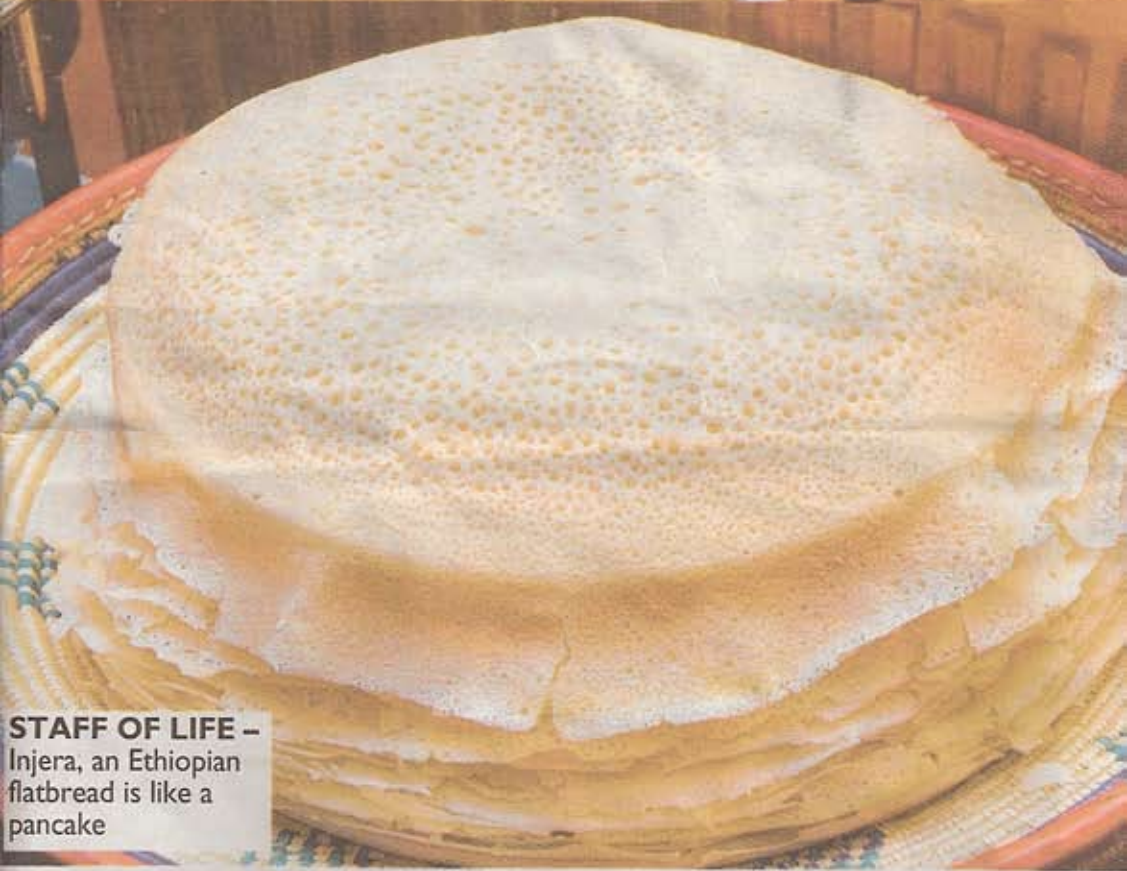




INGREDIENTS –
Long grain rice and tkel gomen (white cabbage) are part of the buffet menu



STAFF OF LIFE –
Injera, an Ethiopian flatbread is like a pancake

It's Tutu good at

EVERYBODY says it – the restaurant scene in Reading has improved dramatically over the past few years. All sorts of tasty eateries have sprung up across town and among the latest additions to the scene is Tutu's Ethiopian Buffet. Located at Reading International Solidarity Centre's Global Café in London Street, the weekly event is orchestrated by chef Tutu Melaku.

Originally from Ethiopia, Tutu teamed up with the Global Café about a year ago with the aim of offering Reading diners a different – and unique – culinary experience. So it was on that premise that I convinced a group of my colleagues at the *Evening Post*

to head to the café to try out the grub from the North-East African country. The café serves a normal menu between Tuesday and Saturday, but on Thursday nights, it's a eat-as-much-as-you-like buffet costing £8.50 a head. It offers a choice of six different dishes including the intriguing Injera. This is a pancake-like thin white bread that is normally used as a kind of tablecloth on which all the dishes are served for everybody to share.

All that is left to do is rip bits of the 'tablecloth' and use it to spoon out the food. At Tutu's what you get is actually a pancake-sized piece of Injera that you put on your plate and top up with your choice on the buffet.



the Global Café

On the night we visited there was a colourful choice of various stew-like dishes including lentil, spinach, cabbage, rice and beef. The whole meal was tasty and subtly spicy and unique and seems to have gathered quite a following for the Thursday night event. The Global Café is all about fair trade and planet-friendly ingredients, so it seemed logical to order some organic white wine to go with our meal.

The crisp and clean wine was an ideal compliment to the richness and depth of the dishes. If that's not your tippie, then the café also serves a wide range of organic beers. The whole experience at that Thursday night at the Global Café made it, for me, one of the best evenings I'd had for a long time.

What was it? Well there was the food, which was tasty and homemade, and there was the Global Café itself, with its simple and warm décor and a friendly crowd of regulars. And then there is Tutu herself, with her unforgettable smile and never-ending good mood.

This evening I am catching up with a good friend of mine who I have not seen for more than a year. Guess where I am going to take her for dinner?

Franck Marceteau took part in Tutu's Ethiopian Buffet, every Thursday night at the Global Cafe, London Street, Reading (0118) 958 3555