

LETTER OF VULNERABILITY AND RESILIENCE

meaningful expressions and understandings from different cultures on
how to deal with the crisis



✉ Dealing with Covid-19 through food – Lets Cook By Theo Boshoff

In South Africa the Coronavirus crisis is better known as the Covid-19 pandemic or simply Covid-19. Although the crisis might have the same cause, it has different outcomes and meaning for the various communities in different countries around the world.

The ways governments across the globe are dealing with the crisis are different and is clearly evident from the news on regulations in Scandinavian countries, the USA, the East and countries like Australia, New Zealand and of course, Africa and South Africa.

South Africa has had one of the hardest lockdowns placed on its residents and harshest regulations enforced in fear of the spread of the virus, all in the name of flattening the curve. Some of these regulations made sense, but some are considered by locals as simply irrational and not thought through at all.

For instance, the South African lockdown was initiated on Friday 27 March 2020 and included the banning of the sale and transport of alcohol and tobacco products. Few other countries enforced such regulations, basically making smoking and drinking alcohol illegal over-night and without consultation with its residents and communities. It was like an Autocratic stamp in a country with one of, if not, the most democratic constitution in the world. For over 110 days smoking has been illegal and smokers have turned to the black market to get their nicotine fix to avoid going 'cold turkey'.

You are still not allowed to visit family, while you are allowed to go to the shops, casinos or church or other gatherings with 49 strangers. This is just to give you an idea of how things differ for people from country to country, which has a direct impact on how they experience the crisis and what they do to deal with it.

I was invited by a friend on Facebook to join a group called "Lets Cook" which was created due to the Covid-19 pandemic which was started four months ago and now has a membership of close to 1100 people so far. It is mostly for South Africans to share cooking notes and recipes, kind of following the boom with people starting to bake banana bread during their lockdowns. This was simply an extension of that premise and has provided a lot of insight and entertainment, as it went further than just posting recipes to a true sharing of food and cooking ideas and knowledge. From culinary quizzes members came up with to notes on the history of certain foods and 'did-you-know' input from members spread all across the world, from Mozambique and Australia to America.



Banana bread

It was of course interesting to hear from members in other countries what life under lockdown meant for them and what they are going through vs. what we in South Africa are going through as well as what the various members have access to in terms of ingredients and the like. With the banning of alcohol sales, South Africans started the making of their own beer in their own backyards, of which the easiest seemed to be [Pineapple beer](#). It's almost like , '[uMqombothi](#)', which is a traditional Zulu beer. uMqombothi bears little resemblance to commercial beer but is much cheaper and quicker to make at home. Another alcohol recipe that did the rounds was for [home-made red wine](#). South Africans like there alcohol and banning it from sale got many people in a tizzy.

The great thing about this group is that it brings together likeminded people sharing a similar humour to converse about a common interest... food and cooking. What is also great about the group is that it is all inclusive and it is open to anyone who wants to join. Members are a real mix and include culinary fundies as well as people who can't even boil an egg, but wants to learn to cook. It's a complete smorgasbord of people.

On days when you are down and overwhelmed by the Corona crisis and all the negative news, Lets Cook offers a myriad of things to take your mind off the bad in the world. It has helped me through a few tough days and I have photos of two different [banana breads](#) and corn bread, or [mealie bread](#) as it is known in South Africa, to prove it.



Mealie bread

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