

Malanga Cake – *Torta de macal*

Ingredients

1 lb (454 g)	malanga corms (yautía, <i>macal</i>), if not available, use eddo (<i>satoimo</i>), or taro
1/2 cup	butter; at room temperature
1/3 cup	Mexican <i>nata</i> (clotted cream); if not available, use mascarpone cheese, or <i>crème fraîche</i> , or sour cream
1/2 cup	sugar
2	eggs; beaten in a small bowl
1/3 cup	evaporated milk
1/3 cup	raisins
1 tbsp	ground cinnamon, or to taste
1 tsp	oil, for greasing mould

Cook and prepare corms into a mash (see next page for directions for eddo).

Grease an 8×8 inch (20×20 cm) baking dish with the oil; reserve. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C).

Beat butter and sugar in a mixing bowl, until sugar dissolves, and mixture is light and creamy. Incorporate cream, then slowly pour in eggs, while mixing well. Add mash and mix vigorously, pouring in evaporated milk gradually. The mix might have a few clumps, that is normal. For a completely smooth texture, first mix mash with evaporated milk in a separate bowl, then gradually add the egg mixture. Pour batter in greased baking dish. Sprinkle ground cinnamon on top, through a fine mesh. Spread raisins on top. Bake for 20 minutes, then remove from oven onto a cooling rack. Allow to cool down completely before slicing.

This dessert has some sugar and natural flavours from the *macal* (or eddo, or taro), raisins and cinnamon, but some honey or agave syrup may be drizzled on top, for an extra touch of sweetness.



How to Prepare Eddo (*Satoimo*)

Eddo plants (*Colocasia antiquorum* or *C. esculenta*, var.) are valued for their edible leaves and corms (underground swollen stems); eddo is known as *satoimo* in Japan, and in English also as Japanese taro, since it is a close relative, sometimes considered a variety of the better known taro (*C. esculenta*). Malanga (*Xanthosoma sagittifolium*) is a similar underground vegetable, native to the South American rainforest; malanga extended its range to Central America and the Yucatan peninsula in Mexico, and is nowadays grown in many other countries around the world. Malanga is also known as *yautía*, tannia, new cocoyam, *quiscamote*, *tiquisque*, and in the Yucatan peninsula, *macal*. Eddo (*satoimo*) and taro are originally from Asia, so they are not used in traditional Mexican cuisine, but may sometimes be used instead of *macal*. Malanga, eddo (*satoimo*) and taro all contain toxic oxalates in their leaves and corms, which have to be eliminated by heat, before adding to dishes.

To prepare eddo (*satoimo*) corms, wash thoroughly, and pat dry. Some people might be extra sensitive to oxalates, so wearing food-grade gloves is recommended. Working with one piece at a time, and using a sharp paring knife, trim the stem end, turn and trim the bottom end, for a round shape with flat ends (photo below, left). Discard ends, then, holding the round corm in one hand, very carefully peel, removing a band of skin from one end to the other, rotating and repeating (photo below, centre). The fully peeled corm will have a polyhedral shape (photo below, right):



Repeat with the rest of the corms.

In Japan, *satoimo* are often cooked whole for savoury dishes, so the peeled corms are rubbed with salt before boiling in water. Once the corms are fork-tender, the water is dumped to discard oxalates, then the cooked corms are added to dishes. These delicious cooked corms may also be used in stews or soups instead of potatoes.

For sweet applications, skip the salt, and rinse the corms under running water instead. Cook and rinse as above.

To prepare them mashed, cut the rinsed raw corms into chunks for shorter boiling time; cook as above (first photo, right), then drain the cooking water. Rinse with water and drain two or three times, then press with a potato masher (second photo), to a very smooth paste (third photo):

