

Nigerian dancers, wearing the type of dress and facial makeup seen during the Christmas celebration, performed as a part of a cultural festival.

## -Christmas in Nigeria

(Continued from Page 9) come to be accepted as Christmas food. It is also a Sunday food.

The rice is rice, of course, but the stew is something else. Whatever type of meat one chooses for their stews is their privilege. In Lagos the turkey culture is more prevalent than in other parts of the country.

But in all, the tomato farmers still make a fortune, so do the red pepper gardeners. From the north come extra large onions and spices. Also come the bean cakes, the bush meat and beans.

There is no uniform dish. Everybody goes by their instincts. The end result is to prepare something special for the day. In polygamous and extended families, women compete to come up with the best dish.

Using her creative imagination, woman once thought about stuffing a chicken with seasoned ground melon seed. She came up

with the dish of the day. The ground melon seed, produces an oil, unique in its taste and when this is blended with the oil from the chicken, the seasoning gave the stuffing a peculiar taste. The man of the house was proud of it and boasted all day about his wife's genius.

Food preparation begins early in the morning — about 4:30 a.m. It has to, because somewhere a.m. the masquerades will begin their outings - and who wants to sit in the house at that time?

Excited children get up even earlier than that, waking everybody else up with the crackings of their air guns and fireworks. They are also unusually obedient on Christmas day.

traditional customs, the man of the house slaughters the animal, whatever it is. The girls get busy grinding tomatoes, onions, beans

for making bean cakes called 'moi moi' while the bone belo their father prepare the meat. Male children are especially handy to chop frewood for roasting the

While the food preparation is goin on, the youths meet in a secret place, usually a community house, to make final preparation for their musical outing. They return home to eat or wait till the food is ready.

In preparing a stew or rice. palm oil is heated in a pot, quantities of which depend on the size of the family. The ground or sliced onion are added to the hot oil followed by tomatoes. Some prefer to fry the meat, but some boil the meat and use the meatseasoned water to prepare ap-

In all cases, the meat is added to the fried onions and tomatoes and spices are added after which the pot is covered and cooking

takes about 30 minutes.

The 'moi moi' is prepared by seasoning some gound beans and putting them in little cups for baking. Half boiled eggs are put in the cups together with ground nione meet on Gabaliana

If the family has prepared some appetizers, this is served in little dishes prior to the Christmas dish.

The man of the house sits at the head of the table and his wife sits opposite him. The boys sit on one side of the table while the girls sit opposite them.

In the cities, this might not be so, but in some hometowns the way people sit at dinner tables is of cultural significance. The man sitting at the head of the table fulfills his role as the head of the family. The woman opposite him provides the balance of power.

The children sit in groups according to their sex because much contact with the opposite sex should begin after the children reach adulthood. In a family with adult children, the responsibility

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