

Ethiopian food is awesome. It packs the spicy power of Korean with the infallible silverware of a tempestuous two year old: *you don't use any silverware*. Instead you use a fun bread called injera!

Cheat Sheet

Injera is a flatbread that is raised by yeast. If you think that's pretty boring, I recommend introducing yourself to some – it has an alien, spongy feel and a tangy, sourdoughish flavor.

Berberé is one of the cornerstones of Ethiopian cuisine. It's a devilishly red spice mixture that contains over a half-dozen different spices, most noticeably ground red chilies. It also includes ginger, allspice, coriander, rue berries, ajwain, and whatever else you have laying around. Basil? Sure, throw it in. Korerima? Yeah, don't know what that is but we'll take it too.

You can think of it as cayenne pepper with an extra oomph - while you'd never flavor a stew with nothing but cayenne, berbere has enough depth that you can do just that.

Mitmita is a mixture of spices that's a lot like like berbere with the exception that it will very easily kick your ass. It's generally a combination of birdseye chilies (super hot), cardamom, cloves, salt, and other random spices.

Mekelesha is a clove-y spice blend used to put the finishing touches on a stew.

Fenugreek is a spice generally associated with Indian food (see *methi*) that looks like little rocks. I have secrets to tell about it but they're too fun to spill the beans right here.

Shiro is ground-up chickpeas. **Mitin shiro** has extra spices mixed in with it already (e.g. berbere), while **nech shiro** is plain powdered chickpeas. I have a theory that you could turn these into a wicked ready-made hummus but haven't gotten around to trying it out yet.

Niter Kibbeh is spiced clarified butter. Clarified butter has had the milk solids removed so that it's shelf-stable and able to cook at higher temperatures without breaking down (no smoky butter kitchens!). Spices include ginger, garlic, basil, black cumin, and many other options. You can also spell it a zillion ways, of which **nitr qibe** is my favorite.

Ghee is clarified butter, no spices, full stop.

Wot is a stew. Its primary use is making puns when writing emails about Ethiopian dinner parties, such as "wots for dinner" or "wot should I cook tonight."

Tibs are sautéed dishes. Not as good for puns, not as fun to cook.

Kitfo is one of the national dishes of Ethiopia. You grind up beef, spice it with butter and mitmita, and eat it raw! Or raw-ish, I don't mind if you cook it a bit. The version using cubed beef instead of ground beef is the wonderfully repetitive **gored gored**.

Tej is Ethiopian honey wine. Think mead.

Korerima is black cardamom. Different than the green kind!

Spiced Clarified Butter

Nitr Qibe

several pounds of butter	2 tsp cumin
2 tbl chopped ginger	3 tsp basil (dried)
1 clove garlic, chopped	1 tsp cardamom seeds
1 red onion, chopped	1 tbl oregano
1 T fenugreek	1/2 tsp turmeric

This recipe is, in theory, for twelve pounds of butter, but that's probably not going to happen. You can use the same amount of spices, though, don't worry about trying to scale it. The idea is just that at the end of the process, you end up with a nicely spiced butter - it isn't an exact science! If you're using a niter kibbeh mix, use a couple teaspoons per stick of butter.

Collard Greens with Spiced Cottage Cheese

Ayib Be Gomen

1 lb cottage cheese	2 tbl mitmita
1 lb collard greens	3 tbl spiced butter
1 tsp black pepper	salt, to taste

This recipe is great to showcase how nicely the spiced butter complements other flavors

- 1) If you bought produce-aisle collards, wash them well and cut them into small pieces. If you bought them from the freezer aisle, just defrost them.
- 2) Boil the collards in a pot until they're as done and you'd like them - my recipe says 5-10 minutes, but I think that's unreasonably short amount of time. Just don't cook them down into mush. Combine everything, and you're all set.

Cabbage and Vegetables

Tikil gomen

4 carrots, sliced	1 tsp cumin
1 onion, sliced	½ tsp turmeric
5 potatoes, cubed	½ head cabbage, shredded
1 tsp black pepper	1 tsp salt

- 1) Over medium heat in a well-oiled pan, cook carrots and onions for about 5 minutes.
- 2) Stir in remaining ingredients except potatoes, and cook over another 15-20 min.
- 3) Add potatoes, cover, reduce heat to medium-low, and cook until potatoes are soft, 20-30 minutes.

Spicy Lentil Stew

Yemisir Kek Wot

2 cups split lentils	1 tbl ginger
2 cups red onions, chopped	1 tsp garlic
1 1/2 cups spiced butter/oil	1 cup berbere
	1/4 tsp black cumin (optional)

- 1) You can also completely remove the berbere and add in a couple sliced green peppers to turn this into an alicha dish.
- 2) Cook onions until golden brown. Add butter/oil and spices.
- 3) Add lentils to the onions, along with enough water to cover.
- 4) Continue cooking until lentils are soft, about 20 minutes or so. Allow to cool and thicken, then eat!

Mild Lamb Stew

Yebeq Alicha

2 lb lamb, cut up	1/4 tsp turmeric
1/4 cup nitr qibe	1 tsp black cardamom powder
2 cups onions, chopped	2 chili peppers
2 tsp garlic powder	Long green peppers, sliced
1/4 tsp ginger powder	salt
1/4 tsp ajwain	

- 1) Cook lamb or other meat, whether boiled or broiled.
- 2) Cook onion until soft, 10-15 min. Add ½ cup water + nitr qibe + garlic powder + ginger powder + ajwain. Cook another 5 mins.
- 3) Add meat + turmeric + 1 cup water.
- 4) Simmer for 30 minutes. Add black cardamom and salt to taste, cook for 5 more minutes, then serve with peppers.