

Is there any nutrition in oxtail, cow foot & tripe?

Meals with oxtail, cow foot, pig's tail, tripe and chicken foot form part of the rich Jamaican cuisine.

The consumption of these items dates back to slavery, when these parts of the meat would have been discarded by the slave master and the house slaves would collect the 'fifth quarter' and feed it to their families. How nutritious are these parts of the meats? Protein is made up of amino acids and the body uses 20 amino acids to function, some of which the body can make (non-essential) and the essential amino acids that must be obtained from food eaten. Protein is divided into two groups based on the amount of essential amino acids present in them. The groups are: protein of high biological value or high-quality protein or complete protein and protein of low biological value or low-quality protein or incomplete protein. High and low proteins The foods that are classified as protein of high biological value are foods from animals such as cheese, milk, eggs, beef, chicken, fish, with the exception of animal foods with high collagen protein or high gelatin content such as cow foot, chicken foot, pig's tail, oxtail and cow skin - the sticky meats. There is an exception to the rule, in that soybeans, a plant source is of high biological value because it has all the essential amino acids that are found in meat of high biological value. Hence, soybeans and its products are excellent sources of protein. The foods that are classified as low biological value are plant sources such as peas, beans, nuts, oxtail, cow foot and pig's tail, because they lack one or more of the essential amino acids. Protein is needed for growth, formation of some hormones and enzymes, antibodies to fight infections, maintaining body fluid balance and to increase the feeling of fullness or satiety. Protein is especially important for infants, children and teenagers as they are growing and developing more than adults. Go for variety A variety of foods should be consumed every day to ensure that if and when incomplete protein or protein lacking one or more of the essential amino acids is eaten, complementation of amino acids can take place. In other words, the amino acid that is missing from one food item, you will get it from another food item when eaten within a 24-hour period. Foods such as oxtail and chicken foot have a low-protein quality and should be prepared and consumed with peas, beans and other vegetables to improve the protein content of the meal. For example, tripe should be eaten with 'nuff' beans, chicken foot soup should be loaded with red peas, oxtail with lots of broad beans. Let us hold on to our Jamaican culture of eating the 'fifth quarter' of animals by adding nature's own peas, beans, and fresh vegetables to improve the protein quality in our diet. Marsha N. Woolery is a registered dietitian/nutritionist in private practice and adjunct lecturer at Northern Caribbean University Source: Jamaica Gleaner