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Detoxification of cassava leaves by simple traditional methods

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Abstract

Cassava leaves, which usually contain large quantities of cyanogenic glycosides, were processed into a Zairian traditional vegetable sauce 'Mpondu' by simple methods which included blanching (10 min), mashing and then boiling for 20–80 min. These methods enhanced the detoxification of the leaves, with blanching alone resulting in the loss of 57% of the free (non-glycosidic) cyanide content and of 60% of the bound (glycosidic) cyanide. It is presumed that losses of cyanide during these processes would be accounted for in volatile HCN, its derivatives and in the boiling water.