Apples are common in the city since the people are being sensitized to eat them, instead of drinking coffee to start the day in the morning. Nairobi/ Kenya 2008 Julius Mwelu / IRIN
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EDITORIAL

Food, Body and Sexuality in Africa

By Richmond Tiemoko

Off the target?
The last issue of this fifth volume of Sexuality in Africa Magazine explores the intersection between food, body and sexuality in Africa. To some extent, this is a deviation from the past volumes where the fourth issue was always on violence, HIV & AIDS and Sexuality to mark the 16 days of activism and the world AIDS day. Food and body could not however be dissociated with violence (be it gender based or not) and HIV in Africa as the food riot and challenge has poignantly demonstrated in 2008. However, in the line of thinking of current ARSRC programming cycle, the fourth issue of the magazine prioritises rights and sexual wellness from a positive perspective. It is our view that to prevent violence and disease, we need to promote rights, love and pleasure in sexuality. The focus on food, body and sexuality is therefore not off target.

Celebration
Focusing our attention on Food and body (healthy body) is a way of celebrating the fifth anniversary edition of the Sexuality in Africa Magazine. Five years in the life of the publication is probably short but it is obviously long and a landmark in Africa. On the African continent with a high level of under-five mortality of not only human beings but also, institutions and projects, achieving five years for a quarterly publication on sexualities is certainly an achievement and deserve celebration. Using the demographic approach and life table, we could say and hope that after surviving the first five years, the Magazine should grow in strength, coverage, reach and quality in the next fifteen years when mortality rates start to grow again.

Locating The Food, Body and Sexuality Nexus.
Sexual pleasure depends to some large extent on how and what one feeds the body with and conversely sexual desire may dictate the diet. Similarly, the body in its appearance, texture and functioning affect not only nutrition but also sexuality and sexuality. This is not to negate the neglected and yet important experience of bodiless sexualities.

Sexual body is arguably the most important aspect of sexualities in Africa. Sexual body is arguably the most important aspect of sexualities in Africa. There are several cases, cultural practices of shaping a sexual body or sexually appealing body. Female genital cutting, male circumcision, labia elongation and girls fattening are just few examples of traditional practices. There seems to be renewed interest in shaping and indeed designing the sexual body or body part. Designed genitalia though not yet widespread are nerveless familiar issues in contemporary Africa.

Regardless of an individual's stand on designing or shaping the 'sexual' body, it is extremely important that individual rights and sexual wellness are upheld.

As we begin the festive season (in Gregorian calendar) when food, drink exchange, and social interceptions, body image and appearance stake centre stage, I wish you sexual wellness, erotic justice and intimacy happiness.

Food for healthy sexuality goes beyond aphrodisiacs. Indeed two regular aspects of food and sexuality nexus in most popular culture in Africa are love potions and aphrodisiacs. And these aspects are deeply gendered as Aphrodisiacs are predominantly for males and used by males to enhance their virility, prevent or address sexual dysfunction. Even though women may use aphrodisiacs and some may be called women's stuff like the Kegar Male, the aphrodisiacs are largely for male sexual performance and pleasure. This is clear in the research note in this volume. The second aspect of the nexus, love potions, jujus and charms almost exclusively used by women to entice and charm men and be loved. Although the effectiveness of all the practices remains controversial, they all show that good food is an integral part of sexuality and sexual practice in many cultures.

Richmond Tiemoko PhD is the Director of the ARSBC.
Body Image, Beauty, culture and Language
In The Nigerian African Context

By Taiwo Oloruntoba-Oju

Examples of Inscriptions of Body and Body aesthetics in Yoruba language

- *Eleyinju age* ("one with graceful eyeballs")
- *Ejinjupova* ("teeth whiter than money"/cowrie shells being previous medium of exchange)
- *Idiidiiba* ("seventeen-friendly buttocks")
- *Idiile* ("beads-friendly buttocks")
- *Aruna* ("beautiful one" also used as name of cognomen)
- *Orunide 6 kep* ("her beauty is problematic; it creates conflicts")
- *Bi orun oja diile keji* ("if our daughter is a beauty we should acknowledge it because it is true, not that we would make a wife of her.

The rationale for giving these examples points to the fact that autonomous aesthetic coding of body image was part and parcel of African culture, while also indicating that indeed what we call ‘beauty’ has always been culturally codified.

Such constructions in which body parts constitute the central issue to which aesthetic signification is attached seem mostly applicable to the female sex, but less overtly to the male sex. The term for beauty in the language is not while the term for beautiful *arau* is gender neutral but “female” and “beauty” seem to be the normative allocates in Yoruba construction, which contrasts with the reported situation in western patriarchal discourse in which the female body is frequently depicted as fluid, available,

Foreign Magazines on fitness and the “ideal (slim)” body image as a Health Sheep in Ghana.
that the male body is completely free of semiotic inscription in traditional Nigerian African culture. In Yoruba, the term, awari ('the beautiful') applies to both female and male sexes, even if it mostly applies to the female. However, attributes of strength and sturdiness appear to be more applicable in the construction of male body image than size or dimension. In Yoruba culture a newly born male is announced as "aki" (male) and further as "aki latunibi or awari latunibi." Latun, latunibi or aki, latunibi (the 'i' variation depends on dialect) is onomatopoeia for 'sturdiness,' hence 'A fi okunrin latunibi kan ti wa here = "We have been blessed with a sturdy male."

Descriptions such as oya a sigbile ("he is tall and stocky/sturdy") may suggest that tallness is the ideal male body image or model; however, shortness, the opposite, is presented with equal auditory adjectives in the praise song of the gods and of the male human. There seems to be a semiotic rule that the feature, 'sturdy,' as well as character attributes such as bravery, should overwrite physical deficiencies in the construction of male body image in traditional African culture. In praise poetry addressed to the male deities, inca such as Okeneji kikunmi ilo kaniki (short tallly) and Odekun yamubin le oka (spawning like the calf) occur. In the latter, otherwise unseen qualities are invested with the attributes of strength, ferocity, or ferocityness.

If such perceptions with regards to the male body is cultural, Wole Soyinka's description of an 'unknown man' in The Interpreters may be seen as reinforcing the perception.

"From the back stepped a barrel figure, half-naked, a soft sheen on his shoulders as if silk from his hat was sliding gently through. [But] even from that distance they saw no softening pretension, the beardman ground his craft earth, beamed a task over his head and nodded into the shadows?"

Here, the features 'sleeping oil,' 'half-naked' and to some extent 'barrel figure' are neutralized by the implied features 'strong' ('bearded a sake'), 'deft' ('grounded his craft earth'), 'smart, unobtrusive or business-like' ('tucked into the shadow').

Such male body image fitting the description strong/sturdy/toughed is traditionally exhibited during specialized cultural displays involving activities (e.g., during masquerade festivals) or body sports (e.g., wrestling), and in nuptial domains, during traditional wooing sessions such as the Fulani shar. Here, male suitors engage in a show of strength and endurance by submitting their bodies to severe whipping by female suitors. In parts of Yoruba land, mutual whipping as test of endurance and also forms part of the rite of passage for young adolescents. Unlike the Fulani shar, no nuptial formalities are involved in the Yoruba display, but the choice of whipping spots may ensure that prospective partners are among the spectators.

Praise songs addressed to the pantheon of gods offers further onomatopoeic rendition of specifications with regard to male body image.

At any rate, as with the wrestling sports, tales of the prowess of particular males do make the rounds soon enough, with expected effects among prospective females. Body build is also on display during these sessions. An athletic body-build would seem to have added value, but the most important parameter seems to be physical strength and the ability to endure.

In Yoruba lore and contemporary popular culture, the sight of a clashing and powerful male is said to provoke a spontaneous and passionate prayer by all females in within sight to the Almighty. The 'prayer' signals a mixed bag of the 'more respectable,' expression of desire for marriage partnership and a bound expression of desire for sexual liaison.

Oluwa, bide ohun le e lo eni, a si ile ini Good bru if this one cannot become one's husband, at least in his benin's entertain'

Conclusion

The idea emerges that in reality, beauty is in the culture of the beholder. However, while the numerous examples do establish primitivist and resilient cultural perceptions of beauty, aesthetics and sexuality, there is indication that the body image and beauty landscape in Nigeria's Africa, like that of the rest of Africa, has altered dramatically in contemporary times. It becomes inevitable once again the culture is not static but dynamic, but also that this dynamism entails neither complete erosion of tradition nor uncritical acceptance of new ideas, but a well-considered blend of old and new into emergent and forward looking forms of expression. What seems to be the pressing need is to navigate in a healthy manner between confronting constructions and projections of body image, beauty and expressions of sexuality.

References


Dr. Oloruntoba-Oje has taught Stylistics and African Literature in Universities in Nigeria and abroad for about two decades. And also contributed to international research in sex-gender relations in African Literature and Culture.

I must acknowledge the Prof. Biola Odejide of the Communication Arts Dept University of Ibadan (and currently Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the institution publicly drew my attention to this inscription during a seminar organised by the African Regional Sexuality Research Centre (Ibadan, Sept 13, 2007).
While facial attractiveness is a general desideratum for beauty, plumpness or roundness as well as a jutting backside is also a pervasive image in traditional Nigerian African construction of female beauty.

"Nunola's behind was not merely as full as hers even when she had her beads on; the thought, I know, the thought she [Nunola] was to pass these physical gifts. She wondered what it was like to be fully" [5].

One final example, is the description of the massive lady, Owolebi, on the dance floor at the Club Cardina in Wole Soyinka's 'The Interpreters'. The descriptive sequence is striking, as indeed, Owolebi's was immense:

"...she filled the floor with her body, dismissing her surroundings with a natural air of supremacy ... and she brought a change in the mood and its rhythm of the band, who now began to play to suit her in the lyric and the mood ..." [5].

The famed kinesthetics of traditional African female body curvatures enters into this narrative through the description of Owolebi's rhetorical sway to the drumbeats; pretty much like a river swollen on fresh yam hillsides. Nonetheless, different images emerge from the male gazes that her body rhythms command. While Koja the artist is shyly sketching grotesque pictures of Owolebi on paper, it is clear, following the gaze and mood of Egbo, the womanizing interpreter, that he 'was dying to go to bed with the original'.

The very idea draws guffaws from another interpreter who considers Owolebi to be 'revoltingly fat.' But Egbo counters that this fellow is 'inane' while continuing to 'fatten his eyes on the subtle independence of the backside'. The interesting thing is how Owolebi's enormous body mass is eventually analysed in terms of proportion and made to fit into cultural perception of beauty.

**?p??:ng?:p?: Slim beauty**

The slim beauty also has her place in traditional Nigerian African culture as represented here in traditional Yoruba language, culture and the associated literature. In the Yoruba vocabulary of body aesthetics the term for the slim and pretty woman is **?p??:ng?:p?:**. The Yoruba pay her a teasing tribute in chants and sayings about beauty:

'Slim beauty falls on a breakable plate, it does not break, but when she falls on a pounding morsel, the mortar splinters.'

It is not clear whether this sexual innuendo, that is an insinuation of sexual gymnastics in this teasing tribute, is deliberate. What is clear is that the traditional African image of beauty is not as monolithic as is often claimed. The 'mature' roundness of plump beauty may well command the male gaze in that traditional community, but **?p??:ng?:p?:** does have her place as well, as a slim pretty woman.

**Iliman Sursarnde Male Body and 'Beauty'**

As noted earlier, nothing in the foregoing should be taken as suggesting
Food for Love in Nigerian Cultures

Through the ages, food has been employed for the enhancement of giving and receiving sexual pleasure. It has been used as an invitation to sex, enticement and luring. In traditional societies, good food was the staple food of the area eaten with relish and assorted meats. Among the Efik, pounded yam or cassava fufu with vegetable soups such as edikangikong or ukwombo, or afia efere (white soup) with goat meat or dried fish was and continues to be cherished. Among the Igbo, pounded yam or cassava fufu with efo riro - bitter leaf soup or egusi - melon soup of mgbegho and efo ikonwu with stock fish or mofola fish could be regarded as sexual enhancing. Pounded yam, cassava fufu, amala, eba with vegetable soup gbua, egusi, ewedu, okra, oghofo could be valued by some Yoruba groups. While among the people of the Delta like the Urhobo and Isoko prefer cassava starch with bangsi soup, fresh fish or bush meat.

Some “attest” to the efficacy of tastefully prepared sea foods such as crabs and oysters. Also, snails (popularly known as “tongo” meat) prepared in spicy sauce to be a good aphrodisiac. Plantain with herbal sauces and the enhancing powers of the avocado which could be eaten with rice and plantain have also been indicated. Apart from the major dishes, every area has its own delicacies which women use to get to capture the hearts of their men. Cassava chips akara mixed with ngba (fermented African oil bean chips) and garnished with certain herbs was highly prized among the Ibo. Special sauces, prepared with certain herbs such as efiri or herbs of the bacinilia family for eating of yams and plantains were regarded as good sexuality enhancing. Indeed any food at all relished by the people concerned could be sexuality enhancing. Such foods as corn pap (agi) and corn drink (kunnu) have been cited as enhancing sexuality through the immediate release of energy.

Many Nigerian cultures believe in the efficacy of honey in revitalising the reproductive organs of both the male and the female. Among the Yorubas there is a strong belief that eating slimy
was a factor in the general politics of their household including sexuality. An interview with a woman who was the fourth wife showed that food played a part in the competition for the man’s attention. She claims that she easily found an esteemed place in the husband’s heart due to her cooking. She constantly inundated the man with delicacies and relished even when it was not her turn to serve him. Whenever the husband desired to eat any special food, he called on her to prepare it to the chagrin of other wives. According to her, it was quite normal for the husband to call her and loudly tell: “Mama Emeka, when you finish, go and make fire for me in my abi.”

In traditional societies where polygamy was rampant and women had limited access to their husbands, food was used for luring and binding the husband. For her, going to make fire in the abi was more than making ordinary fire, it was an invitation to sex during which Mama Emeka and Baba Emeka set their bodies on fire. Meals were intermixed with little delicacies and fruits to enhance and maximise the sexual relationships with their husbands whenever it was their turn to be with him. The performance of sensual acts which elicited desire, not only for the food being prepared but for the woman preparing the food. It is also very appealing and satisfying to

loving potions were also administered through food for the exclusive attention of the man. Even till date, food is an tool for love. Women still invite desired men to good food where they show their mastery of the art subly suggesting that more of such would be available if the relationship becomes permanent. It would seem that any food thoughtfully prepared and passionately served and eaten in desired company turns into food for love. Hence, it has been argued that, basically many aphrodisiac recipes are wholesome ingredients prepared in a tasty way and the receptivity to romance probably comes from the general sense of relaxation and well being which good food induces. Hence Ackerman concludes that, “looked at it in the right light any food might be thought aphrodisiac.”

The process of cooking and eating of food can also be very sexy. This led Thomas Wolf to claim that there is no sight on earth more appealing than the sight of a woman making dinner for someone she loves. To the man, even the movements involved in cooking become sensual acts which elicit desire, not only for the food being prepared but for the woman preparing the food. It is also very appealing and satisfying to
Body Image and Sexuality in Egypt

Dalya El Ziny and Meena Tharwat 2008 SLD Fellows in an interview with Dr. Sany Kozman a Social Entrepreneur for the AIDS department in Caritas, Alexandria, Egypt and the director of board of trustees of the NGO “Life Friends” and Dr. Youssef Aziz a consultant Dermatologist and Andrologist and the Director of Caritas in Alexandria and the Secretary of the Alexandria Society of Dermatology, Venerology, and Andrology, discussed body image, food and sexuality in Egypt.

**Body Image and Sexuality**

There is a strong relation between body image and sexuality as body image can affect sexuality and sexual acts in many ways and vice versa. Body image is referred to an individual’s perception and cognition of his or her body and outer look. Attitudes towards body image are not only cognition but also a set of behaviors and emotions of one’s physical appearance upon which evaluation of one’s own self may affect his or her practices. Body image evaluation influences sexual performance, activities, interests and experiences. The issue is not only of concern to women, but men as well as some men’s concern about their body image is to fulfill the societal role of masculinity while some studies suggested body image therapy as an effective way in ameliorating disorders in self consciousness during sex [1].

**Male and Female Body Images In Egypt**

According to Dr. Sany Kozman who is a Social Entrepreneur responsible for the AIDS department in Caritas, Alexandria, Egypt and the director of board of trustees of the NGO “Life Friends”, body image can affect sexuality in many ways as mentioned earlier. In general, sexual attraction depends on body image, but many variations exist between males and females regarding the different physical attributes considered sexually appealing. For example, males are first sexually attracted to female bodies according to the image and certain parts of the female body have special sexual significance for most males especially at the beginning of relationships.

On the other hand, body image is considered a hidden priority for females that they do not reveal in the Arab context. As expected by the society, females mention male personality as their first attraction.
and priority instead of the male body image, for this is the socially acceptable answer. Moreover, self-consciousness and interest in body image is less for males than females but it decreases after marriage for females. He referred this decrease in interest to increase life burden and changes in priority listing for both husband and wife. For females, we should not disregard body changes after pregnancy, labor and lactation that affect their body image and take huge effort and time to regain the pre-birth figure. Moreover, house hold chores and duties that last all day long and are female responsibility in the Arab context are considered hurdles for wives to find time and effort for body care and weight management.

One should not over generalize body care and image in both sexes as it seems that gender and sexual preference may affect the perception and care of an individual’s body. Dr. Kozman continued that homosexual men are more concerned about their body image and outward appearance than heterosexual men. They are also involved in different types of sports and body building to enhance their masculine physique despite the prevalent misconception that they prefer to acquire feminine appearance since they are interested in members of the same sex.

**Food and Sex**
In another sitting with Dr. Youssef Aziz, a consultant Dermatology and Andrology and the Director of Caritas in Alexandria and the Secretary of the Alexandria Society of Dermatology, Venerology, and Andrology; Dr. Aziz whose ideas are based on practical and clinical experience explained that, better body image might be the motivational reason some boys and girls participate in sporting activities as these activities have strong relation to their sexuality”. Dr. Aziz has noticed that body fitness has a positive affect on sexual performance. However, body image is only one component of sexual life that is entangled with many other aspects that should be considered as well. Stressful conditions and life burden can also affect sexual desire, interests and performance regardless of body image. Moreover, after years of marriage and frequent performance of the same acts with minimum changes and less creativity sexual desire may be reduced and altered to duties rather than pleasure. In his practical experience, many individuals inquired about food in relation to sexual performance. He usually advised high calories foods that could generate energy to enhance sexual performance. Nevertheless, he stressed that the brain is the center and origin of sexual activity and not really the quantity of food intake. In conclusion, the influence of body image on sexual attraction for both males and females is greater than its influences on sexual activity and performance.

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L-R, Dalya Elziny, Dr. Youssef Aziz and Meena Tharwat

References

Dr. Dalya Elziny and Meena Tharwat are both 2008 SLD fellows from Egypt
Kayan Mata: The secret world of local Aphrodisiacs in Northern Nigeria

By Amma Mohammed-Durosinluyin

Introduction
In Hausa culture, the phrase "Kayan mata" often gets women smiling mischievously, excited and stampeding to get a share. Literally, "Kaya" means materials or property while "Mata" means women in the Hausa language. Hence, kayan mata means women's stuff but is generally understood to mean women's sexual stuff or aphrodisiacs. An aphrodisiac is any food, drink, drug, scent or device believed to stimulate sexual interest and increase sexual vigour [1]. Human sexual expression is more than procreation, it is also recreational [2]. Throughout history, almost every culture has used various substances, usually herbal in origin, in an attempt to intensify sexual desire, performance and cure the impotent. Despite all the unproven claims people continue to make use of aphrodisiacs and women in northern Nigeria are no exceptions. They include both traditional (which are common) and more modern ones. There are different types used by men and women to increase libido and vaginal lubrication.

This study is important to understand the cultural contexts in which traditional aphrodisiacs are used with the aim of investigating the use of Kayan Mata (traditional Aphrodisiacs) by women in Kaduna, northern Nigeria.

Methodology
The study was carried out in Kaduna State, Nigeria using mixed methods to collect primary data. Quantitative data were drawn with a structured questionnaire, and qualitative data drawn from in-depth interviews and a focus group discussion among some of the educated and uneducated women. The survey used purposive convenient sampling of 500 respondents who were assured confidentiality, anonymity and privacy. Questions asked focused on the meaning of Kayan Mata, the reasons of use, and perceived efficiency and side effects.

Majority of the respondents (83.4%) were between the ages of 19-44, while 14.8% were less than 15 years with 1.8% above 44 years. They were mainly Muslims ranging from housewives to professional either with some form of education or none at all. 37% (75.8%) of the women were in marital relationships with 20% (55.1%) in monogamous marriages and 17% (44.8%) in polygamous relationships.

What is Kayan Mata
Although a popular and yet public secret, Kayan Mata has different meanings and definitions according to the respondents. For some, Kayan Mata is a concoction prepared to make a woman "okay", an appetizer/sweetener, magashin dadda (traditional medicine to make you sweet). It is used to used to Gura Mata (repair women) and makes a woman tasty. Some think it is just a belief, some are genuinely unaware of it, or have heard of it and are not sure of what it is.

Despite all the unproven claims people continue to make use of aphrodisiacs and women in northern Nigeria are no exceptions.

Why do women use Kayan Mata?
As expected, there are different reasons women use Kayan Mata. Findings from the survey indicated the use of Kayan Mata is mainly a pleasure-seeking behaviour. Pleasure of the male partner (33.2%), women's personal sexual pleasure (90.8%) or pleasure for the couple (46%). It is also used as a tool to outperform other wives in fierce competitions amongst co-wives. "To be better than your mate's co-wife and be the 'He moon among stars' or to stop the husbands from taking a second wife or to drive their mates away."

The use of Kayan Mata at times, seems to be related to life cycle and particularly reproductive cycle. As a group of women said in the focus group it is used 'So that you can be very young again. It rejuvenates you. Especially after you have had several children'. Other reasons include lubrication especially for women who see naturally dry in situations where there is little or no foreplay.

Source
Social networking seems to play a major role in the sourcing, marketing and use of Kayan Mata in Kaduna, state. Most women (53.2%) get their supply of Kayan Mata from friends while 25.4% get it from family members, 17.8% from the market and 3.6% from other sources. One third of the respondents had recommended the use of Kayan Mata to others. Most buyers are introduced during weddings, other gatherings and by their friends.

Types of Kayan Mata
Kayan Mata comes in different forms and their mode of administration and application varies accordingly.

Oral preparations: Not less than 20 varieties of oral forms were mentioned during the interviews. They include:

Aja (tiger nut) for making a sweet tasting drink thought to be good for both men and women to improve fertility. Danbin (dates), boko (sugar-cane) watermelon, onions and grapes are also useful. Zogole (Moringa seeds), Garin Tamur a powdered formulation which tightens, Gardenh is gotten from a plant that looks like small white onions, it increases the urge. Tzimm, a herbal drink/brew is said to be...
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Majority of the respondents (83.4%) were between the ages of 19-44, with 14.5% were less than 19 years with 1.8% above 44 years. They were mainly Muslims ranging from housewives to professional either with some form of education (44.5%) or not all (55.5%) of the women were in marital relationships with 209 (55.1%) in a monogamous marriages and 170 (44.9%) in polygamous relationships.

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The use of kayan mata at times, seems to be related to life cycle and particularly reproductive cycle. As a group of women said in the focus group, it is used 'So that you can be a virgin again. It tightens. Especially after, you have had several children'. Other reasons include, lubrication especially for women who are normally dry or in situations where there is little or no foreplay.

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Gari Tence: powdered formulation which tightens. Gardelli is gotten from a plant that looks like small white onions, it increases the urge. Tami, a herbal drink/beer is said to be...
very effective in lubricating a woman and so is useful for women that are naturally dry or take a long time to get wet. Sakey koma, red powder drunk with yoghurt “is drink a man easy with desire” according a mid-life interviewee.

Another popular type is Kaziz matu, a chicken specially prepared for women. It is relatively more expensive and usually given to brides. The effect ceases with childbirth so it needs to be renewed from time to time.

Vaginal preparation: These are usually tighteners called dan matu. Examples include Ruan zakanin ayu, the liquid gotten from the genitals of an aquatic animal (Ayu). Kari kuma (scorpion sting), Bagaruwa is an edible fruit that can be boiled and sat on, in water like a sit bath after delivery, to tighten the vagina, Karya gado (break the bed) are all inssiccrable. Honey can also be used as lubricant and is good because it has no particles.

Effectiveness and Implications

Most of the users of Karyan matu are very positive about its effect. One of the respondents said “I am used to it and I know what to use if I want to enjoy myself, and what to use if I want to punish my husband”. Some users said their husbands seem to be happier and enjoy themselves better, shout and scream, and want more, even when the wife is tired. Some women also notice changes in themselves (now well lubricated). I always reach my peak anytime I use it”. Women commonly cite the tightening and timi as being most effective.

However, no specific scientific research has been done on the effectiveness of the products and like most aphrodisiacs the thought of the effect is more psychological (a placebo effect) than real.

Too much Timi has been associated with drowsiness, or being too wet to the extent that you “drip” and need to wear something protective. Other possible complications are lower abdominal cramps, nausea, and weakness.

What does Islam have to do with it?

Islam has had a lot of influence on the Hausa culture. Some women are told by their religious scholars that if they are in a polygamous setting it is obligatory to disclose what they take to co-wives.

This is because it may make your husband pay more attention to you at the detriment of others and this is not allowed.

There are however some risks related to the use of Karyan matu. Some preparations for vaginal tightening sometimes cause itching, vaginal discharge, “infection of the womb”, burning sensation and a fear of causing cancer and excessive bleeding after delivery from stenosis.

Discussion

Aphrodisiacs are common in many cultures. This study shows many women are still preoccupied in acquiring materials to enhance their sexual life, which could have wide-ranging implications. Most women in this study used aphrodisiacs mainly for the men’s pleasure. Women seem to think that by ensuring sex with their male partner is pleasurable, they can bargain for other things. This shows that the function of sex is not only for reproduction and pleasure in itself, but also for economic, power, emotional and other gains. This is also likely to work because pleasure reinforces behaviours which are worth repeating

[3], men will do anything to get it and maintain it. Vaginal practices that cause tightening are an important part of using aphrodisiacs in northern Nigeria.

The preference for “Dry sex” has been documented in a number of Sub-Saharan African countries [4, 5] but the women in this study just like the Baganda people of Uganda prefer ‘wet sex’ to ‘dry sex’. Clinically diminished vaginal lubrication or difficulty lubrication during sex has been identified as a principal component of sexual arousal disorder and can be associated with pain (dyspareunia) [6]. Women in this case are unlikely to disclose use of vaginal preparations to their doctors who discourage this practice.

Conclusion

Use of Karyan matu is widespread mainly to produce “great sex in marriage”, but also for economic, political, religious and social rewards. Their efficacy is not fully proven scientifically but women will “swear” it works and will continue to use it. Science or no science? Hence, we need to be fully aware of it and its possible implications. Further research is needed to determine the male perspectives on the use of aphrodisiacs.

References
Two African ladies proudly show off their curves in Nigeria.

It would be easy for one to assume that the concept of the beautiful African woman began with the younger and more "expressive" or "enlightened" generation that is gradually being blindfolded by western ideals.

If the stick thin shadow of a woman today was ideal and appealing to the African man, why in the early days did the African man who was either a farmer, hunter or warrior look forward to coming home after a hard day and the warmth of his wife's body? How do we explain the description of beautiful women in African literature? How do we explain the undeniable high level of sexual energy generated by some of our very vigorous and sensual dance movements passed through generations and still in existence today? Or the waist beads that adorned the thick waists of some of the maidens of old, our mothers, grandmothers and even some of our women today or voluptuous bodies once referred to as birthing bodies? Or even some of our present day popular hip hop lyrics which say "shake what your mama gave you"?

Dance and Mate Selection......

The Makossa dance which originated from Cote Divoire, that has been made popular by our new generation musicians is a very good example of these sensual dances for the beautiful voluptuous African woman. It involves the movement of well rounded thigh and buttocks sensually which in later years men too have also adopted their way of dancing to the same rhythm. Interestingly, these dances are neither a recent development nor discovery, in some African cultures was used as a practical means of mate selection for young men and women of the community and marriages built on such choices were believed to last the couple entire life time without any need for divorces! It is unfortunate that some of these dances in recent times are being judged by western or so called "moral" standards as being vulgar and indecent without much thought to the cultural relevance or reverence of the dance itself[3].

Waist Beads and Body Shape......

Another phenomenon are waist beads. Why waist beads? These beads, traditionally worn by African women mostly around their waists (under clothes these days) and on the waist or ankles in other cases have several meanings. The ones worn on the waist was held in place by the buttocks with its uses, ranging from enticing the husband, sites of passage, to healing and rejuvenation. Traditionally they were used in the "kitchen house" used as initiation lodges for young girls in the Old Congo Empire, some parts of Nigeria and other parts of Africa. They were a symbol of the beginning of a young girl's reproductive cycle and this was a site of passage to the mysteries of womanhood. It was also a time of
learning from the older women who linked the physical mystery of these beads to menses, courtship, sex and childbirth[4].

Since the art of self adornment has been practiced in Africa since the beginning of time, in Egypt, waist beads were uniforms for teenage girls ignoring any sexual nuances and they were called girdles. In Ghana, women believed that these beads helped achieve the hour glass figure and sexually stimulate their men just as some Islamic cultures allowed women wear these beads under their clothes also for a husband's pleasure. In other parts of West Africa, women went as far as dripping their beads in scented oil or made them from fragrant material like sandalwood and wore them with tiny bells around their waist so that they jingled as they walked. This signaled to the man that they were clean and ready. These days it is interesting to know that the waist beads of old are once again becoming more visible especially amongst the youth as our jeans are getting lower and lower and people are showing more skin[5][6]. The fit of these beads around the waist, is also used as a means of maintaining women's body weight and figure, especially after childbirth, which simply shows that they were health and beauty conscious despite their large frames. It is important to note that despite the preference of some for big women, the slim build is still highly cherished in Northern Nigeria.

Birding Bodies and Comfort For The Unborn...

The effect of dance and waist beads cannot be achieved without voluptuous bodies. This is not to say that slim women do partake in the Makisu dance nor wear waist beads. Of course they do, but before the rave of the western ideal of what a beautiful woman (slim) should look like, flesh was in. This explains the Makosa mate selection dance which by a girl's movement (shaking her ample bum, hips, belly or bosom) one could tell how good a wife she would be, also the fastening houses where young (stiny) girls were taken and taught about the intricacies of marriage (preparing their bodies for babies) and most importantly, pleasing their husbands and finally the waist beads. Since beads were mainly worn around the waist, women would require either a belly or a bum or both to hold these beads in place. A woman was also supposed to be not just a wife, mother and lover to her husband, she was also literally supposed to provide warmth. This explained why men preferred women with "something" they could hold on to and why young wives to be were taken to fastening houses to prepare their bodies for the ability to provide a cushion effect (comfortable) for the unborn.

Celebrating Curves.......

I sometimes find it interesting that some men still appreciate the well rounded built for comfort type of woman and not surprised at the image conscious ones, who still believe that people should either look or strive to look a certain way (slim) to be termed as beautiful and healthy. What then happens to those born with big frames who just cannot be thin, just the other day I was listening to the lyrics of the song "pot belly" by the South African group known as Freshly Ground. The title of the song first caught my attention and I wondered what anyone would have to say about a pot belly and when I listened to it, I couldn't help appreciating and smiling at the choise which says, "Fat thighs, fanny arms and pot belly still give good things...". The truth is, I do not need to be thin or a shadow of myself for the society to accept me as healthy or beautiful. In the midst of all this dogwash of what is and what the society thinks should be, it is important to note that we are beautiful just the way we are and that beauty is in the eyes of the beholder with a big heart and mind. I'll still stand here confident, strong and healthy and celebrate my curves for I know I am beautiful.

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SEXUALITY RESOURCES

The Sex Life of Food: When Body and Soul Meet to Eat
Author: Bunny Campinque
Publisher: St. Martin's Press, New York, 2005
ISBN: 0-312-34577-7

Bunny Campinque has looked at food from every angle and brings delicious stories about what others have done and said about eating and about making sex. There are as many ways that hunger and desire work on each other and so many things that can influence our experiences. Not only are people moved by the looks, textures and shapes of the food they eat but even the rumors or some stories can make hunger of both types. As the stories move, sometimes cooking is like playing; eating is the main event and eating stories is the missing after. This is a book you can read and reflect on and will find stories reflecting the passion of food from the taste and insightful choices. It's built a banquet and a late-night feast. Take it, devour it, and apply it.

The Politics of Women's Bodies
Sexuality, Appearance, and Behavior
Second Edition
Edited by Rose Wells
ISBN: 0-7914-5433-3

For nearly three decades, feminist scholars have examined how the female body and ideas about the female body affect women's lives. The Politics of Women's Bodies, Sexuality, Appearance, and Behavior, brings together recent critical writing in this important field--covering such diverse topics as the politics of body diversity, the nature of femininity, and the consequences of violence against women. The Politics of Women's Bodies, Sexuality, Appearance, and Behavior, begins by looking at how ideas about women's bodies become culturally accepted. As the writing in the first section emphasizes, our society constrains the real allure of female bodies by denying them the celebrations and expressions that are essential to human sexuality. The second section of the book examines the possibilities of rethinking how women's bodies can become more fluid, flexible, and healthy.

Development with a Body: Sexuality, Human Rights and Development
By: Nina Correa (Author), Andrew Comarow (Editor), Susan Jolly (Editor)
Hardcover: 256 pages
Publisher: Zed Books (July 8, 2006)
Language: English
ISBN: 1-84113-797-8

The book offers compelling insights into contemporary challenges and transformative possibilities of the struggle for sexual rights. It combines the concepts of the political and offers inspiring examples of political interventions and campaigns that advocate the positive dimensions of sexuality. It brings together reflections and experiences of researchers, activists and practitioners from Brazil, India, Nigeria, Peru, Senegal, South Africa, Turkey, the UK and Europe, from political discourses on sex and sexuality to sex work and trafficking. From HIV and sexuality in struggles for legal reform and citizenship, the authors examine the means of creating stronger linkages between sexuality, human rights and development.

The Seduction Cookbook: Culinary Creations for Lovers
Author: Diane Brown
Publisher: Stone publishing USA, 2005
ISBN: 0974537363

The Seduction Cookbook, Culinary Creations for Lovers, May 4, 2006
The idea of cooking and dining has not been explored enough. This book is about preparing elegant dishes (dishes and presentations) with the Right atmosphere (candles, soft music, flowers, beautiful settings). All the recipes are simple and are clearly displayed on only one page that leaves the cook to spend less time in the kitchen and more time at the table with a loved one. Here the author explains that cooking and eating are arts that involve the head, the heart, and the hands. Food is love. Brown helps you create that important sense of intimate anticipation. You'll find appetizers that will include a little luscious with a little严肃 meal.

Sacred Sexuality
Author: Dr. Mutia Ashby
Publisher: Divine Designs (September 1, 1997)
ISBN: 0-9624640-38

Sacred Sexuality: Egyptian Tantric Yoga

Tantrism and Mysticism of Ancient Egypt The Sacred Guide To Love, Sexuality, Marriage, Relationships and the Secrets of Sexual Energy Cultivation, Seduction, and Sexual Enlightenment This Volume will explain the male and female principles within the human body and in the universe and further detail the purification of sexual energy into spiritual energy. The student will study the deities Men and Hefen, Asar and Aset, Geb and Nut and discover the mystical implications for a practical spiritual discipline. This Volume will also focus on the Tantric aspects of Ancient Egyptian and Indian mysticism, the purpose of sex and the mystical meanings of sexual abstinence which lead to self-knowledge and enlightenment.