

Recipes for Black History Month 2026

1. Ontario - [Jamaican Patties](#)

a. Why Jamaican Patties?

- i. It is well known that the Greater Toronto Area has one of the largest Jamaican diaspora communities in the world, with over 140,000 residents of Jamaican descent. No dish is more ubiquitous in the GTA than the Jamaican patty. It can be found everywhere from upscale restaurants like *Patois* to simple stands and coffee shops at Union Station.

Jamaican immigration to Canada, largely to the GTA, began in earnest in the 1960's and 70's, following the migration patterns of peoples across the Caribbean broadly. In 1955, the *West Indian Domestic Scheme* began. This was an immigration program targeting Caribbean women from '55 to '67, encouraging them to come work in Canada as domestic workers. This program opened the doors for many Black women to enter Canada, an opportunity that would not have been available before. Despite this, racism and mistreatment was common, with many working upwards of 18 hours per day, 7 days a week, for low salaries. Women like Jean Augustine, Canada's first Black female MP and Cabinet minister, arrived in Canada through this scheme. The next wave of immigration coincided with the end of the *West Indian Domestic Scheme* and the "liberalization" of Canada's immigration policies, where emphasis on skills and education were prioritized and a focus on race, nationality, and skin colour was (legally) de-emphasized. During this period, Canada accepted roughly 64,000 people from the Caribbean. The third wave of Caribbean immigration to Canada occurred after the development of the points system in 1967, mostly in the early 1970's. 1973 saw the highest number of Caribbean migration to Canada, with approximately 20,000 persons from Caribbean countries admitted to Canada. By the mid 1970's an economic recession slowed migration trends, though consistent migration would continue to the modern day.

One story of Jamaican Canadians' contribution to their communities and Canadian society at large is that of Gloria Reuben. She is a Canadian-American actress, producer, singer, and social activist. Born in Toronto, Ontario, to Pearl Avis (Mills), a classical singer, and Cyril George Reuben, an engineer, her parents were both Jamaican-born. Her father was mostly Jewish (with Ashkenazi and Sephardi roots), though he also had some African ancestry; her mother is of mostly African descent. Her father died when she was young. Reuben came to prominence on the American television series *ER* as Jeanie Boulet, an HIV-positive physician assistant on the hospital's staff. She was a guest star throughout the first season and was promoted to full-time cast

member at the beginning of the second. She continued that role until early in the sixth season. In 2008, Reuben returned to ER for one episode during its 14th season. She has stated that this role led to her HIV/AIDS activism. Reuben continues to raise awareness about the HIV/AIDS pandemic, lobbying for increased advocacy and speaking at several major fundraising events. She also takes great interest in global issues, predominantly climate change, nature, and human rights. Gloria Reuben is the president of Waterkeeper Alliance, an organization that strengthens and grows a global network of grassroots leaders protecting everyone's right to clean water. She is also a special adviser on climate change for The Climate Reality Project, former United States vice president Al Gore's environmental organization. She was formerly on the board for the National Wildlife Federation. Reuben is also on the Leadership Council for the RFK Center for Justice and Human Rights.

b. What you'll need:

i. Pastry Dough

1. 3 1/2 cups (450 grams) all-purpose flour
2. 1 teaspoon (4 grams) salt
3. 1 tablespoon granulated sugar
4. 1 cup (220 grams) unsalted butter or 1/2 cup (100 grams) beef suet chopped into pea size pieces and frozen + 1/2 cup (100 grams) shortening
5. 1 tablespoon (30 grams) turmeric powder
6. ~1 cup water (230 grams) ice cold water

ii. Beef Patty Filling

1. 1 pound (450 grams) lean ground beef
2. 1 large yellow or red onion, finely chopped
3. 3 scallions, finely chopped
4. 1 Scotch bonnet pepper (can add more if desired)
5. 1/2 cup (50 grams) breadcrumbs
6. 3/4 teaspoon salt or as necessary
7. 1 teaspoon paprika
8. 3 tablespoons soy sauce
9. 1-2 tablespoons ketchup
10. 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
11. 3/4 teaspoon dried thyme
12. 1/2 teaspoon allspice
13. 4 tablespoons unsalted butter
14. 1 -2 cups water
15. 2 cloves garlic, minced

c. Instructions:

i. Pastry Dough

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a dough hook, add the **all-purpose flour, salt, turmeric powder, suet and shortening**

and mix on low speed until a crumbly texture is developed. If using **butter** (instead of beef suet and shortening) add that instead. The mixture should resemble a breadcrumb consistency. Another method is to grate shortening and suet or butter into flour and mix by hand with a whisk until breadcrumb consistency is achieved. A food processor will also work to get breadcrumb consistency by combining all ingredients and pulsing 6-8 times.

2. Add in the **ice cold water** and mix until ingredients are well combined and the pastry dough slightly developed.
3. Remove dough from mixing bowl and wrap in plastic, place into refrigerator for 30 minutes.

ii. Assembly

1. Preheat the oven to 365°F.
2. Remove dough from the refrigerator and divide it into 12 equal parts for large patties or 20 equal parts for small patties (I prefer larger sized patties). Use a pastry cutter or knife to assist you.
3. Roll each dough piece into a ball and flatten using a rolling pin.
4. For large pieces, fill each pastry disc with 2 to 3 tablespoons of filling around the centre of the pastry dough. For smaller patties, fill dough with 1-1/2 tablespoon of meat filling.
5. Chilling the meat filling completely in the fridge makes filling the pies a lot easier as the filling sets a bit.
6. Overlap the pastry dough to resemble a half moon crescent and pinch the outer end with a fork to seal the patties closed. You can use the edge of a knife to smooth out the edge of the patty purely for aesthetic reasons. No need to cut off excess dough, just press edge into perfect semi-circle.
7. Place the patties onto a baking tray lined with parchment paper and bake in the middle rack for 25-30 minutes or until beef patty is light golden brown. If making smaller patties you may need less time.
8. Eat immediately or patties freeze very well and can be reheated in oven.

Makes 12 Patties

Recipe Courtesy of Nadia Boachie writing for Taste Toronto

2. Quebec - [Haitian Griot](#)

a. Why Haitian Griot?

- i. The Haitian community in Montreal is a large and storied group. As of 2021, approximately 47,550 Haitians were living in the Montreal area, making them the largest minority group in the city. During the 1960's and 70's, the dictatorship of Haiti's president, François Duvalier, violently suppressed any opposition in reaction to a failed military coup near the start of his term. Mass arrests, torture, and even the deployment of undercover death squads (the *Tonton Makout*) were used to terrorized the people of Haiti. Between the late 60's and the early 70's, thousands of Haitians sought refuge in Quebec, the only other majority French speaking jurisdiction in the Americas. It was under these conditions that Michaëlle Jean was born in Port-au-Prince, Haiti on the 6th of September, 1957. After her father had suffered arrest and torture by the hands of the government, Jean and her family fled to Quebec when she was only 11, and like many other Haitians during this time, settled in the Montreal Area.

A social activist, Jean mixed freely in the diverse world of Montreal's ethnic communities, honing a perfect command of French and English in the process. Embarking on a career in broadcast journalism, she became a popular commentator on the French-language network of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and also worked frequently on the English network. From 2001 Jean worked as an anchor for Radio-Canada's *Le Téléjournal*, and in 2004 she began to host her own television interview show, *Michaëlle*. She won numerous awards for her journalism, including the Amnesty International Journalism Award. With her husband, French-born Canadian filmmaker Jean-Daniel Lafond, she also made several acclaimed documentaries, most notably *Haïti dans tous nos rêves* (1995; "Haiti in All Our Dreams").

On September 27, 2005, Jean was officially installed as Canada's governor-general. She was the first Black person and the first Haitian immigrant to hold the prestigious but mainly ceremonial post as the British monarch's viceregal representative in Canada. The appointment brought out, in a striking fashion, the changing nature of modern Canada: since World War II Canada had become a genuinely multicultural society, with attitudes influenced by the heavy flow of immigrants.

b. What you'll need:

- i. 2 lb Pork Shoulder, cut into 1" pieces
- ii. ¼ cup White Vinegar
- iii. ½ tbsp Salt
- iv. 4 limes
- v. ½ cup Epis
- vi. 4 Maggi Cubes, Mini, 4 g each. Or 1 normal maggi cube

- vii. 5-6 stems Parsley
- viii. 4 sprigs Thyme
- ix. 1 Habanero Pepper
- x. 2 tbsp Seasoned Salt, can also use adobo
- xi. Vegetable Oil, for frying

c. Instructions:

- i. Pour the vinegar, salt and the juice of the limes over the pork. Mix to combine.
- ii. Reserve the lime halves after juicing, and rub each piece of meat on the flesh of the lime half, making sure to really get the meat covered in the citrus.
- iii. Cover the bowl, put it in the fridge, and let it sit for an hour. When the hour is up, rinse the meat to remove the vinegar and the salt.
- iv. Put the cleaned pork in a bowl and add the Haitian Epis, maggi, and seasoning salt. Use kitchen twine to tie the parsley and thyme together, then place the bunch in the bowl along with habanero pepper.
- v. Stir until the meat is well coated. Cover again and let the meat sit in the fridge for 2 hours or overnight.
- vi. Remove the parsley, thyme and habanero pepper from the bowl and discard. Add the pork into a medium pot on the stove along with the leftover marinade.
- vii. Turn the heat to high and cook the meat for about 5 minutes until it releases some juice.
- viii. Reduce the heat to medium, and cook for another 10 minutes or until the pork is cooked through and fork tender. The excess marinade should thicken a little. Remove the pork from the pot and set aside in a bowl.
- ix. In a medium to large pot, heat the vegetable oil to 360 degrees Fahrenheit. Add the pork to the oil and fry until it turns golden brown (about 1-2 minutes). Fry the pork in batches, removing the meat to a paper towel-lined plate once it's done frying to remove extra oil.
- x. Serve with pikliz and fried plantains. Enjoy!

Makes 8 Servings

Recipe Courtesy of Alexandria Drzazgowski Ulmer writing for The Foreign Fork

3. New Brunswick - [Jollof Rice](#)

a. Why Jollof Rice?

- i. Moncton has the highest proportion and total number of African residents of any major city in New Brunswick, with 4,075 people representing 5.26% of the population circa 2021. Nigerians now make up the second largest group of immigrants becoming permanent residents in Moncton, and the largest African community choosing to settle in the city. While Nigeria has a massive culinary tradition, few dishes carry the same clout as Jollof Rice.

Jollof rice was probably first cooked during the 14th century in the Wolof empire, which had risen in the previous century in what is now inland Senegal. Rice cultivation thrived in the Wolof empire and formed the basis of many dishes. One of those was *thiéboudienne* or *thiebou dieun*, a dish made by cooking rice with fish, shellfish, and vegetables; the word *thiéboudienne* comes from the Wolof words for rice, *ceeb* or *thiebb*, and fish, *jën*. As the Wolof empire expanded, the dish spread throughout the region, and different ingredients and cooking methods were introduced. Eventually, the new interpretations of *thiéboudienne* came to be known as jollof, a variant spelling of the dominant Jolof state in the Wolof empire.

The contemporary versions of jollof rice—complete with tomatoes, peppers, onions, and spices—were developed after new ingredients and flavors from other parts of the world had been introduced to West Africa. Today jollof rice is a common dish throughout much of West Africa, where it is known by a number of different names. For example, in The Gambia it is called *benachin*. In Senegal it is still called *thiéboudienne*. In some French-speaking West African countries, such as Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, and Guinea, jollof rice is called *riz gras*, or “fat rice.” In Mali it is called *nsamé* or *zaame*.

In the 2010s the long-standing, lighthearted debate over which country and its diaspora make the best jollof rice garnered significant attention on social media and the Internet. These came to be called the “jollof wars” and center on differences in preparation and ingredients. People with roots in Cameroon, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone have all laid claim to the best variation of jollof rice. In general, those from The Gambia and Senegal, where the dish originated, have stayed out of the debate. Perhaps the most passionate debate has taken place between Nigerians and Ghanians, whose jollofs often use different types of rice and various aromatics. The “jollof wars,” for all their fierceness, have been credited with bringing diasporic communities across the world together as they celebrate a shared cuisine. They have also coincided with increased efforts to reclaim and highlight West African food.

b. What you'll need:

- i. For the Sauce:
 - 1. 3 red bell pepper
 - 2. 3 Plum tomatoes
 - 3. 1 medium onion
 - 4. 2 scotch bonnet/habanero use less if you don't like it spicy
 - 5. ¼ cup water
- ii. For the Jollof
 - 1. ½ cup oil
 - 2. 1 medium onion sliced
 - 3. 4 tablespoons tomato paste
 - 4. 4 cloves garlic finely minced
 - 5. 1 tablespoon ginger grated
 - 6. 2 bay leaves
 - 7. 1 tablespoon thyme
 - 8. 1 tablespoon curry Powder
 - 9. 1 teaspoons salt or add to taste
 - 10. white Pepper or black pepper to taste
 - 11. 1 tablespoon chicken bouillon powder or 3 cubes
 - 12. 4 cups long grain rice rinsed and drained
 - 13. 3-4 cups chicken stock
 - 14. 1 large tomato sliced
 - 15. 1 medium onion sliced
 - 16. 2 tablespoons butter at room temperature - optional

c. Instructions:

- i. First, make the tomato-based sauce by blending together the red bell peppers (pimento), tomatoes, onion, and scotch bonnet.
- ii. Heat the cooking oil in a large pan over medium heat, then add the diced onions and let them cook for about 3 minutes or until they are soft.
- iii. Next, add the tomato paste and fry for about 5 minutes. Then stir in garlic, ginger, and bay leaves—leave to cook for 2 more minutes.
- iv. Add the blended sauce and allow the pepper to cook until the water is reduced and the sauce become thick —about 10 to 15 minutes.
- v. Season with thyme, curry powder, bouillon cubes, salt, and pepper to taste. Cook for another 2 to 5 minutes.
- vi. Add the rinsed rice to the sauce and stir until it is well coated with the sauce. Then add the chicken stock, stir briefly, cover with a tight-fitting lid, and bring to a quick boil over high heat.
- vii. Once it begins to boil—after about 3 to 5 minutes, reduce the heat immediately to low and steam until the rice is done—about 30 minutes.
- viii. Add the butter, sliced tomato, and onions, stir together briefly and turn off the heat. Cover it immediately so that the heat remaining in the rice can steam up the vegetables a little.
- ix. Serve with sweet fried plantains, roasted chicken, or salad.

Makes 8 Servings

Recipe Courtesy of Lola Osinkolu writing for Chef Lola's Kitchen

4. Nova Scotia - [Molasses Cornbread](#)

a. Why Molasses Cornbread?

- i. Cornbread has its origins in Native American cuisine, but the dish as we know it today began its life after West Africans were exposed to corn by European traders engaging in the Atlantic slave trade. Dishes like *kush* began to emerge in Senegambia and the Sahel, and thus when African slaves were shipped off to the Americas, ingredients like cornmeal were already familiar to them. By the 18th century, the dish evolved from a simple mixture of cornmeal and water cooked over an open fire to what is effectively the modern recipe we use today; incorporating ingredients like buttermilk, eggs, baking soda/powder, and pork fat.

Africville was an historic Black community in Halifax, Nova Scotia. The first official record of Africville is from 1761, when the land was granted to several white families, including the families of men who imported and sold enslaved African men and women. In 1836, Campbell Road connected central Halifax to the Africville area. It is likely that several Black families lived in the area, earning it the nickname "African Village." They were a mix of formerly enslaved people, maroons, and Black refugees from the War of 1812. Many of these refugees were once enslaved in the Chesapeake area of the United States. With its roots often originating south of the border, Black Nova Scotian cuisine is heavily influenced by the colonial diets of American slaves and settlers, blending European, African, and Indigenous dishes, techniques, and ingredients. Inspired by *Mama's Cornbread* at Freedom - Culinary culture in Halifax Nova Scotia, this molasses cornbread was selected to illustrate just how massive the history of a simple soul food staple can be.

b. What you'll need:

- i. Equipment:
 1. 9 x 9 square baking dish
- ii. Ingredients
 1. Dry Ingredients:
 - a. 1 cup yellow corn meal or corn flour
 - b. 1 cup flour
 - c. ½ cup white sugar
 - d. 2 tsp baking soda
 - e. 1 tsp baking powder
 - f. ½ tsp salt
 2. Wet Ingredients:
 - a. 1 cup buttermilk, shaken
 - b. ½ cup molasses
 - c. ¼ cup warm water

c. Instructions:

- i. Preheat oven to 350F.

- ii. Butter a 9×9 baking dish.
- iii. In a large mixing bowl whisk together the dry ingredients until well combined.
- iv. Add the wet ingredients (no need to mix them together first) and stir or whisk just to combine, but do not over mix this batter.
- v. Turn the batter into your prepared pan and bake for about 28-35 minutes, or until the cornbread is firm to the touch in the center. Don't open your oven door prematurely or the cornbread can sink.
- vi. Serve warm with lots of butter!
- vii. Leftovers can be kept in an airtight container on the counter for a few days. The cornbread can also be frozen for longer storage. Use within a month.

Makes 12 Servings

Recipe Courtesy of Sue Moran writing for View from Great Island