

Cuisine straight out of Africa

Ethiopian cooks up a storm at RISC

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By
George!

Good news reporter
George Hamilton

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TASTY treats from Ethiopia have become the highlights of the menu at a Reading café since the arrival of a new chef.

Tutu Melaku, who is originally from the north east African country, has taken over the kitchen at Reading International Solidarity Centre's (RISC) Global Café.

And the London Street venue has now become one of only a handful of restaurants in the UK where traditional injera – an Ethiopian flatbread that forms the basis of most meals – is served.

Tutu, a mother of two who arrived in Reading in 1992, was chosen as the new partner to run the kitchen at the

internationalist café after organising a series of successful private evenings.

"I used to do catering from home, cooking for parties, and last year I started my own business, Mobile Catering," the 39-year-old explains.

"It went very well and I decided to work from outside so I went to RISC to promote my business there. I offered to do a menu and before I knew it they offered to give me the kitchen to run."

Tutu, who took over at the beginning of the month, said her aim was to give people a chance to discover her country's cuisine and change perceptions about Ethiopia.

"It's fantastic," she said. "Everything is cooked from fresh, we have lamb, beef,



SOMETHING NEW – Ethiopian chef Tutu Melaku, left, with Leslee Hopper, licensee of the Global Café at RISC

Picture: STEVE TEMPLEMAN (Ref 063327)

What is injera?

INJERA is a kind of thin pancake-style sourdough bread that is at the centre of Ethiopian cuisine.

In traditional meals, a large injera is put on the table and meat or vegetarian dishes are scooped on top of it.

Guests tear pieces off the edges of the pancake and roll the food up in it before eating it.

The uniqueness of the dish is such that people often describe it as like "eating the tablecloth".

chicken and vegan food and it's very healthy.

"I'm delighted, in Reading we don't have an African restaurant and I think there is only one other Ethiopian restaurant in the country, in London.

"I'm very happy here, I've come from a long way and now I think of Reading as my home."

Leslee Hopper, Global Café's licensee, said: "We first met Tutu when she used the café for a private evening.

"It was very successful and her food was just delicious.

"Tutu has such a warm personality and is also very passionate about food."

She added: "We are delighted to be working with Tutu and being a venue that provides beautiful Ethiopian food."

Tutu's Ethiopian Table is open for lunch and dinner from Tuesday to Saturday and there is a grand buffet every Thursday between 6pm and 9pm, which costs £7.50.

The café is also taking bookings for Christmas parties. For information, call RISC on (0118) 958 3555.

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