

NAME OF THE ELEMENT: TRADITIONAL PROCESS OF MAKING OF PALM OIL

DOMAIN: SOCIAL PRACTICES, RITUALS AND FESTIVE EVENTS.

COMMUNITY: AKUAPEM SETTLERS WHO LIVE IN SEFWI

REGION: WESTERN NORTH REGION (Note: Practice of this Element occurs in most regions in Ghana)

BRIEF DESCRIPTION / STEPS IN PREPARATION: Ngo is traditionally produced palm oil made from palm fruits. Fresh harvested palm bunches are partitioned by manual threshing with an axe or cutlass to access the spikelets. The spikelets are covered for some days to allow easy removal of the fruits. The fruits are removed manually by hand and made ready for boiling. In other times, stale bunches are hit with a cutlass for fast removal of the palm fruits and the remaining fruits are removed by hand from the spikelets. The fruits that are collected in this manner, usually come off with their husks which is then sieved using a sieving machine to remove the husks from the palm fruits when it is turned in a cyclical manner.

The nuts are boiled in a large pot and covered with large cocoa sacks to enable the nuts at the top to cook properly. The cooked fruits are collected with a colander or a bucket with holes underneath it. Afterwards, it is grounded with a palm nut grinding machine. The grinding machine separates the palm oil from the palm kernel and the chaff by extraction. The extracted oil which has some water percentage is collected and boiled in another pot. While the pot heats the extracted oil, the water content settles at the bottom while the palm oil rises to the top. The practitioner then collects the red oil which has settled above the water. The harvested oil which contains some amount of water is then heated in another pot for some time to take out all excess water from the oil before it becomes ready for use.

The practitioners in this community previously used wooden mortars and pistons to make the Ngo. With this, the boiled palm fruits are pounded using the mortar and piston manually. The pounded fruits are collected and mixed with water to separate the palm kernel nuts, chaff and the palm soup using a collander. The soup is then set on fire to boil. While it boils the palm oil rises above the soup and is collected and then reheated for all water components to completely evaporate then the Ngo becomes ready to use. Usually, to have more palm oil, the palm fruits are left to dry in the sun for some days before the process starts.

The practitioners usually make the red oil in large quantities either to store for their use at home or sell. Ngo or Palm Oil is used to prepare local meals such as eto, abom, aprapransa, mpotompoto, and others as well as used to burst and heal boils and food poisoning. For industrial purposes, it is also used to make soaps. The practitioners replant most of the palm trees as they harvest the nuts since this is the source for their raw material for this particular skill process. This skill or element is also practiced in most communities within the region of Ghana. It is a skill process that is passed on from generations to generation through informal means (apprentice). Some tangible elements (such as instruments, specific clothing or space(s), ritual objects) (if any) associated with the enactment or transmission of the ICH element: Grinding Machine, Sieving machines, Cutlass, Firewood, Metal pots/pans, Water, Rubber gallons and Metal stoves

Photography:



Consent: Akuapem Community

Submitted by: National Folklore Board