

# Latin America and the Caribbean

The importance of cassava as a tropical food in Latin America and the Caribbean is revealed by its importance in indigenous mythology and tribal customs.

During the last decade, industrial use of cassava has grown in the tropics, converting the commodity from being a subsistence crop to a commercial crop that provides raw material for food processing and industrial applications.

Even so, traditional products continue to play an important role in the Latin American diet.

Examples of these products include the following:

## DRIED PRODUCTS

■ **Cazabe:** *Casabe* in the Caribbean, Colombia, and Venezuela is prepared in a manner similar to that of the Brazilian *farinha*, except that, after pressing and kneading, the pulp is formed into a flat cake that is toasted on a sheet of metal until it reaches a moisture content of 10% to 12%. It can be conserved for 6 months.

■ **Chive:** The *chive de yuca* is coarse meal made from fermented and precooked cassava, and is similar to the African *gari* and the Brazilian *farinha*. Cassava roots are peeled, and a pulp obtained that is fermented between 5 and 15 days, then sun dried, baked, and sieved again before eating or marketing.

■ **Farinha:** Peeled cassava roots are grated, and the pulp pressed and placed on (usually) copper trays. It is then toasted, stirring the toasted pulp crumbs until they are dried. This dried flour, widely eaten in Brazil, is then packed into sacks and stored.

## SEMI-MOIST PRODUCTS

■ **Cassareep:** This Brazilian spicy sauce is obtained from cassava juice or *yare*. It is seasoned with pepper, red peppers, garlic, and other condiments, and boiled until it has the consistency of thick syrup.



## WET PRODUCTS

■ **Amoiuuare:** A fermented beverage prepared from grated cassava placed in baskets covered with *cachipo* (*Heliconia* sp.) leaves and consumed diluted with water.

■ **Bureche:** This fermented liquor from the upper Orinoco Region is prepared from *casabe*.

■ **Carato:** A beverage made by adding pieces of *casabe*, cassava flour, or pulp boiled in water. Herbs or flavors are usually added to make it more palatable.

■ **Catare, teuaka, katora, or katsera:** Drunk in the Antilles, Guyanas, and Venezuela, this *yare* is cooked in earthenware pots until it acquires the consistency of syrup. Chilis (*Capsicum* sp.) and ants are added to season and conserve it.

■ **Manicuera:** After boiling, the cassava juice becomes a slightly sweet beverage. It is typical of northwestern Amazon Region, where it is served in the late afternoon.

■ **Mingao:** A little fermented starch is dissolved in boiling water, and cooked until it thickens. Flavor is added by palm nuts, pineapple, bananas, or lime.



■ **Paya:** The Tamanaco tribes of northwestern Amazon Basin prepare this drink by fermenting *casabe* under moist leaves to catalyze action by yeasts (Montaldo 1985).

■ **Payauára, yaraque, or yakari:** This is prepared in the same way as *paya*, but differing by first toasting the *casabe*.

■ **Yare:** Indigenous groups of the Amazon Region obtain cassava juice by pressing grated cassava pulp. Because it contains a high quantity of cyanogenic glucosides, the juice is boiled until the glucosides decompose and release the cyanide.



Cazabe