leaves j) local seasonings e.g “ogiri/ogili/ogiri okpei/dawadawa/iru” k) ground crayfish, l) periwinkle (“mfi”/ “isam”) recipe, m) onion, n) dried/smoked/fresh fish like catfish, which is more preferable for “ofe nsala” or tilapia and conger eel. o) stock fish (“panla”) p) smoked/dried prawns and q) palm oil
	4 essential components of “ofe nsala”	13 non-essential components of “ofe nsala”

**17 nuances of ingredients could be used in the preparation of “ofe nsala”**

Figure 23: Illustrating the essential and non-essential ingredients/components of “ofe nsala”

COMPONENTIAL ANALYSIS OF NIGERIAN WHITE SOUP: AFIA EFERE																
BLOG ID	INGREDIENTS															
	meat	calabash /african nutmeg	uda	uziza seeds	uyayak	uziza leaves	pepper	crayfish	periwinkl e	dry fish	smoked fish	yam	seasonin g cubes	salt	okro	
DOB	1	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	
DON	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	
9JA	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	
AFRO	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	
NIG.	1	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	2	
SISI																
1Q	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	
REC. FOODS WIVES																
TOTAL	6	3	3	2	6	1	6	6	1	2	3	6	6	6	1	
% (6/10)	60%	30%	30%	20%	60%	10%	60%	60%	10%	20%	30%	60%	60%	60%	10%	
% (6/6)	100%	50%	50%	33.33%	100%	16.66%	100%	100%	16.66%	33.33%	50%	100%	100%	100%	16.66%	

Table 11: Componential analysis of “afia efere”

Similarly, from the componential analysis of “*afia efere*” (See: **Table 11**), the nuances of ingredients of *afia efere* listed in **table 11** have been categorized under essential, and non-essential components/ingredients in **figure 24**.

SOUP	ESSENTIAL/MAIN INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS	NON-ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS
<i>Afia Efere</i>	a) yam, b) pepper (e.g fresh pepper like scotch bonnet, (“ata rodo”) or dried ground pepper like ground Cameroun pepper, cayenne pepper) to tolerance level, c) seasoning/bouillon/stock cubes like beef or crayfish seasonings or “maggi” brand, d) salt to taste, e) meat like chicken or assorted meat like goat meat f) “uyayak” (aridan/aidan/aiden/adian fruit) and g) ground or powdered crayfish 7 essential components of “afia efere”	h) calabash/african nutmeg (“iwun”/ “ehuru”/ “ehu”) or “uziza” seeds as its substitute (optional) i) “uda,” j) fresh/dried “uziza”/ “utazi” leaves, k) periwinkle (“mfi”) l) dried/smoked fish m) okro 6 non-essential components of “afia efere”

**14 nuances of ingredients could be used in the preparation of “afia efere”**

*Figure 24: Illustrating the essential and non-essential ingredients/components of "afia efere"*

From the componential analysis of the various versions of white soup (See: **Tables 10 & 11**), one can deduce that to generally make white soup, yam, pepper, seasoning cubes and salt are essentially needed. This is seen as these ingredients were commonly mentioned as the essential characteristics of all the versions of white soup. However, if one chooses to make any of the versions of white soup, then one would refer to the essential/main ingredients required for making that version.

**5.5.4 Summary/Conclusion on White Soup**

In summary, while “white soup,” sometimes called white pepper-soup, is widely enjoyed all over Nigeria, it is a traditional staple soup to the Southern part of Nigeria, particularly the Efik/Calabar tribes who mostly call them “afia efere,” as well as the Eastern part of Nigeria like the Igbos who call them “ofe nsala.”

Due to the consumption of “white soup” in different Nigerian cultures, “white soup” is cooked differently and thus consists of similar but different components/ingredients. While white soup is generally made with pounded yam (which could be substituted with cocoyam, potato puree, “achi,” flour, yam flour/powder, etc),

pepper, seasoning cubes, and salt, the different versions of white soup consist of similar but different components. For instance, "ofe nsala" mainly consists of pounded yam, pepper, seasoning cubes, and salt. Meanwhile "afia efere" consists of pounded yam, pepper, seasoning cubes, salt, meat, crayfish, and aidan fruit ("uyayak pod").

However, in the course of making the various versions of "white soup," while some of the ingredients are optional, and could be substituted, to maintain the traditional and acceptable way of making "white soup," or as one of the bloggers describe it "the ancestors way of making this soup," which could also be defined as authenticity or originality of "white soup," white soup must be made with pounded yam, as the thickener and without vegetables or palm oil. Also, one must avoid using proteins like chicken parts which might affect the color of this soup, e.g. gizzards, etc.

White soup while is beneficial to Nigerian's health especially in curing cold and when one loses appetite in the course of other ailments, it is mostly beneficial to lactating mothers, and as such, used as a gift to visit new or lactating mothers.

## **5.6: The "Well Loved and Cooked Soup": Melon ("Egusi") Soup**



### **5.6.1 Background Information on Melon ("Egusi") Soup**

Melon soup locally called "egusi" soup in Nigeria (Wives) and hereinafter, called "egusi" soup, is made from melon seed which is locally called "egusi" (Sisi; Foods) in Nigeria and hereinafter referred to by its local name, "egusi."

“Egusi” soup has been noted as one of the most popular traditional Nigerian soup, (Afro; Sisi) if not the most popular of all Nigerian soups for all Nigerians (Dob; Rec; Foods). This is because it is mostly loved by both Nigerians and non-Nigerians who like Nigerian fufu recipes (Rec.). As a common Nigerian soup that is **well-loved and cooked**, “egusi” soup has been discussed across the sampled blogs/bloggers, who also note that “egusi” soup features so often on Nigerians' meal timetable (1q).

While, it has been noted as a delicacy for most Yoruba cultures (Don; Afro) – the Southwest or Western part of Nigeria (Don; 9ja; Afro; Sisi; 1q) who locally call this soup, “elegusi” (Don), it is also peculiar to the Igbos (the eastern part of Nigeria), who call them, “ofe egusi” with the Igbo word, “ofe” meaning soup in English, thus, “ofe egusi” translates into “egusi” soup and the Hausas (the northern part of Nigeria) who call them “miyan gushi” (Dob; Don; 9ja; Afro; Nig; 1q; Rec). In fact, “egusi” soup has been described as quite versatile as it is prepared, and widely consumed by every single tribe in Nigeria (Dob; 9ja), even though the methods of preparation might differ slightly (Dob), and the soup might have its own characteristics, taste and texture depending on the region and culture (as noted by one of the bloggers – 1q; and affirmed by Oguntona et al., 1999; Etkin, 2006; Adegboye et al., 2015). As such, there are different types and versions of “egusi” soup. For instance, “egusi” soup with pumpkin (“ugu/ugwu”) leaves has been noted as very common in most Nigerian households (Dob), while “egusi” pepper-soup has been noted as very common amongst the riverine areas e.g Delta state, and the Urhobos (Dob). Meanwhile another version of “egusi” soup called the “lumpy egusi soup” is noted as mostly common amongst the Yorubas such that they are called Yoruba style “egusi” soup (9ja). Although, lumpy “egusi” is also a common delicacy amongst the Igbos, particularly those of Imo, Abia and Anambra state (Rec), and it is locally called “akpuruakpu mgbam” in Igbo (Rec). Thus, these different types of “egusi” soup, as well as its versions e.g. lumpy “egusi” soup are called differently depending on the region and culture in Nigeria (Oguntona et al., 1999; Etkin, 2006; Adegboye et al., 2015).

Despite the different names given to “egusi” soup depending on the culture, all versions of “egusi” are very similar in that they use melon (“egusi”) seeds, which are quite oily (Nig). Although, the various versions might be different in the type of



leaf/vegetable used (Sisi) alongside the “egusi.” For example, the process of making “egusi” soup with “uziza” (false cubeb) leaves is very similar to making “egusi” soup with “utazi” (*Gongronema latifolium*) leaf and “egusi” soup with “afang/okazi/ukazi” (*Gnetum africanum*) leaf (Foods). While the same method of cooking these soups might be the same (Dob; Foods), the vegetables/leaves used in cooking these versions could be tweaked/differ (Foods).

Regardless of the type/variation/version of “egusi” soup, traditionally, “egusi” soup is thickened with ground “egusi” seeds (Afro; Rec). If living outside Nigeria where “egusi” seeds are sometimes unavailable or quite pricey (1q), they could be substituted with sunflower seeds (as noted by Rec.), cashew nuts (as noted by 1q.), pumpkin seeds, almonds and sesame seeds locally called “benniseed” (noted by Don). These alternative seeds to “egusi” seeds have been noted by one of the bloggers are easily accessible in any local supermarket, without having to visit any Nigerian or African food store, if one doesn’t want to (Don). Although this blogger informs that pumpkin seeds might not be suitable for cooking lumpy “egusi” or “egusi” with balls as it might not form the giant lumps expected in lumpy “egusi” (Don). Nevertheless, as stated by those bloggers who provided the alternatives for “egusi” seeds, when “egusi” seeds are substituted for other seeds like the ones mentioned above, while the soup might adopt the same process for making “egusi” soup, as well as taste similar to “egusi” soup, it renders the soup something else, and the name of the soup changes from “egusi” soup to the seeds used. For instance, where cashew nuts are used as substitutes for “egusi” seeds, the soup no longer becomes “egusi” soup, but cashew nut soup (1q). Likewise, where sunflower seeds are used in place of “egusi” seeds, it is called sunflower soup and not “egusi” soup (Rec).

Aside from thickening authentic “egusi” soup with “egusi” seeds, to further thicken any “egusi” soup, one could additionally, use ground “ofor”/ “ófó” (*detarium microcapum*) seeds (noted by Rec. & Foods. Also see: Uhegbu et al., 2009, p.316; Aviara et al., 2015, p.212) or “achi” (*brachystegia eurycoma*) seeds (Rec. & Foods. Also see: Ikegwu et al., 2010, p.58; Khalid et al., 2018, p.40). However, these ingredients are optional (Rec.; Foods).

Apart from “egusi” seeds, water, and palm oil used in the preparation of “egusi” soup, one could use any choice of protein e.g. beef, chicken, seafoods (Dob; Don; 9ja; Afro), cow stripe (locally called “shaki”), cow skin (locally called “ponmo”/ “kpomo”), cow leg, goat meat, animal offals, fish (dried/smoked or fresh fish), stock fish, and other kinds of protein. (Don; Rec.).

It was also observed across the blogs that traditionally, the different cultures/tribes choose to make “egusi” soup either plain or with vegetables (Don; Rec; Wives). For instance, while the Yorubas from the part of Ijebu choose to make “egusi Ijebu” (a Yoruba style “egusi” soup) without vegetables (Sisi; 1q), they choose to make “efo elegusi” (another type of “egusi” soup mostly eaten amongst the Yorubas) with lots of vegetables (Sisi). Also, it was noted that the Efik/Calabar tribe like to mostly cook “egusi” soup with bitter leaf and waterleaf, just like cooking their delicacy, “afang” (*gnetum africanum*) soup with “afang/okazi/ukazi” leaf and waterleaf (1q). However, while the vegetable/leaf used adds to the naming of the recipe on “egusi” soup as well as to the main characteristic/ingredient of the “egusi” soup recipe, it is most times the distinguishing factor of one version of “egusi” soup from the other (Foods). For instance, since “egusi” soup could be cooked with various vegetables like “uziza” (false cubeb) leaf, this version of “egusi” cooked with this leaf will be called “*egusi*” soup with “uziza” leaf, which is locally called “ofe egusi na uziza” in Igbo (as noted by Dob). Likewise, “egusi” soup cooked with bitter leaf, which is locally called “onugbu” by the Igbos and “ewuro” by the Yorubas will be called “*egusi*” soup with bitterleaf (“onugbu”/ “ewuro”) (Dob; Wives). Meanwhile the version cooked with elephant grass locally called “achara,” will be called “*egusi*” soup with elephant grass, which is locally called “ofe achara” in Igbo (noted by Rec). And a version cooked with water leaf (*talinum triangulare*) is called “egusi” with waterleaf and locally called “gbure egusi” in Yoruba (Dob; Don). Other vegetables that could be used in cooking “egusi” soup include: fluted pumpkin (Foods) or pumpkin leaves which are locally called “ugu/ugwu” leaves (Sisi), spinach (Rec), African spinach locally known as “soko/shoko” (Sisi), calallo/callaloo locally known as “tete,” collard, kale, scent leaf (Dob; Don; 9ja; Sisi; 1q; Rec.; Foods), “afang/okazi” (or wild spinach) leaf, water leaf, etc. Hence, while there are lots of vegetables/leaves to choose from as substitutes when one possible vegetable/leaf for

making “egusi” soup is unavailable (Don; Sisi; Rec), it has been noted that the choice of vegetable/leaf to be used in cooking one’s soup depends on one’s taste (Rec), and each of these vegetables/leaves have its own unique flavor (Dob), which also goes a long way in defining the taste of the soup (9ja).

More specifically, the various versions of “egusi” soup that have been selected from the sampled blogs are “egusi” soup cooked with different kinds of vegetables like (fluted)pumpkin (“ugu/ugwu”) leaves also referred to as *telfairia occidentalis* (Dob), bitter leaf (“onugbu/ewuro”), as well as “egusi” soup cooked with other vegetables like “utazi,” “uziza,” “afang/okazi” leaf, etc. Other versions of “egusi” soup selected include “fried egusi,” “oilless egusi,” “egusi with lumps/balls” also called “lumpy egusi,” and “egusi Ijebu” or “Ijebu egusi.” For **“egusi” soup cooked with the different kinds of vegetables** mentioned above, while the vegetable/leaf used is the distinguishing factor amongst the various versions, **“fried egusi”** mostly refers to the method of preparing “egusi” soup, which involves the frying of the ground “egusi” seeds with either palm oil or with blended pepper (Don) in order to add in-depth flavor and feel to the melon (“egusi”) soup (Dob). Meanwhile, **“oilless egusi”** requires the “egusi” soup being made with little or no oil (as noted by Nig., the only oil should mostly be one from the “egusi” seeds and from the meat broth (Wives)). This method of preparing “egusi” without oil has been referred to as the healthy way of making “egusi” soup, and it does not compromise the taste of “egusi” soup by the absence of palm oil (Wives). Contrarily, another blogger notes that by making this version of “egusi” (“oilless egusi”), one will be missing out from the original taste of “egusi” soup provided by the presence of palm oil (Nig). However, **“egusi with lumps/balls”** also called **“lumpy egusi”** is distinguished from the aforementioned versions of “egusi” soup by the presence of big balls/clumps/lumps of “egusi” that are big enough to be picked and chewed (Don – this is also the main factor of lumpy egusi) like meat (9ja – according to her grandmother; Rec.). On the other hand, **“egusi Ijebu”** is noted for its fluid consistency (Sisi) as the texture of this soup is required to be very “fluidy” or “soupy” (Don). This means that the main factor of “egusi Ijebu” is that it has lots of fluid (Don; Sisi). Another main factor of “egusi Ijebu” is that it is made without vegetables (Sisi; 1q). To further enhance the taste

of this soup, “egusi ijebu,” local seasonings like “ogiri” are added, because they give the soup its signature taste (Sisi).

### **5.6.2 The Relationship between Melon (“Egusi”) Soup to Health**

“With more and more Nigerians making better health choices daily – wanting to lose weight and live healthy” (Wives), a particular information that stood out amongst the blog narratives of “egusi” soup is that Nigerians have sort ways to boost the health benefits of “egusi” soup. The blogs/bloggers suggest that one way they have done is by generating alternative ways to cooking “egusi” soup to curtail its oil content (Dob; Nig.), another way is to consciously select the ingredients one uses to make “egusi” soup (Don). In regards to the former, one way adopted by most Nigerians is to cook “egusi” soup with less or zero cholesterol (Wives) by either eliminating palm oil totally or using it sparingly considering “egusi” seeds are also high in cholesterol due to its oil content (Dob). Another way adopted by most Nigerians and observed across the bloggers who discuss this recipe is by substituting “egusi” seeds with pumpkin seeds (Don) especially if one is concerned about weight gain (Don; 1q – this method is most times adopted by weight watchers).

With regards to consciously selecting the ingredients used in making “egusi” soup, one of the bloggers suggests that one could choose to cook “egusi” soup with vegetables, in order to make the soup more nutritious (Wives). For instance, pumpkin (“ugu/ugwu”) leaves which are mostly used to cook “egusi” in Nigeria are most times used because they are believed to contain healthy nutrients such as potassium, calcium, iron, folic acid, vitamin A, vitamin C, vitamin E, thiamin, niacin, vitamin B6, folate, magnesium and phosphorus etc (Dob). As a source of Vitamin A, “egusi” soup then made with pumpkin (ugu/ugwu) leaves are then perceived to be good for eye sight and the skin (Dob). They are even believed to further possess medicinal qualities like assisting with slowing down ageing process and helping to eliminate free radicals which are responsible for cancerous growths (Dob). The presence of vitamin C in the pumpkin/ugu leaves are perceived “to help heal wounds, form scar tissues, maintain healthy bones, skin and teeth” (Dob).

However, despite this “nutritional consciousness” of some Nigerians towards “egusi” soup, “egusi” soup are believed to possess some medicinal qualities. For instance, “gbure egusi” (“egusi” soup cooked with waterleaves) are perceived to be best made when one is ill and has lost appetite (Don). This is because this soup is really watery, quite spicy and the leaves are quite soft, so no chewing is necessary. Thus, it helps get some food and fluids into the invalid's stomach (Don – as her grandmother did). Just like pepper-soup and white-soup, “gbure egusi” and “egusi Ijebu” are also good options during the winter to warm one’s “cockles,” (Don) as they are usually very spicy “egusi” soups, which are spicy enough to keep one warm (Don).

### **5.6.3 The Standard of Eating Melon (“Egusi”) Soup**

The standard of eating most Nigerian soups like “egusi” soup has again been noted as, with the hands (1q). This soup is usually served with a side, mostly swallows such as “garri/eba” (Don; 9ja; Afro; 1q; Rec; Foods), which is fried fermented cassava (Afro; also noted by Ayogu et al., 2017, p.67). Cassava “fufu/fofoo” (Afro; Rec) locally called “akpu” (Rec), which is the solid made from fermented cassava (Ayogu et al., 2017, p.67) and pounded yam (9ja; Rec; Foods), which is locally called “iyan” (Afro) are good swallows for this soup. Other swallows that could be used for this soup are semolina (fufu) (Afro; Rec), “amala” (9ja; afro; Rec), which is fermented yam (Afro), and made from yam flour (Somorin et al., 2012, p. 53 & 54), and wheat-meal (Afro). Aside swallows, “egusi” soup are noted as also good and delicious when served with sides like rice (Dob; 9ja; Afro; Nig; Sisi; Rec), yam (Dob; Afro; Nig), plantain (Afro) or even grilled or toasted bread (Don).

However, for those trying to eat healthy or on a diet or weight loss journey, the next step after making “egusi” soup, as described by some bloggers is to serve it with some accompaniment like “a small fist-sized-eba” or by just licking/eating the soup alone, which is also very satisfying (Nig; Wives).

### **5.6.4 Componential Analysis of Melon (“Egusi”) Soup**

Considering the deliciousness and popularity of this traditional Nigerian soup, “egusi,” this section will conduct a componential analysis on the different versions of the

soup provided by the sampled blogs. All the sampled food blogs have listed the various ingredients required for preparing melon (“egusi”) soup. However, some of the blogs have focused on at least one version of “egusi” soup rather than discussing all of its versions. Moreover, the list of the ingredients required for each version of “egusi” soup have been classified into **tables 12-18** following Bernard (2017), in order to assess what ingredients could be included into each variation/version of “egusi” soup or should be excluded from the recipe.

COMPONENTIAL ANALYSIS OF NIGERIAN EGUSI SOUP: MELON (EGUSI) SOUP MADE WITH PUMPKIN (UGU/UGWU) LEAVES													
BLOG ID	INGREDIENTS												
	Egusi/pumpkin seeds	Meat	Stockfish	Smoked fish (SF)/Dried Fish (DF)	Crayfish	Tomatoes	pepper	palm oil	leaves	Seasoning Cubes	Salt	Onion	Ogiri Okpei
DOB	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2
DON	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	2	1	2
9JA													
AFRO	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
NIG.													
SISI													
1Q													
REC.	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	1
FOODS													
WIVES	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
TOTAL	5	5	4	5	5	1	5	5	5	4	4	3	1
% (5/10)	50%	50%	40%	50%	50%	10%	50%	50%	50%	40%	40%	30%	10%
% (5/5)	100%	100%	80%	100%	100%	20%	100%	100%	100%	80%	80%	60%	20%

Table 12: Componential analysis of melon (“egusi”) soup with (fluted) pumpkin (“ugu/ugwu”) leaves

Based on the componential analysis of “*melon (egusi) soup with (fluted) pumpkin (ugu/ugwu) leaves*” (See: **Table 12**), the components of “egusi” soup with “ugu” leaves listed in **table 12** have been grouped under essential components/ingredients (ingredients that should be included when making this soup), and non-essential components/ingredients (ingredients that could be excluded when making this soup) in **figure 25**.

SOUP	ESSENTIAL/MAIN INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS	NON-ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS
<b>“Egusi” Soup with “Ugu/Ugwu” Leaves</b>	a) ground/blended “egusi” seeds, could be substituted with pumpkin seeds b) meat (like beef, or assorted meat – goat meat or cow parts like cow stripe (“shaki”) c) dried/smoked fish, d) ground/powdered crayfish, e) pepper (e.g fresh pepper like scotch bonnet/habanero pepper, (“ata rodo”) or red bell pepper (“tatashe”) OR ground dried pepper e.g chilli pepper (“shombo”) f) palm oil, and g) leaves, which in this case are (fluted)pumpkin (“ugu/ugwu”) leaves, although spinach, bitter leaves, “uziza” (false cubeb) leaves or eggplant leaves (“efo Igbo”) could be used as substitute 7 essential components of “egusi” soup with “ugu” leaves	h) stock fish, i) tomatoes, j) seasoning/stock cubes to taste, k) salt to taste, l) onion, and m) traditional seasonings like “ogiri okpei” 6 non-essential components of “egusi” soup with “ugu” leaves

**13 nuances of ingredients could be used in the preparation of “egusi” soup with “ugu/ugwu” leaves**

*Figure 25: Illustrating the essential and non-essential ingredients/components of “egusi” soup with “ugu/ugwu” leaves*

COMPONENTIAL ANALYSIS OF MELON (EGUSI) SOUP WITH BITTER LEAVES														
BLOG ID	INGREDIENTS													
	Egusi	Meat	Stockfish	Dried/Smoked fish	Crayfish	pepper	Palm oil	Leaves	Seasoning cubes	Salt	Onions	Osu	Achi/Gro und ofor	Ogiri okpei
DOB	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2
DON														
9JA														
AFRO														
NIG.														
SISI														
1Q														
REC.	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2
FOODS	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
WIVES	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	1	2
<b>% (4/10)</b>	40%	40%	40%	30%	40%	40%	40%	40%	40%	40%	30%	10%	10%	20%
<b>% (4/4)</b>	100%	100%	100%	75%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	75%	25%	25%	50%

*Table 13: Componential analysis of melon (“egusi”) soup with bitter leaves (“onugbu/ewuro”)*

Similarly, from the componential analysis of “melon (egusi) soup with bitter leaves (onugbu/ewuro)” (See: Table 13), the components of “egusi” soup with bitter leaves listed in table 13 have been grouped under essential, and non-essential components/ingredients of “egusi” soup with bitter leaves in figure 26.

SOUP	ESSENTIAL/MAIN INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS	NON-ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS
<i>Egusi Soup with bitter leaves</i>	a) ground “egusi” seeds, b) meat like beef, chicken, turkey or assorted meat like goat meat, and cow parts like cow skin (“ponmo”) or cow tripe “shaki” c) stockfish (“okporoko”), d) ground crayfish, e) pepper (like fresh pepper e.g scotch bonnet/habanero pepper (“ata rodo”) OR dried pepper e.g chilli pepper (“shombo”)), f) palm oil, g) leaves, which in this case are bitter leaves, although fluted pumpkin (“ugu”) leaves or any other green vegetables of choice could be used as substitute h) seasoning cubes like “maggi” or “knorr” brand, and i) salt	j) dried/smoked fish, k) onion, l) achi or ground ofo/ofor and m) traditional local seasoning like “ogiri okpei/ogiri/dawadawa.”
	9 essential components of “egusi” soup with bitter leaves	4 non-essential components of “egusi” soup with bitter leaves

**13 nuances of ingredients could be used in the preparation of “egusi” soup with bitter leaves**

*Figure 26: Illustrating the essential and non-essential ingredients/components of “egusi” soup with bitter leaves*

COMPONENTIAL ANALYSIS OF MELON (EGUSI) SOUP MADE WITH OTHER VEGETABLES (E.G UZIZA OR UTAZI OR OKAZI/AFANG LEAVES)														
BLOG ID	INGREDIENTS													
	egusi	meat	stockfish	dried/smoked fish	crayfish	pepper	palm oil	leaves	seasoning cubes (SC)	salt	onions	locust beans/ogiri/dawadawa	prawns	catfish
DOB	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2
DON	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2
9JA														
AFRO NIG.														
SISI	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
1Q REC.														
FOODS	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	1
WIVES	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	5	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	2	1	1
% (5/10)	50%	40%	40%	40%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	30%	20%	10%	10%
% (5/5)	100%	80%	80%	80%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	60%	40%	20%	20%

*Table 14: Componential analysis of melon (“egusi”) soup with other vegetables*

From the componential analysis of “melon (egusi) soup with other vegetables (e.g “uziza”/ “utazi”/ “okazi”/ “afang”)” in table 14, the components of this soup have also been grouped under essential, and non-essential components/ingredients in figure 27.



SOUP	ESSENTIAL/MAIN INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS	NON-ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS
<i>Egusi Soup with other vegetables/leaves</i>	a) ground “egusi” seeds, b) ground crayfish, c) pepper (like fresh pepper e.g scotch bonnet/ habanero pepper (“ata rodo” or “ose nsukka”) or red bell pepper (“tatashe”), d) palm oil, e) any leaves/vegetable of choice like pumpkin (“ugu”) leaves, “uziza” (false cubeb) leaves, water leaves/watercress/baby spinach, “okazi/ukazi/afang leaves,” “utazi” ( <i>gongronema latifolium</i> ) leaves f) seasoning cubes like “maggi” or “knorr” cubes brand or the flavor maggi chicken and g) salt 7 essential components of “egusi” soup with other vegetables	h) meat like beef or assorted meat like goat meat or cow parts like cow tripe (“shaki”), cow skin (“ponmo”), and cow leg i) stockfish, j) dried/smoked/fresh fish like catfish, k) onions, l) local seasoning like locust beans (“dawadawa”) or “ogiri” m) prawns 6 non-essential components of “egusi” soup with other vegetables

**13 nuances of ingredients could be used in the preparation of “egusi” soup with other vegetables/leaves**

Figure 27: Illustrating the essential and non-essential ingredients/components of “egusi” soup with other vegetables

COMPONENTIAL ANALYSIS OF FRIED MELON (EGUSI) SOUP: MADE USING THE FRYING METHOD												
BLOG ID	INGREDIENTS											
	Egusi	meat	stockfish	smoked(SF)/dried (DF) fish	crayfish	pepper	palm oil	leaves	seasoning cubes	salt	onions	ogiri okpei
DOB	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2
DON	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
9JA												
AFRO												
NIG.												
SISI												
1Q												
REC.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1
FOODS												
WIVES												
<b>TOTAL</b>	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	1
<b>% (3/10)</b>	30%	30%	30%	20%	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%	10%	10%
<b>% (3/3)</b>	100%	100%	100%	66.66%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	33.33%	33.33%

Table 15: Componential analysis of fried melon (“egusi”) soup

From the componential analysis of “fried melon (egusi) soup” in table 15, the nuances of ingredients of fried “egusi” soup listed in table 15 have been grouped under essential, and non-essential components/ingredients in figure 28.

SOUP	ESSENTIAL/MAIN INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS	NON-ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS
<i>Fried Egusi Soup</i>	a) ground “egusi” seeds, b) meat like beef, or cow tripe (“shaki”) or cow skin (“ponmo”), c) stockfish, d) ground crayfish, e) pepper like fresh pepper, f) palm oil, g) any leaves/vegetable of choice like pumpkin (“ugu”) leaves, bitter leaves, spinach, kale and “uziza” (false cubeb) leaves, or “uziza” (false cubeb) leaves and pumpkin leaves, h) seasoning cubes, and i) salt 9 essential components of fried “egusi” soup	j) dried/smoked fish, k) onions, and l) “ogiri okpei”. 3 non-essential components of fried “egusi” soup

**12 nuances of ingredients could be used in the preparation of fried “egusi” soup**

Figure 28: Illustrating the essential and non-essential ingredients/components of fried “egusi” soup

COMPONENTIAL ANALYSIS OF OILESS MELON (EGUSI) SOUP: EGUSI SOUP WITHOUT OIL										
BLOG ID	INGREDIENTS									
	egusi	meat	stockfish	smoked/ dried fish	crayfish	pepper	leaves	seasonin g cubes	salt	onion
DOB										
DON										
9JA										
AFRO										
NIG.	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
SISI										
1Q										
REC.										
FOODS										
WIVES	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
<b>% (2/10)</b>	20%	20%	10%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%
<b>% (2/2)</b>	100%	100%	50%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 16: Componential analysis of oilless melon (“egusi”) soup

Based on the componential analysis of “*oilless melon (egusi) soup*” (See: Table 16), the components of oilless “egusi” soup listed in table 16 have been grouped under essential, and non-essential components/ingredients in figure 29.

SOUP	ESSENTIAL/MAIN INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS	NON-ESSENTIAL INGREDIENT/COMPONENT
<i>Oiless Egusi Soup</i>	a) ground “egusi” seeds, b) meat like chicken or assorted meat like goat meat or cow skin (“kpomo”), c) smoked/dried fish, d) ground crayfish, e) pepper (like fresh pepper e.g red bell pepper (“tatashe”) or habanero pepper (“ata rodo”) or dried pepper like chilli flakes), f) any leaves/vegetable of choice like (fluted)pumpkin (“ugu”) leaves, kale or “uziza” (false cubeb) leaves, or “uziza” (false cubeb) leaves and pumpkin leaves, g) seasoning/bouillon cubes like beef seasoning cubes, h) salt i) onion 9 ssential components of oiless “egusi” soup	j) stockfish, 1 non-essential component of oiless “egusi” soup

**10 nuances of ingredients could be used in the preparation of oiless “egusi” soup**

Figure 29: Illustrating the essential and non-essential ingredients/components of oiless “egusi” soup

COMPONENTIAL ANALYSIS OF LUMPY MELON (EGUSI) SOUP: EGUSI SOUP WITH LUMPS															
BLOG ID	INGREDIENTS														
	egusi	meat/fish	smoked/dried fish	stockfish	crayfish	pepper	palm oil	leaves	seasoning cubes	salt	onion	iru	tomatoes	shrimps	
DOB															
DON	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2
9JA	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1
AFRO															
NIG.															
SISI															
1Q	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2
REC.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	2
FOODS															
WIVES															
TOTAL	4	4	3	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	1	1
% (4/10)	40%	40%	30%	20%	40%	40%	40%	40%	40%	40%	30%	30%	30%	10%	10%
% (4/4)	100%	100%	75%	50%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	75%	75%	75%	25%	25%

Table 17: Componential analysis of lumpy melon (“egusi”) soup

Based on the componential analysis of “*lumpy melon (egusi) soup*” (See: Table 17), the components of lumpy “egusi” soup listed in table 17 have been grouped under essential, and non-essential components/ingredients in figure 30.

SOUP	ESSENTIAL/MAIN INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS	NON-ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS
<b>Lumpy Egusi Soup</b>	a) ground “egusi” seeds, b) meat/fish, c) ground/powdered crayfish, d) pepper sauce or pepper like fresh pepper – red bell pepper (“tatashe”), scotch bonnet/habanero pepper (“ata rodo” or “ose oyibo”) or dried pepper e) palm oil f) any leaves/vegetable of choice like (fluted)pumpkin (“ugu”) leaves, spinach, bitter leaves, “uziza” (false cubeb) leaves, “afang/okazi/ukazi leaves” or elephant grass (“achara”) g) seasoning/bouillon/stock cubes like “knorr” or “maggi” brand or their flavors like beef seasoning	h) stockfish, i) dried/smoked fish j) salt, k) onions, l) “ogiri okpei/iru”, m) tomatoes and n) shrimps.
	7 essential components of lumpy “egusi” soup	7 non-essential components of lumpy “egusi” soup

**14 nuances of ingredients could be used in the preparation of lumpy “egusi” soup**

Figure 30: Illustrating the essential and non-essential ingredients/components of lumpy “egusi” soup

COMPONENTIAL ANALYSIS OF EGUSI IJEBU/IJEBU EGUSI												
BLOG ID	INGREDIENTS											
	egusi	meat	stockfish	smoked/ driedfish	pepper	palm oil	seasonin g cubes	salt	onions	ogiri/iru/ ocust beans	prawns	
DOB												
DON	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	
9JA												
AFRO												
NIG.												
SISI	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	
1Q	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	
REC.												
FOODS												
WIVES												
<b>TOTAL</b>	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	2	1	
<b>% (3/10)</b>	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%	20%	20%	30%	20%	10%	
<b>% (3/3)</b>	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	66.66%	66.66%	100%	66.66%	33.33%	

Table 18: Componential analysis of “egusi” Ijebu/Ijebu “egusi”

Similarly, from the componential analysis of “*egusi ijebu*” (See: Table 18), the components of ingredients of “egusi ijebu” soup listed in table 18 have been grouped

under essential, and non-essential components/ingredients of “egusi ijebu” soup in **figure 31**.

SOUP	ESSENTIAL/MAIN INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS	NON-ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS
<i>Egusi Ijebu/Ijebu Egusi</i>	a) ground “egusi” seeds, b) meat like beef or assorted meat like goat meat or cow parts like cow tripe (“shaki”) or cow skin (“ponmo”), c) stock fish (“panla”) (optional) d) smoked/dried fish (like “eja osan” or “eja aro”) e) pepper (fresh pepper – red bell pepper (“tatashe”), scotch/habanero pepper (“ata rodo”) or ground pepper) f) palm oil 6 essential components of “egusi” Ijebu	g) seasoning/bouillon cubes like the brands – “knorr” or “maggi” cubes h) salt, i) onions, j) “ogiri”/ “iru” (locust beans) (optional), and k) prawns. 5 non-essential components of “egusi” Ijebu

**11 nuances of ingredients could be used in the preparation of “egusi” Ijebu**  
*Figure 31: Illustrating the essential and non-essential ingredients/components of “egusi” Ijebu/Ijebu “egusi”*

**About the Ingredients:** Some of the ingredients of “egusi” soup could be substituted if they are unavailable, which is particularly common for people residing outside of Nigeria (9ja). Some of these ingredients are melon (“egusi”) seed, pumpkin seeds (Don), cashew nut (1q); sunflower seeds (Rec) all of which have been suggested as alternatives/substitutes for “egusi” seed. However, where melon (“egusi”) seed is substituted with the above seeds/nut, the name of the soup also changes to suit the seeds/nuts used. Also, for any version of melon (“egusi”) soup requiring vegetable, the aforementioned vegetables could be used as substitutes.

From **tables 12-18** above, the ingredients that are commonly mentioned amongst all of the various versions of melon (“egusi”) soup are: ground melon (“egusi”) seeds, pepper, palm oil and leaves. Thus, these items constitute the essential ingredients required for making melon (“egusi”) soup. However, when making oilless melon (“egusi”) soup, palm oil is eliminated and when making “Ijebu egusi,” leaves are eliminated.

### **5.6.5 Summary/Conclusion on Melon (“Egusi”) Soup**

In summary, while melon (“egusi”) soup is widely enjoyed all over Nigeria, the methods of preparation, and the characteristics taste and texture of the soup might differ slightly depending on the region and culture. The soup is generally made with ground “egusi” seeds, pepper, palm oil and leaves, however, when making oilless “egusi” soup, palm oil is eliminated and when making “Ijebu egusi,” leaves are eliminated. Further, the various variations/versions of “egusi” soup are mostly distinguished by the vegetables/leaves used in their preparation, and the method of preparation used in making them (e.g oilless “egusi” soup, which is “egusi” made with little or no palm oil and fried “egusi” soup, which is “egusi” made by frying). Moreover, their texture (e.g lumpy “egusi” which are made with balls/clumps of “egusi” in it and “Egusi Ijebu” which is very “fluidy” or “soupy” in texture) exist also.

However, in the course of making “egusi” soup or any of its versions, while some of its ingredients are optional, and could be substituted, the essential quality, as well as the star of this soup is the presence of “melon” (“egusi”) seeds, which if not present, or substituted with other seeds/nuts like pumpkin seeds or cashew nut, could render the supposed “melon (egusi) soup” another soup coined after the seeds used in its preparation.

### **5.7: “The Most Affordable/Poor Man Soup”: African Wild Mango (“Ogbono”) Soup**



Ogbono Soup (© Copyright by Betty Chinwenwo Chukwu, 2020).

### 5.7.1 Background Information on African Wild Mango (“Ogbono”) Soup

African wild mango soup locally called “ogbono” soup by the Igbos (9ja) and “ugiri” or “apon” soup by the Yorubas (Dob; 9ja) is prepared with the nut of African wild mango (Dob; 1q) which is botanically called “*irvingia gabonensis*” (Dob) and locally called “oro” by the Yorubas (9ja). African wild mango (“ogbono/apon/ugiri”) soup which is generally known as “ogbono/ogbolo” soup in Nigeria (hereinafter: “ogbono” soup), amongst other draw soups like okra soup is another “offering of draw [slimy] soup” (1q; Foods). It has also been noted as one of the most popular local Nigerian dish (Dob) in Nigeria (Sisi; Foods) such that one can find it on many Nigerian restaurant menus’ list (Don; 1q).

Due to its popularity, all of the sampled food blogs typically have at least one recipe on “ogbono” soup. From the blog narratives on this soup, “ogbono” soup has been described as a “very delicious soup” (Afro; Foods) such that one may “over-eat if one is not careful” (Wives). It is also contended that the version of this soup without palm oil (oiless “ogbono” soup) also tastes great although sometimes, its color is not very appealing due to the absence of palm oil (Wives). Thus, while palm oil does not affect the taste of this soup as well as other Nigerian soups, it is understood to make the look of the soup very inviting (Wives).

Further, “ogbono” soup has been described as greatly loved and enjoyed by many because of its slimy consistency texture which makes ingesting morsels of swallow very easy and enjoyable as it makes the lump/morsel of swallow slide down the throat easily (Dob; Sisi; Foods; Wives). As a result, when toddlers are first introduced into eating one of the commonest Nigerian meals – solids and soup, they are mostly given this soup since the sliminess of this soup helps them swallow solids with ease (Sisi; Foods). Nevertheless, this soup is consumed by both toddlers and adults mostly at lunch (Don). In fact, it is indicated as one of the most widely consumed soups in Nigeria since it is **very affordable** and requires very little ingredients to make a big pot of soup (Don). As such, it has been described as “**the poor man soup**” (Don). Moreover, it is noted on the one hand as being very easy and fast to cook (9ja; Wives), and on the other hand, it could also be difficult to cook (Rec).

Considering that “ogbono” soup has been remarked as a versatile soup (Sisi), and thus, commonly consumed across Nigeria, none of the sampled blogs/bloggers provided a specific tribe/culture where this soup originates from. Rather, they only note what “ogbono” soup is locally called in some regions/cultures/tribes in Nigeria. For instance, the Igbos call it “ogbono/ogbolo” soup while the Yorubas call it “ugiri or apon” soup (as noted earlier). Further, the blogs note that the method of preparing, as well as the taste of, “ogbono” soup differs from tribe to tribe (Dob; Sisi).

Regardless of these variations on “ogbono” soup across the various tribes/cultures, in order to make it, the seeds/nuts of African wild mango (“ogbono”/ “oro” seeds) which are typically dried in the sun and have a lightly aromatic smell are needed (9ja). These seeds/nuts are usually sold whole or in a powder form (9ja). However, if one has the “ogbono” seeds, one would have to dry, and then mill (9ja) or grind it (Rec; Wives), as this soup requires the “ogbono” seeds to be ground (9ja; Sisi). While “ogbono” seeds in its powdery form could turn into little stones if left for few hours, once added into liquid, it dissolves completely (Dob). Thus, the ground “ogbono” seeds are mixed with either hot broth or hot water (9ja). This mixture is then used as a thickener when making “ogbono” soup (Dob). However, when mixing the ground “ogbono” seeds in liquid (which could be hot broth/water), one must ensure to maintain the high viscosity (Don) and slimy consistency of this soup which is the trademark of this soup (Dob).

Just like most Nigerian soups, “ogbono” soup could also be made plain – without vegetables or with vegetables (Don; Wives) as some people might prefer leafy vegetables as well as adding other thickeners like okra or “egusi” to their “ogbono” soup (Dob; Sisi; also noted by Foods; further noted in Wives). Hence, just like melon (“egusi”) soup, “ogbono” soup could be cooked with vegetables such as fluted pumpkin (“ugu/ugwu”) leaves (Don; 9ja; Sisi; Foods; Wives). However, if using this vegetable it is advised that it should not be the only vegetable one uses, one could add some bitter leaves (9ja; Sisi; Foods) or preferably, “uziza” (false cubeb) leaves (Don; Foods; Wives), which are the most important leaves for making “ogbono” soup, as they make a lot of difference in the flavour, of the soup (Don). Other vegetables that could be used in preparing “ogbono” soup are kale (Don), “uha/oha” (*pterocarpus soyauxili*) leaves (Foods; Kuhnlein et al.,



2009, p.271, 279), basil/scent (“efinrin/nchuawun”) leaves (Don; Sisi), or “uziza” (false cubeb) leaves, which are aromatic and spicy vegetables that could instantly transform the aroma, taste and flavor of one’s “ogbono” soup when incorporated into the soup (Don; Sisi). However, just as noted in previous chapters, when using “uziza” (false cubeb) leaves or seeds or both, some of the bloggers caution that one must be careful with the quantity of pepper added into the soup because “uziza” leaves “naturally have that little spicy flavour that makes food more peppery” (Wives).

With regards to the various versions there could be on “ogbono” soup, when making oilless “ogbono” soup (“ogbono” soup without oil), one would need some red bell pepper which are locally known as "tatashey" for bright color (Wives – advises that one should not use tomato or tomato paste because of its raw taste). Although, one could make one’s “ogbono” soup without them (red bell pepper, “tatashey/tatashe”) (Nig).

### **5.7.2 The Relationship between African Wild Mango (“Ogbono”) Soup to Health**

Due to the health properties of African wild mango seeds/nut (“ogbono/oro”) seed, african wild mango (“ogbono/apon/ugiri”) soup has also been believed to possess some medicinal qualities. First, it is valued for its fat and rich protein content (9ja). It is also contended to lower one’s cholesterol level (Dob), improve one’s cardiovascular health (9ja), prevent sugars from being stored by the body (1q) and aid weight loss (Dob; Afro; 1q). To further aid weight loss, it is advisable to make and consume, “ogbono/apon/ugiri” soup with little or no oil i.e. one looking to lose weight should consume oilless “ogbono/apon/ugiri” soup.

Due to the perceived pharmacological properties of “ogbono” soup which results from its seeds/nuts – african wild mango (“ogbono/oro”) seed, it has been noted across the blog narratives that “ogbono” seeds are now being marketed in capsules (Dob) and will soon be exported for medicinal purposes (1q). In fact, the medicinal properties of “ogbono” soup as well as its seeds, have further been glorified in a study which emphasizes the medicinal benefits of this soup and its seeds (Ngondi, Etoundi, Nyangono, Mbofung, & Oben, 2009; also cited by 9ja). This literature further adds that african wild mango (“ogbono/oro”) seed even helps to lower one’s chances of developing

degenerative diseases, reduce abdominal fat, treat diabetes, stop diarrhea, as well as ulcer (Ngondi et al., 2009; also cited by 9ja; and mentioned by a Nigeria local newspaper – The Guardian, 2016; and a Nigerian blog – Health 2 Living, 2009).

### **5.7.3 The Standard of Eating African Wild Mango (“Ogbono”) Soup**

To aid weight loss, it has been advised that it is best for one on a weight-loss journey to lick “ogbono” soup alone without adding carbs. However, if one chooses to consume carbs, a fist of swallow is sufficient (Wives). Otherwise, the slimy consistency of this soup is best enjoyed with "morsels of swallow" (Dob) which is best enjoyed using washed hands (Dob; and as demonstrated in **figure 46**). There are variety of swallows that could be served with this soup, such as: semovita (Afro; Wives), starch/ “garri/eba” (Don; Afro; Wives), wheat-meal, “amala” (9ja; Wives), “fufu” (Rec) also spelt “foo-foo” (Foods; Wives) locally called “akpu” (Wives) in Igbo, pounded yam (9ja; Afro; 1q; Wives) and many other forms of swallows (Wives). One could also eat “ogbono” soup with other sides like “agidi” (Rec), which is made from fermented maize, sorghum or millet (Akpapunam, Ikya, & Gernah, 2019, p.2), “tuwo shinkafa” (Rec) or “tuwo” in short (Wives), which is a rice pudding common amongst the Hausas in Nigeria (Uwaegbute, 1991) rice (Wives), or pasta (Sisi).

### **5.7.4 Componential Analysis of African Wild Mango (“Ogbono”) Soup**

Considering that “ogbono” soup is well loved and consumed across Nigeria, this section will conduct a componential analysis on recipes of the selected versions of “ogbono” soup in order to identify what consistutes each of the versions of “ogbono” soup. All the sampled food blogs have listed the various ingredients required for preparing each version of “ogbono” soup. Their list of the ingredients has been classified into **tables 19-22** following Bernard (2017), in order to assess what ingredients could be included into (represented by **1**) or should be excluded from (represented by **2**) each version/variation of “ogbono” soup.

COMPONENTIAL ANALYSIS OF AFRICAN WILD MANGO (OGBONO/APON/UGIRI) SOUP WITH (FLUTED)PUMPKIN (UGU/UGWU) LEAVES												
BLOG ID	INGREDIENTS											
	meat	seasonin g cubes	salt	stockfish	smoked/ dried fish	palm oil	leaves	ogbono	crayfish	pepper	onion	ogiri okpei
DOB	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
DON												
9JA	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
AFRO NIG. SISI 1Q												
REC.	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
FOODS	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
WIVES	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	5	5	5	4	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	2
<b>% (5/10)</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>% (5/5)</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>40%</b>

Table 19: Componential analysis of african wild mango (“ogbono/apon/ugiri”) soup with (fluted) pumpkin (“ugu/ugwu”) leaves

Based on the componential analysis of “*ogbono soup with (fluted) pumpkin (ugu/ugwu) leaves*” (See: **Table 19**), the components of “ogbono” soup with “ugu” leaves listed in **table 19** have been grouped under essential components/ingredients (ingredients that should be included when making this soup), and non-essential components/ingredients (ingredients that could be excluded when making this soup) of “ogbono” soup with “ugu” leaves in **figure 32**.

SOUP	ESSENTIAL/MAIN INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS	NON-ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS
<i>Ogbono with "Ugu/Ugwu" Leaves</i>	a) (ground) "ogbono/oro" seeds, b) meat or assorted meat like cow parts e.g cow skin ("ponmo/kpomo") or cow tripe ("shaki"), c) seasoning cubes like the "maggi" brand d) salt, e) palm oil, f) leaves, which in this case are (fluted)pumpkin ("ugu/ugwu") leaves, although this could be substituted with any leaves of choice like spinach or "uziza" (false cubeb) leaves g) ground crayfish and h) pepper (e.g fresh pepper such as scotch bonnet/habanero pepper ("ata rodo"), sweet pepper like fresh paprika)	i) stock fish, j) smoked/dried fish, k) onions, which should only be used to steam the meats and l) local seasonings like fermented oil seeds ("ogiri okepi/ogiri/") or fermented locust beans ("iru" or "dawadawa") (optional)
	8 essential components of "ogbono" soup with "ugu" leaves	4 non-essential components of "ogbono" soup with "ugu" leaves

**12 nuances of ingredients could be used in the preparation of "ogbono" soup with "ugu/ugwu" leaves**

Figure 32: Illustrating the essential and non-essential ingredients/components of "ogbono" soup with "ugu/ugwu" leaves

COMPONENTIAL ANALYSIS OF AFRICAN WILD MANGO (OGBONO/APON/UGIRI) SOUP WITH UZIZA LEAVES														
BLOG ID	INGREDIENTS													
	meat	smoked/dried fish	stockfish	palm oil	leaves	ogbono	crayfish	prawns	pepper	local seasoning	onion	salt	seasoning cubes	periwinkles
DOB														
DON	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
9JA														
AFRO														
NIG.														
SISI														
1Q	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2
REC.														
FOODS														
WIVES	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	2
TOTAL	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	2	3	3	3	1
% (3/10)	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%	20%	30%	20%	30%	30%	30%	10%
% (3/3)	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	66.66%	100%	66.66%	100%	100%	100%	33.33%

Table 20: Componential analysis of african wild mango ("ogbono/apon/ugiri") soup with "uziza" leaves

Similarly, from the componential analysis of "ogbono soup with uziza leaves" in table 20, the components of "ogbono" soup with "uziza" leaves listed in table 20 have been grouped under essential, and non-essential components/ingredients in figure 33.

SOUP	ESSENTIAL/MAIN INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS	NON-ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS
<i>Ogbono with "Uziza" Leaves</i>	a) (ground) "ogbono/oro" seeds, b) meat like beef or assorted meat like goat meat or cow skin ("ponmo"), c) smoked/dried fish like the local Nigerian fishes – "eja osan," "eja sawa" and "eja kika" d) stock fish, e) palm oil, f) leaves, which in this case are hot leaf – "uziza" (false cubeb) leaves, although this could be substituted with kale, spinach, "ugu" leaves or bitter leaves, g) ground crayfish, h) pepper either ground fresh pepper such as scotch bonnet/habanero pepper ("ata rodo"), red bell pepper ("tatashe"), or dried pepper like Cameroun pepper, i) onion, j) salt and k) seasoning cubes 11 essential components of "ogbono" soup with "uziza" leaves	l) prawns, m) local seasonings like fermented oil seeds ("ogiri okepi/ogiri") or fermented locust beans ("iru" or "dawadawa") (optional), n) onion, which should only be used for only seasoning and steaming the meats, and o) periwinkles (optional). 4 non-essential components of "ogbono" soup with "uziza" leaves

**15 nuances of ingredients could be used in the preparation of "ogbono" soup with "uziza" leaves**

Figure 33: Illustrating the essential and non-essential ingredients/components of "ogbono" soup with "uziza" leaves

COMPONENTIAL ANALYSIS OF OILESS AFRICAN WILD MANGO (OGBONO/APON/UGIRI) SOUP/OGBONO SOUP WITHOUT PALM OIL												
BLOG ID	INGREDIENTS											
	meat	seasonin g cubes	fish	leaves	ogbono	crayfish	pepper	local seasonin g	salt	okra	stockfish	onion
DOB DON												
9JA	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	2
AFRO												
NIG.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
SISI 1Q REC. FOODS												
WIVES	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1
TOTAL	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	2	3	2	2	1
% (3/10)	30%	30%	30%	20%	30%	30%	30%	20%	30%	20%	20%	10%
% (3/3)	100%	100%	100%	66.66%	100%	100%	100%	66.66%	100%	66.66%	66.66%	33.33%

Table 21: Componential analysis of oiless african wild mango ("ogbono/apon/ugiri") soup

Likewise, based on the componential analysis of “*oiless ogbono soup*” (See: **Table 21**), the nuances of ingredients of oiless “ogbono” soup listed in **table 21** have been grouped under essential, and non-essential components/ingredients in **figure 34**.

SOUP	ESSENTIAL/MAIN INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS	NON-ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS
<i>Oiless Ogbono</i>	a) (ground) “ogbono/oro” seeds, b) meat like chicken, turkey, smoked meat or assorted meat like cow tripe (“shaki”) or cow skin (“ponmo/kpomo”), c) seasoning/bouillon cubes like “maggi” cubes d) fresh fish like mackerel or smoked/dried fish e) ground crayfish, f) pepper (either ground fresh pepper such as scotch bonnet/habanero pepper (“ata rodo”), red bell pepper (“tatashe”/“tatashey”) or dried pepper like chilli flakes g) salt 7 essential components of oiless “ogbono” soup	h) any vegetable/leaves of choice like uziza (false cubeb) leaves, fluted pumpkin (“ugu”) leaves i) local seasonings like fermented locust beans (“dawadawa”) (optional) j) okra, k) stock fish and l) onion 5 non-essential components of oiless “ogbono” soup

**12 nuances of ingredients could be used in the preparation of oiless “ogbono” soup**

*Figure 34: Illustrating the essential and non-essential ingredients/components of oiless “ogbono” soup*

COMPONENTIAL ANALYSIS OF OTHER VARIATIONS OF AFRICAN WILD MANGO (OGBONO) SOUP MADE WITH OTHER VEGETABLES/LEAVES														
BLOG ID	INGREDIENTS													
	meat	seasonin g cubes	fish	leaves	ogbono	crayfish	pepper	local seasonin g	salt	okra	stockfish	onion	palm oil	prawns
DOB DON 9JA														
AFRO	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	2
NIG.														
SISI	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1
1Q REC. FOODS WIVES														
TOTAL	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	2	2	1
% (2/10)	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	10%	20%	10%	10%	20%	20%	10%
% (2/2)	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	50%	100%	50%	50%	100%	100%	50%

*Table 22: Componential analysis of african wild mango (“ogbono/apon/ugiri”) soup made with other vegetables or other versions of african wild mango (“ogbono/apon/ugiri”) soup*

Based on the componential analysis of “*ogbono soup using other vegetables other than uziza and fluted pumpkin leaves*” in table 22, the components of “ogbono” soup with other vegetables/leaves have been grouped under essential, and non-essential components/ingredients in figure 35.

SOUP	ESSENTIAL/MAIN INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS	NON-ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS
<i>Other Versions of Ogbono Soup</i>	a) (ground) “ogbono/oro” seeds, b) meat or assorted meat like goat meat and its offals/internal organs, cow skin (“ponmo”) or cow tripe (“shaki”) c) seasoning/bouillon cubes like “maggi” or “knorr” cubes, d) fresh/smoked/dried fish, e) any leaves/vegetables of choice like bitter leaves, “ugu” leaves, basil (“efinrin”) leaves f) ground crayfish, g) pepper (like ground fresh pepper such as scotch bonnet pepper, red bell pepper (“tatashe”/ “tatashey”) or dried pepper like chilli pepper or cayenne pepper (“atagungun”), h) salt, i) onion, and j) palm oil 10 essential components of this soup	k) local seasonings like locust beans (“iru”), l) okra, m) stock fish, n) prawns, (optional). 4 non-essential components of this soup

**14 nuances of ingredients could be used in the preparation of other versions of “ogbono” soup**

*Figure 35: Illustrating the essential and non-essential ingredients/components of other versions of "ogbono" soup or "ogbono" soup made with other vegetables*

From the above (See: **Tables 19-22**), the ingredients that are commonly mentioned amongst all of the various versions of “ogbono” soup are: (ground) “ogbono/oro” seeds, meat, crayfish, pepper, salt, seasoning cubes and palm oil. However, while palm oil is eliminated in oilless “ogbono” soup, “ogbono” soup could be made with or without leaves. From the componential analysis of the various variations of “ogbono” soup, it is important to note that whenever the vegetables/leaves say (fluted)pumpkin (ugu/ugwu) leaves or uziza leaves are substituted with other vegetables, the name of that version of “ogbono” soup changes to include the name of the vegetable used (as noted also in Kuhlein et al., 2009).

### **5.7.5 Summary/Conclusion on African Wild Mango (“Ogbono”) Soup**

In summary, african wild mango (“ogbono/apon/ugiri”) soup is widely enjoyed all over Nigeria, although the methods of preparing, as well as the characteristics/components, taste and texture of “ogbono” soup might differ slightly depending on the region and culture (supported by Oguntona et al., 1999; Etkin, 2006; Adegboye et al., 2015).

However, “ogbono/apon/ugiri” soup is generally made with “ogbono/oro” seeds or ground “ogbono/oro” seeds, meat, crayfish, pepper, salt, seasoning cubes and palm oil. However, while palm oil is eliminated in “oiless ogbono soup,” some “ogbono” soups could be cooked with or without leaves. In the course of making “ogbono” soup, while some of its ingredients like the vegetable/leaves used are optional, and could be substituted, the essential quality, as well as the star of this soup is the presence of “ogbono/oro” seeds, hence cannot be substituted with other seeds, e.g okra or (melon)“egusi,” otherwise, it would render the supposed “ogbono” soup another soup coined after the seeds used in its preparation.

### **5.8: “Very Pocket Friendly Soup”: Okra/Okro (*Abelmoschus Esculentus*) Soup**



Okra Soup (© Copyright by Betty Chinwenwo Chukwu, 2020).



### **5.8.1 Background Information on Okra/Okro (*Abelmoschus Esculentus*) Soup**

Okra (*abelmoschus esculentus*) also spelt as “okro” by some of the sampled bloggers (Don; 9ja; Afro; 1q) and known as “lady finger” by most Nigerians (as noted by the blogs: Dob; Afro; Rec) is another “offering of draw [slimy] soup” (Dob; 1q; Foods) just like *african wild mango* (“ogbono/ugiri/apon”) soup.

Okra/okro (*abelmoschus esculentus*) soup (hereinafter called okra soup) has also been noted as one of the most popular and cheapest Nigerian soup (Foods). As such, one of the sampled blogs have described this soup as “**very pocket friendly**” as it could be made with very little money (Wives). Thus, the beauty of this soup also lies in how diverse one can make and consume it depending on preference, time and budget (9ja). One variation of okra soup that has been mentioned by the bloggers that could be made based on one’s time and budget is okra soup with stew. Unlike banga stew which are prepared like soups (Adegboye et al., 2015, p.2484), the type of stew accompanied with plain okra are those made with tomatoes and peppers which are boiled and fried in oil (either vegetable or palm oil) to remove all traces of water and its sour taste and contains any protein of choice (e.g meat, fish or seafoods) (Adegboye et al., 2015, p.2484; Rec). This particular version of okra soup – okra with stew has been regarded as the cheapest to make because it depends on the ingredients in the already-available-stew that accompanies the okra soup (Dob; 9ja; Nig). While this version of okra soup has been noted to be mostly consumed amongst the Yorubas (9ja; Nig.), it is regarded as a “lesser soup for the affluent Yorubas” (9ja). Another variation of okra soup that has also been noted as affordable to make (as noted by Don who notes that one could cook this soup even when one has ran out of money; affirmed by Sisi) is one of the popular delicacy of the Yorubas (Don; 9ja; Afro; Nig.; Sisi; 1q) called “ila alasepo/asepo” – “ila” is the Yoruba word for okra while “asepo” means “to cook together” (9ja). Hence, “ila asepo” means “mixed okra soup” in English (9ja). This version of okra soup (“ila alasepo”) is very similar to “ottong/otong soup” which is a popular traditional okra soup amongst the Efik people of Cross rivers (Southeastern/Southern part of Nigeria) (Don; 9ja; Afro; Sisi).

Considering okra soup has mostly been described as one of the tastiest, delicious (Dob; 9ja; Nig.; Rec; Foods), and “sumptuous” (Nig) soup, even though it is prepared

with “less fancy ingredients in a short amount of time” (Dob) due to its easiness to prepare (Nig), it is widely enjoyed by most Nigerian tribes – the Igbos (Foods; Wives); Yorubas (Don; 9ja; Nig.; Sisi; 1q), and the Hausas who call okra soup with pumpkin (locally called “ugu/ugwu”) leaves, “miyan kubewa” (Dob; Rec). This soup is consumed widely across Nigeria and, as such, there are lots of variations of okra soup (Oguntona et al., 1999; Etkin, 2006; Adegboye et al., 2015).

Regardless of the different variations of okra soup, all require okra (Rec; Foods), which must have a high viscous consistency/resilience in the early stages of cooking (Dob; 9ja; Afro; 1q). This is its trademark (9ja), as with the *African wild mango* (“ogbono/apon/ugiri”) soup (Dob; 9ja) which is also highly viscous. Resultantly, okra soup just like “ogbono” soup “draws” (as it is described by most Nigerians) or becomes slimy when pounded or blended and cooked (Afro; Nig; 1q; Rec; Wives). Therefore, its level of viscosity – how much it “draws” or its relative sliminess is the determining factor for a great okra soup (9ja; Rec). Due to its slimy texture, okra soup just like “ogbono” soup is incredibly loved by many families, friends and especially by kids (Dob; Don; Nig; Sisi; Rec; Foods) and the elderly (Rec; Foods) because its slimy consistency texture makes ingesting morsels of swallow very easy and enjoyable (Dob; Sisi; Rec Foods; Wives). Hence, okra soup as well as “ogbono/apon/ugiri” soup are the commonest soups that are given to Nigerian-toddlers when introducing them to eating Nigeria’s staple food or “adult-food” (Rec; Foods) – swallow and soup (Foods).

In addition, okra soups could be prepared plain – without vegetables/leaves (Dob; 9ja; Foods), or with vegetables/leaves. For instance, seafood okra could be made with or without vegetables/leaves (9ja). However, some vegetables/leaves that could be used in preparing okra soup are bitter leaves which makes the okra soup have a “more soupy taste” (1q; also mentioned by 9ja); “uziza” (false cubeb/*piper guineense*) leaves (Don; 9ja; also see: Franca & Ibiwari, 2019), or (fluted)pumpkin (“ugu/ugwu”) leaves, which are commonly used to provide some depth of texture to the okra soup (Don; Rec; Foods) just like kale (Don). “Ugu/ugwu” leaves also further add another dimension of crunchiness to the okra soup (Don). However, where “ugu/ugwu” leaves are unavailable especially for those outside Nigeria, one could use spinach, water leaves (Rec; Sisi), kale

(Don) or callaloo (“efo tete”/ “tete”), which has been noted could deliver a maximum flavor and nutrition to this soup (Nig.). Other leaves/vegetables, one could experiment with are scented leaves such as basil, or water leaves (9ja).

Moreso, okra soup could be prepared with or without palm oil (Nig). For instance oilless okra, which is made with little or no palm oil (Nig.; Sisi; Rec; Wives). However, if one is making okra without oil, just as in oilless “ogbono” soup, sweet peppers such as fresh paprika or red bell peppers (“tatashe”) to add some appetizing color to the soup could be used; although one also could omit this ingredient if one wishes (Rec; Wives). Meanwhile, “plain okra soup with stew” is made by mixing chopped okra with any Nigerian stew (Dob; Nig), specifically, a Nigerian stew which has palm oil as its base (Dob). While these mixtures are served alongside each other, they are not cooked together (Nig). As such, it has been described as “the red and green soup” (Nig) with the red symbolizing the Nigerian stew (which is made with tomatoes and peppers which are boiled and fried in oil (either vegetable or palm oil) to remove all traces of water and its sour taste (Adegboye et al., 2015, p.2484; Rec)), and the green symbolizing the okra (Nig). Seafood okra soup is very similar to plain okra soup with stew (“the red and green soup”). Although, seafood okra soup is a fusion of okra, seafood and pepper (Sisi) as opposed to just a combination of okra and any Nigerian stew (Nig). Further, in this variation of okra soup (seafood okra), not only is okra the star of the dish, but also seafood has been mentioned as the star of seafood okra soup, as meats cannot be used in preparing it as it defeats the authenticity of the soup. For example, Don – in her words said, “use any combination of seafood that you can find, including fish too. Anything you wish, just don’t take meat anywhere near this dish;” further emphasized by Wives – “seafood okra soup is cooked without meat, just sea animals.” Moreover, crayfish is not to be added in this version of okra soup as it adds a strong taste to the seafoods, and fresh fish used in preparing the soup (Don; Rec). Rather, shrimps and prawns, which are technically fresh versions of crayfish would suffice against crayfish (Rec). Additionally, seafood okra just like any okra soup could be made with or without additional vegetables (9ja) as well as with or without oil (Nig – though it is not completely oil free as seafoods, fish and their stock/broth have some oil).

In the case of mixed okra soup – “ila alasepo,” just like seafood-okra, it could be cooked with purely seafood with no meats in sight (Don). Although unlike seafood-okra, “ila alasepo” is made mostly with palm oil (Don; Sisi). Although one could choose to make it without palm oil (Sisi – even though she prefers it with palm oil). Again, unlike seafood-okra, where the use of vegetables is by choice, “ila alasepo” does not require the addition of leaves (Sisi). Although some people may choose to add some vegetables of their choice (9ja). For instance, 9ja added vegetables to her ‘asepo’ soup because she loves it with vegetables. On the other hand, Nig. added bitter leaves. While Sisi noted that she never adds any vegetables, she indicates that one could add some leaves like pumpkin (“ugu”) leaves, spinach, “uziza” or basil leaves at the end of the cooking process. It is worth noting that “ila alasepo” requires some Nigerian traditional/local seasonings such as locust beans, which is referred to as “iru” in Yoruba and “dawadawa” in Hausa. Edible potash, on the other hand is locally called “kaun” also spelt “akaun.” These traditional/local seasonings have been noted as essential to making authentic/original “ila asepo” recipe (Don; 9ja; Sisi; Nig), as they help to increase the soup’s viscosity/stickiness (Don; 9ja; Nig). Alternatively, for potash (“kaun”/ “akaun”), one could use baking soda which is much easier to source (Nig.). As we have seen with other soups, one could choose to leave them out (Nig.). Although in this case, without these local seasonings, one’s okra soup is likely “to be flat” (Don). Interestingly, one of the bloggers who did not use any of these ingredients when cooking “ila asepo,” has noted that her soup was still elastic, crunchy and fresh (Sisi); perhaps to motivate people to adjust their soup to their local ingredient availability.

Unlike “ila asepo,” “ottong/otong” soup is made with little or no palm oil (Don; Sisi) although it requires the addition of vegetables/leaves (Don; Sisi) while the former doesn’t. While in making the authentic version of the former, traditional/local seasonings like locust beans (“iru/dawadawa”) and edible potash (“kaun”/ “akaun”) are essentially needed, the latter requires “uziza” leaves (Don) or “uziza” seeds. However, again, some choose to omit these ingredients (Sisi).

With regards to all the sampled bloggers, a vital rule that must be maintained when making any “traditional okra soup” is that bouillon cubes should be eliminated (9ja). This

is because they are not essential for any local/traditional soup (Sisi). Just as noted in “afang” soup, Nigerian local recipes such as okra soup never use onions (Nig), although with what one of the bloggers call, “the versatility of foods,” one may add some if one prefers (Nig). Some warn, however, that adding them breaches the authenticity of this soup (Nig; Sisi) and challenges the ancestor's methods of making it (Nig.). Hence, as noted earlier, while onions could be used in steaming the meats to be used in preparing this soup, they should not be added into any local or traditional soup, if one seeks to maintain its authenticity (Wives; Nig; Sisi). For certain, all bloggers agree that okra soup is defiled if it is not slimy (Rec).

### **5.8.2 The Relationship between Okra/Okro (*Abelmoschus Esculentus*) Soup to Health**

Okra, as a green vegetable, when made with other vegetables like pumpkin (“ugu/ugwu”) leaves or/and “uziza” leaves have been noted to possess abundant nutritional benefits like vitamins (9ja; Afro; Nig.; Rec; Foods; Wives), protein, folate and magnesium (9ja) and also offers an abundant source of fibre (9ja; Afro; 1q). For these reasons it is contended to be good for the digestive system (1q) as it could assist with bowel movement as well as detoxify the liver (Afro). It is also touted as a low-calorie vegetable that could be used for dieting like low-calorie diets, keto diet or weight watchers (9ja; Afro; Rec.).

On the wellness continuum of health, okra soup e.g. seafood okra and “ila asepo” have been regarded as “comfort soups” (Nig.), as they are perceived to have the power to induce happiness and cause one to feel good especially when cooked with seafood (Don). They are prescribed by family folk healers/caregivers as best to be consumed when one is a bit under the weather (Sisi).

### **5.8.3 The Standard of Eating Okra/Okro (*Abelmoschus Esculentus*) Soup**

While okra soup could be served plain, as an appetizer (as mentioned by Nig) like pepper-soup, as it could be quite filling (Dob; 9ja; Afro; Rec.; Wives), it could also be served with any stew as its base (Dob). However, just like *african wild mango* (“ogbono/apon/ugiri”) soup, the slimy texture of okra soup also makes it the perfect soup for any form of swallow (Dob; 9ja; Wives) or sides. Thereby making it a good main

meal/course (Nig). It could then be served with any choice of swallows such as pounded yam (9ja; Afro; Nig; 1q; Rec.; Wives), “garri”/ “eba”/starch (Don; 9ja; Afro; Nig; Sisi; Rec; Foods; Wives), or cassava flakes (Afro), cassava fufu (9ja; Rec.; Foods; Wives), semolina/semovita fufu (9ja; Afro; 1q; Rec.; Foods – called semo in short; Wives), “amala” (Afro; Rec), which is made from yam flour (Somorin et al., 2012, p. 53 & 54), “tuwo shinkafa” (Rec), which is a rice pudding common amongst the Hausas in Nigeria (Uwaegbute, 1991), wheat(meal) (Dob; Afro; Nig; Wives) or oatmeal swallow (1q). Other sides that could be served with okra soup aside swallows are (roasted)plantains (Nig), “agidi” (Dob), which is made from fermented maize, sorghum or millet (Akpapunam et al., 2019, p.2), yam (Nig), rice (9ja; Nig; 1q), which could also be substituted with bulgur wheat for those on a diet (Don). Although, if one is on a diet like keto diet, one could choose to serve okra soup particularly seafood okra or “ila asepo” with low carb fufu meals (Rec) or alone (Afro).

In all, okra soup has been emphasized as “not a meal for fork and knife” (1q). Rather, it requires washing one’s hands and “digging in” (1q; also noted by Dob & Don) just as in other Nigerian soups which requires one to mold one’s swallow into a ball or “morsel” (Nig; 1q), and dip it into the soup, and swallow (Onoise, 2018; also see: **Figure 46** for a demonstration of this standard of eating).

#### **5.8.4 Componential Analysis of Okra/Okro (*Abelmoschus Esculentus*) Soup**

Due to the popularity of okra soup such that it is widely consumed across Nigeria, all the sampled food blogs have participated in listing the various ingredients required for preparing okra soup. Although, some of the blogs have focused on at least one version of okra soup rather than discussing all versions. Those blogs that have discussed the various versions, their list of the ingredients have been classified into **tables 23-31** following Bernard (2017), in order to assess what ingredients could be included into (represented by 1) or could be excluded from (represented by 2) okra soup, as well as its variations.

COMPONENTIAL ANALYSIS OF OKRA/OKRO SOUP: "PLAIN OKRA/OKRO SOUP WITH STEW"																	
BLOG ID	INGREDIENTS																
	okra	meat	fish	crayfish	prawns	seasonin g cube	salt	pepper	leaves	oil	tomatoes	onions	curry	akaun	local seasonin gs	stew	
DOB	1	2	2	1	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
DON																	
9JA	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	
AFRO	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	
NIG.	1	2	2	1	2	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	
SISI																	
1Q																	
REC.																	
FOODS																	
WIVES																	
TOTAL	4	1	1	3	1	2	4	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	
% (4/10)	40%	10%	10%	30%	10%	20%	40%	20%	20%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	20%	10%	
% (4/4)	100%	25%	25%	75%	25%	50%	100%	50%	50%	25%	25%	25%	25%	25%	50%	25%	

Table 23: Componential analysis of plain okra/okro soup with stew

Based on the componential analysis of “*plain okra/okro soup with stew*” (See: **Table 23**), the nuances of ingredients of plain okra soup with stew listed in **table 23** have been grouped under essential components/ingredients (ingredients that should be included when making this soup), and non-essential components/ingredients (ingredients that could be excluded when making this soup) in **figure 36**.

SOUP	ESSENTIAL/MAIN INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS	NON-ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS
<i>Plain Okra/Okro Soup with Stew</i>	a) okra/okro and b) salt	c) meat like chicken, smoked turkey, d) fish/smoked fish, e) powdered crayfish (optional), f) prawns, g) seasoning cubes like the “maggi” brand h) pepper (like fresh pepper such as scotch bonnet/habanero pepper (“ata rodo”), red bell pepper or dried pepper like chilli flakes), i) any vegetables/leaves of one’s choice, j) oil (palm oil/groundnut/vegetable oil), k) tomatoes, l) onions, m) curry, n) edible potash (“akaun”/ “kaun”) (optional), o) local seasonings like (fermented) locust beans (“iru”) and p) any Nigerian stew
	2 essential components of plain okra with stew	14 non-essential components of plain okra with stew
<b>16 nuances of ingredients could be used in the preparation of plain okra soup with stew</b>		

Figure 36: Illustrating the essential and non-essential ingredients/components of okra soup with stew

COMPONENTIAL ANALYSIS OF OKRA/OKRO SOUP: OKRA/OKRO SOUP WITHOUT OIL (OILESS OKRA/OKRO SOUP)												
BLOG ID	INGREDIENTS											
	okra	prawns (P)/shrimps (S)	crayfish	fish	seafood	local seasonings	seasoning cubes	salt	pepper	leaves	meat	onions
DOB												
DON												
9JA												
AFRO												
NIG.												
SISI												
1Q1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
1Q2	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1
REC.	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	1
FOODS												
WIVES												
TOTAL ALL	3	2	3	1	1	2	3	3	3	1	3	2
TOTAL TWO BLOG	2	1	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	2	2
% (2/10)	20%	10%	20%	10%	10%	10%	20%	20%	20%	10%	20%	20%
% (2/2)	100%	50%	100%	50%	50%	50%	100%	100%	100%	50%	100%	100%

Table 24: Componential analysis of oilless okra/okro soup

From the componential analysis of “oilless okra/okro” in table 24, the components of oilless okra soup have been grouped under essential, and non-essential components/ingredients in figure 37.



SOUP	ESSENTIAL/MAIN INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS	NON-ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS
<i>Oiless Okra/Okro Soup</i>	a) okra/okro b) ground crayfish, c) seasoning cubes like beef or crayfish seasonings (optional – this could be because it is not needed when making local/traditional okra soup), d) salt, e) pepper like fresh pepper such as scotch bonnet/habanero pepper (“ata rodo”), sweet peppers/red bell peppers (“tatashe”) f) meat like chicken, beef, cow stripe (“shaki”) and g) onions	h) prawns/shrimps, i) fish like dried fish, j) seafood such as calamari, whelks (“ngolo”), k) local seasonings like “uziza” seeds, african nutmeg (“ehuru/iyun”), and l) any vegetables/leaves of one’s choice e.g “uziza” (false cubeb) leaves.
	7 essential components of oiless okra soup	5 non-essential components of oiless okra soup

**12 nuances of ingredients could be used in the preparation of oiless okra soup**

Figure 37: Illustrating the essential and non-essential ingredients/components of oiless okra soup

COMPONENTIAL ANALYSIS OF OKRA/OKRO SOUP WITH VEGETABLES														
BLOG ID	INGREDIENTS													
	okra	stockfish	smoked fish (SF)/drie	crayfish/prawns	seasonin g cubes	salt	pepper	leaves	meat	fish	palm oil	onions	ogbolo/o gbonno	
DOB	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2
DON														
9JA	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
AFRO														
NIG.														
SISI														
1Q														
REC.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
FOODS	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1
WIVES														
TOTAL	4	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	3	1
% (4/10)	40%	30%	30%	40%	40%	40%	40%	40%	40%	30%	40%	30%	10%	
% (4/4)	100%	75%	75%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	75%	100%	75%	25%	

Table 25: Componential analysis of okra/okro soup with vegetables

Likewise, from the componential analysis of “*okra/okro soup made with vegetables*” in table 25, the components of okra soup made with vegetables have been grouped under essential, and non-essential components/ingredients in figure 38.

SOUP	ESSENTIAL/MAIN INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS	NON-ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS
<i>Okra/Okro Soup with Vegetables</i>	a) okra/okro b) ground/powdered crayfish or prawns, c) seasoning/bouillon cubes like the brands – “maggi” or “knorr” cubes d) salt, e) pepper like fresh pepper such as scotch bonnet pepper or bell peppers (“tatashe”), f) any vegetables/leaves of one’s choice (e.g (fluted)pumpkin (“ugu”) leaves, spinach, callaloo (“tete”) (optional), g) meat like beef, chicken, turkey or assorted meat like goat meat, all cow parts like cow tripe (“shaki”), and h) palm oil	i) stock fish, j) smoked/dried fish, k) fish like “panla,” mackerel, titus l) onions and m) african wild mango (“ogbono/ogbolo”)
	8 essential components of okra soup with vegetables	5 non-essential components of okra soup with vegetables

**13 nuances of ingredients could be used in the preparation of okra soup with vegetables**

*Figure 38: Illustrating the essential and non-essential ingredients/components of okra with vegetables*

COMPONENTIAL ANALYSIS OF OKRA/OKRO SOUP WITH UZIZA LEAVES													
BLOG ID	INGREDIENTS												
	okra/okr o	seasonin g cubes	salt	pepper	leaves	meat	palm oil	crayfish	shrimps/ prawns	onion	stockfish	smoked/ dried fish	local seasonin gs
DOB													
DON													
9JA													
AFRO													
NIG.													
SISI													
1Q	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2
REC.													
FOODS													
WIVES	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1
TOTAL	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	1
% (2/10)	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	10%	10%	20%	20%	10%
% (2/2)	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	50%	50%	100%	100%	50%

*Table 26: Componential analysis of okra/okro soup with vegetables like “uziza” leaves*

From the componential analysis of “*okra/okro soup made with vegetables like uziza leaves*” (See: **Table 26**), the components or nuances of ingredients of okra soup made with “uziza” leaves listed in **table 26** have been grouped under essential, and non-essential components/ingredients of okra soup with “uziza” leaves in **figure 39**.

SOUP	ESSENTIAL/MAIN INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS	NON-ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS
<i>Okra/Okro Soup with Vegetables like Uziza Leaves</i>	a) okra/okro b) seasoning cubes like the beef seasoning cubes, c) salt, d) pepper (like fresh pepper or dried pepper e.g Cameroun pepper), e) leaves which in this case the distinctive feature of this version of okra soup is “uziza” (false cubeb) leaves f) meat like beef, or assorted meat like goat meat or cow parts like cow skin (“kpomo”) or snails, which is optional g) palm oil, h) ground crayfish, i) stock fish (optional), and j) fresh/smoked/dried fish	k) shrimps/prawns, l) onions, which is only needed to boil the beef used for preparing this soup m) local seasonings like locust beans (optional).
	10 essential components of okra soup made with vegetables like “uziza” leaves	3 non-essential components of okra soup made with vegetables like “uziza” leaves

**13 nuances of ingredients could be used in the preparation of okra soup with vegetables like “uziza” leaves**

Figure 39: Illustrating the essential and non-essential ingredients/components of okra with vegetables like "uziza" leaves

COMPONENTIAL ANALYSIS OF NIGERIAN WHITE OKRA/OKRO SOUP: EFERE ETIGHI												
BLOG ID	INGREDIENTS											
	okra/okro	seafood	seasoning cubes	salt	pepper	leaves	protein	palm oil	crayfish	shrimps/prawns	onion	
DOB												
DON												
9JA												
AFRO												
NIG.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	
SISI												
1Q	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
REC.												
FOODS												
WIVES												
TOTAL	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	1	2	2	1	
% (2/10)	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	10%	20%	10%	20%	20%	10%	
% (2/2)	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	50%	100%	50%	100%	100%	50%	

Table 27: Componential analysis of white okra/okro soup ("efere etighi")

From the componential analysis of “white okra/okro soup” in table 27, the components of white okra soup (“efere etighi”) have been grouped under essential, and non-essential components/ingredients in figure 40.

SOUP	ESSENTIAL/MAIN INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS	NON-ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS
<b>White Okra/Okro Soup (“Efere Etighi”)</b>	a) okra/okro b) seafood like crabs and shrimps. Mushroom could also be used although this is optional, c) seasoning/bouillon cubes, d) salt, e) pepper like fresh pepper such as habanero/scotch bonnet peppers, or dried pepper e.g chillies or Cameroun pepper, f) protein whether fresh fish like tilapia, or catfish or meat g) ground/powdered crayfish, and h) shrimps/prawns 8 essential components of “efere etighi”	i) any vegetables/leaves of one’s choice like basil/scent leaves, “uziza” (false cubeb) leaves, or curry leaves j) palm oil, although in this version, palm oil is not necessary k) crayfish (ground/powdered crayfish), and l) onions. 4 non-essential components of “efere etighi”

**12 nuances of ingredients could be used in the preparation of white okra soup (“efere etighi”)**

Figure 40: Illustrating the essential and non-essential ingredients/components of white okra soup (“efere etighi”)

COMPONENTIAL ANALYSIS OF SEAFOOD OKRA/OKRO SOUP																
BLOG ID	INGREDIENTS															
	okra/okr	SEAFOOD	seasonin g cubes	salt	pepper	leaves	meat	palm oil	crayfish	shrimps/prawns	onion	local seasonin gs	other seasonin gs	stockfish	fish: smoked/dried fish	tomato
DOB	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	2
DON																
9JA	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	1
AFRO																
NIG.	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	2	1	2	1	2
SISI	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	2
1Q																
REC.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	2	1	2
FOODS																
WIVES	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	2
TOTAL	6	6	6	6	6	2	1	5	5	4	4	2	2	2	4	1
% (6/10)	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%	20%	10%	50%	50%	40%	40%	20%	20%	20%	40%	10%
% (6/6)	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	33.33%	16.67%	83.33%	83.33%	66.67%	66.67%	33.33%	33.33%	33.33%	66.67%	16.67%

Table 28: Componential analysis of seafood okra/okro soup

From the componential analysis of “*seafood okra/okro soup*” in table 28, the components of seafood okra soup (“efere etighi”) have been grouped under essential, and non-essential components/ingredients in figure 41.

SOUP	ESSENTIAL/MAIN INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS	NON-ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS
<i>Seafood Okra/Okro Soup</i>	a) okra/okro b) seafoods like crabs, although crabs are optional if one finds them expensive, periwinkles, mushrooms or mixed seafood or other seafood of choice c) seasoning/bouillon cubes e.g brands like “knorr” (e.g “knorr” beef) or “maggi” (e.g “maggi” crayfish) cubes or other soup seasonings like “aromat” could be used d) salt, and e) pepper like fresh pepper such as (red)bell pepper or sweet pepper (“tatashe”) or habanero/scotch bonnet peppers, or dried pepper e.g chilli flakes	f) any vegetables/leaves of one’s choice (e.g callaloo (“efo tete”/ “tete”), spinach, kale, fluted pumpkin (“ugu”) leaves), g) meat, although meat is not needed for this version of okra soup, one of the bloggers (Rec) went contrary to that rule. h) palm oil (optional), i) ground/powdered crayfish, j) shrimps/prawns (optional), k) onions, l) local seasonings like black fungus (“ero belebelenti”) although, this is optional, locust beans (“iru”), m) other ingredients like garlic powder and ginger are optional, n) stock fish, o) smoked/dried/fresh fish like croaker or tilapia, and p) tomatoes.
	5 essential components of seafood okra	11 non-essential components of seafood okra

**16 nuances of ingredients could be used in the preparation of seafood okra soup**

Figure 41: Illustrating the essential and non-essential ingredients/components of seafood okra soup

COMPONENTIAL ANALYSIS OF OKRA/OKRO SOUP: "ILA ASEPO/ALASEPO/ALASEKPO"																
BLOG ID	INGREDIENTS															
	okra/okr o	seafood	seasonin g cubes	salt	pepper	leaves	meat	palm oil	crayfish	shrimps/ prawns	onion	local seasonin gs	local ingredien ts	other seasonin gs	stockfish	fish: smoked/ dried fish
DOB																
DON	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	2	1	1
9JA	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	2	1
AFRO	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	1
NIG.	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	1
SISI	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	1
1Q REC. FOODS WIVES																
TOTAL	5	1	5	5	5	2	4	5	4	4	1	3	3	1	2	5
% (5/10)	50%	10%	50%	50%	50%	20%	40%	50%	40%	40%	10%	30%	30%	10%	20%	50%
% (5/5)	100%	20%	100%	100%	100%	40%	80%	100%	80%	80%	20%	60%	60%	20%	40%	100%

Table 29: Componential analysis of “ila alasepo/alasekpo/asepo”

Based on the componential analysis of “*ila asepo/alasepo/alasekpo*” in table 29, the nuances of ingredients of “*ila asepo*” listed in table 29 have been grouped under essential, and non-essential components/ingredients in figure 42.

SOUP	ESSENTIAL/MAIN INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS	NON-ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS
<i>Ila Asepo/Alasepo/Alasekpo</i>	a) okra/okra b) seasoning/bouillon cubes such as the brands – “knorr” (e.g knorr chicken) or “maggi” cubes, c) salt, d) pepper (like fresh pepper such as habanero/scotch bonnet peppers (“ata rodo”), (red)bell pepper or sweet pepper (“tatashe”) or dried pepper e.g cayenne pepper (“atagungun”)), e) palm oil (optional, even though it is essentially needed for making authentic/original version of “ <i>ila asepo</i> ”), palm oil could be substituted with coconut oil if one prefers, and f) fresh/smoked/dried fish e.g dried catfish (“ <i>eja osan</i> ”)	g) seafood like crab and periwinkles h) though vegetables are not needed for this dish, as its absence distinguishes it from “ <i>otong/ottong</i> ” soup, one could still use any vegetables/leaves of one’s choice (e.g bitter leaf and spinach) i) meat like beef, or assorted meat like goat meat and its offals, or cow parts e.g cow tripe (“ <i>shaki</i> ”), cow skin (“ <i>ponmo</i> ”), cow foot, j) (blended) crayfish, k) shrimps or fresh/dried/smoked prawns, l) onions, m) local seasonings like (fermented) locust beans (“ <i>iru</i> ”) (optional) n) local ingredients like edible potash (“ <i>akaun</i> ”/ “ <i>kaun</i> ”) and could be substituted with baking soda o) other ingredients like garlic, p) stock fish (“ <i>panla</i> ”)
	6 essential components of “ <i>ila asepo</i> ”	10 non-essential components/ingredients of this soup

**16 nuances of ingredients could be used in the preparation of “*ila asepo/alasepo/alasekpo*.”**

Figure 42: Illustrating the essential and non-essential ingredients/components of “*ila alasepo/alasekpo/asepo*”

COMPONENTIAL ANALYSIS OF OKRA/OKRO SOUP: "OTTONG/OTONG SOUP"														
BLOG ID	INGREDIENTS													
	okra/okr o	Seafood	seasonin g cubes	salt	pepper	leaves	meat	palm oil	crayfish	shrimps/ prawns	onion	local seasonin gs	stockfish	fish: smoked/ dried fish
DOB														
DON	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	1	1	1
9JA	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2
AFRO	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	2
NIG.														
SISI	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1
1Q														
REC. FOODS WIVES														
TOTAL	4	1	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	2	1	1	3	2
% (4/10)	40%	10%	40%	40%	40%	40%	40%	30%	40%	20%	10%	10%	30%	20%
% (4/4)	100%	25%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	75%	100%	50%	25%	25%	75%	50%

Table 30: Componential analysis of “ottong/otong” soup

Based on the componential analysis of “ottong/otong” in table 30, the components or nuances of ingredients of “ottong/otong” have been grouped under essential, and non-essential components/ingredients in figure 43.

SOUP	ESSENTIAL/MAIN INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS	NON-ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS
“Ottong/Otong” Soup	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) okra/okro</li> <li>b) seasoning/stock cubes like the brands – “maggi” (e.g “maggi” crayfish) or “knorr” (e.g “knorr” chicken) cubes,</li> <li>c) salt,</li> <li>d) pepper (like fresh pepper such as habanero/scotch bonnet peppers (“ata rodo” or “ose nsukka”), or dried pepper),</li> <li>e) any vegetables/leaves of one’s choice (e.g “ugwu,” which could be substituted with spinach, “uziza” leaves, water leaves or kale</li> <li>f) meat like beef or assorted meat like goat meat and its offals or cow parts like cow leg and foot, cow skin (“ponmo”), cow tripe (“shaki”) and snails, and</li> <li>g) blended crayfish or crayfish pieces</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>h) any seafood of one’s choice,</li> <li>i) palm oil (although not required for this dish)</li> <li>j) shrimps or smoked/fresh prawns (optional),</li> <li>k) onions, which are used to steam the fish or seafoods to be used in preparing this dish</li> <li>l) local seasonings like (fermented) locust beans (“iru”) (optional),</li> <li>m) stock fish, and</li> <li>n) Fresh/smoked/dried fish.</li> </ul>
	7 essential components of “ottong/otong” soup	7 non-essential components of “ottong/otong” soup

14 nuances of ingredients could be used in the preparation of “ottong/otong” soup

Figure 43: Illustrating the essential and non-essential ingredients/components of “ottong/otong”

COMPONENTIAL ANALYSIS OF OTHER VARIATIONS OF OKRA/OKRO SOUP												
BLOG ID	INGREDIENTS											
	okra/okr o	seasonin g cubes	salt	pepper	leaves	meat	palm oil	crayfish	local seasonin gs	stockfish	fish: smoked/ dried fish	
DOB												
DON	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
9JA												
AFRO												
NIG.												
SISI												
1Q	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1
REC.	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	1
FOODS												
WIVES												
TOTAL	3	2	2	2	3	2	3	3	1	2	3	3
% (3/10)	30%	20%	20%	20%	30%	20%	30%	30%	10%	20%	30%	30%
% (3/3)	100%	66.67%	66.67%	66.67%	100%	66.67%	100%	100%	33.33%	66.67%	100%	100%

Table 31: Componential analysis of other versions of okra/okro soup

From the componential analysis of “*other versions of okra soup*” in table 31, the components or nuances of ingredients of the versions of okra soup analysed in table 31 have been grouped under essential, and non-essential components/ingredients in figure 44.

SOUP	ESSENTIAL/MAIN INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS	NON-ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS/COMPONENTS
<i>Other Versions of Okra Soup</i>	a) okra/okro, b) any vegetables/leaves of one’s choice (e.g “uziza” leaves, kale, bitter leaves, pumpkin leaves or spinach) c) palm oil, d) (ground)crayfish and e) smoked/dried/fresh fish like mackerel	f) seasoning/stock cubes (optional), g) salt, h) pepper (like fresh pepper such as habanero/scotch bonnet peppers (“ata rodo”), or dried pepper e.g Cameroun pepper), i) meat like beef or a combination of different parts of a cow e.g cow leg, j) local seasonings like (fermented) locust beans (“iru or dawadawa”) or fermented oil seeds (“ogiri/ogiri okpei”), and k) stock fish
	5 essential components of this soup	6 non-essential components of this soup
<b>11 nuances of ingredients could be used in the preparation of other versions of okra soup</b>		

Figure 44: Illustrating the essential and non-essential ingredients/components of other versions of okra soup

From tables 23-31 above, the ingredients that are mostly mentioned amongst all of the various versions of okra soup are: okra/okro, crayfish, seasoning cubes, salt,



pepper, protein of choice whether fish, meat or seafood, palm oil, and leaves/vegetables. However, palm oil is eliminated in “oilless okra soup,” and “white okra” like “efere etighi” and “ottong/otong” soup. Also, from this analysis one would also notice that okra could be made with (as in “ottong” soup) or without leaves/vegetables (as in “ila alasepo/asepo/alasekpo,” “efere etighi” and seafood okra). Also, seasoning cubes and salt could be eliminated when making local/traditional okra soup as seen in the other versions of okra soup (9ja; Nig.). Again, when making seafood okra, crayfish are eliminated as it could affect the taste of the seafood okra. However, prawns and shrimps are more adequate as they are fresh versions of crayfish (Rec).

#### **5.8.5 Summary/Conclusion on Okra/Okro (*Abelmoschus Esculentus*) Soup**

In summary, one can conclude that while okra/okro soup is widely enjoyed all over Nigeria, their methods of preparation as well as the characteristics, taste and texture of the soup might differ slightly depending on the region and culture. These various versions of okra soup though might also involve similar ingredients, but they consist of different components, and are in fact made differently.

However, okra soups mostly consist of okra/okro, crayfish, seasoning cubes, salt, pepper, protein of choice whether fish, meat or seafood, palm oil, and leaves/vegetables. However, while palm oil is mostly present in most okra soups like authentic/traditional “ila alasepo/asepo/alasekpo,” palm oil could be eliminated in oilless okra soup, seafood okra, white okra like “efere etighi” and authentic/traditional “ottong/otong” soup. Further, meats are totally eliminated from seafood okra. Again, while okra soups could be made with vegetables/leaves (as in authentic/traditional “ottong” soup), they could also be made without leaves/vegetables (as in authentic/traditional “ila alasepo/asepo/alasekpo,” white okra (“efere etighi”) and seafood okra). Also, seasoning cubes and salt could be eliminated when making local/traditional okra soup as they are not essential for local/traditional soups (9ja). Again, when making seafood, crayfish are eliminated as it could affect the taste of the seafood okra. Rather, prawns and shrimps should be used, as they are fresh versions of crayfish (Rec).

From the componential analysis of okra soup and its various versions/variations, a common essential ingredient/component/characteristic of all okra soups is the presence of

the green vegetable, “okra,” which if not present, or substituted with other ingredients, like “ogbono,” could render the supposed okra soup something else or its substitute – “ogbono” soup.

### 5.9: Categorization/Classification of Selected Nigerian Soup Recipes Following Sampled Food Blogs

Based on the background information of the selected Nigerian soup recipes, the sampled blogs have classified the selected soups under different recipe headings/categories like the one’s outlined in **table B.3** in **Appendix B**. Upon compilation of how the selected soups and their variations/versions were categorized by the sampled blogs (See: **Figure 45**), it was found that across the sampled blogs, all of the selected Nigerian soup recipes were categorized as “soup recipes” and “traditional Nigerian soup” or “standard Nigerian meal.”

*Figure 45: The categorization of selected soup-recipes by the sampled Nigerian food blogs*

<b>CATEGORIZATION/CLASSIFICATION OF ESSENTIAL/Common NIGERIAN SOUPS ACCORDING TO THE SAMPLED BLOGS</b>	
<b>SOUP RECIPES</b>	<b>CATEGORIES</b>
<b>Afang Soup</b>	<b>Regional Recipe: African Soup: Traditional Nigerian soup:</b> Southern Nigerian Recipe - Efik recipe; Eastern Recipe; <b>Vegetable Soup; Main course; Lunch</b>
<b>Bitter Leaf Soup</b>	<b>Regional Recipe: African Soup: Traditional Nigerian soup:</b> Eastern Nigerian Recipe - Ibo recipe: Anambra soup; Cocoyam Recipe; <b>Main course</b>
<b>Banga Soup</b>	<b>African Soup: Traditional Nigerian soup:</b> Southern Nigerian Recipe -Niger Delta style palm nut soup, Efik soup, Urhobo soup; Vegetable Recipe; Palm fruit/nut recipe; Palm oil recipe; fish recipe; <b>Main course</b>

**CATEGORIZATION/CLASSIFICATION OF ESSENTIAL/Common  
NIGERIAN SOUPS ACCORDING TO THE SAMPLED BLOGS**

<b>SOUP RECIPES</b>	<b>CATEGORIES</b>
<b>Ofe Akwu</b>	<b>Regional Recipe: Traditional Nigerian soup:</b> Southeastern Nigerian Recipe - Igbo version; Eastern Nigeria Recipe; <b>Vegetable Soup; Main course</b>
<b>Abak Atama</b>	<b>Regional Recipe: African Soup: Traditional Nigerian soup:</b> Eastern Nigerian Recipe - Efik recipe; Calabar soup; Palm fruit/nut soup
<b>Afia Efere</b>	<b>Traditional Nigerian Soup:</b> Southern Nigeria recipe: Calabar soup, Efik soup/recipe; Eastern Nigeria Recipe: Ibo recipe; White Soup; <b>Main course</b>
<b>Ofe Nsala</b>	<b>Regional Recipe: Standard Nigerian Meal: Traditional Nigerian soup:</b> Eastern Nigeria Recipe - Igbo cuisine; Sauce; Peppersoup recipe; Chicken recipe; Yam recipe; Vegetable Recipe; Holiday Recipe; <b>Main course</b>
<b>Egusi soup with (fluted)pumpkin (ugu/ugwu) leaves</b>	<b>Traditional Nigerian Soup:</b> Igbo soup; Yoruba soup; Nigerian Egusi soup; Melon soup; Vegetable recipe; <b>Main course</b>
<b>Egusi soup with bitter leaf</b>	<b>Regional Recipe: Nigerian Soup:</b> Eastern Nigeria Recipes
<b>Egusi soup with uziza leaf</b>	<b>Regional Recipe: Traditional Nigerian Soup:</b> Eastern Nigeria Recipes
<b>Fried Egusi Soup</b>	<b>Regional Recipe: Traditional Nigerian Soup:</b> Eastern Nigeria Recipes; Northern Nigeria Recipes; Southern Nigeria Recipes; Western Nigeria Recipes; <b>Main course</b>
<b>Oiless Egusi soup</b>	
<b>Lumpy Egusi Soup</b>	<b>African Soup: Traditional Nigerian soup; Lunch</b>
<b>Egusi Ijebu Soup</b>	<b>African Soup: Traditional Nigerian soup: Yoruba soup</b>
<b>Ogbono soup with (fluted)pumpkin</b>	<b>Regional Recipe: Traditional Nigerian Soup:</b> Eastern Nigeria Recipes; <b>Vegetable recipes; Main course</b>

**CATEGORIZATION/CLASSIFICATION OF ESSENTIAL/COMMON NIGERIAN SOUPS ACCORDING TO THE SAMPLED BLOGS**

<b>SOUP RECIPES</b>	<b>CATEGORIES</b>
<b>(ugu/ugwu) leaves</b>	
<b>Ogbono soup with uziza leaves</b>	<b>Traditional Nigerian Soup</b>
<b>Oiless Ogbono soup</b>	
<b>Other Variations of Ogbono Soup</b>	<b>Standard Nigerian meal: Nigerian Soup: Urhobo Soup; Weightloss; Dinner</b>
<b>Plain Okro Soup with Stew</b>	<b>Standard Nigerian meal: Nigerian Soup</b>
<b>Oiless Okro Soup</b>	<b>African soup: Nigerian Soup; Okro recipe; Seafood recipe</b>
<b>Okro Soup with Vegetable</b>	<b>Nigerian Soup</b>
<b>Okro Soup with Uziza Vegetable</b>	<b>Nigerian Soup</b>
<b>White Okro Soup (Efere Etighi)</b>	<b>Nigerian Soup: Efik recipe; Fish recipe; Okro Recipe; Seafood Recipe</b>
<b>Seafood Okro</b>	<b>Nigerian Soup</b>
<b>Ila Asepo</b>	<b>Traditional Nigerian Soup: Efik recipe; Okra/Okro Soup/Recipe</b>
<b>Otong/Ottong Soup</b>	<b>African Okro Soup: Traditional Nigerian Soup; Okra/Okro Soup/Recipe</b>
<b>Other Versions of Okro Soup</b>	<b>African Soup: Nigerian Soup; Okra/Okro Soup/Recipe; Healthy &amp; Vegetarian Recipe</b>

As a Nigerian soup/standard Nigerian meal, some of the blogs also categorized some of these soups (e.g. “afang” soup, bitter leaf soup, “banga” soup, “abak atama,” lumpy “egusi” soup, “egusi” Ijebu, oiless okra soup) as African soups/recipes. Some of the blogs further classified the soups under the Nigerian regions/tribes where these soups are predominantly consumed (e.g Northern Nigeria, Eastern Nigeria, Efik/Calabar

recipes/soups, Igbo/Igbo recipes/soups). As originating from specific regions in Nigeria, some of the selected Nigerian soup recipes have also been categorized under “regional recipes” (See: **Figure 45**).

Based on the characteristics of the soups, some of the soups (“afang” soup, “banga” soup, “ofe akwu,” “ofe nsala,” “egusi” soup with “ugu/ugwu” leaves, “ogbono” soup with “ugu/ugwu” leaves) have been categorized under “vegetable” soup. This is because the soup is either predominantly made with vegetables (as in “afang” soup) or has some amounts of vegetables (as in “banga” soup, “ofe akwu,” “ofe nsala,” “egusi” soup with “ugu/ugwu” leaves, “ogbono” soup with “ugu/ugwu” leaves, etc). Some bloggers have classified the soups following its major ingredient(s). For instance, bitter leaf soup was categorized under its major thickener – cocoyam, likewise, “ofe nsala” has been classified under “yam recipe” because of its major thickener – yam. Meanwhile, “banga” soup was classified based on its major ingredient: palm fruit/nut, and fish recipe (See: **Figure 45**).

As per the order in which the soups are consumed, some of the soups (e.g. “afang” soup, bitter leaf soup, “banga” soup, “ofe akwu,” “afia efere,” “ofe nsala,” “egusi” soup with “ugu/ugwu” leaves, fried “egusi” soup, “ogbono” soup with “ugu/ugwu” leaves) have been classified as a main course. Others have been specifically identified as being served for lunch (e.g. “afang” soup, lumpy “egusi” soup) or dinner (e.g. the variations of “ogbono” soup), as such, have been categorized under the following headings “main course,” “lunch” or “dinner” (See: **Figure 45**).

Also, some of the soup recipes have been classified under special times when they could be consumed. For instance, “ofe nsala” has been classified as a “holiday recipe” because it could be consumed during the holidays. Some of the recipes were also classified under the purposes for which they were used – for weightloss (e.g other variations of “ogbono” soup on **figure 45**), “healthy or vegetarian” recipes (e.g other variations of okra soup on **figure 45**). Please see **figure 45** for detailed classification of the selected Nigerian soup recipes. Reasons for which these soups have been classified under the following headings/recipe categories could be explained by the information provided about the soups in their various chapter-sections.

## CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

As noted earlier, Nigeria has abundance of vegetation that is used both for food and medicinal purpose (1q). By doing this research, I have learned that there are over fifty (50) different kinds of soups that are eaten in Nigeria, not to mention their various variations/versions which could be about over two hundred and twenty (See: **Table B.4** in **Appendix B**). In addition, other than soups, there are probably over a hundred of other Nigerian foods (See: New York Times Cooking, 2019 for some list of Nigerian foods), the list would likely run into thousands if both fruits were counted (Foods).

Due to the a plethora of Nigerian dishes, this study chose to focus on Nigerian soups, which has a common base made by boiling together one's choice of protein with spices before following further cooking instructions, which could then differ amongst all soups. The taste of one's soup depends on one's soup base. Here, I focused on seven essential Nigerian soups which are consumed across Nigeria as represented on the sampled blogs. The wide variety of soups may be due to migration of people and cuisines from one culture in a particular region to another culture in a particular region (Onabanjo et al., 2013, p.368; Ayogu et al., 2017). Migration has led to what Etkin describes as an "integrated style of food selection" (Etkin, 2006, p.42) or commonly shared dishes which have been defined as "Nigerian foods" (Ene-Obong et al., 2013, p.540). As a result, soups that were associated with a particular culture, or originated from a particular culture, were through time, adapted and eaten in other cultures and regions. Distinct cuisines, what Etkin calls "discrete cuisines" (2006, p.42) or as I now call it "discrete soups" then become shared cuisines or shared soups. Thereby depicting this concept of a shared culture. As a result of these migration of cuisines, while sometimes, the cultural practices of cooking these cuisines, in this case soups, might totally change, they also sometimes evolve and in turn lead to these soups being cooked, consumed differently and even called differently amongst the various Nigerian cultures and ethnicity (Foods; Oguntona et al., 1999; Etkin, 2006; Adegboye et al., 2015).

Given the above, it sometimes becomes difficult to ascertain the exact origin of a particular soup and this is also noted by the bloggers. For instance, while some bloggers argue that "egusi" soup originates, and is mostly consumed amongst the Yorubas, some

argue that it is mostly consumed amongst the Igbos. This uncertainty makes it difficult to ascertain the true origin of “egusi” soup and this project has focused more on the content of the food category of “soup” than the origins of specific soups.

I have also delved into meanings and uses of the soups. These seven common Nigerian soups are usually associated with "traditional" food or meals from Nigeria that also carry positive connotations (Elwert- Kretschmer, 2001, p.205) relating to health, preventing diseases and maintaining one’s wellbeing and comfort (Onabanjo et al., 2013, p.374). Thus, they have been regarded as sustaining cultural heritage (Onabanjo et al., 2013, p.374). On the other hand, it can also be answered positively that these conceptions of shared culture, shared Nigerian foods, shared Nigerian soups have variations and patterns which again as noted earlier, are revealed in the distinct ways in which the shared culture are practiced across various Nigerian cultures. These different cultural practices – different ways of preparing Nigerian soups amongst the various Nigerian cultures are socially dependent on locally produced foods that are traditionally and generally eaten by the culturally coherent and distinct groups (Etkin, 2006, p.42). However, from this study, “discrete Nigerian soups” – soups peculiar to a particular cultural group include “afang,” “banga” soup (Niger Deltas/Deltan/Benin/Edo version of palm fruit/nut soup), “ofe akwu” (Igbo version of palm fruit/nut soup), “abak atama” (Efik/Akwa Ibom version of palm fruit/nut soup), “afia efere” (Efik/Akwa Ibom version of white soup), “ofe nsala” (Igbo version of white soup), “egusi Ijebu” (Yoruba version of “egusi” soup), “ila alasepo/alasekpo/asepo” (Yoruba version of okra soup), “ottong/otong” soup and “efere etighi” (Efik/Akwa Ibom versions of white okra soup).

Also, from doing this research, it was discovered that generally, “the integrated style of food selection across Nigerians” – “common Nigerian foods,” in this case, “common Nigerian soups,” as well as their “discrete soups” are mostly named after the major ingredient or leaves/vegetables used in its preparation (as noted by Foods; Seki & Ono, 2014, p.489; Kuhnlein et al., 2009, p.271, 279). For instance, “afang” soup has been named after its major ingredient and vegetable/leaf – “afang/okazi/ukazi leaf.” Likewise, bitter leaf soup (“ofe onugbu”/ “efo ewuro”) has been named after the major ingredient or leaf/vegetable used in preparing it – bitter leaf which is locally called “onugbu” in Igbo

and “ewuro” in Yoruba. Also, okra/okro soup has been named after the major ingredient or vegetable used in preparing it – okra.

On the other hand, some of these common Nigerian soups have also been named after the thickener or seed/nuts/fruits used in making them. For instance palm fruit/nut soup has been named after the fruit/nut or major ingredient used in preparing it – palm fruit/nut, which is locally called “banga” (by the Niger Deltas/Deltan/Benin/Edo), “akwu” (by the Igbos) and “abak” (by the Efiks/Akwa Ibom tribes). Meanwhile, “white soup” has been named not after the “assumed” color of the soup but after the thickener, which is also the major ingredient used in making this soup – pounded yam which is white in color. Likewise, melon (“egusi”) soup has also been named after the thickener, which is also the major ingredient of this soup – melon (“egusi”) seeds. Similarly, african wild mango (“ogbono/ugiri/apon”) soup is also named after the thickener, which is also the major ingredient of this soup – African wild mango nuts (“ogbono”/ “oro”).

However, whenever these essential ingredients which constitute the name of this soup changes – is replaced/substituted, the name of the soup also changes. For instance, where melon (“egusi”) seed was replaced/substituted with pumpkin seeds (by Don) or sunflower seeds (by Rec) or cashew nuts (by Iq). When this was done, the name of the soup changed from melon (“egusi”) soup to pumpkin soup (in Don’s case), sunflower soup (in Rec.’s case) and cashew nut soup (in Iq’s case) even though they all maintained the cooking process for melon (“egusi”) soup. Likewise, when the major leaves/vegetables required for making the soup changes, the generic name of that soup also changes to constitute the new vegetable. Reason being that a recipe name reveals a lot about a recipe – its major ingredients or major vegetables/leaves. You would have noticed that in this thesis, I have used distinctive phrases from the blogs to refer to the soups in the titles as a kind of signature for each soup. I realise of course, they all have their own varied names.

Another purpose of this study was to provide the components of each of the common Nigerian soups, as well as the ingredients/components that essentially constitute and maintain the essence of those soups, and ingredients that mostly add up to the content and taste of the soup but are not essentially needed. However, it was not determined



whether the essential ingredients/components of the soups could actually produce the soup in question. This would be an interesting focus for further research. Again, it was not ascertained in this study what components were common amongst the various sampled Nigerian soups in order to identify what generally makes a Nigerian soup. This was because some of the soups had limited components to arrive at that conclusion. For instance, “banga” soup, one of the versions of palm fruit/nut soup had only about three major components and excluded some common Nigerian soup ingredients e.g. pepper provided by other soups’ componential analysis.

However, from the componential analysis of soups, it was also discovered that some soups were made with substitutes, while some were without. In fact, substitution of some ingredients could sometimes render the soups something else where also discovered. For instance, in “afang” soup while water leaves could be replaced with other vegetables like watercress, spinach, callaloo (“tete”) etc, “afang/ukazi/okazi” leaves could not be replaced/substituted with any vegetable. Doing so would result in the soup being called mere vegetable soup. Likewise, for bitter leaf soup, where bitter leaves are, and could be replaced with any other leaves, one makes a different soup in total. For instance, if bitter leaves are replaced with “oha” (*pterocarpus soyauxili*) leaves, one makes “oha” (*pterocarpus soyauxili*) soup and if replaced with “afang” leaves, one makes “ofe Owerri” soup rather than bitter leaf soup. Also, for palm fruit/nut soup, one cannot replace the presence of palm fruit/nut with mere palm oil as one would not even get a palm fruit/nut soup at all not to mention its’ taste.

However, the information on substitutes for some of these Nigerian ingredients provided by the sampled food blogs could be explored by Nigerians in the diaspora or Nigerians at home who experience inaccessibility and unavailability of certain ingredients due to living in certain areas which do not provide access to certain local ingredients (James, 2004, p.357). Thereby utilizing these Nigerian food blogs as objects of inquiry, which provide streamlined versions of traditional Nigerian ingredients for diasporic Nigerians and those in their home country to recapture and rework their cultural/local recipes (Hedge, 2014, p.89, 92 and 97; Rocha, 2018, p.14 & 16; Holak, 2013; Grønseth, 2016). This again has further been represented in the glossary section

where substitutes for soup ingredients are provided. These substitutes originate to suit personal needs like finances, taste, availability and accessibility etc. For instance, one of the bloggers noted that periwinkle with its shell is a luxury in Nigeria but hard to find outside Nigeria. After she found it once at a Chinese grocery in Toronto, it was hard to find it again (Afro). Meanwhile, another blogger notes exempting periwinkles from some of her soups because they are sometimes expensive in Nigeria (Wives). Hence, one would have to use ingredients within their “reach” – that are available and easily affordable. As such, most Nigerians abroad, have resulted to mostly the powdery form of ingredients (e.g. swallows) or the dried or frozen forms of ingredients (e.g. leaves/vegetables like bitter leaf, spinach etc) (Nig.).

From the componential analysis of each of the sampled common Nigerian soups, it was also discovered that there are inconsistencies in how the components of each of the Nigerian soups are called. Some of the bloggers identified the components/ingredients of the various common Nigerian soups either by their English name, local or botanical name and sometimes by two of the above. However, most times, one ingredient had more than one local name. Thus, rather than measuring the number of times the local or English or botanical names of ingredients were used by the sampled blogs, this study chose to provide a compilation of some Nigerian soup ingredients/components, their English, local and/or botanical names as well as similar ingredients that could serve as substitute (See the glossary). This will serve as a mini-dictionary of Nigerian soup ingredients for most Nigerians who are unaware of these names.

It was further discovered that there are lots of spices and flavors used in making Nigerian soups, some of which have been franchised in other parts of the world (also noted by Foods). For instance, the use of *Knorr* brands, which are available in various forms in almost every country of the world informs one that Nigerian soups are no longer made with just local seasonings or spices like “iru” (as known by the Yorubas) or “dawadawa” (as known by the Hausas) which are made from fermented locust beans botanically called *parkia biglobosa* (Etkin, 2006; Solis-Oviedo & Pech-Canul, 2019; Dosumu, Oluwaniyi, Awolola, & Oyedeji, 2012, p.44); or “ogiri” which is made from fermented melon seeds botanically called *citrullus vulgaris* (Oguntoyinbo et al., 2010,

p.870; Solis-Oviedo & Pech-Canul, 2019), or “ogiri okpei” which is argued to be made from Bambara groundnut botanically called *vigna subterranean* (Solis-Oviedo & Pech-Canul, 2019), while some studies (Dosumu et al., 2012, p.44; Odibo, Ezeaku, & Ogbo, 2008) argue it is made from fermented *prosopis africana* seeds and another study (Ezenobi, Amaku, & Agbidi, 2016) argues it is made from fermented castor bean botanically called *Ricinus Communis* seeds. Rather, Nigerian foods are beginning to incorporate other non-local seasonings such as an array of bouillon/seasoning cubes. Thereby supporting the claim that Nigerian recipes are reflecting more of the use of western ingredients and English names of ingredients than traditional/local ingredients and names of these ingredients (Onabanjo et al., 2013, p.367; Adegboye et al., 2015, p.2488). This adaptive ways of now cooking Nigerian soups to include non-local ingredients (Dobby; Foods) is due to what bloggers (Don; Nig; Sisi) describe as the versatility of Nigerian foods, such that they could be tweaked to fit one’s personal preferences, and in fact, some ingredients could be added or subtracted, or both, in order to invent a new recipe (Dob; Don). However, while doing so, one does not maintain the authenticity or originality or the traditional way of making that dish. In fact, in one of the blogger’s words, by doing so, one does not “maintain the ancestor’s ways” of making such dishes (Nig.).

Additionally, from the content analysis of the sampled blogs, it was generally emphasized that Nigerian soups are consumed daily with swallows or sides. Thus, Nigerian soups with swallows or sides are staple meals in Nigeria. However, while some of these staple soups are consumed daily, some have been reserved for ceremonial occasions or weekends when families are together and can share the enjoyment of the soup together. One of such ceremonial soups are “afia efere,” the Efik version of white soup (1q) which has been noted as commonly served in chieftaincy coronations and other traditional events (1q). It was also discovered that culturally/traditionally, Nigerian staple foods – soups and swallows are commonly eaten with washed hands (Dob; Don; Nig; Wives) and not fork and knife (1q). This standard of eating is illustrated below in **figure 46**.



*Figure 46: Illustrating how staple foods (swallows) are eaten with soups in Nigeria (Chukwu, 2020)*

In all, one major theme revealed across the sampled food blogs is food as culture – while Nigerian foods cut across cultures – are consumed across Nigerian cultures, they are cooked and consumed differently. Hence, the different methods of cooking a particular soup symbolizes the differences in cultures. This is seen as most of the sampled soups or their variations/versions though are consumed across Nigeria, they originate from different cultures and their discussion reveal the different ways in which these foods/soups or their ingredients are represented or identified in a particular culture as opposed to other cultures. Also, the discussion of each of the sampled soup reveal the cultural and social boundaries/rules/taboo surrounding the preparation and consumption of the soups in order to sustain cultural heritage – the cultural way of making that soup (Onabanjo et al., 2013, p.374).

Aside themes related to “food as culture,” another theme revealed from the content analysis of the sampled food blogs as well as Nigerian-food-blog-recipe is food as health or as medicine. While it has been noted by one of the Nigerian bloggers that what’s a healthy meal means different things to different people, some Nigerian soups have been demonized as being unhealthy because of its palm oil. Hence, it has been noted

that the health proponents of any Nigerian soup always depend on the ingredients used (emphasized by Don). This was explained in detail in the various soup sections. However, most Nigerian soups have been associated with pharmacological properties – being able to heal all kinds of diseases, and to maintain one’s comfort and wellbeing. Please see **figure 47** for a compilation of Nigerians’ folk beliefs on the pharmacology of the selected Nigerian soups.

<b>SOUP FOLK BELIEFS</b>	
<i>Afang Soup</i>	Good for constipation and great for the bowels as it is a rich source of protein, fiber, vitamins and minerals, essential and non-essential amino acids.
<i>Ofe onugbu/Onugbu Soup</i>	Good for the skin; good for regulating blood sugar levels; ensures strong teeth; serves as immune boosters; helps with resistance against cancer; responsible for sturdy and powerful manhood
<i>Banga Soup/Ofe Akwu/Abak Atama</i>	Palm fruits which are used to make this soup are also used to produce palm kernel oil, which are used as local body lotion to help keep one's skin shiny and moisturized. This oil is also believed to treat different skin problems and some ailments like cough or cold. Roasted palm fruits are also comforting.
<i>Ofe Nsala/Afia Efere</i>	Good for the winter, cold/rainy weather, good for weightloss or low-calorie diets and mostly consumed when recovering from malaria or other ailments.
<i>Egusi Soup</i>	Responsible for slowing down ageing process; eliminating free radicals which are responsible for cancerous growths. Egusi soup cooked with pumpkin (ugu/ugwu) leaves are believed to cure all kinds of ailments like: malaria, faintness, and anaemia. They are also perceived to improve bone marrow problems, and ensure healthy bones, improve blood levels; prevent anaemia and leukaemia; heal wounds, and help form scar tissues, and thus good for pregnant women and women with heavy menstrual periods. They are also good for healthy skin, or teeth. Egusi soups are generally good for invalids and those who have lost appetite. They are also good for the winter to keep the body warm.
<i>Ogbono Soup</i>	Helps in controlling weight and ensuring weight loss as it is an appetite suppressant. Lowers cholesterol levels in the body. Prevents sugars from being stored by the body. Lowers chances of developing degenerative diseases. Used to stop diarrhea, ulcer, reduce abdominal fat and treat diabetes.
<i>Okra Soup</i>	It is good for the winter or taken when one has a cold as its flavors are very comforting for the cold and are also perceived to keep one happy especially when made with seafoods. It is also good for the digestive system, as it helps in detoxifying the liver and in bowel movement.

*Figure 47: Nigerians' folk beliefs on pharmacology of the selected Nigerian soups*

Although there are particular ways in which the soup or its major ingredients with the pharmacological properties could be eaten in order to benefit from its pharmacological properties (See “afang” soup, bitter leaf juice as examples).

### **6.1: Significance, Contributions and Strengths of the Study/Methodological Approach**

By embarking on an exploratory study and systematic evaluation of food blogs through componential and content analysis, this study hopes to lay a foundation upon which future studies on Nigerian food blogs could be built (Bernard, 2017; Adler & Clark, 2010; Kirby et al., 2010). Further, this study will contribute to the literature on food, culture, health and wellness in relation to Nigerian or African foods (Oguntona et al., 1999; Onabanjo et al., 2013; Ayogu et al., 2017; Ene-Obong et al., 2013), while also contributing to the emerging analyses of food blogs, and a literature on Nigerian food blogs. The study will also contribute to studies which have applied the content analysis method (Dumas et al., 2017), a powerful method that not only continues to garner attention as an important way to study ideas that are circulating in the public domain, but has also been powerfully utilized in court (Bernard, 2017, p. 474, 485).

### **6.2: Limitations of Study/Methodological Approach**

Despite the significance of this study, there are limitations. First, because this study utilizes only componential and content analysis, with no human subjects being interviewed, there are issues regarding generalizability (Adler & Clark, 2010; Kirby et al., 2010; Bernard, 2017). Secondly, within deploying the researcher as the participant and the lens for analysis (Kurtz et al., 2017), issues as to whether correct judgment and codes had been correctly generated from the studied text may arise (Bernard, 2017; Bryman et al., 2012, p.307). Also, content analysis is arguably not helpful in answering “why” questions (Bryman et al., 2012, p.308). Similarly, the problem with componential analysis is that a researcher can get caught up with finding the minimal analytic combination of features such that they forget they are interested in the meaning that people assign to different objects in a domain (Bernard, 2017, p.434; Bryman et al., 2012, p.308). Further, it is moot whether the bloggers’ classification is exactly how they think within the cultural domain (Bernard, 2017) and more complex methods with respondents could reveal richer cognitive cultural categories (see for example, Garro, 2000).

In order to resolve some limitations of this study, I recommend that further studies should be done to experiment whether the essential ingredients of each of the soups analyzed in this study could reproduce the actual soup. Also, I recommend that primary

data should be collected through interviewing Nigerian bloggers or Nigerians, and Nigerians in the diaspora in order to examine their use of these food blogs – the importance of food blogging in Nigeria, and its importance to Nigerians and Nigerians in the diaspora. Further, a comparative study – comparing data between Nigerians, and Nigerians in the diaspora on their relationship with, and attitudes to food or food blogs could be done. Also, this study prods for further research on the nutritional content of these recipes analyzed in this study.



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## **APPENDIX A: FOODBLOG CODEBOOK**

1. **Blog generated ID #** \_\_\_\_\_
2. **Blog Title** \_\_\_\_\_
3. **Which of these features does the blog have?**
  - Pictures
  - Texts
  - Links
  - Comment box
  - Subscribe box
  - Search engine
  - Menu bar
  - Blog categories
4. **How many categories does the blog have?** \_\_\_\_\_
5. **Mention some of those categories** \_\_\_\_\_

### **Blogs' "About Page"**

6. **The "About page" of the blog is about**
  - The author of the blog/blogger
  - The Blog
  - Both
7. **The blog is owned by:**
  - An individual
  - A team/group of individuals
  - Other
8. **Does the "About page" of the blog include the picture of the blogger?**
  - Yes
  - No
9. **Does the "About page" of the blog include the blogger's name?**
  - Yes (move to question 10)
  - No (move to question 1)
10. **Provide blogger's name** \_\_\_\_\_
11. **Blogger's gender**
  - Female
  - Male
  - Undefined
  - Other (Specify)
12. **Blogger's marital status**
  - Single
  - Married
  - Divorced
  - Living together not married
  - Unidentified
13. **Blogger's nationality**
  - Nigerian

- Non-Nigerian
  - Unidentified
- 14. Blogger's cultural group**
- Igbo
  - Yoruba
  - Hausa
  - Unidentified
- 15. Blogger's tribe \_\_\_\_\_**
- 16. Current Location/Residence of Blogger**
- Nigeria
  - Outside Nigeria
  - Unidentified
  - Other
- 17. Current Location/Residence of Blogger \_\_\_\_\_**
- 18. How many subscribers does the blog have? \_\_\_\_\_**
- 19. Does the food blog provide social space for users to share their opinions or/and experiences?**
- Yes
  - No
- 20. Who then are the intended/targeted audience/users of the blog?**
- Nigerians living in their home country
  - Nigerians living outside their home country (Nigerians in the diaspora)
  - Both A & B
  - Non-Nigerians
  - All of the above
  - Others, specify \_\_\_\_\_
- 21. Is the food blog used as a form of advertisement for monetization?**
- Yes
  - No
- 22. Does food blogger engage/provide or use other forms of social media in sharing the content of their food blog?**
- Yes
  - No
- 23. Which form(s) of social media does the blogger use?**
- BBM
  - Emails
  - Facebook
  - Google +
  - Instagram
  - Likedin
  - Pinterest
  - Snapchat
  - Twitter
  - Whatsapp
  - Wikipedia
  - Youtube

- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**24. How many followers/viewers does the food blogger have on their social media?**  
(this question should be answered for each of the social media selected in question 23)

- Less than 1,000
- 1,000 to 4,999
- 5,000 to 9,999
- 10,000 to 14,999
- 15,000 and above

**Blogs' Structure/Organization**

25. Which of these features does the blog have on its “front page?”

- Menu/Navigation bar
- Header
- Sidebar (with social profiles, favorite content or call to action)
- Footer (with relevant links like a disclaimer, privacy policy, contact page, etc)
- Archives
- Blog categories
- Search engine

26. Does the blogger provide the following on the individual posts?

<b>FEATURES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Post Heading</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Author of the post</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Links to other posts</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Outstanding/Featured Posts</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Comments</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Brief Information about the blogger</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Picture of the blogger</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Blogger's Favorites</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Adverts</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Social Media Icon</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Share button</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Sampled Recipe Posts**

27. General name of recipe

- Afang Soup
- Bitter leaf soup
- Banga Soup
- Ofe Akwu
- Abak Atama
- Afia Efere
- Ofe Nsala
- Egusi soup with (fluted)pumpkin (ugu/ugwu) leaves
- Egusi soup with bitter leaves
- Egusi soup with uziza leaves

- Fried Egusi Soup
- Oiless Egusi Soup
- Lumpy Egusi Soup
- Egusi Ijebu
- Ogbono soup with (fluted)pumpkin (ugu/ugwu) leaves
- Ogbono soup using other vegetables
- Ogbono soup using vegetables like uziza leaves
- Oiless Ogbono soup
- Plain okra soup with stew
- Oiless Okra Soup
- Okra with vegetables
- Okra soup with vegetables like uziza
- White okra – “Efere etighi”
- Seafood okra
- Ila Alasepo/alasekpo/asepo
- Ottong/otong soup
- Other Versions of Okra soup

28. Does the recipe post have the following (this question should be answered for each of the soups selected in question 27)?

<b>FEATURES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Recipe Heading</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Recipe Category provided by the blogger</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Author of the recipe</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Date of publication</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Narrative/Story on the recipe</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Video on the recipe</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Preparation time</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Cook time</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Total Time of preparation</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Number of servings</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Ingredients for preparing the recipe</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Measurements of Ingredients for preparing the recipe</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Cooking instruction/methods/procedure for the recipe</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Pictures of the cooking stages/instructions</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Pictures of the finished soup</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Pictures of some/all of the ingredients used in preparing this recipe</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments provided on the  
recipe post



**Sampled Recipe Posts: Writing Style**

**29. The ingredients needed for preparing this recipe were:**

(this question should be answered for each of the soup post selected in question 27)

- Numbered
- Bulleted
- Listed
- Paragraphed
- None of the above
- Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

**30. The cooking instructions/directions for preparing this recipe were:**

(this question should be answered for each of the soups selected in question 27)?

- Numbered
- Bulleted
- Listed
- Paragraphed
- None of the above
- Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

**31. How many Igbo soup recipes were sampled from the food blog? \_\_\_\_\_**

**32. How many Yoruba soup recipes were sampled from the food blog? \_\_\_\_\_**

**33. How many Hausa soup recipes were sampled from the food blog? \_\_\_\_\_**

**34. How many sampled soup recipes were Nigerian recipes but are neither Igbo, Yoruba or Hausa recipes? \_\_\_\_\_**

**35. How many Nigerian soup recipes were commonly included amongst the sampled food blog? \_\_\_\_\_**

- a. What are they?
- b. What are the main ingredients of the commonly consumed Nigerian soup recipes?
- c. Which of the ingredients are common?
  - i. How many of these ingredients are common?
- d. Which of the ingredients are different?
  - i. How many ingredients are different?

**36. In general, what contributions has the food blog made to food as culture and health?**

- a. What words are related to food as culture?
- b. What words are related to food as health?
- c. What soups are healthy or medicinal?

## APPENDIX B: SUPPLEMENTARY TABLES FOR CHAPTERS

Table B.1: Selection of Nigerian Food Blogs

POPULAR NIGERIAN WEBSITES WHICH RANKED NIGERIAN FOOD BLOGS (BASED ON GOOGLE SEARCH)								
<a href="#">OASDOM &amp; AMAZON ALEXA</a>	<a href="#">TATASHEY</a>	<a href="#">NIGERIAN INFOPEDIA</a>	<a href="#">NIGERIAN FINDER</a>	<a href="#">NIGERIAN BULLETIN</a>	<a href="#">HOT VIBES MEDIA</a>	<a href="#">ZIKOKO</a>	<a href="#">LEGIT</a>	<a href="#">CONNECT NIGERIA</a>
TOP 15	TOP 10	TOP 10	TOP 10	TOP 10	TOP 15	Top 10	TOP 10	TOP 5
All Nigerian Recipes			5th	5th	6th			
<b>All Nigerian Foods</b>								
Dobby's Signature	10th	6th	6th	6th	3rd	2nd	3rd	2nd
9jafoodie	3rd		2nd	2nd	5th	7th	1st	4th
<b>Wivestownhall</b>								
Nigerian Food Tv				7th				
Dooney's Kitchen	6th	1st	1st	1st	1st	6th	5th	3rd
<b>Knorr Cube</b>								
Iq Food Platter	5th	2nd					9th	
Sisi Jemimah								
Afrolems	4th	3rd	3rd	3rd	7th	4th		5th
<b>Mamasdish</b>								
Nigerian Lazy Chef		9th		9th	13th	5th	4th	
<b>Matse Cooks</b>		7th			4th		8th	
<b>My Belle Don Full</b>		4th	4th	4th	2nd			



Table B.2: A Summary of Sampled Food Blogs' Characteristics

SUMMARY OF SAMPLED FOOD BLOGS' CHARACTERISTICS										
Blog name/title	Blog's Tag/Caption line/label	Generated ID	Author/Blogger's name	Blogger's gender	Marital Status	With children	Nationality	Cultural Group	Current Residence of Blogger	Current Location/Residence
Dobby's Signature		DOB	Dobby	Female	Unidentified		Nigerian	Igbo	Nigeria	Lagos
Dooney's Kitchen	creating lasting food memories	DON	Dunni Obata	Female	Unidentified		Nigerian	Delta-Igbo and Yoruba	Outside Nigeria	United Kingdom
9jafoodie		9JA	Ronke Edoho	Female	Married		Nigerian	Yoruba	Outside Nigeria	Saskatchewan, Canada
Afrolems	Home of great Nigeria, African and International Recipes	AFRO	Atim Ukoh	Female	Unidentified		Nigerian	Cross Rivers	Outside Nigeria	Toronto, Boston/San Francisco and Lagos
Nigerian Lazy Chef	A Nigerian Food Blog	NIG	Nma	Female	Married	with children	Nigerian	Igbo	Outside Nigeria	United States of America
Sisi Jemimah		SIS	Jemimah Adebisi	Female	Unidentified		Nigerian	Yoruba	Outside Nigeria	United Kingdom
1qfoodplatter	Healthy Eating. Healthy Living	1Q	Iquo Ukoh	Female	Married		Nigerian	Cross Rivers	Nigeria	Lagos
All Nigerian Recipes	Celebrating Classic Nigerian Food since 2010	REC	Flo Chinyere	Female	Married	With children	Nigerian	Igbo	Outside Nigeria	Spain (moved from London)
All Nigerian Foods		FOOD	Chy Anegbu and David Anegbu	Male & Female	Unidentified		Nigerian	Igbo	Nigeria	Unidentified
Wives Connection	How to prepare food in Nigeria, Pregnancy, babies,	WIVES	Eya Ayambem	Female	Married	with children	Nigerian	Undefined	Nigeria	Abuja

Table B.3: A Summary of Sampled Food Blogs' Recipe-Categories

<b>BLOG</b>	<b>NO. OF RECIPE CATEGORIES</b>	<b>SOME OF THE CATEGORIES MENTIONED BY THE BLOGGERS</b>
DOB	126	Eastern Nigeria Recipes (41), Northern Nigeria Recipes (26), Southern Nigeria Recipes (18), Western Nigeria Recipes (17), <b>Soup Recipes</b> (44), Stews and Sauces (41), Rice Recipes (23)
DON	6	Rice Dishes, <b>Traditional Nigerian Soups</b> , Stews, Yam, Plantain and Pottage Dishes, Snacks, Healthy Nigerian
9JA	17	9jafoodie Recipes, Beans, Chicken, Drinks, Fish, Pasta, Plantain, Potato, Rice, Sauce, Small Chops, <b>Soups</b> , Stew, Tips, Video, Yam,
AFRO	65	Appetizers, Breakfast, Efik Recipes, Hausa Recipes, Ibo Recipes, Fitfam Recipes, Vegan Recipes, <b>Soups</b> , Swallows, Rice recipes, Salad Recipes, Kitchen Tips, Other African, Turkey Recipes,
NIG	186	Appetizers, Breakfast, Nigerian snacks, <b>Nigerian soups</b> , Nigerian stews, Southeast recipes, Southwestern recipes
SISI	30	Asian curries and soups (13), Baking Recipes (11), Breakfast Recipes (9), Caribbean recipes (2), Healthy Recipes (6), Helpful Cooking Tips (2), Nigerian snacks (15), Nigerian Food (104), <b>Nigerian Soups</b> (49), Pepper Soup Recipes (6), Nigerian Party Favourites (19)
1Q	24	<b>African Soups, Nigerian Soups</b> , All Recipes, Chicken Recipes, Rice Recipes, Plantain Recipes, Seafood Recipes, Kiddies Recipes, Meal Times: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, Appetizers/Small chops, Desserts, Snacks, Drinks, Food Timetable, Tips: Kitchen Tips, Health Tips, Nutrition Tips, Foodpedia, Videos

<b>BLOG</b>	<b>NO. OF RECIPE CATEGORIES</b>	<b>SOME OF THE CATEGORIES MENTIONED BY THE BLOGGERS</b>
REC	31	Breakfast Recipes, Efik Recipes, Hausa Recipes, Igbo Recipes, Yoruba Recipes, Special Nigerian Recipes, World Recipes, <b>Soups Recipes</b> , Stew Recipes, Rice Recipes
FOODS	34	Igbo Foods, Yoruba Foods, Hausa Foods, <b>Nigerian Soups</b> , Rice & Stew Recipes, Healthy Tips, Nigerian Drinks, Easy Nigerian Recipes, Nigerian Food Store
WIVES	87	Breakfast Ideas (16), My Kitchen diary recipes (278), My Nigerian Weight Loss Journey (47), Nigerian cooking tips (20), Nigerian food (25), Nigerian food for babies (29), Nigerian food for diabetics (4), Nigerian fufu and soup recipes (92), <b>Nigerian soups</b> (93)

Table B.4: Nigerian Soups Discussed on the Blogs

<b>KINDS OF NIGERIAN SOUPS DISCUSSED ON THE BLOG</b>		<b>NUMBER OF VARIATIONS ON EACH BLOGS</b>	
<b>NIGERIAN SOUPS</b>			
1	<b>AFANG SOUP</b>	10	
2	<b>BITTER LEAF SOUP (OFE ONUGBU)</b>	10	
3	<b>EGUSI SOUP</b>	10	
4	<b>OGBONO SOUP</b>	10	
5	<b>OKRA/OKRO SOUP</b>	10	
6	<b>PALM FRUIT/NUT SOUP</b>	BANGA SOUP	10
		OFE AKWU	7
		ABAK ATAMA	5
7	<b>WHITE SOUP</b>	AFIA EFERE	7
		OFE NSALA	9
8	EDIKAIKONG/EDIKA IKONG SOUP	9	
9	EFO RIRO/YORUBA VEGETABLE SOUP (Nigerian Vegetable Soup)	8	
10	EWEDU SOUP	8	
11	GBEGIRI SOUP	8	
12	OHA SOUP	8	
13	OFE OWERRI	6	
14	GROUNDNUT/PEANUT SOUP	6	
15	DIFFERENT KINDS OF OFE SOUP	6	
16	OFE OKAZI/UKAZI	5	
17	NIGERIA/RIVERS STATE NATIVE SOUP	5	
18	NIGERIAN BLACK SOUP	5	
19	BENISEED SOUP	3	
20	MIYAN TAUSHE	3	
21	AFIAME SOUP	2	
22	BINI OWO SOUP	2	
23	FISHERMAN'S SOUP	2	
24	MIYAN KUKA	2	
25	MIYAN WAKE	2	
26	OBE ISHAPA	2	
27	WATERLEAF SOUP	2	
28	ABAK ETIDOT	1	
29	ABAK NMONG	1	
30	COCONUT SHAKI SOUP	1	
31	EDITAN SOUP	1	
32	EFERE IBABA	1	
33	EKPANG KWUKWOR	1	
34	ETINKENI MMONG	1	
35	EWETA SOUP	1	
36	IGBAGBA OFOFO	1	
37	IWUK EFERE IKO	1	
38	MIYAN NAMA	1	

<b>KINDS OF NIGERIAN SOUPS DISCUSSED ON THE BLOG</b>		
	<b>NIGERIAN SOUPS</b>	<b>NUMBER OF VARIATIONS ON EACH BLOGS</b>
39	MIYAN POFORI	1
40	MIYAN ZOGALE	1
41	OBE ATA	1
42	OBE KOOWU	1
43	OBE ORE	1
44	OMI ATANIFA	1
45	OMI UKPOKA	1
46	OVWOH SOUP	1
47	OWGHO SOUP	1
		TOTAL VARIATION = <b>202</b>
<b>SOUP COMBINATIONS (SOUP COMBOS)</b>		
48	OGBONO & OKRA SOUP	5
49	OGBONO & EGUSI SOUP	3
50	VEGETABLE & EGUSI SOUP (EFO ELEGUSI)	3
51	OKRA & EWEDU SOUP	2
52	PALM FRUIT & EWEDU SOUP	2
53	EGUSI & EWEDU SOUP	2
54	BANGA & AFANG SOUP	1
<b>TOTAL =</b>		<b>18</b>
<b>SOUPS (202) + SOUP COMBO (18) =</b>		<b>220</b>

Table B.5: Nigerian Soups Discussed on the Blogs & Selecting one's to be Analyzed

NIGERIAN SOUPS	DOB	DON	9JA	AFR O	NIG.	SIS	1Q	REC.	FOO DS	WIV ES	S/NO	
<b>AFANG SOUP</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	10	
<b>Afang Variation</b>		X					X			X <sup>2</sup>	4	
<b>BITTER LEAF SOUP (OFE ONUGBU)</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	10	
<b>Bitter Leaf Soup (ofe onugbu) variation</b>							X				1	
<b>EGUSI SOUP (7 VERSIONS OF EGUSI SOUP)</b>	EGUSI WITH (FLUTED)PUMPKIN (UGU/UGWU)	X	X		X			X		X	5	
	EGUSI WITH BITTER LEAF	X						X	X	X	4	
	Egusi with Bitter Leaf Variation									X	1	
	EGUSI WITH UZIZA/UTAZI	X	X				X		X	X	5	
	FRIED EGUSI	X	X					X			3	
	EGUSI WITHOUT OIL (OILESS EGUSI)					X				X	2	
	EGUSI WITH LUMPS/BALLS (LUMPY EGUSI)		X	X			X	X		X	5	
	Egusi with Lumps/Balls (variation)						X				1	
	EGUSI IJEBU (IJEBU EGUSI)		X				X	X			3	
	Egusi Variation (Egusi stew, peppersoup, sunflower seeds egusi, etc)	X	X					X	X		X <sup>3</sup>	7
<b>OGBONO SOUP (4 VERSIONS OF OGBONO SOUP)</b>	OGBONO WITH (FLUTED)PUMPKIN (UGU/UGWU)	X		X				X	X	X	5	
	Ogbono with (Fluted)Pumpkin (Ugu/Ugwu) Variation			X				X <sup>2</sup>		X	4	
	OGBONO WITH UZIZA LEAVES		X				X			X	3	
	Ogbono with Uziza leaves Variation		X							X <sup>2</sup>	3	
	OGBONO WITHOUT OIL (OILESS OGBONO)			X		X				X	3	
	OTHER VERSIONS OF OGBONO WITH OTHER VEGETABLES				X		X				2	
<b>OKRA/OKRO SOUP (9 VERSIONS OF OKRA/OKRO SOUP)</b>	PLAIN OKRO WITH STEW	X		X	X	X					4	
	Plain Okro with Stew (Variation)					X					1	
	OILESS OKRO						X	X			2	
	A Variation of Oilless Okro						X				1	
	OKRO WITH VEGETABLES	X		X				X	X		4	
	Okro with Vegetables (Variation)	X									1	
	OKRO WITH VEGETABLE LIKE UZIZA						X			X	2	
	WHITE OKRO (EFERE ETIGHI)					X	X				2	
	SEAFOOD OKRO	X		X		X	X		X	X	6	
	ILA ALASEPO/ALASEKPO/ASEPO		X	X	X	X	X				5	
	OTTONG/OTONG SOUP		X	X	X		X				4	
	Ottong/Otong Soup Variation		X								1	
	OTHER VERSIONS OF OKRO SOUP		X					X	X		3	
	Other variations of Okro Soup (okro sauce/stir fry/peppersoup)		X	X	X			X			X <sup>2</sup>	6
<b>PALM FRUIT/NUT SOUP</b>	BANGA SOUP	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	10	
	Banga Soup Variation	X		X			X			X	4	
	OFE AKWU	X	X			X	X	X	X		7	
	ABAK ATAMA	X	X		X		X	X			5	
	AFIA EFERE	X	X	X	X	X	X				6	
<b>WHITE SOUP</b>	OFE NSALA	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	9	
	Variation - White soup									X <sup>3</sup>	3	
	X =127 (full recipes)	X=15	X=16	X=12	X=11	X=12	X=11	X=15	X=14	X=10	X=11	
	X =3 (only ingredients provided no instructions)							X=1		X=2	167	
	X=38 (other variations not analysed)	X=3	X=5	X=3	X=1	X=1	X=0	X=6	X=3	X=0	X=15	
	TOTAL RECIPES (provided by each blogger)	18	21	15	12	13	11	21	18	10	28	
	<b>Total RECIPES (provided by each blogger that is analysed)</b>	<b>X=15</b>	<b>X=16</b>	<b>X=12</b>	<b>X=11</b>	<b>X=12</b>	<b>X=11</b>	<b>X=15</b>	<b>X=15</b>	<b>X=10</b>	<b>X=13</b>	<b>130</b>

Table B.6: Selected & Analyzed Nigerian Soups Categorized Based on Culture

NIGERIAN SOUPS		DOB	DON	9JA	AFRO	NIG.	SIS	1Q	REC.	FOODS	WIVES	S/NO
AFANG SOUP		EFIK	EFIK	EFIK	EFIK	EFIK	EFIK	EFIK	EFIK	EFIK	EFIK	10
BITTER LEAF SOUP (OFE ONUGBU)		IGBO	IGBO	IGBO	IGBO	IGBO	IGBO	IGBO	IGBO	IGBO	IGBO	10
EGUSI SOUP (7 VERSIONS OF EGUSI SOUP)	EGUSI WITH (FLUTED)PUMPKIN (UGU/UGWU)	X	X		X				X		X	5
	EGUSI WITH BITTER LEAF	X							X	X	X	4
	EGUSI WITH OTHER VEGETABLES (E.G UZIZA, UTAZI, AFANG/OKAZI)	X	X				X			X	X	5
	FRIED EGUSI	X	X						X			3
	EGUSI WITHOUT OIL (OILESS EGUSI)					X					X	2
	EGUSI WITH LUMPS/BALLS (LUMPY EGUSI)		X	X				X	X		X	5
	EGUSI IJEBU (IJEBU EGUSI)		YOR					YOR	YOR			
OGBONO SOUP (4 VERSIONS OF OGBONO SOUP)	OGBONO WITH (FLUTED)PUMPKIN (UGU/UGWU)	X		X					X	X	X	5
	OGBONO WITH UZIZA LEAVES		X					X			X	3
	OGBONO WITHOUT OIL (OILESS OGBONO)			X		X					X	3
	OTHER VERSIONS OF OGBONO WITH OTHER VEGETABLES				X		X					2
OKRA/OKRO SOUP (9 VERSIONS OF OKRA/OKRO SOUP)	PLAIN OKRO WITH STEW	YOR		YOR	YOR	YOR						4
	OILESS OKRO							X	X			2
	A Variation of Oilless Okro							X				1
	OKRO WITH VEGETABLES	X		X					X	X		4
	OKRO WITH VEGETABLE LIKE UZIZA							X			X	2
	WHITE OKRO (EFERE ETIGHI)					EFIK		EFIK				2
	SEAFOOD OKRO	X		X		X	X		X		X	6
	ILA ALASEPO/ALASEKPO/ASEPO		YOR	YOR	YOR	YOR	YOR					5
	OTTONG/OTONG SOUP		EFIK	EFIK	EFIK		EFIK					4
OTHER VERSIONS OF OKRO SOUP		X					X	X			3	
PALM FRUIT/NUT SOUP	BANGA SOUP	EFIK	EFIK	EFIK	EFIK	EFIK	EFIK	EFIK	EFIK	EFIK	EFIK	10
	OFE AKWU	IGBO	IGBO			IGBO	IGBO	IGBO	IGBO	IGBO		7
	ABAK ATAMA	EFIK	EFIK		EFIK			EFIK	EFIK			5
WHITE SOUP	AFIA EFERE	EFIK	EFIK	EFIK	EFIK	EFIK		EFIK				6
	OFE NSALA	IGBO	IGBO		IGBO	IGBO	IGBO	IGBO	IGBO	IGBO	IGBO	9
		3	3	1	2	3	3	3	3	3	2	IGBO (26)
		4	5	4	5	4	3	5	3	2	2	EFIK (37)
		1	2	2	2	2	2	1	0	0	0	YORUBA (12)
		7	6	5	2	3	3	6	9	5	9	OTHER NIG. SOUPS (55)
Total RECIPES (provided by each blogger that is analysed)		X=15	X=16	X=12	X=11	X=12	X=11	X=15	X=15	X=10	X=13	130

Table B.7: Description of the Writing Styles of Recipes (Ingredients/Cooking Instructions)

**BULLETED INGREDIENTS**

e.g.

- Pepper
- Salt
- Bouillon cubes
- Palm oil
- Water

**LISTED INGREDIENTS**

e.g.

Pepper  
Salt  
Bouillon cubes  
Palm oil  
Water

**NUMBERED INGREDIENTS**

e.g.

1. Pepper
2. Salt
3. Bouillon cubes
4. Palm oil
5. Water

**BULLETED COOKING INSTRUCTIONS**

- Add water
- Heat for a while
- Add palm oil
- Add salt and pepper to taste

**LISTED COOKING INSTRUCTIONS**

Add water  
Heat for a while  
Add palm oil  
Add salt and pepper to taste

**NUMBERED COOKING INSTRUCTIONS**

- 1) Add water
- 2) Heat for a while
- 3) Add palm oil
- 4) Add salt and pepper to taste

**COOKING INSTRUCTIONS IN PARAGRAPHS**

Add water. Heat for a while. Add palm oil. Allow to cook for about 5 to 10 minutes (could sometimes include picture of instruction)

Add salt and pepper to taste. Bring to a boil. Do not cover pot when this is added

**OTHER NUMBERED COOKING INSTRUCTIONS**

STEP1: Add water

STEP 2: Heat for a while

STEP 3: Add palm oil



Table B.8: Table on Origin of “Palm fruit/nut Soup”

ORIGIN OF "BANGA SOUP"		
BLOG ID	PARTS OF NIGERIA	
DOB	Southern	
NIG.;		
1Q;	South eastern	
REC.	South south	SOUTHERN
WIVES		
ORIGIN OF "OFE AKWU SOUP"		
DOB;		
SISI;	eastern	EASTERN
REC.		
ORIGIN OF "ABAK ATAMA SOUP"		
DOB	southeastern	Cross River
		akwa
REC	southern	ibom
		SOUTHERN

Table B.9: Showing the Local Names of “Palm fruit/nut Soup” in Different Nigerian Cultures

LOCAL NAMES OF PALM FRUIT SOUP BASED ON CULTURE		
NIGERIAN CULTURE	LOCAL NAME OF PALM FRUIT/NUT SOUP	BLOG ID
Igbos - e.g Anambara; Enugu	Ofe akwu	DOB; SISI; REC.; FOODS
Niger-Deltas, Delta State, Benin. Edo	Banga soup	DOB; DON; 9JA; NIG.; SISI; 1Q; REC.; FOODS
Yorubas	Obe eyin	9JA
Urohobos	Amiedi	9JA
Itsekiris	Obey-ekpo	9JA
Efik/Ibibio	Abak Atama	DOB; DON; SISI; 1Q