**Nigerian Jollof Rice (Oven Baked Method)**

**Ingredients**

* 3 cups of rice (I like Uncle Ben’s Parboiled white rice)
* 2 Maggi cubes (or chicken or beef bouillon cubes)
* salt to taste
* 1 tsp of thyme
* 2 tsp curry
* 1 tsp black pepper
* 2-3 bay leaves
* 3 tbs of tomato paste
* 1/2 cup of extra virgin olive oil
* 2 medium sized plum tomatoes
* 3 large red bell peppers
* 3-4 habanero peppers
* 2 medium onions
* 4 garlic cloves
* 1 small piece of ginger (about 1 ½ inches cubed)
* 4½ cups of hot meat stock (you can use turkey or chicken stock if you do not have any homemade)
* 3 tablespoons of crayfish (shrimp) powder

**Instructions**

1. Wash your uncooked rice under cold running water until clear and drain. Set aside.
2. Blend the tomatoes, peppers, garlic, habanero peppers, ginger and one full onion until smooth. In a pot, cook on medium heat to boil away the excess water. Set aside to cool.
3. Pre heat oven to 350 degrees.
4. In a Dutch oven, pour in the oil. Chop the remaining onion and add into the pot when the oil heats up. Sauté the onion until translucent; add the curry, thyme and bay leaves. Stir fry for a about 2-3 minutes to help release the flavors of the spices; then add the tomato paste and fry until the paste looks a little dark and dry. Add in the blended tomato-pepper mixture. Season with crayfish, the crushed bouillon cubes, black pepper and thoroughly fry until the mixture looks dark. You will know the mixture is fried properly because the oil will float to the top. Remove the pot from the heat and stir in the uncooked rice. Make sure the tomato mixture coats each grain. Pour in the meat stock and check for seasonings and add salt if needed. Cover the top of the Dutch oven with foil along with a tight lid and place the pot into the oven, on the center rack. Increase the heat of the oven to 375 degrees and cook covered for about 20 to 30 minutes. I usually check if the rice is cooked after about 20 minutes. If your rice still needs a little cooking, cover tightly and let it cook further. Try not to add water because you do not want your rice to be too soft. If additional water is needed, please add no more than ⅓ cup of hot water and cook for another 10 minutes. Do not be afraid to add more salt if needed.
5. Remove from the oven and serve hot. Enjoy.