

**On Anuta, this is a complex process. One digs up the taro corms (a corm is technically a swollen underground portion of the plant's stem, but we can think of it as a kind of root), peels off the skin with a large knife, and bakes the corms in an earth oven for several hours. This is done by lining a hole in the ground with rocks, building a fire until the rocks become white hot, removing the burning wood, inserting the taro corms, and covering the whole thing with leaves for perhaps half a day. Then one collects mature (brown) coconuts, removes the husks, cracks open the shell, and grates the hard, white coconut meat on a kind of grater. The coconut shavings are squeezed with a bundle of sennit fiber, made from the husk of the brown coconut, to remove the white liquid or "coconut cream." The baked taro is then mashed with sticks—usually made from a coconut leaf petiole—and the coconut cream is mixed in with those same sticks. This mixture, called uoua taro, is typically wrapped in large tropical leaves and served at feasts, usually along with fish or some other form of animal protein. It is roughly comparable to a very rich serving of mashed potatoes.**

**Rick**

## Uoua Taro

*Rick Feinberg, Class of '65*

POLYNESIA EASY VG

**Why you chose this recipe:** It's regarded as a delicacy on Anuta, the Polynesian Island where I've done years of research; it's "different," but one can make it on the US mainland—with a few modifications. Use it in place of potatoes or other carbohydrate at lunch or dinner.

**Servings:** It's easy to prepare in whatever quantities one prefers.

**Time to prepare:** An hour or two using common American cooking equipment.

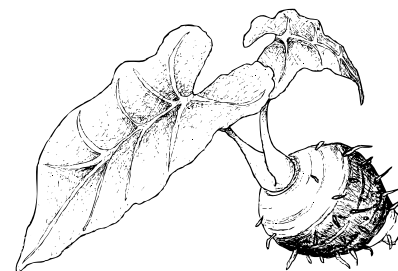
**Ingredients:**

Taro and coconut cream.

**Instructions:**

Fortunately, making Uoua taro in the U.S. is much simpler. It should be possible to buy taro in an Asian grocery store. If taro isn't available, some other starchy root vegetable can be substituted. Canned coconut cream can also be purchased at most Asian groceries, and in many standard food stores as well. Peel the taro (or taro substitute) and bake it in a standard oven at medium to high heat until soft. Mash it with an appropriate utensil, and mix in the coconut cream. Proportions may be adjusted to taste, but something like a half cup of coconut cream to a couple pounds of taro seem about right.

**Tips and variations:** Experiment to find the proportions of taro to coconut cream that suit your taste. You can also experiment by substituting potatoes, sweet potatoes, yams, not-too-ripe bananas or plantains, or maybe manioc (if you can find it) for the taro.



*Uoua*