

Heirloom Gardens Oral History Project
Interview with Dorina Chimilio by Elizabeth Gowens
Conducted on June 16th, 2023 Snellville, GA

[00:00:00] **LuAnna Nesbitt:** The following interview is a part of the Heirloom Gardens Oral history project. It was conducted in Snellville, Georgia by interview Elizabeth Gowans on June 16th, 2023. The narrator of this oral history is Dorina Chimilio

[00:00:13] **Elizabeth Gowans:** So just for the record, please state your name.

[00:00:16] **Dorina Chimilio:** Yes. My name is Dorina Chimilio.

[00:00:19] **Elizabeth Gowans:** It's nice to meet you.

[00:00:20] **Dorina Chimilio:** Nice meeting you too.

[00:00:22] **Elizabeth Gowans:** So to start out I'd love it if you could just tell me about the community.

[00:00:27] **Dorina Chimilio:** Okay. The Garifuna community originated in the island of Vincent and, it's a mix of the Arawak Indians and the African, uh, since the people that they just, mixed up in the island also visit.

[00:00:44] **Elizabeth Gowans:** That's really great to hear. I wanna know. So what kind of food did you eat growing up with your heritage being, like, African Indian?

[00:00:57] **Dorina Chimilio:** I remember my grandmother, we, she used to make us a lot of staple foods. And one of the important ones in our dishes is the yucca. And, and I remember her making a lot of cassava bread. And, it's something that was done as a community, especially females. It was very laborious. It was, a lot of work for them to do. What I remember is, her going every morning, around 4 o'clock in the morning, we a group of ladies, to the place of growing their food. And they used to walk miles and miles to get to those places.

And, when it's, it was time for harvesting, so they will also go in and group up ladies and they will bring the yucca to home. And then it was a process, the long process to make the cassava bread. They first have to clean it and then peel it and then grind it. And, then they have to strain it. And then they have to like, it's a block of, like a flour and then they have to separate it and, then it was, it was ready to make the cassava bread.

And from this work, they will have to take out the juice from the yucca and , from that juice, they will bring other things that they can use it. So from the juice, they will make a, like a jelly. And they use it to make soup with it, because we eat a lot of, we have a lot of soup and from the yucca, they will make the cassava bread, and then from remaining crumbs, from the crumbs, they will save it, and they will make some wine with it. Everything was utilized in, in the yuca during all this, this process.

And also from the yucca, we will, my grandmother used to make yucca bread, it's so delicious. It was so delicious, I love to enjoy the yucca bread. We also eat a lot of ground vegetables, like yucca, we have the yams. And she also plant banana and plantains. And, she also used to plant sugar cane. And we were so happy when she was harvesting the cassava, the cane because it was usually for the kids to enjoy because I was so sweet and we used to enjoy that. And she comes from her place of work and she will bring that for us. It was very, very delicious. I enjoy it with my brothers and sisters. And also, kids from the neighbors will come and also enjoy it with us. Uh, what else I used to the pepper, tomato, every kind of stuff she used to.

[00:04:05] **Elizabeth Gowans:** Is she the person inspired to learn how to plant and taught you?

[00:04:11] **Dorina Chimilio:** Definitely. Definitely. She did inspire me to continue in her legacy. And I think basically planting your own food is, it's said to be organic and you're doing it yourself. I think you have that sense of happiness within you when grow your own food. And I also learned it with, with my mom, it's just being from generations to generations.

[00:04:33] **Elizabeth Gowans:** I'm curious to know, was there a difference that you experienced in watching your grandmother plant in as to planting here in the United States, maybe in the soil? In what seeds were available? Any worse?

[00:04:53] **Dorina Chimilio:** I think the major difference over here in the United States from Honduras is the weather or the climatic type of stuff. Honduras is very hot all the time, maybe summer most of the time. And all the year, sometimes the cold weather doesn't let some of the diversity will grow all the year.

[00:05:16] **Elizabeth Gowans:** So, do you have any favorite things to plant?

[00:05:19] **Dorina Chimilio:** Peppers. And I also like to plant a sweet potato. Yes. Sweet potatoes.

[00:05:26] **Elizabeth Gowans:** Okay, next question. What is your favorite thing to make with what you plant?

[00:05:33] **Dorina Chimilio:** The sweet potato bread. We like to, my sister and me, we like to experiment on doing those stuff. A lot of people like it and really they eat it. So, we always experiment in the ready. The breads from all these vegetables. Yes.

[00:05:53] **Elizabeth Gowans:** I'm assuming it's your mom and your grandmother who taught you how to cook?

[00:05:57] **Dorina Chimilio:** Yes. And I'm still learning from my mom. Right now she's over here , vacationing and with my aunt. And it was four of them it was only two of them remaining. And I sit and sit with them and listen to the conversation about why they experiment with, they were young too, it was a different kind of life. It was very, way different. Yes, and I like to hear from them.

[00:06:24] **Elizabeth Gowans:** Okay, well, are there any questions about food you want me to ask you?

[00:06:28] **Dorina Chimilio:** Um, anything, uh, something else I want to share with you is like, um, with the plantains and stuff. Something that I learned how to do, that I'm planning to go into business with that, is making the plantain chips.

Yes, when I was growing up with my mom, since she was a single mother, I learned how to do the plantain chips with her. And she used to have a small restaurant and I used to help out a lot since I was the older kid. And I learned how to do , the plantains chips. So we use a lot of plantains in our food.

And uh, with the plantains, we make the hudut. And the hudotes are mashed plantains, and we can mix it in however you like it. It can either be green plantains or the ripe plantains, or you can mix it, but you can have that sweetness on it. And we eat that with, with the seafood soup. And the soup, we, the base is either coconut or water based. And the fried fish. So, it is, it's something delicious. It's very, very delicious.

I have the cassava that I can show you. And we make cassava chips. The cassava, we add butter on it and garlic sauce and we put it in the oven, it becomes very crisp. It's so delicious. The kids like it a lot. The banana. The right banana, we do, we also make banana bread, and it's so good and I used to enjoy going to our place of growing because it used to be like fun for us when we were young and then it would give us a sense of oh we are helping our elders. But at the same time, it was very enjoyable.

[00:08:26] **Elizabeth Gowans:** Earlier you mentioned medicinal plants, and so I wanted you to tell me about the types of medicinal plants that you grow and what you use them for.

[00:08:36] **Dorina Chimilio:** Okay. We have, , right here in the front, I have, the rosemary. I grow the rosemary because we use it a lot to make tea with it. And, we also do the ruta, which I have a plant in there too. And that one is, is like an aromatic and so we bake with it. As, also the rosemary, we also cook it and boil it and we can also bake with it. We kill, we can also do, we burn it in the house. And it give you like the good scents of the rosemary. They use it a lot in traditional dancing for ancestors and, it gives a lot of, I don't know how to explain it. Can I say it's just good for our body. And it help you with, with a lot of things and digestion. And it help you a lot to, to sleep and like I say before, to, you know, to give you a lot of things in your, in your body.

So, you know, to relax. Um, one of the things that we, we grow is, things like basil. I have a little plant of basil right there. And that we use it for to cook. We put it in our soup. Like I tell you, it's soup. And the water based soup, we use a lot of water based, yeah.

Yes. Did you? A lot. We use it in bread, too. Rosemary. The coconut. We do a lot of things with coconut. Mmm. Actually, we do soup with coconut. We also make, the coconut oil. My ancestors didn't cook with anything else with, that we coconut oil. We fried the fish with the coconut oil.

They use it in our hair when we were kids. And, we also use it in our body and face. And that's how I use my face every day. We also make our coconut bread. With the milk of the coconut, we make our bread. That is a very important principle in our school. What else? I can't think of.

The milk. I think we call it yerba buena in Spanish. Yeah. We use it to make tea. And it's good for our indigestion. And a lot of stuff in our, in our body. And um, and people use it a lot for our, for drinks. So, we make juices and we can just spread the fresh leaf on it.

[00:11:52] **Elizabeth Gowans:** Um, I'd like to talk you through how coconut is made?

[00:11:58] **Dorina Chimilio:** How it's made? Oh, yes, definitely. Yes, , it's a lot of work. Yeah, everything in our food and, you know, the processing is very, , it's a lot to do. Um, so I learned with my grandma that we have to like, , take out the, the white skin from the coconut and inside the coconut and then we have to grind it.

And then, then we have to squish the milk out of it and we have to sit it for four hours until Um, for the next day and the next day we'll take out the top of it that that is the milk that is in the top and the remaining water will throw it away and that's the one we use to put it in and out of the stove and we have to be like, stirring it.

They will get, they won't get burned and we'll make sure that the oil is coming out and uh, it have to be at a time where we have to see that it's, it's ready because if we leave it there, it's gonna, gonna get burned. Yeah. And um, there's some people that mix that ninja juice with some, um, um, I don't know if you heard about the orange that is dark. I don't know how to call that. Yeah, I don't remember the name right now. I feel like it. Yes. When it's, it's not a sweet orange. It's the, it's, the orange is a little dark. But it's not, it's not lime either. Yes. They mix it. They put a little bit of that in there. And then, uh, that help a lot to have more oil.

Yes. Yeah, that's how we make that, the coconut oil. Yes, I think I'm planning to work on that too, start making coconut oil. Yes. I'm going to take advantage of my mom is right here right now, so I can learn the process better.

[00:14:10] **Elizabeth Gowans:** Always something to learn something new from mom.

[00:14:13] **Dorina Chimilio:** Yes.

[00:14:16] **Elizabeth Gowans:** Speaking of ancestors, so you spoke earlier about. Listening to your mom, talk to your aunts, to your grandmother. And I want you to elaborate on what kind of stories you heard. , just the histories of your family. How's yourself, sitting at their feet, just listening.

[00:14:43] **Dorina Chimilio:** I think listening to, to other people, you know, it make you feel , like you are learning from them and that learning, you take it from generations to generations. It's just me listening to my grandmother when she was alive and, she would tell you stuff like, you always have to do the right thing in life in order to, for you to be success.

If you're not, you don't, you're not doing it right, don't do it at all. And it's the same, the same teaching I'm doing with my children right now. Since they are in that young stage of life, that if they don't learn it from me. Who else they gonna teach them. So, that's coming from me learning from my grandmother and now learning from my mom and we, my aunt that they are older for me.

They had lived a different stage of their life, this one that I'm living now. Cause they were, they grew up back home and I came to the United States when I was in my 20s. And some of the things that I had, they lived when they were in their 20s. I didn't experience like in traditionally, right? And, some of those things that they are teaching me right now, I still want to my children to know, to learn about it.

Even if I didn't experience that, but I'm still learning it from my elders that they will learn that. Even if it's just a little bit, because when they have their own family, They will, also do the same thing, right? So, that's why I mostly, to listen to them and ask them questions about, how do they, um, enjoy living that life.

Back then, they say, okay, we were like very, they think that they were very poor. But I'm telling them that they're, they had a good life. Even though it was just different than now, right? Before they didn't have internet, they didn't have phones, they didn't have this and that, but they enjoyed themselves doing other things.

Playing with a group of children on the street, like running here, running there, like going to the beach and have the ocean right there that they can get the food from there. Fresh stuff. Going to grow up to the farm with their mom, their grandmothers and bringing food home that they can enjoy themselves.

That's where they,, they spend their time. Not right now that we now sit and be on the internet looking at somebody else's life. Right?

I think that, that's why I mostly want to hear from them. I think that's very enjoyable and, , and teaching my children, especially, the language, right? I see my son very happy to learn some of the Garifuna words. And when I hear him repeating it, I get very happy.

Son, you already sung Garifuna words, and my daughter, I, what I did with her when she was young is that she can, she didn't join a, a, a group of, Garifuna dance over here in the community. It was like, a girl that used to teach the girls that got it from the dances over here.

And, , and she knows some of the songs, and she knows the dance. She's already an adult, she, you say, I forgot how to dance, but I, , I know that's not true. Why you learn, you didn't forget. Yeah, , but I like them , to learn about the ethnicity. I like them to know, I like them to learn about their identity, their own identity, that they will never forget who they are and where are they coming from.

[00:18:58] **Elizabeth Gowans:** Ooh, okay. So you talked about fruits and vegetables and things that you, did you grow up on a farm or did your family just garden?

[00:19:13] **Dorina Chimilio:** They just garden a lot they just garden a lot, but yes, my, my grandmother used to have animals in the house, , and she'd grow chickens and hens and stuff and, and, , we used to enjoy that.

Nah, just getting a little egg from the, , and then she'll say. "You have to go and clean up the, uh, before you get an egg." She used to grow pigs. And, for every Christmas or New Year's, she will, kill one and, share with the neighbors. And have that, , piece of pig for meal.

You can have it on the holidays. Yeah. Mm hmm. And, uh, the remaining of, all the food, oh, and she will cook the, uh, the, the green bananas for, for them to, that they can be fed, yeah. And I used to help a lot with that. You'll go to the little, how do you call it? The place where they have things and feed them.

Was you very enjoyable. It's very fun. Yeah.

[00:20:27] **Elizabeth Gowans:** Do you have favorite Garifuna traditions that stick out to you from growing up or even from now?

[00:20:35] **Dorina Chimilio:** Yes. Um, we have, , traditional, , dancers and, songs that we use, so we are, we still enjoy over the, the holidays, especially Christmas and New Year's.

Yeah, it's a, it's a concert with a group of females and, that, that they will rehearse and the singing and the way of dancing together, for maybe let's say two months before the holidays, they will get together. And they will rehearse. And I remember my grandmother like, Oh, I have to walk to Mrs. Cristina Gonzalez and because we have to rehearse with my friends for before Christmas and they'll get together like every evening for an hour and a half and they keep going. And two or three Male, males don't play the drums. And, so December 24th, uh, they will get together with their, little uniforms and stuff and their head wrap.

And they will go and dance from eight o'clock at night until maybe, three o'clock in the morning. They'll go in and do their dancing. And also for new year's now on Honduras. And especially in my hometown, they are making it like as a carnival. Um, the first of January, you'll still receive the New Year.

It's out there. When I was a dancer, they, they dressed up with hats and, very colorful, floaty. And they have in their knees, some chairs that make noise when they dance. And, and the drummers and they dance from home to homes all day long from, let's say from 11 o'clock in the morning, maybe to 12 o'clock at night at, in, in the Hava.

A specific place and that's in front of my mother's house. that's where it's the last stage. The last place they, so they dance over there all night long. It's fun. And then they have, they also have the Indio Barbaro. The Indio Barbaro is , is a, is a character in our community that runs behind the children.

And now the young people also join. And, he is dressed only with a skirt and with a mask, and he pretends to be like a someone that you scare and people are making fun of him and he'll run

behind you. And whatever he has in his body is, , what, I don't know how you call it. It's like a paint he has in his body and, we oil. And then he will rub his head on his body with the oil and he will put it in his hand and he'll be applauding.

And then you have to pay him, one dollar or something and beat it and stuff like that. It's very fun. So they have that all in Christmas time. And it's very fun. It's very fun. Yeah. That's what I most like about stuff in our community. Yeah. And, , I have the museum, Garifuna Museum, I know I'm not here anymore.

I don't know if Dr. Daria told you about it. Yeah. It's mobile, I have it mobile. And one day when I have an exhibit, I will show you what I have. So whatever I'm talking about, I have, in the museum. Yeah.

[00:24:25] **Elizabeth Gowans:** Wonderful. Would you tell me more about the museum?

[00:24:30] **Dorina Chimilio:** Um, yes. In my museum, my name is, Walaganti, and Walaganti means our heritage.

And what I have in Walaganti is mostly telling the Garifuna history, around it. And I do have a lot of artwork that I made it myself, but I also have some artwork that, people have donated to me. It's maybe art that they did about the Garifuna culture or, also stuff that they, um, that they have purchased and donated to the museum.

And I have, pictures of different Garifuna artists , in our community. And I have stuff about, that talk about the Garifuna language and how it's confirming and everything. And I also have a, art about a lot of Garifunas that have been going to, to the army over here and they are, retired, uh, Garifuna, military.

, I have a lot of fun and stuff. That tell about the stuff that is going on in our culture. And, I've been, doing, exhibits since 2018. And I have been teaching children about the Garifuna culture because I, I think that there's not a lot of people don't know about the Garifuna people and , what I want to do with the museum is to make our artists about who we are, which we are.

Yeah. I think, uh, in 2019, I was invited to go to North Carolina University, I think it was. My friend is a professor there. And what she did was like a group of her students learned about the Garifuna culture. And they had a group of, boys and girls that learned a song and a dance.

And I went from here with some of my friends that used to have it was a Brummer's, and they did the dancing and they did the song with the people that I brought from here. And I also brought some of my artifacts and stuff , and had an exhibit in the youth.

[00:26:50] **Elizabeth Gowans:** I'd actually love to hear more about your art and what started you down there.

[00:26:57] **Dorina Chimilio:** When I came to Georgia, it was not a lot of Garifuna people here. I t was just a small group of Garifuna and I started a nonprofit organization that we can let people

that we exist over here as an ethnic group. And, we did function, as a nonprofit organization for three years.

And after that, people starting saying, "Oh, I will not participate in the non profit organization anymore." So people started getting busy, got married, got kids and stuff like that. And it was only me and other persons that remained in the organization. And I, I decided in our long term, long plans for the organization, we decided we was going to do a museum.

And that was my idea. I put it in the organization. We can open a museum if, we can let people know that we sit here with the museum, right? That was one of our long term goals. And since people started, leaving and stuff, I said, okay, let me start it myself. You know, since it was my idea.

So, I decided in 2017, the summer of 2017, I started working on my, uh, my artwork. In my community, we used to fish a lot. Going to the ocean, my grandfather used to fish a lot. I started making like a boat with paper and stuff like that. I was making my boat and stuff like that, thinking about what my ancestors used to do and start by working , on that, make my boat, my mama help me do some stuff on it.

I did that and, and then I make like a , mud house. I made a mud house. That's what my, that's what my grandma used to make, in a mud house and started making my mud house with. Everything on it, so I finished doing that. Okay, this is what my ancestors used to do. Okay, so continue doing that and start making the face of a Garifuna woman.

Like when we lost a family member, like me right now, I lost my husband a year ago and I made the face of a female, like with tears and with head rock. That's what, that's how. The females used to dress up when they lost a family member. I did that. I, the lead, whatever comes to my mind and I start making it in, in artwork.

And I had a collections, a lot of stuff that my, my grandma used to, , used when she cooked and which she made the Ella bread a lot of those, kitchen instruments. So I, I had a collection then I continued. Collecting a lot of stuff.

And every year, when I do um, the exhibit, I have like new artworks that I, uh, I present.

[00:29:57] **Elizabeth Gowans:** Do your kids help you with the museum?

[00:29:59] **Dorina Chimilio:** Yeah, the kids help me a lot with the museum. As a matter of fact, my, I think since then, my, my son started, I think I can do painting and stuff, there's a painting on the back over there, it's a picture of his dad when, before, before he, he passed away, he took a picture of him in the park.

And then he did, I'm pretty sure, you can't see it when you get up in the corner.

[00:30:22] **Elizabeth Gowans:** Is there anything specific you want to talk about next?

[00:30:26] **Dorina Chimilio:** Um, I'm just so, um, excited and, and happy to do, um, this retreat. And thank you so much for inviting me to go out there with this project and, and help. It's very helpful.

[00:30:41] **Elizabeth Gowans:** If you could talk about learning how to cook and how you learned to do that. If you received recipes from family members, or if you learned by watching, jumping?

[00:30:52] **Dorina Chimilio:** I mostly learned by watching and jumping in. Yes. Yes. Because sometimes you don't know how many people will gather with you in the family. We are family related people. Like this week, it was a ton of people in this house.

Oh my God. I have to invite my my step brothers. To come from New York and he can cook for a lot of people and I wish I knew that he can come and join us, and that he has happened, but yeah, for this event we have, uh, grilled chicken, we have pork ribs, uh, we have Rice and beans cooked with coconut milk.

Yes. We have the plantain chips. Uh, and you can call some of that if you would like to, yes. Uh, Um, What else? He made some salad, uh, rice and vegetables. We have, pure milk. Well, that's a waste of a lot of food. You're right. Yeah, that's a lot of food. Yeah.

[00:32:05] **Elizabeth Gowans:** I have another specific question.

[00:32:08] **Dorina Chimilio:** Okay.

[00:32:08] **Elizabeth Gowans:** So, I really love desserts. So what are your favorite desserts? Either to pick or to eat.

[00:32:16] **Dorina Chimilio:** I like the sweet potato bread. I love the sweet potato bread. Oh my god. I still love it.

[00:32:25] **Elizabeth Gowans:** Did he ask her how you make that? No, I was just curious. Can you walk us through making it?

[00:32:29] **Dorina Chimilio:** Yeah, it's the same thing.

We peel the, the sweet potato. We grind it. We grind it. And, and then we mix it. Sugar uh, cinnamon. And, um, uh, we use, vanilla and we mix it and mix it and then we put it on top of the stove and we, we cook it. We cook it a little bit and we mix it, also mix it with coconut milk. And then, uh, we, we put it to cook and then we have the pan to put it in, put in the pan and put in the oven.

And then we let it, , sit there for, a couple of hours. Hours, an hour maybe, and then we achieve it to another small pot, no coconut milk, and then we put it on top of it. Yeah. . Yeah. It is already brown on the top and then we put it up and then we let it sit for a little bit. You cannot eat it too hot.

Let it. And it's good to eat, to put ice cream top of recipe. You, we like to, oh my god.

. It's so good. It is so good.

[00:33:46] **Elizabeth Gowans:** Do you scrape the inside out of the vanilla bean or do you...

[00:33:49] **Dorina Chimilio:** Vanilla extract. The whole house smells so good when you're cooking it.

[00:33:54] **Elizabeth Gowans:** So you are growing some herbs and vegetables too here?

[00:34:00] **Dorina Chimilio:** Yes.

[00:34:01] **Elizabeth Gowans:** Or, okay. Are you growing in the backyard?

[00:34:03] **Dorina Chimilio:** Yeah. In the backyard. Okay. Yeah. I have tomatoes. I have, uh, peppers, I have strawberries. I have, uh, mint and basil and over here have the, the Buddha, I have, uh, rosemary and, uh, salt rice rose thin. Yeah. and I, I think recently did sweet potato. Oh, okay.

[00:34:40] **Elizabeth Gowans:** Are you, um, Professor Daria also said that you have experienced growing, I'm thinking about other, um, root vegetables. Are you growing taro or something?

[00:34:50] **Dorina Chimilio:** Uh, yes. Uh, we did that, at Spelman.

[00:34:55] **Elizabeth Gowans:** Was that an , important vegetable for you growing up?

[00:34:58] **Dorina Chimilio:** Yes. Because we eat it a lot. , with the taro. We use taro, yam, coconut, , with coconut milk, and we also do bananas, green bananas, and, and ripe bananas, and we cook it all together in a coconut milk, and we call that tapu. Then we fry the fish, and we put in, any kind of fish you like. I like, uh, blue fish. We like blue fish. Yes.

[00:35:37] **Elizabeth Gowans:** I think that was the question I was thinking about earlier. When you mentioned things that your grandmother threw, you said yams, and then I know you said you could see if you see there's outback, and you don't really have yams here in the U. S., I mean, there are yams in Africa, and you have ancestors, so the yams that your grandmother was throwing, were those brought over from Africa, and they were actual yams?

[00:36:07] **Dorina Chimilio:** Mm hmm. Yes, I have yams, of course, with me. And how they used to do this, to grow it, is to cut it in pieces. So let's say we're going to cut, this will be half right here, and we're going to cut like in four pieces, and what they used to do to have like more, seeds is to, If we call this in four pieces and the pieces that doesn't have the skin, we put the, used to put like ash on it.

And then we save it in a dark place. Until this stand, like growing the stamp, then it stand. And also from here you can get a stamp. If you wanna do this, you just cut this piece right here. And

then we put it on the ground and the stem. But to have more, more seeds all cut in pieces and get the.

The part that doesn't have the skin, we pluck, and we put it aside for, let's say, two or three weeks, and they'll, they will come, coming up, and put it in the ground.

[00:37:18] **Elizabeth Gowans:** Oh, yeah. That's amazing. Yeah. I've never seen anything like that. You've never seen it?

[00:37:22] **Dorina Chimilio:** Yes. And this, we peel it, and we can cook it in coconut milk, fried fish, and it'll be good.

[00:37:30] **Elizabeth Gowans:** That is, which flavor is it?

[00:37:34] **Dorina Chimilio:** No, you have to add salt to it and stuff like that because it is, doesn't have like much to it, but when you add the seasoning and then you, and then with the saltiness of the fried fish, it adds more to it. Yeah. And

[00:37:51] **Elizabeth Gowans:** When the yams were brought over, were you told if they were brought over as a whole yam or were they seeds or?

[00:37:59] **Dorina Chimilio:** For the two of the states? It's a whole.

[00:38:02] **Elizabeth Gowans:** They wear brought as -.

[00:38:03] **Dorina Chimilio:** It's a whole.

[00:38:03] **Elizabeth Gowans:** I just think that's really cool.

[00:38:04] **Dorina Chimilio:** Yes.

[00:38:05] **Elizabeth Gowans:** Because people use them, sometimes people use the words interchangeably here. Yeah. And sweet potato. And it takes you a long time to realize that they're not the same thing.

[00:38:13] **Dorina Chimilio:** Exactly. They, yes, they're not the same thing.

Yeah. Yeah, because this one is, there's a lot of different ones.

[00:38:20] **Elizabeth Gowans:** Can you describe what kind of yams?

[00:38:23] **Dorina Chimilio:** , this is a white, yeah. Yeah. This is a white one.

[00:38:28] **Elizabeth Gowans:** So, the color is different? Is there anything else that's different?

[00:38:32] **Dorina Chimilio:** No, um, there's other ones that is, um, purple. Which is purple, yeah.

Purple. Which one? Kind of like potatoes.

Yes, they're kind of potatoes.

Yeah.

[00:38:44] **Elizabeth Gowans:** I'm thinking about your family and having learned Uh, the techniques for cooking and growing food from, your grandparents and your mom.

What are you teaching your kids, to cook? What do they like to eat? What do they like to cook?

[00:39:03] **Dorina Chimilio:** My son loves to cook. Yeah? Yes.

He loves to cook a lot and, most of the things he likes to, to do. is, um, he is very healthy and he likes to make a lot of salad and he likes to, grill a lot. Yes. And, um, he makes a lot of, green vegetables to eat. Yeah. And my daughter, I don't think she's interested in cooking. But, uh, I'm very in incentivating her that she can learn how to cook old food.

You know what I'm saying? The other day I told you, you're gaining so much weight. She's in school and working, I mean she don't have time to correct, but yeah, I know that's hard.

My daughter is 20 and my son is 26. My daughter is attending SCAD, she want to be a photogRalpher. And my son, he, um, he has his own little business, selling cars, doing candy.

[00:40:19] **Elizabeth Gowans:** So when , they were growing up and you were raising them, did your son come to you and say, I want to learn how to cook or how did that passion develop?

[00:40:29] **Dorina Chimilio:** I think he, he used to say he's dad. He comes from work and, , when I, He's trying to get home when he was home, he'll call me and say, don't worry.

I come to rush home because I already had dinner ready. And he was to be like, we got to have dinner together, and the only him listening to his dad, I have dinner , for us to have today. I think that, I think in. It just recently happened that his daughter liked him to cook, but I think he, he is so, see his dad doing it.

[00:41:10] **Elizabeth Gowans:** Do you sit for most meals?

[00:41:12] **Dorina Chimilio:** Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes.

[00:41:16] **Elizabeth Gowans:** If you don't mind me asking, you don't have to answer, in your experience working in the Garifuna community, do men typically take care of their families or is that just something that your husband did?

[00:41:30] **Dorina Chimilio:** I think it was something that my husband did. Um, in our culture, most of the things in, in the household, females have to do it. But um, he was a different kind of person. Yes. And I miss him so

[00:41:49] **Elizabeth Gowans:** What was his favorite meal?

[00:41:52] **Dorina Chimilio:** His? He likes, he use to like, make the curry and some other traditional food. The hudut. He likes to have the hudut a lot. And , for that, he usually invites all the farmers to come and join us.

Yes. And he like to make the hudut. He likes that the, his plantain to be sweet. So, that would just have to be like more ripe planting that the green. Yes. I, like I say, I want us to be out there and let people know that we here, I, uh, I did experience that not a lot of people know about them. The first time I did the exhibit I did invited some people that I work in a, uh, public school and I'm invite some of my coworkers to come and see what I had.

And, it was two. Coworkers are keen, white people. And say that, no, why we don't know about the Garifuna people? And I was like, wow. How many people like you don't know about us? And that's why I decided to continue with the museum. I just waiting for me to have a, a place that I can have it permanently.

That I can keep teaching about us. Yeah. 2020. I think it was before the pandemic, I think it was. Yeah. I had an exhibition in my, in the school that I worked for, for the children's, uh, elementary school from kindergarten to fifth grade. And I , had 15 classes that came to experience, the museum.

And I was teaching these kids, how to fish, I was teaching how to make the implement and I was teaching them the language and I see that these kids were like 20 minutes was not enough each class and I said, okay, I think I can, can expand a little more, right? Just teaching kids about my culture, how to drum, how to dance, how to do language and a lot of other stuff the kids can enjoy.

And before I came , to the school, I did artwork with the children with the, I think it was the Girl Scouts meeting that they did, that year in one of the local museum over here in Gwinnett. It was more than 500 girls in there that day with the parents. They came and enjoyed making whatever dancers had, their masks, and they would drum and dance in there.

Oh my God. We was invited to go to five different schools, but the pandemic came and we couldn't make it. So I know I can do a lot with them now. If I find a place, I can start. So we'll start from there.

That's why I was so excited when, um, Dr. Daria invited us to go and grow some of our food and spend my garden, and I said, Oh, don't worry, I will, , get some people in our community and they can come in and work and do stuff over there.

So, that was it.

[00:45:05] **Elizabeth Gowans:** What's the timeline for, , you might know this too, planting and harvesting taro.

[00:45:10] **Dorina Chimilio:** I think it's six, six to eight months. Yeah. He sent me pictures last week.