

1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper  
 1 small onion, diced  
 1 teaspoon ketchup  
 1 teaspoon soy sauce  
 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce  
 1 tablespoon dark rum  
 1 teaspoon Trinidadian Scotch bonnet pepper sauce (see page 320 to make your own, or purchase online from Matouk's); habanero sauce can substitute in a pinch but is not ideal  
 2 tablespoons green seasoning (see page 324 to make your own)  
 2 teaspoons canola oil  
 ¼ cup sugar  
 4 cups parboiled rice  
 1 bell pepper, seeded and diced  
 1 (15-ounce) can green pigeon peas (about 2 cups), drained and rinsed (available from Goya), or frozen black-eyed peas  
 1 (13.5-ounce) can full-fat coconut milk  
 3 cups water  
 2 teaspoons salt  
 2 pounds kabocha or butternut squash, peeled, seeded, and cut into 2-inch chunks  
 2 tablespoons olive oil



Black pepper



Parboiled rice, pigeon peas, pumpkin

**PELAU**, a rice, bean, and often meat (usually chicken) dish, is thought of as an Afro-Trinidadian dish. However, you may note the remarkable similarity of its name to the Indian rice dish known as *pulao*, or in other derivations, *pilaf*. The basic ingredients of rice, beans, vegetables, and meat are indeed similar throughout the various cultures. But the flavorings used in pelau are distinctly Trinidadian. The coconut milk is a common Caribbean ingredient, and the type of beans used, pigeon peas, are also a hallmark of Caribbean cooking, as are the flavors of green seasoning, rum, and a little bit of Scotch bonnet pepper sauce. I've adapted this recipe from *The Naparima Girls' High School Diamond Jubilee: Trinidad & Tobago Recipes*, a community cookbook that was originally published in 1988. For this vegetarian version, I've added chunks of roasted kabocha or butternut squash, which are similar to what would be called "pumpkin" in Trinidad.

## PELAU WITH ROASTED PUMPKIN

### Serves 8

In a small bowl, stir together black pepper, onion, ketchup, soy sauce, Worcestershire sauce, rum, pepper sauce, and green seasoning. Set aside.

**Make "browning" when you're ready to cook:** Heat canola oil in a heavy pot with a lid over medium heat. Then, add sugar and allow to cook, stirring occasionally, until almost black.

When browning has liquefied and is almost black, add rice to pot and stir for a few minutes to coat.

Add bell pepper, pigeon peas, and seasoning mixture, stir, and cook until onion is translucent, about 3 minutes.

Add coconut milk, water, and salt and stir until all ingredients in pot are well combined. Cover pot and bring to a low boil, then lower heat to low and allow to cook for 20 to 30 minutes, stirring about every

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