

# Culinary History

## What To Cook On A 2,500-Year-Old Boat, Part 2

By Elina Shatkin, Mon., Nov. 1 2010 @ 3:30PM

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A market in Mozambique.

Danielle Eubank

In [Part 1 of What To Cook On A 2,500-Year-Old Boat](#), expedition artist [Danielle Eubank](#) talked about the basics of defensive cooking, the brazen roaches and why the Dutch oven was her best friend while she was sailing around Africa on the *Phoenicia*. In the second part of the story, she talks about some of the markets she visited and dishes she cooked.

They had plenty of herbs and spice, which they acquired in the Middle East and Africa. Some they kept as long as two years, while some were so moth-riddled, Eubank had to throw them out.

"We picked up local supplies everywhere," Eubank says. "In Mozambique, one of the crew members and I hired a local driver, and we went to one of the local markets." Doing her best to haggle in fragmented Portuguese, she bought a whole bush of bananas, a box of coconuts, a box of pineapples and all kinds of spinaches, "which look very different from the spinaches we have here."

Because it was so hot and humid, Eubank had to carefully choose things that wouldn't go bad. The spinach had to be used within a day or it would go bad. The eggplant was a disaster, as was the zucchini. They completely molded in 24 hours because of the heat and moisture.



Spices at a market in Mozambique.

Danielle Eubank



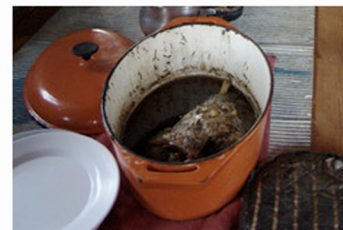
Pies by Sanada aboard the Phoenicia.

Danielle Eubank

Eubank commonly used beans and added chili powder or, when she had them, fresh chiles. It was a challenge, however, pleasing the array of international palates. "The Brazilian wouldn't eat spicy things, though everyone else did," Eubank says. "And, of course, the Indonesians were crazy about spicy things."

Some culinary experiments worked better than others. "One guy made a potato banana omelet, which I didn't particularly like. In fact, it was utterly revolting, but I didn't tell him because he tried really hard," Eubank says.

Others attempted cakes and pies. "I think when you're on a boat and haven't been in civilization for weeks, they're absolutely stunning, but it's not something you would make at home." The cakes and pies were important, however, because they were an affective way to use pineapples and bananas that had turned brown and mushy. That's the key to "defensive cooking."



Danielle Eubank

Roast lamb for Eid aboard the Phoenicia.

"Certain things go bad really quickly and you have to use them up," Eubank says.

Eubank spent her time on the *Phoenicia* cooking on a ship stove, which is designed to swivel as the boat rocks. Unfortunately, the one aboard the *Phoenicia* had a design flaw and never swiveled. Also, only one of its four burners worked reliably.

"I found the Dutch oven to really be my best friend," Eubank says. Because only one of the burners worked, she had to "turn it up to 11" and move the pot around on the burner. "You're tilting back and forth as well as rocking. [The Dutch oven] has high sides, so you don't get burned when the swells are high and it's sloshing."

One night, Eubank tried a Cuban theme because, employing Defensive Cooking Principal #1, she had to use up a bunch of bananas. She decided to fry them. "It just so happened these were the roughest waves of the whole trip. We couldn't even put food on the table because it would have sloshed on people. I managed to slice and fry them to make little banana nuggets."

Other successes included a rice pudding with fresh ground cinnamon, nutmeg and orange rind. For Eid, she made a roast lamb stuffed it with garlic, cloves and nutmeg, and cooked it very well.



Eubank sketches aboard the Phoenicia.

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