

# FREEDOM SOUP

Soup Joumou



Enjoying and sharing the taste  
of freedom since 1804

FONDASYON  
FELICITEE

# Where the Legacy of Freedom Soup Started



The story of the **Soup Joumou** began over two centuries ago when Marie Claire Heureuse Felicite Bonheur Dessalines, who will become the first empress of Hayti, Empire of Freedom on **October 8th, 1804**, started distributing the soup across the country!

Empress Felicite mobilized family members, high officials and staff to prepare the healthy soup at night every year to distribute it from sunup to sundown from **January 1st to 7th!** The Empress is quoted: **“If only one citizen is hungry on Independence Day, there is no celebration of freedom in the nation.”**

The soup was prepared through the night, and that it is the legacy that **FONDASYON FELICITEE** has been carrying on for the past 24 years!

**FONDASYON FELICITEE** aspires that every Haitian Elder, child, women, and men get to enjoy a bowl of that healthy soup that signifies the country's freedom victory!



# The Origin Story

On the **1st of January 1804**, Ayitian Liberator Jean-Jacques Dessalines declared **Hayti's independence** “from all forces of the universe!”

Our celebrated healer, justice seeker and educator **Marie Claire Heureuse Felicite Bonheur Dessalines**, concentrated herself to create a meal that would keep us healthy even if we weren't in a position to eat daily. She conceived **Independence Soup**, with **Joumou**, (a type of squash) as the base with plenty of vegetables and tubercules. This soup became the symbol of **liberation**, and this tradition has continued ever since!

Wherever they are, Haitians bring their big pots and cook this soup every New Year's Day to celebrate their freedom!

In 1804, the Soup **Joumou** was a symbol of **equality**. It was to signal that 312 years of slavery were crushed! It magnified that Haytians were victorious over the enslaving-armies of the world!

Every spoon of the soup is a reminder of the revolution and the resistance!



# Freedom Soup is not just a soup, It is a celebration!

**Soup Joumou** has been a part of Ayitian history for 220 years and is much more than food! It satisfies psychological needs, nutritional as well as spiritual demands, in one word, it confirms **Ayitian identity!**

**Soup Joumou**, sometimes wrongly referred to as pumpkin soup, is a symbol of Ayiti/Hayti's freedom. It is made to celebrate independence in **1804**.



**Soup Joumou** has maintained our people in good health in the first free Black nation in the Americas, Hayti, Empire of Freedom; in the first Black Kingdom founded by King Henry in 1811; in the first Black Republic of Haiti founded in 1807. Always it reminds us that food is always best shared!

**Empress Felicite** says it this way: **“Unless your soup walks: a bowl goes to an elderly, bowls are served to passersby..., your soup is not Independence soup.**

**Soup Joumou** is a representation of victoriously resilient people and their proud history made of incredibly daring battle feats during the most atrocious and outrageous times!



# Recette Soup Felicite a pou 7 moun



## Ingrédients :

- 1 ½ gal. Dlo
- 1 gwo joumou
- 1 liv pòm detè
- 1 liv yanm
- 1 liv malanga
- 1 liv bannann
- (5 liv. makawonni)
- 1 liv. kawòt
- 1 gwo tèt chou
- ¼ liv. seleri (separe l an 3)
- ¼ liv. lòzèy (separe l an 3)
- 3 zonyon
- 1 tèt lay
- 1 pake boukè gani pèsi ak ten
- 1 ½ glòs. Lwil
- 2 liv pwaro
- Sèl
- 3 bèl Piman vèt
- 2 bèl pimandous vèt
- Sitwon
- 4 zoranj si

## Preparasyon :

1. Kale pòm detè yo ; yanm yo ak malanga yo,
2. Koupe yo an ti moso,
3. Lave yanm, malanga ak kèk zoranj si
4. Netwaye tout legim yo ;
5. Pire rès ji zoranj si yo nan yon veso
6. Fè bouke gani ak 2 pòsyon ten, 2 pòsyon lòzèy,
7. 2 pòsyon pèsi, 2 pòsyon seleri ;
8. Mete dlo w chofe anvan
9. Koupe joumou yo netwaye anndan yo, pa kale yo,
10. Plase yo, nan dlo bouyi a, jouk yo byen kwit ;
11. Desann chodyè a
12. Kraze joumou an jouk li ba w yon pat byen pwès ;
13. Melanje pat joumou an nan dlo kite bouyi la,
14. Koule l nan paswa
15. Mete chodyè w cho
16. Mete lwil ou chofe, mete epis la mete viv yo ak tout karot ak ji zoranj si a
17. ajoute yon ti sèl ; sòf yon pòsyon pèsi ;
18. kitel marinen, Brase l tanzantan
19. 5 min. apre Ajoute dlo joumou ou te fè a ;
20. 5 min. apre ajoute chou a ; makaroni
21. 5 min. apre, ajoute 1 bouke gani ;
22. ajoute tout piman ak pòsyon zonyon an ;
23. 5 min. apre, ajoute tout sa w te melanje ansanm yo ;
24. Brase l byen brase epi kite l konsonmen sou ti dife ;
25. Etenn dife w, epi lage dènye pòsyon bouke gani a,
26. toufe l ;
27. ajoute ji sitwon an.
28. Brase l, toufe l.





# Large Quantity Recipe in English Recipe for Freedom Soup

*For the huge 'Manman Penmba' 80 liter cooking pot*



## Ingredients :

- 5 gal. water
- 3 to 5 big pumpkin
- 18 to 24 potatoes
- 2 lb. macaroni
- 12 big carrots
- 2 big cabbages
- 2 bunch of celery (split in 3 parts)
- 2 bunch of sorrel (split in 3 parts)
- 2 bunch parsley (split in 3 parts)
- 2 bunch of thyme (split in 3 parts)
- 5 big onions (split in 3 parts)
- 3 whole garlic
- 4 oz of oil
- Salt
- 2 or 3 green pepper (split in 2 parts)
- 7 hot pepper
- 1 cup of lime Juice
- 3 spoons of butter

## Preparation:

- Clean squash (joumou/pumpkin, don't peel)
- Peel potatoes ;
- Clean up and cut up vegetables and tubercules, leave in water;
- Arrange 2 parts of thyme, sorrel, parsley, celery into bunch.
- Grind the third part of thyme, sorrel, parsley, celery; Mix them together;

## Directions:

1. Thoroughly scrub skin clean ;
2. Put water to boil; place pumpkin in boiling water till well cooked ;
3. Crush or blend pumpkin till it becomes a thick paste ;
4. Mix the pumpkin paste; keep 4 gal. of water;
5. Put oil in the pot, when hot sauted in:
  - a. onions, garlic, pepper, pounded spices.
  - b. add potatoes, yams, carrots to hot pot
  - c. add in pumpkin water to the pot;
6. 3 min. later add cabbage;
7. 3 min. later add in macaroni.
8. add 2 big spoons of salt; 1 part of parsley.
9. 5 min. later tie in parsley, thyme, losey into a bunch.
10. add all peppers and part of the onion.
11. stir well and lower the fire.
12. turn off the fire then drop the last bunch.
13. cover. Let it stand at least 15 min.; stir well.
14. add the lemon juice; stir well; cover.
15. Serve after 15 minutes.



# The Empress' Biography



# The Empress' Biography

## EMPRESS FELICITE OF HAYTI, Empire of Freedom

Marie Claire Heureuse Felicite Bonheur is the daughter of Marie-Sainte Lobelot and Guillaume Bonheur was born in Leogane, on May 8th, 1748.

The French painter, Michel Petit bought her at the highest price when her owner noticed Petit's admiration for this gorgeous young woman. Our collective memory about her marriage to Petit, tells us that as a captive, Claire Heureuse, with a soft-speaking voice, demanded that Petit marry her in the following terms:

*"You have all rights over me. Buyer's right over his property, right of white over black, colon's right over slave, force of man's right over woman's weakness, but, if you wish to know the woman who lives in me, you will marry me.*

Michel Petit did submit and marry her. The groom desperately wanted to please his bride. He kept insisting that she chooses a gift. Her only request was to buy her mother and father out of enslavement. He did. Yet, continued to insist that she chose something else. She categorically refused; contending that one must know when one has had enough. She was free, her mother and father were free and living with her; there was nothing else that she wanted. In less than five years, Petit died.

A little over a decade later, Marie Claire married Pierre Lunic, Master-Charron on the Saint-Jean of God plantation. They seem to have enjoyed a good relationship. Pierre was by far older than Claire Heureuse. No children came from this union. By this time, Marie Claire enjoyed a good reputation as an educator, teaching many 'free Blacks' how to read and write. She extended her knowledge of the natural environment and soon learnt the healing properties of plants and became a successful healer. Within seven years, Claire Heureuse became a widow again.

During the Haitian Revolution – Claire Heureuse provided health care many times on the battlefields. Usually, after the fight stopped before stepping on the battlefield to help the wounded. After a particular battle near Gonaives, General Dessalines returned to the field to examine what he felt went wrong during that battle. Marie Claire was in full labor of love for freedom. The two met for the first time. Dessalines immediately fell in love with the intelligence, courage, and beauty of Claire Heureuse and asked her to marry him. Her first response was a resounding 'no'. He worked hard to convince her, eventually she stated four conditions in order for them to become a couple:

1. Dessalines must legally recognize all his natural children with other women.
2. He is to provide his children's mothers with the financial means to raise them properly.
3. In the marriage, Marie Claire Heureuse Felicite would remain free to speak according to her own convictions and act in harmony with her own words.
4. The General's enemies would not automatically be hers.

# The Empress' Biography (cont.)

Eventually, they agreed. The wedding ceremony uniting the pair took place at the Cathedral in Saint-Marc, on April 2, 1800.

Marceau Louis described the house where the couple resided at Royale Street, in the city of Saint Marc, thus:

*“Marie Claire Heureuse Felicite sowed health, justice and literacy around her and takes care of many charitable works while she leads a quiet and comfortable life. The couple lives in the Lucas House, the most luxurious home in St. Marc. Dessalines not finding it sumptuous enough, made it still more beautiful. The reception room decked with marble tiles, well paneled and adorned with portraits of French generals famous for their victories but, he was careful to place on the wall across from it an oil painting, representing him in his true height and dimensions, in the midst of a vast camp of blacks, as wanting to erase his neighbors by the height of his stature and the brightness of the color.”*

Many contemporaries wrote and spoke about Marie Claire, including Dr. Mathurin, who said this about our heroine:

*“She was the first war nurse in our country, equating, in this order of ideas, the great Florence Nightingale whose work is known throughout the world.”*

We must note that Marie Claire's work precedes that of Florence Nightingale. In fact, Nightingale is born on May 12, 1820, meaning 72 years after La Felicite.

FONDASYON FELICITEE says: In fact, she should be considered to be a doctor, considering that her healing was of high standard and that she took orders from no one as well as assumed full responsibility for her work.

When she became Empress, Hayti's first lady, she convinced all those who were able, to prepare and distribute Independence Soup, for the given period of 1st to the 7th of January each year, from the first lights of the day until nightfall. About this activity Empress Felicite said:

*“No one could appreciate freedom while hunger thunders in his belly. If there is one among us with no food, the rest of the citizens can not celebrate freedom on the Earth. In order for your celebration to be true, those who have plenty must harness the responsibility to share with those who have less.”*

Empress Felicite actively participated in the writing of the Imperial Constitution of 1805; her particular focus was the segment on the protection of the future of Haytian children. She insisted on writing texts that guaranteed rights to children born out of wedlock as demonstrated by article 12 that states:

*“A father engaged in the bonds of marriage, can recognize a natural child born during the said marriage.”*

Thus, we understand that Empress Felicite was very concerned for the vast majority of Black children of that time, born out of wedlock, firstly because of the enslavement laws; secondly by

# The Empress' Biography (cont.)

the imposed social practices - since the enslavement system banned marital union of enslaved Africans. As such, the Empress of Justice looked to re-weld the family force by creating laws that allowed African children to emerge from the marginalization in which the system had expelled them to. Lady Justice Felicite, protected them individually in her private life and when the opportunity came, she guaranteed their rights by law, applicable to all.

In September 1804, news came! The population had taken to the streets, even soldiers of the 24th half-Brigade had followed the people because they heard that Napoleon could be crowned Emperor of France, and therefore, would soon come to Hayti to put African people back into enslavement! This news travelled faster than a wildfire; and the Northerners in Cap-Haitian began to shout: 'long live Emperor Dessalines!' In no time all the high-ranking officers of the revolution were in Cap-Haitian demanding that Dessalines assume the title of Emperor. He eventually agreed and chose October for the crowning ceremony. Objections were raised saying that there was not enough time to have a crown and other ceremonial articles ready, Dessalines responded: "then we'll carry on without it!"

So, on October 8th, in a modest ceremony, without a crown, no cloak, and no scepter, General Jean-Jacques Dessalines, in ordinary military attire, was crowned Jacques, Emperor 1st of Hayti, Empire of Freedom. He declared his wife, the simple woman full of kindness, Empress Felicite. He also stated "After us, there will be no other nobles in Hayti". He added:

"The Supreme rank to which you have raised me teaches me that I became the father of my fellow citizens, whom I was previously the defender of"

For Empress Felicite, there was no change to her life of sharing and service to all.

The Constitution of 1805 accords a special position to her in article 22 which states:

"The State will grant a fixed treatment to her Majesty the Empress which she will enjoy even after the death of the Emperor with the title of Dowager Princess."

Everything indicates that Felicite has never presented any claims related to this article to the Governments that succeeded.

Two years after his coronation on 17 October 1806, Emperor Dessalines was killed attempting to put down a revolt led by General Alexandre Sabès dit Pétion. When Empress Felicite learned that her husband had been murdered, without hesitation, her very first response was to protect. She asked the treasurer to bring the available funds, and she distributed these to all junior personnel and told them to find ways to their own safety because the Emperor was no longer there to protect them:

# The Empress' Biography (cont.)

It was on October 24th, that General Christophe Henry conveyed his condolences to Madam Dessalines, here is an extract:

"It would be difficult for my heart, my dear Commere (god-mother to my child), to express to you the sensation I have experienced in learning the news of the troubles that have taken place, and especially the unprecedented attack on the person of his Majesty the Emperor, your husband; my anxiety is unequalled on his fate. I could not get any definite detail about these unfortunate affairs; I absolutely ignore the leaders of the insurgents, their plan and their purpose; I cannot even think that they dared to dip their hands in his blood.

"Go hide, the Emperor is no longer there to protect you. Be careful not to meet with those who murdered the Emperor. You officers and high dignitaries, your salaries and your savings have been appreciable, you will be able to defend yourself. Everyone must leave me here alone. Everyone is free to protect themselves by their own means.

She asked the mothers of Dessalines's youngest children to move away from the capital and, if necessary, to change the names of the little ones in order to protect them. She entrusted each of them with a sum of money. When all the money was distributed, she shared her own valuables, including her own jewelry and tableware. The Empress insisted that she must stay alone to meet the criminals who will surely come here at the capital city.

Lots of important correspondences were exchanged after the contemptable murder of Hayti's Liberator. For example, here what General Petion wrote to a grieving widow to officially informed her of the death of her husband:

"At the headquarters in Port-au-Prince on October 19th, 1806  
Madam, All the most sacred laws of nature were violated by the one who was your husband, the general destruction of the true defenders of the State whose judgment had come out of his guilty mouth, the excess in crimes, at last, caused all oppressed citizens to take up arms run to liberate themselves from the most unbearable tyranny. The sacrifice is consumed, and the memorable day of the seventeenth had been set by Providence for the moment of vengeance. Behold, Madam, the shortened table of the last events, and the end of the one who profaned the title which united him to you.

What a difference from virtue to crime! What a contrast! We can hardly breathe, after realizing the greatness of the dangers we faced, yet, as we raised our hands to the Supreme essence, your name, your priceless qualities, your pains, your patience to endure them, everything came back to our hearts and reminded us of our duty, gratitude, admiration inspired by you.

# The Empress' Biography (cont.)

Be reassured, Madam; you are in the midst of a people who would devote their life for your happiness; forget that you were the wife of Dessalines, to become the adoptive wife of the most generous nation, who only knew of hatred against her only oppressor. Your properties, everything that belonged to you, or what you have some rights to, is entrusted to me and I shall transmit them to you in its integrality; they are under the safeguard of the love of your fellow citizens....

I have the honor to greet you with respect,

The General commanding the 2nd Division of the West.

signed PETION”

For fear that the insurgency would spread in the North, I thought it prudent to take, before moving, measures that tended to maintain order in both divisions. I ordered that the troops received new clothing and additional pay. As soon as I can be absent, you will see me flying towards you. ...

So, the great project of our enemies is fulfilled; they have finally managed to put division into the Empire and when? On the eve of a general pacification in Europe, where we should only consider finishing our fortifications and waiting for the enemy. Big culprits have played a part in this case.

... if he believed that you and your interesting family would run some risks, to let me know right away; I would send for you, as well as your children, to come and stay with my wife who is heartbroken and devastated like me on this cruel event.

I embrace you wholeheartedly and with unwavering dedication.

(S) Christophe Henry.”

Thanks to author Marceau Louis, we learned that former Empress Felicite received in 1840, a visit from Senator Schoelcher; in his book Foreign Colonies and Haiti, he wrote this concerning our shero:

“It was at St. Marc that Mrs. Dessalines withdrew and I owe a lot to General Bonnet and his son for the honor they made me by asking her to allow me to come to her house.

Mrs. Dessalines is a tall negress, with a calm, pure face and still of great beauty. She was dressed in white according to her usual custom. She lives very simply, occupied with pious works and benevolent kindness, she has lost nothing of her amiable character. Today as in the time when she was Empress, she is always surrounded by young girls whom she raises and protects. There is only a difference in the number. When one sees this venerable woman, whose manners breathe a gentle and easy dignity, whose whole life is only a long good deed; it inspires great pity for the fools who want to deny a human soul to the race that she honors.”



# The Empress' Biography (cont.)

We could summarize the long and generous contribution of Marie Claire Heureuse Felicite Bonheur to the world, as follows:

Empress Felicite of Hayti, Empire of Freedom:

- Taught her husband Jean-Jacques Dessalines and many others to better master the French language.
- Insured an education and a roof to an exceptionally large number of orphans. Some authors of the period assured us that she seldom had less than twenty children to whom she guaranteed well-being in her home.
- Provided natural health care to all those sick people who sought her.
- Created the tradition of sharing soup on Independence Day.
- Participated in the drafting of the Imperial Constitution of 1805.
- Collaborated with writer Courtilien Coutard on his book on Haytian history
- Created women's teams and organized them so that they could go up to the fields after the battles to heal wounded soldiers.
- Fiercely opposed any form of injustice. She underlined, even in public, decisions that she judged to be unfair, exaggerated or inconsistent with the purpose for which Hayti had been created; she usually won her cases.

*Her name is used as an eponym for a female advisor or counselor – of Justice for Hayti, in a ceremony held by the Haytian Superior Council for the Judiciary (CSPJ) in April 2018.*

Prior to her transition, she sent for a carpenter and ordered her coffin. As soon as it was delivered, she personally inscribed on it: **Marie Claire Heureuse Felicite Bonheur, Widow of Jean-Jacques Dessalines**. This wonderful soul departed on August 8th, 1858. This peaceful defender of justice, Empress of an incredible nation, in scarceness as well as in abundance, in war or peace times, she served all people, and lived to count 110 years of age!

If you would like to learn more about how our Foundation celebrates Freedom Soup, you can learn more at <https://www.freedomsoup.org>

Share the taste of Freedom!