

## Oil Palm Production Technology in Laimbwe History of Cameroon

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### Abstract

We argue in this paper that the Laimbwe of Cameroon developed an efficient palm oil production technology in their history through innovative ingenuity. There were people who produced *ndegh*, a semi-rectangular instrument with carefully folded ends to enable knotting and loosening by palm tree climbers. Steps were also formed round palm trees at regular intervals to ease climbing and descending. Cone harvesting was done to enable more cones to form. Their transportation was on double sided sharp sticks and local material (*ikwoh* singular, *tekwoh* plural) on which rested the stick carrying cones on necks of carriers. The collected cones were stored in huts specially constructed for the purpose with local material and covered by trees. This allowed them to get soft for easy removal of nuts by women and children. A circular hole that narrowed downwards at the base was constructed by relevant architects and in them were pounded boiled palm nuts. Pounding was done by men and boys using long mortars. This was followed by the opening of a hole in the pounded nuts to facilitate collection of settled first grade oil using calabashes and dishes. This oil was stored in locally produced cylinder-like containers (*kooi*). The place of oil production (*icheh*) was covered with banana leaves and sticks to prevent dirt and rain from flooding it. Further collection and boiling to separate oil from water was done with young boys shuffling palm branches into holes of pounded nuts mixed with warm water. We will collect data from lived observation and participation, group discussions, one on one interview and analysis of primary and secondary material to demonstrate that the material culture of Laimbwe oil production technology was ingenious in every sense of the word.

**Keywords:** Technology, Ingenuity, Material Culture, Palm Production



**The Ehmbai for Carrying Kekoo (Cutlass) and Ndeggh for Climbing Palm Trees**

**Source:** Author's Collections December 2016