

# NUESTROS SABORES

OUR FLAVORS



**Recetas que  
cuentan historias de  
nuestra herencia**

Recipes that tell the  
stories of our heritage

**Latinos and  
Hispanics in  
Dietetics and  
Nutrition**

a member interest group of the  
Academy of Nutrition  
and Dietetics

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# Healthy Traditions of Hispanic & Latino Cuisine

Latinos are the largest and fastest-growing community in the United States, yet there is a misperception that Latin cuisine is unhealthy. This misnomer creates a cultural disconnect between what we view as healthy in the United States and our traditional food. Health disparities disproportionately impact communities of color and are inextricably linked to diet and nutrition. Hispanic adults are 70% more likely to be diagnosed with diabetes and are more likely to be obese than non-Hispanic white adults.<sup>1</sup> However, we can change this narrative by celebrating our culture and culinary traditions, embracing the nostalgic cuisine of our abuelas and abuelos, and connecting everyone to the nourishing flavors of our food.

## EATING HEALTHY

Latin cuisine inherently incorporates fresh, colorful and nutritious ingredients. As Latino food and nutrition experts, we leverage the science of food and build a bridge to culturally meaningful patient care while maximizing nutrition as the key to improving our health.

The benefits of healthy eating add up over time, bite by bite.



### Disfruta de tres porciones de lácteos cada día

Enjoy three servings of dairy each day – including cow's milk, yogurt and cheeses.



### Añadir más verduras

Add more veggies – including nopales, salsas, avocado, chiles, tomatillos, yuca, plantains and tomatoes.



### Elija frutas fresca

Choose fresh fruits – including mango, pineapple, papaya, guava, prickly pear, apples, limes and melon.



### Escoja proteína magra

Choose lean protein – including beans, legumes, nuts, seeds, eggs, chicken, pork, beef, goat and fresh fish.



### Haga la mitad de sus granos integrales

Make half your grains whole – including corn, quinoa, rice and oats.

## Sources:

1. US Department of Health and Human Services. Office of Minority Health. <https://www.minorityhealth.hhs.gov/omh/browse.aspx?lvl=3&lvlid=61>

# Embracing Our Flavors

This cookbook is a celebration of our cultural culinary traditions, which center around family and social gatherings. It also serves as a practical tool for promoting healthy eating habits across the lifespan. Our hope is that younger generations will connect with our recipes and cultural heritage while learning about nutrition. And we hope to inspire adults to include delicious meals to support their health goals. Whether you're learning about our flavors for the first time or come from one of the countries represented in this book, we hope you embrace the vibrant flavors of our food with our personal stories and family traditions.

Each recipe in this cookbook provides a balanced approach to healthy eating. Our recipes incorporate dairy, vegetables, fruit, lean proteins and whole grains into a variety of entrees, sides, desserts and beverages. For example, the “Tamales de Quinoa con Rajas y Queso/Quinoa Tamales Filled with Roasted Peppers and Cheese” recipe from Mexico (page 21) features a modern twist on a classic while blending cheese, vegetables and whole grains to create a comforting dish that feels like a hug from your abuelita.

Throughout the book, you'll see examples of how we like to plate our food to add balance and nutrition. For example, the “Torta de Platano/Plantain Cake” recipe from Venezuela (page 85) combines the rich flavors of cream, cheese, plantains and eggs with the crisp freshness of a big salad and satisfying lean protein. We believe all foods fit into a healthy diet and seek to empower you to replicate our recipes in your own way.

The bottom line is this – we do not have to give up our traditional family recipes to achieve good health. The way we celebrate life's blessings, including our regional ingredients, food and family, is our solution to healthier communities.

On your road to health and wellness, we invite you to enjoy our flavors while creating stories of your own.

Saludos y provecho,

*(Cheers and enjoy)*



**Iliana Guerra Martinez, MHA, RD, LD, CDCES**

Chair, Latinos and Hispanics in Dietetics and Nutrition (2024-2025)

# CONTRIBUTORS



**LANA BALVIN FRANTZEN** lives in San Antonio, Texas, and is a proud Latina daughter of a Peruvian father and Mexican American mother. Dr. Frantzen's passion is sharing knowledge to help families make the best science-based nutrition decisions to enhance their health and enjoy food! Dr. Frantzen enjoys conveying constantly evolving, complex nutrition science into meaningful action steps for diverse audiences. She has published research in the areas of breakfast and dietary intakes of Hispanic children, including the *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*. Dr. Frantzen's research has been recognized globally and has helped spread the message of the important role of breakfast in the overall nutrition of low-income Hispanic children.



**MARIA BUXTON** is a registered dietitian specializing in women's health and family nutrition. She was born in Mexico and raised in Oklahoma, where her family's cultural foods provided a way for her to connect to her Mexican heritage. Today, her family connections inspire her to emphasize the importance of providing culturally appropriate nutrition care. Maria furthers this mission by volunteering for special interest groups like LAHIDAN and providing individualized nutrition counseling as part of the dietetics private practice group Fit With Food, LLC in Maryland.



**VALERIA DIEGO** is a proud first-generation college graduate, earning her bachelor's degree in nutrition from California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo. She is currently a graduate student at California State University, Long Beach. As a Mexican American, Valeria is a dedicated aspiring registered dietitian with a mission to bridge the language and cultural gap in nutrition education. She aims to make nutrition more accessible and relevant to low-income and Spanish-speaking communities. Rooted in her heritage, Valeria is committed to promoting Latino cultural foods as valuable sources of nutrition and fostering greater communication around their health benefits.



**ILIANA GUERRA MARTINEZ** is a first-generation Mexican American who calls the Rio Grande Valley in South Texas her hometown. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Dietetics and Master of Science in Health Care Administration, both from the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. In her current role as Executive Diabetes Educator for Novo Nordisk (NNI), she leads multiple cross-collaborative population health initiatives within various health systems and physician groups in South Texas. In collaboration with the marketing team, Iliana also leads the translation team, ensuring educational resources are created in Spanish. Prior to joining NNI, Iliana was a clinical nutrition manager with a specialty in nutrition support and pediatric nutrition. But what she is most proud of is her volunteer work within her community and professional organizations. Apart from serving on the Rio Grande Valley Diabetes Association board of directors, Iliana is also the director of Camp ENERGY, a summer camp for kids with Type 1 diabetes. She holds leadership positions with LAHIDAN, the Texas Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and the Association of Diabetes Care and Education Specialists Advocacy Committee.



**MARIANELLA HERRERA-CUENCA** is a professor and researcher in nutrition. She has been working in the nutrition field as soon as she graduated from medical school in her native Venezuela and understood that she didn't know anything about nutrition, which was fundamental for her work as a primary care physician at the time. Ever since, she has dedicated her professional life to nutrition. She has also worked in humanitarian affairs; as a person who has always loved to cook and research cultural culinary traditions, she became involved in community kitchens and recipes for emergency situations. She is committed to the promotion of Latino community values and does her best to help the Latino low-income communities reach the maximum potential they deserve.



**ALANA MARRERO GONZALEZ** is a proud Latino dietitian with 14 years of experience. She's worked in nonprofit organizations, specifically minority groups such as people living with HIV. She earned a master's in nutrition and health science from the Medical Science Campus in Puerto Rico, as well as a doctorate in clinical nutrition from the University of North Florida. As a proud Puerto Rican dietitian, Alana is a dedicated community practitioner with a mission to bring nutrition education to all populations. She aims to make nutrition more accessible and relevant to low-income and minority communities.



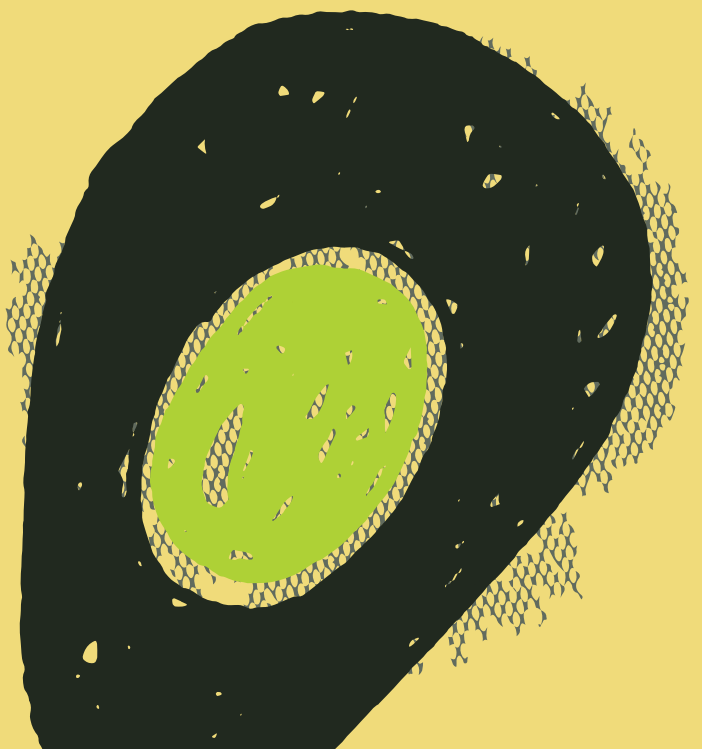
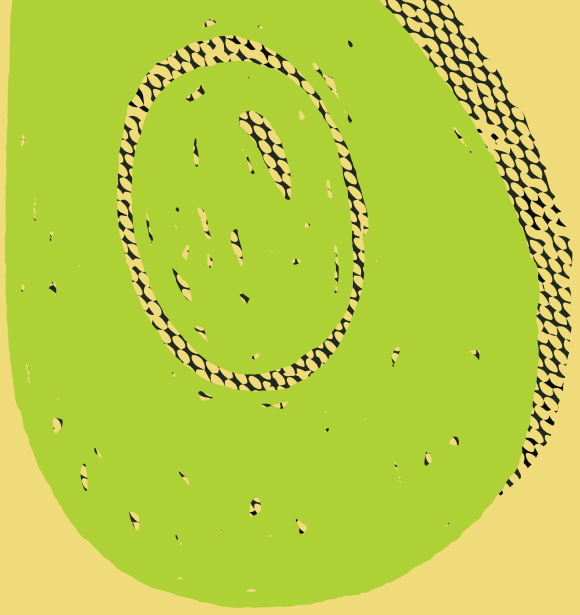
**MANUEL IVAN MARROQUIN** is a dietetics student, a certified dietary manager and a first-generation Mexican American with family roots in Durango and Jalisco, Mexico. He has worked in wellness programs focused on gardening, nutrition and healthy food demonstrations for children in underserved communities. Currently, he is involved with CalFresh Healthy Living, creating workshops to promote healthier habits among college students at CSULB. As a contributor to this cookbook, Manuel combines his passion for culturally relevant, nutritious recipes from his childhood. He looks to pursue a Ph.D. in public health and become a registered dietitian, working on school nutrition programs to improve the health and wellness of future generations.



**OLGA LUCÍA PINZÓN-ESPITIA** is a dietitian who obtained her professional degree in nutrition and dietetics at the Universidad Nacional de Colombia and a Ph.D. at the Universidad del Rosario, Colombia. She is currently a postdoctoral researcher active in clinical nutrition, oncology and health management. Olga Lucia is a dedicated teacher, researcher and consultant worldwide, and she has dedicated her career to improving nutrition care in clinical, hospital, outpatient and home care settings. Her mission is to integrate nutrition as an essential pillar in clinical care, promoting evidence-based practices to improve patients' quality of life. With a deep commitment to the processes of nutritional care, food and nutrition education, Olga Lucia works to close the gaps in access to quality nutritional care in Colombia and Latin America.



**MARÍA EUGENIA RODRÍGUEZ LEÓN** is a registered dietitian and board-certified specialist in renal nutrition. She has been working with adults living with kidney disease since 2009. Her mission is to provide simple and practical education to Spanish-speaking adults living with kidney disease so they can maintain an appropriate, varied and delicious diet that slows down the progression of the disease. She founded her private practice, ME Nutrition Services, PSC, in 2015 to fulfill this mission. She has collaborated with several nonprofit organizations in Puerto Rico and the United States. She offers professional lectures to nephrologists, nephrology fellows, dietitians and dietetics interns. Under the brand *Nutrición Renal PR*<sup>®</sup>, she has created educational material for professionals, a blog in Spanish about renal nutrition and general education through social media. She earned her bachelor's degree in nutrition and dietetics from the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras Campus in San Juan, Puerto Rico. She completed her internship at the VA Caribbean Healthcare System in San Juan. She pursued her master's degree in clinical nutrition at Rush University in Chicago, Illinois.



**CHILES LIME**

**TOMATOES CORN**

**MEXICO**

**CACTUS AVOCADO**

**QUESO FRESCO**



# Nopales y Rajas con Crema y Elote

Cactus With Sliced Poblano Peppers, Cream and Corn

 **YIELD:** 4-6 servings

 **PREP TIME:** 20 minutes

 **COOK TIME:** 10 minutes

## INGREDIENTS

2 pounds washed and de-thorned nopales (cactus pads)

2 large poblano chiles

1 cup tomatoes, diced

½ cup white onion, sliced

1 cup corn kernels

1-2 serrano chili peppers, diced (optional)

1 teaspoon cumin

2 cups sour cream or plain yogurt

3 garlic cloves, minced

1 ½ tablespoons chicken consommé powder (bouillon)

Olive oil

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Roast the nopales over an open flame until slightly charred, on the stove on both sides. Repeat with poblano chiles until charred on both sides.
2. After roasting, clean the nopales and chiles. Cut the nopales into strips. Peel, deseed and cut the chiles into strips.
3. Add enough olive oil to coat the bottom of the pan, then heat over medium-high heat. Add the chopped tomatoes, sliced onion, corn and serrano chili peppers (optional) to the pan. Sprinkle 1 teaspoon of cumin over the vegetables. Sauté these ingredients over high heat for about 5 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables are fragrant and slightly caramelized.
4. Add the sliced roasted chili peppers and nopales to the pan and stir in while on medium heat.
5. Add the sour cream or plain yogurt and minced garlic cloves to the pan with the vegetables. Mix powdered chicken broth with creamy yogurt mixture until the powder has dissolved. Cook the mixture for 3-5 minutes until well combined and heated through, stirring occasionally. If using yogurt, you will require less cook time than if you use sour cream.
6. Serve hot as a main dish or as a filling for tacos or tostadas.






**WRITTEN BY MANUEL IVAN MARROQUIN, CDM, FIRST-GENERATION DIETETIC STUDENT**

My grandmother's cherished holiday recipes always bring my family closer together. It's a great recipe to enjoy during the cold —the warmth of the nopales, roasted peppers and creamy corn is always a welcoming surprise when visiting my grandmother's home for the holidays. This dish feels like a hug in a bowl, and it is one I turn to when I need a taste of home. *Inspired by Manuel's grandmother, Alicia Cobian.*



# Elote con Yogur y Queso

Corn With Yogurt and Cheese

 **YIELD:** 4 servings  
 **PREP TIME:** 10 minutes  
 **COOK TIME:** 20 minutes

## INGREDIENTS

4 ears of corn  
1 cup plain yogurt  
1 pound queso cotija (cotija cheese), crumbled  
1 cup unsalted butter, melted  
Red chili powder or Tajín

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a large pot, bring water to a boil. Add the 4 ears of corn and cook until the corn is soft, about 20 minutes.
2. Remove the corn from the pot and place it on a plate.
3. Spread plain yogurt or mayonnaise evenly over each ear of corn.
4. Sprinkle cotija cheese generously over the corn.
5. Drizzle melted butter on top.
6. Finish by sprinkling red chili powder or Tajín to taste.
7. Serve with your favorite Mexican-inspired dishes like tacos, burritos or enchiladas.



**WRITTEN BY MANUEL IVAN MARROQUIN, CDM, FIRST-GENERATION DIETETIC STUDENT**

This dish takes me back to my mother's childhood in Autlán, Jalisco. She would tell me stories of how she and her eight siblings made elote together in their small pueblo. Now it's a staple at our family gatherings, and every bite reminds me of those traditions. *A childhood recipe inspired by Manuel's mother, Nora Ileana Rodriguez.*



# Chiles Rellenos

## Stuffed Peppers

 **YIELD:** 4 servings

 **PREP TIME:** 30 minutes

 **COOK TIME:** 45 minutes

### INGREDIENTS

4 poblano chiles  
1 teaspoon canola oil  
1 medium tomato, diced  
1 medium onion, diced  
4 cups water  
1 tablespoon chicken consommé powder (bouillon)  
2 potatoes, diced  
1 teaspoon salt  
4 sprigs of cilantro  
4 eggs (separate egg whites and yolks)  
1 teaspoon ground cumin  
1 teaspoon garlic powder  
1 teaspoon onion powder  
1/2 teaspoon smoked paprika  
1 cup flour  
1 pound queso fresco or queso asadero, sliced into strips

*Step-by-step photo instructions are included on the following pages.*

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Using tongs, roast the poblano chiles over an open flame on the stove until charred on all sides. Alternatively, you can roast the peppers in the oven by placing them on a baking sheet under the broiler for 5–7 minutes on each side until charred. Once roasted, place peppers in a glass bowl and cover tightly with plastic wrap for 15 minutes to steam. After the peppers have cooled, carefully peel off the charred skin. Then, using a small knife, make a small cut lengthwise at the base of the pepper. Remove the seeds.
2. In a pot, cook the tomato, onion and cilantro with a little oil until the vegetables are soft. Add the 4 cups of water, chicken consommé powder, salt and diced potatoes. Keep cooking until the potatoes become tender and the broth blends well.
3. Separate the eggs, placing the egg whites in a mixing bowl. Beat the egg whites with a mixer until stiff peaks form. Once whipped, gently fold in the egg yolks, ground cumin, garlic powder, onion powder and smoked paprika with a rubber spatula until well incorporated. Be careful not to overmix and deflate the egg whites.
4. Slice the queso fresco into strips and stuff each poblano chile with the cheese.
5. Coat the stuffed chiles with flour, then dip them into the egg batter, making sure they are fully covered.
6. Heat oil in a pan over medium heat. Fry the chiles until they are golden brown on all sides.
7. Add the remaining egg batter to the prepared broth and cook for a few minutes until it thickens slightly. Taste and add more salt if needed.
8. Serve: Place the fried chiles in a bowl and pour a large spoonful of the tomato-based broth over the top of each pepper. Serve with a side salad or veggies of choice.



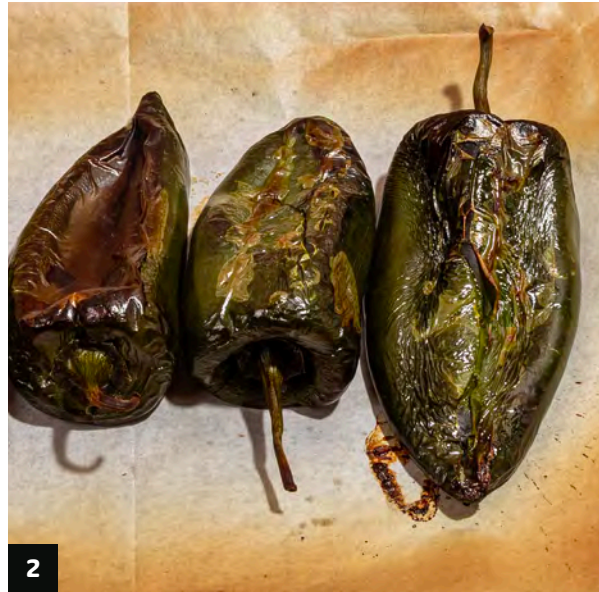
**WRITTEN BY MANUEL IVAN MARROQUIN, CDM, FIRST-GENERATION DIETETIC STUDENT**

Chiles rellenos is one of those dishes that my mother would make on special occasions, and the smell of roasted poblano peppers always filled the house. The way the dish is prepared varies depending on the region, and each preparation is unique. *A childhood recipe inspired by Manuel's mother, Nora Ileana Rodriguez.*

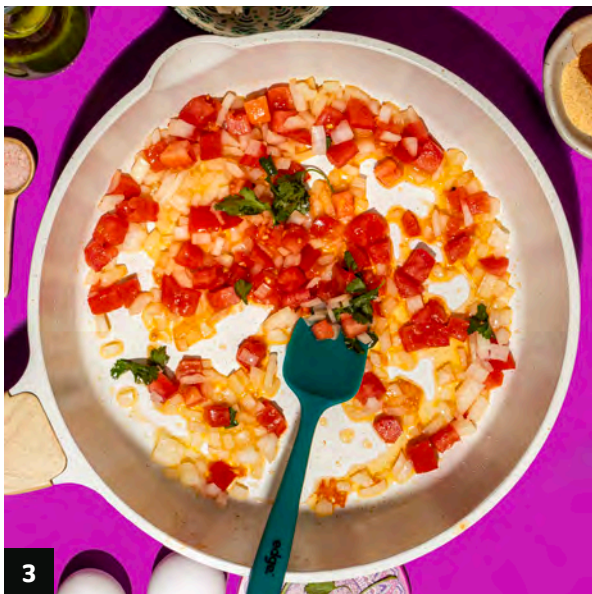
## CHILES RELLENOS STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS



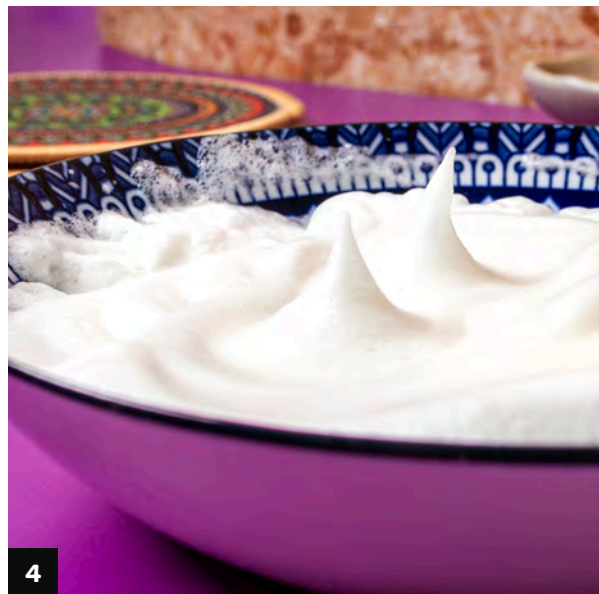
Using tongs, roast the poblano chiles over an open flame on the stove until charred on all sides. Alternatively, you can roast the peppers in the oven by placing them on a baking sheet under the broiler for 5-7 minutes on each side until charred.



Once roasted, place peppers in a glass bowl and cover tightly with plastic wrap for 15 minutes to steam. After the peppers have cooled, carefully peel off the charred skin. Then, using a small knife, make a small cut lengthwise at the base of the pepper. Remove the seeds.



In a pot, cook the tomato, onion and cilantro with a little oil until the vegetables are soft. Add the 4 cups of water, chicken consommé powder, salt and diced potatoes. Keep cooking until the potatoes become tender and the broth blends well.



Separate the eggs, placing the egg whites in a mixing bowl. Beat the egg whites with a mixer until stiff peaks form.

## CHILES RELLENOS STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS



Once whipped, gently fold in the egg yolks, ground cumin, garlic powder, onion powder and smoked paprika with a rubber spatula until well incorporated. Be careful not to overmix and deflate the egg whites.



Slice the queso fresco into strips and stuff each poblano chile with the cheese. Coat the stuffed chiles with flour, then dip them into the egg batter, making sure they are fully covered. Heat oil in a pan over medium heat. Fry the chiles until they are golden brown on all sides.



Add the remaining egg batter to the prepared broth and cook for a few minutes until it thickens slightly. Taste and add more salt if needed.



Place the fried chiles in a bowl and pour a large spoonful of the tomato-based broth over the top of each pepper. Serve with a side salad or veggies of choice.



**RECIPE TIP:**

You can also cover your enchiladas with muenster, quesadilla or mozzarella cheese.

# Enchiladas Verdes

 **YIELD:** 6 (2 enchiladas each)  
 **PREP TIME:** 40 minutes  
 **COOK TIME:** 15 minutes

## Enchiladas With Green Sauce

### INGREDIENTS

#### For the Green Salsa:

¾ tablespoon canola oil

6 medium tomatillos, washed and outer husk removed

1 Roma tomato

2 medium jalapeño peppers, break off stem

⅓ white onion, roughly chopped

¼ cup cilantro, roughly chopped

1 teaspoon chicken consommé powder (bouillon)

1 ½ teaspoons kosher salt

½ cup water reserved from boiled chicken

#### For the Enchiladas:

2 chicken breasts, boiled and shredded (reserve ½ cup boiled water for salsa)

12 corn tortillas

1 cup queso fresco, shredded

1 cup Oaxaca cheese, grated

#### Toppings:

1 medium ripe avocado, sliced

1 cup Mexican crema or sour cream

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Heat nonstick pan/skillet to medium heat and add oil. Once oil is hot, add tomatillos, Roma tomato, jalapeños and onion. Sauté in pan until all vegetables are slightly charred/browned and almost cooked, about 10 minutes. Tip: Color of tomatillos will change from bright green to dull green.
2. Once cooked, transfer all the vegetables to a blender and add cilantro, consommé, salt and water from boiled chicken. Blend until smooth.
3. Transfer blended salsa back into the pan/skillet and allow salsa to simmer for about 5 minutes under medium-low heat. Stir occasionally.
4. Preheat oven to 350° F. Heat up corn tortillas in microwave for about 30 seconds so they are soft and pliable.
5. Add a thin layer of salsa verde to a 9x9 baking dish.
6. Take a warm tortilla and cover it with the green salsa. Place the tortilla on a plate and add shredded chicken and shredded queso fresco in the middle of the tortilla (about a heaping tablespoon each). Roll the tortilla to close it and place the rolled tortilla into the baking dish. Repeat this process for all 12 tortillas. Place each rolled tortilla next to each other in a line in the baking dish.
7. Once you have rolled all the tortillas in the baking dish, add a thin layer of green salsa on top of the enchiladas and cover with the queso Oaxaca. Cover with aluminum foil and bake for 10 minutes to allow cheese to melt.
8. Remove foil and continue to bake uncovered for an additional 5 minutes.
9. To serve, add to a plate and cover with additional green salsa to taste. Drizzle crema and top with sliced avocado. Serve with side salad, steamed veggies or black beans.



**WRITTEN BY ILIANA GUERRA MARTINEZ, MS, RD, LD, CDCES, FIRST-GENERATION MEXICAN AMERICAN & DIETETICS LEADER**

Growing up, there was always salsa in my house. Green, red, charred, al mocaquete... My father would add salsa to almost everything. But what he loved best was making huevos rancheros with his freshly made salsa. I have proudly inherited his curiosity for making and perfecting different salsas. This green salsa took me some time to perfect, but ever since I got it right, there's always a container of this green salsa in my fridge. *Inspired by Iliana's father, who takes great pride in making and experimenting with new salsas.*



# Tamales de Quinoa con Rajas y Queso

Quinoa Tamales Filled With Roasted Peppers and Cheese

 **YIELD:** 20 tamales

 **PREP TIME:** 3.5 hours

 **COOK TIME:** 2.5 hours

## INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup chia seeds
- 4-5 cups water, divided
- 20 corn husks, each 7-10 inches wide
- 1 cup quinoa, dry
- 4 cups quick cook oats, dry
- ¼ cup tomato bouillon with chicken flavor, ground
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1 cup corn oil (or vegetable oil)
- 1 tablespoon corn oil (or vegetable oil), for roasting peppers
- 4 chilaca peppers (or poblano peppers)
- 2 large jalapeño peppers
- 2 cups Mexican-style quesadilla cheese for melting, shredded

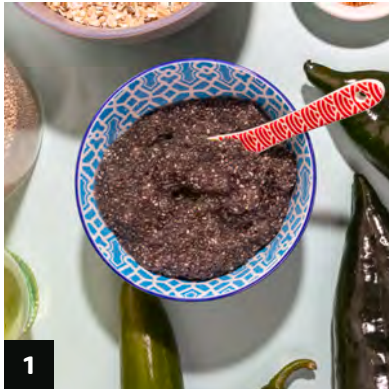
*Step-by-step photo instructions are included on the following pages.*



**WRITTEN BY MARIA BUXTON, MS, RD, LDN, FAMILY NUTRITION AND WOMEN'S HEALTH DIETITIAN**

Tamales are a labor of love. Making them takes many hours, but it helps if you have a house full of family and friends to lend a hand. When I think of tamales, I think of big family gatherings for Christmas or family events. Each person has their role, whether getting up early to cook the filling, prepare the dough or build the tamales. One of my favorite memories was sharing this tradition with my husband and teaching him how to spread corn masa onto a corn husk. It's always fun to watch first-timers struggle but then get the hang of the skill. Over the years, my mom and I have experimented with different tamale recipes and enjoyed the versatility of this dish. This recipe is my mother's creation, and I am always amazed by her ability to blend her creativity and cooking experience in every meal she makes. Many of our family favorites have been updated over the years to meet my parents' changing dietary needs, but the foods are always delicious and best shared with someone you love. *Inspired by Maria's mother.*

## TAMALES DE QUINOA CON RAJAS Y QUESO STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS



**1** Stir chia seeds into 1 cup of water, cover and soak 1-2 hours in the refrigerator or until chewy. Soak overnight for best consistency.



**2** Soak corn husks in warm water for 1-2 hours until pliable. You can also soak husks overnight to make prep time more efficient. The next day, preheat oven to 400° F for roasting peppers.



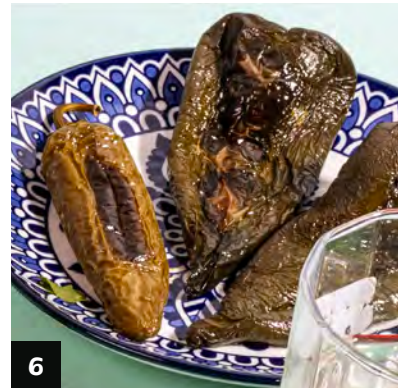
**3** Preparing the Dough: In a medium saucepan, bring quinoa and 3 cups of water to a boil, then cover, reduce the heat and simmer for about 20-25 minutes until water is fully absorbed and quinoa is fluffy. Set quinoa aside to cool for about 10 minutes.



**4** Meanwhile, grind oats into a flour using a blender or food processor. In a large bowl, mix cooled quinoa, chia seed mixture, oat flour, baking powder, bouillon, corn oil and  $\frac{2}{3}$  cup of water together to make a dough. Mix the dough with a large spoon until fully incorporated. The dough will have a wet and sticky consistency. Set dough aside while preparing peppers.



**5** Roasting the Peppers: Lightly spray a 15.25 x 10.25 baking pan with nonstick cooking spray. Place peppers on the baking sheet and drizzle 1 tablespoon of corn or vegetable oil over the peppers. Use clean hands or a basting brush to cover each pepper with oil until well coated.



**6** Roast peppers in the oven at 400° F, flipping peppers over every 5 minutes to roast evenly. Roast for about 20 minutes until the skin starts to blister and char. Remove peppers from the oven. Using tongs, place peppers inside a gallon-sized Ziploc bag with a damp paper towel and seal. Set the bag aside for 10 minutes so peppers can cool and soften. Carefully tear the flesh of each pepper by hand from top to bottom making long,  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch wide strips of pepper.

## TAMALES DE QUINOA CON RAJAS Y QUESO STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS



**7** Fill a steaming stock pot with water up to the water line indicated on your pot and put the steam tray in place. Place a small heat-safe ramekin or mug in the center of your steam tray inside the stock pot to create a stand to lean tamales up against.



**8** Assemble the Tamales: Pull about 20 corn husks from their water bath and rinse off any remaining silks or debris. Place them in a bowl and set them aside. Assemble tamales one by one. First, lay a corn husk flat on a plate. Scoop  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup of dough mixture onto the center of your corn husk. Use a spoon to spread dough out in a  $\frac{1}{8}$  to  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch thick layer. Place 6 strips of pepper into the center of your dough layer and top with 1 tablespoon of shredded cheese.



**9** Carefully fold one-third of your corn husk over the center third and press gently to adhere the dough mixture and filling together. Open the first flap of your corn husk you previously closed to reveal the sealed dough. Fold over the opposite third of your corn husk over the center third, pressing gently to seal the other side. Leave this flap of the corn husk in its place. Fold the initial corn husk flap to cover the center. This will create a thin point at the top and a wide end at the bottom, like a triangle. Fold the top pointed end down toward the center and over your crease to make your tamale.

**10**

Place the tamale onto the steam tray folded and seam side down, propping the open end up on the ramekin or mug stand to prevent melted cheese from spilling out. Repeat steps 9-10 until dough mixture and filling ingredients run out.

**11**

Steaming the Tamales: Bring your filled steamer stock pot to a boil on high heat. Once you hear the water boiling, cover the pot and reduce heat. Simmer for 1 hour.

**12**

Check one tamale after 1 hour of simmering. The tamale is done when the dough holds its shape and peels away easily from the corn husk. Add additional cooking time in 10-minute increments until done.

**14**

To enjoy your tamales, open the corn husk flaps to reveal the cooked filling inside. Discard the corn husks. Serve tamales as an entree with your favorite sides, like a cabbage slaw with pico and guacamole.



# Horchata

## Sweet Rice and Milk Beverage



**YIELD:** 9 cups



**PREP TIME:** 1 hour and 40 minutes (includes soaking time)

### INGREDIENTS

1 cup enriched long grain white rice, dry

1 ounce packet of Mexican cinnamon sticks

5 cups water, divided

3 cups milk

1 (14-ounce) can fat-free condensed sweetened milk

2 teaspoons vanilla extract

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a 2-quart saucepan, stir rice, cinnamon and 2 cups of water. Heat the mixture on high heat until the water starts to steam. Cover the saucepan with a lid and remove the pan from heat. Let the mixture sit for 1 hour to soak the rice and cinnamon.
2. In a blender, combine soaked rice and cinnamon mixture with 3 cups of water. Pulse mixture 2-3 times, then blend for about 1 minute until rice and cinnamon break up into small pieces.
3. Place a fine meshed strainer over a pitcher. Carefully pour blended rice and cinnamon mixture over the strainer to separate the rice water. Set aside the rice and cinnamon pieces caught in the strainer to use in the next step.
4. Return the rice and cinnamon mixture from the fine meshed strainer into your blender. Add milk, condensed sweetened milk and vanilla extract to your blender. Pulse mixture 2-3 times and then blend for about 1 minute until the condensed sweetened milk is mixed well.
5. Place your strainer over your pitcher of rice water. Pour blended milk mixture over your strainer to remove rice and cinnamon pieces. Discard rice and cinnamon pieces collected.
6. Stir the horchata mixture well. To serve, pour horchata into a glass with ice and enjoy. Store remaining horchata in the refrigerator. Stir well before serving. Serve with a side of your favorite fresh or canned fruit packed in 100% fruit juice.



**BEANS**

**MAIZE COFFEE**

**EL SALVADOR**

**TROPICAL FRUIT**

**YOGURT**



**RECIPE TIP:**

For a modern twist on this classic, you can make a simple yet flavorful sauce by combining plain yogurt, chipotles marinated in adobo sauce and a pinch of salt.

# Pupusas de Queso y Frijoles

 **YIELD:** 9 pupusas  
 **PREP TIME:** 45 minutes  
 **COOK TIME:** 30 minutes

## Pupusas With Cheese and Beans

### INGREDIENTS

#### For the Curtido:

4 cups green cabbage, cored and shredded  
2 cups hot water  
1 medium carrot, peeled and grated  
½ medium jalapeño, sliced into thin rounds  
½ small purple onion, thinly sliced  
½ cup distilled apple cider vinegar  
4 tablespoons of water  
½ tablespoon dried oregano  
½ tablespoon kosher salt

#### For the Pupusas:

4 cups masa harina (corn flour)  
2 ⅔ cups water, room temperature  
2 teaspoons kosher salt  
2 teaspoons vegetable oil

#### For the Filling:

2 cups mozzarella or Oaxaca cheese, shredded  
1 cup refried pinto beans, freshly cooked or canned (if canned, warm)

*Step-by-step photo instructions are included on the following pages.*

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. To make the curtido, combine the shredded cabbage and hot water in a large bowl. Let sit for 10 minutes, then drain very well. Once drained, add the shredded carrot, sliced onion and sliced jalapeño rounds.
2. In a separate small bowl, whisk together vinegar, water, oregano and salt. Once mixed, add the liquid to the vegetables.
3. Stir to mix all ingredients. Once mixed, cover the bowl or transfer to an airtight container and refrigerate the curtido for at least 30 minutes before use or chill overnight. Curtido is traditionally stored in a jar in the fridge.
4. Make the Pupusas: In a large bowl, mix the masa harina and salt, then slowly add the water. Mix the masa by hand until dough is formed (dough should be a clay-like texture). Tip: For the next step, have a small bowl with room temperature water and 1 tsp of oil available to wet your hands as you make the pupusas; this will keep the dough from sticking to your hands.
5. Separate the dough and roll into 2-inch balls. Take each ball and flatten it into a cup that fits into the palm of your hand.
6. Fill the cupped dough with 1 oz cheese and 1 oz beans (Tip: 1 heaping tablespoon of each).
7. Fold the dough over into a ball. Then pat the ball between your hands until flat. Be careful not to tear the pupusa. (Tip: If the pupusa tears, patch it with a bit of masa and oil.)
8. Repeat until all the pupusas have been made.
9. Preheat a nonstick skillet or griddle to medium heat. Brush skillet with vegetable oil. Brush each pupusa with oil before placing on the skillet. Place the pupusas on the skillet, two at a time, and let each side cook for 2-3 minutes or until golden brown. Turn the pupusas over and cook on the other side. Once cooked, let each pupusa stand about 2 minutes before eating.
10. Serve fresh with curtido. As a modern twist, add a spoonful of the chipotle yogurt sauce on top.



**WRITTEN BY ILIANA GUERRA MARTINEZ, MS, RD, LD, CDCES, FIRST-GENERATION MEXICAN AMERICAN & DIETETICS LEADER**

When my husband and I married, my new mother-in-law asked if I knew how to make pupusas. I didn't even know what they were! My mother-in-law passed away soon after we were married. To keep her memory alive, I asked her sister and mother, my new aunt and grandmother, to teach me. Every time I make these pupusas, my husband's heart fills with joy as it brings back memories of his childhood in El Salvador. *Gifted to Iliana by her husband's family.*

## PUPUSAS DE QUESO Y FRIJOLAS STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS



**Make the Curtido:** In a large bowl, combine the shredded cabbage and hot water. Let sit for 10 minutes, then drain very well. Once drained, add the shredded carrot, sliced onion and sliced jalapeño rounds.



In a separate small bowl, whisk together vinegar, water, oregano and salt. Once mixed, add the liquid to the vegetables.



Stir to mix all ingredients. Once mixed, cover the bowl or transfer to an airtight container and refrigerate the curtido for at least 30 minutes before use or chill overnight. Curtido is traditionally stored in a jar in the fridge.



**Make the Pupusas:** In a large bowl, mix the masa harina and salt, then slowly add the water. Mix the masa by hand until dough is formed (dough should be a clay-like texture).

**TIP:** Before step 5, have a small bowl with room temperature water and 1 tsp of oil available to wet your hands as you make the pupusas; this will keep the dough from sticking to your hands.

## PUPUSAS DE QUESO Y FRIJOLAS STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS

**TIP:** Use 1 heaping tablespoon of cheese and beans.

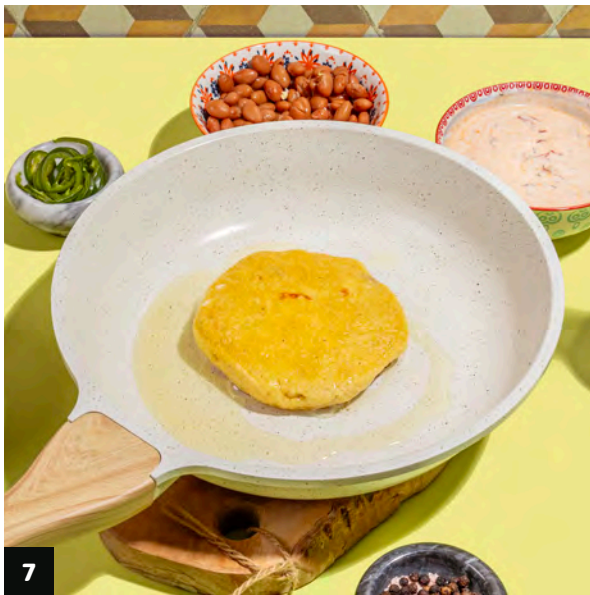


Separate the dough and roll into 2-inch balls. Take each ball and flatten it into a cup that fits into the palm of your hand. Fill the cupped dough with 1 oz cheese and 1 oz beans.

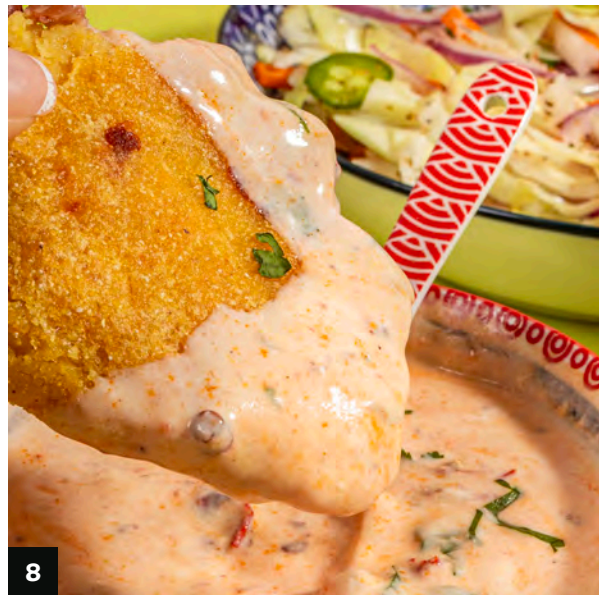
**TIP:** If the pupusa tears, patch it with a bit of masa and oil.



Fold the dough over into a ball. Then pat the ball between your hands until flat. Be careful not to tear the pupusa. Repeat until all the pupusas have been made.



Preheat a nonstick skillet or griddle to medium heat. Brush skillet with vegetable oil. Brush each pupusa with oil before placing on the skillet. Place the pupusas on the skillet, two at a time, and let each side cook for 2-3 minutes or until golden brown.



Turn the pupusas over and cook on the other side. Once cooked, let each pupusa stand about 2 minutes before eating. Serve fresh with curtido. As a modern twist, add a spoonful of the chipotle yogurt sauce over top.



# Atol de Elote

## Sweet Corn and Milk Beverage

 **YIELD:** 6 servings

 **PREP TIME:** 25 minutes

 **COOK TIME:** 10 minutes

### INGREDIENTS

5 cups of yellow corn kernels,  
previously cooked

2  $\frac{3}{4}$  cups water, divided

2 cups milk

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup granulated sugar

$\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt

3 teaspoons cornstarch

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1 cinnamon stick (optional)

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Reserving a few corn kernels for garnish, add the corn to a food processor or blender and puree until smooth. Add a splash of milk to the corn if necessary to help with pureeing. If using canned corn, save the liquid from the canned corn and add it to the blender.
2. With a fine mesh strainer sitting on a medium mixing bowl, push the pureed corn mixture through a fine mesh strainer with the back of a spoon or spatula. Discard the corn solids remaining in the strainer.
3. To the bowl, add sugar and salt.
4. In a large saucepan or Dutch oven, heat 2  $\frac{1}{4}$  cups of water with 2 cups of milk until bubbling, stirring often to prevent scolding.
5. Once hot, add the corn mixture to the pot. Reduce the heat, cover and simmer over low heat for approximately 5 minutes, or until the mixture has thickened.
6. In a small bowl or ramekin, stir together the cornstarch and remaining  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of water. Pour into the simmering liquid. Whisk until creamy.
7. Pour the hot atol into cups or bowls, sprinkle with cinnamon and garnish with a few of the corn kernels and a cinnamon stick. Serve hot.



### WRITTEN BY VALERIA DIEGO, FIRST-GENERATION DIETETIC STUDENT

Atol de elote is a delicious, creamy, grain-based beverage made from milk, corn and cinnamon. This pre-Hispanic Mesoamerican beverage, enjoyed by the Aztecs and Mayans, holds deep cultural significance across Latin America. Though there are many variations of this quintessential heritage food, the hallmark ingredient in the Salvadoran version is fresh corn kernels. As a proud Mexican American, I value the diversity of Latin American cuisine. While I do not belong to every culture represented in these recipes, I have been fortunate to be inspired by my dear friends from El Salvador, who have helped me gain a deeper understanding and appreciation for these dishes. Their insights and stories have guided me throughout this process, and I hope to honor the richness and authenticity of these recipes with the utmost respect.



# Quesadilla Salvadoreña

 **YIELD:** 9 servings

 **PREP TIME:** 10 minutes

 **COOK TIME:** 60 minutes

## Sweet Cheese Pound Cake

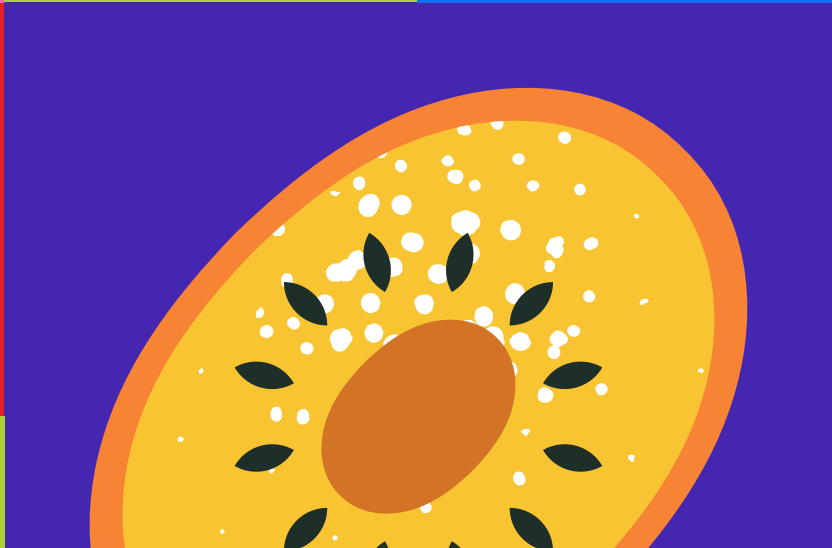
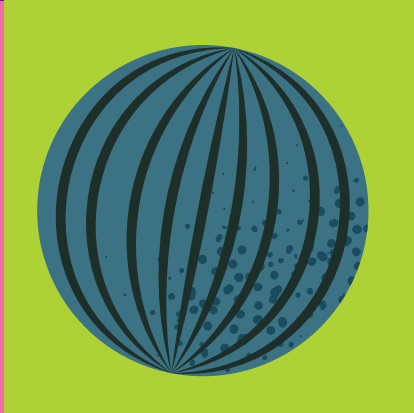
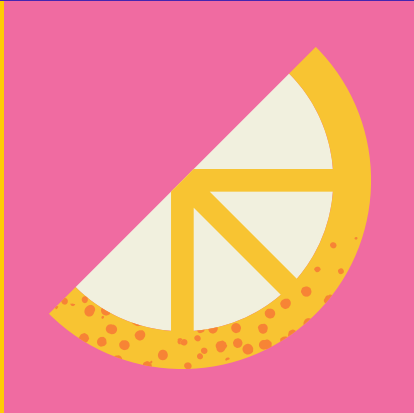
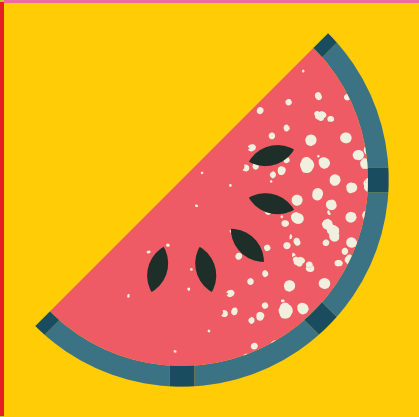
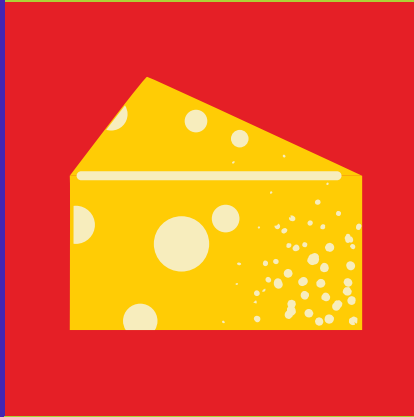
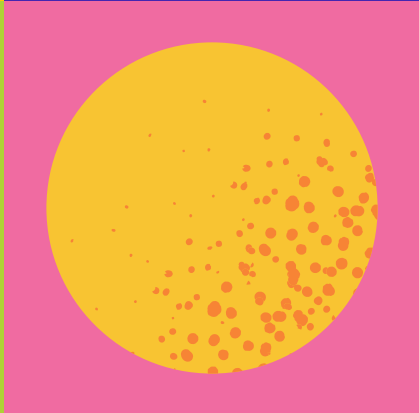
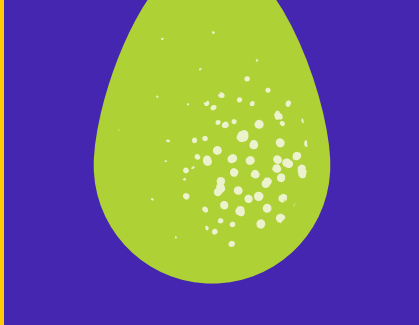
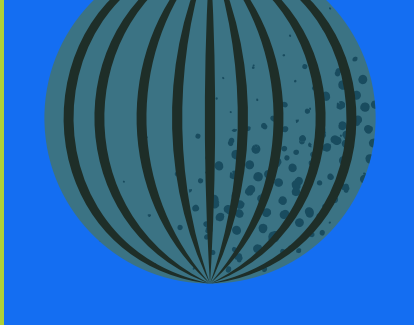
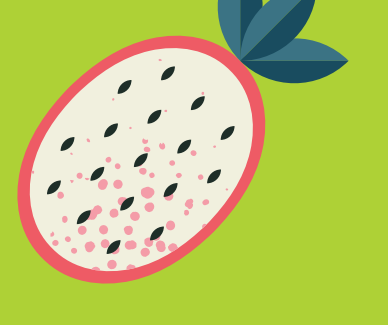
Quesadilla Salvadoreña will soon become your favorite cake. This pan dulce, or “sweet bread,” is similar to pound cake and is made with parmesan cheese and topped with sesame seeds. Its light, comforting flavors make it a perfect treat to pause and savor during the day. Traditionally enjoyed for breakfast or as a snack with a cup of good coffee, you can add more nutrition to your plate by pairing with your favorite fruit and a glass of milk.

### INGREDIENTS

½ cup unsalted butter, melted and cooled  
3 large eggs, room temperature  
1 cup granulated sugar  
1 cup of grated parmesan or queso duro blando  
½ cup milk  
½ cup plain yogurt  
1 ½ cup all-purpose flour  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
½ teaspoon salt  
2 teaspoons sesame seeds

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350° F. Grease a 9x9 cake pan or cast-iron pan.
2. Separate the egg whites and yolks into two different ramekins or small bowls. Avoid getting egg yolk in the egg whites, or they won't beat properly.
3. In a large mixing bowl, combine the melted butter, egg yolks and sugar. Beat until mixture is well combined. Add the grated cheese, milk and yogurt and mix until fully incorporated. Set mixture aside.
4. In a medium mixing bowl, whisk the flour, baking powder and salt.
5. In a new mixing bowl with a handheld mixer or stand mixer, whip the egg whites on high speed until stiff peaks form, approximately 2 minutes. Set aside.
6. Add one-third of the flour mixture into the egg yolk and cheese mixture. Stir with a spatula until just combined. Repeat with the next one-third of the flour, then again until you've gradually added all the flour, scraping the bowl after each addition.
7. Add the stiff egg whites to the bowl. With a spatula, gently add the egg whites, being careful not to deflate the egg whites as you mix. Fold the batter over the egg whites, rotate the bowl and repeat until no streaks remain.
8. Pour the batter into the greased cake pan or cast-iron pan. Top with a generous sprinkle of sesame seeds.
9. Bake the quesadilla until golden brown, about 35-40 minutes. It's ready when a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean. Let cool for 5 minutes.
10. Cut the quesadilla into squares or wedges. Serve with a glass of milk and fresh fruit.



**BANANAS** MELONS




**GUATEMALA**

**CHEESE CHAYOTE SQUASH**

**BERRIES**



# Chilaquitas de Güisquil

 **YIELD:** 6 servings  
 **PREP TIME:** 25 minutes  
 **COOK TIME:** 55 minutes

## Grilled Cheese and Chayote

This dish uses “güisquil,” also known as chayote or pear squash. A veggie-packed take on a classic that is reminiscent of a grilled cheese, chayote is packed with fiber and pairs nicely with the calcium found in cheese.

### INGREDIENTS

½ cup of cooking oil, divided  
6 (6-inch) corn tortillas  
3 güisquiles/Mexican chayote/pear squashes, sliced into thin rounds  
6 eggs, beaten  
½ pound of queso fresco, sliced  
½ pound of Oaxaca cheese, sliced  
1 medium onion, sliced into rings  
1 teaspoon of adobo seasoning  
1 (28-ounce) can chopped tomatoes  
1/3 cup cilantro, chopped (for garnish)  
¼ cup queso fresco, crumbled

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Add ¼ cup of cooking oil to a large pan and heat over medium flame.
2. Wrap corn tortillas in a damp towel or paper towel and heat in the microwave for 30 seconds.
3. Take a tortilla and place both queso fresco and Oaxacan cheese slices on one half, then gently fold over the tortilla.
4. With two slices of squash, sandwich a slice of queso fresco and Oaxacan cheeses in between.
5. Dip the tortilla and the squash into the beaten egg mixture one at a time.
6. Cook both sides of the tortilla and squash until golden brown, approximately 5 minutes per side. Remove and place on a paper towel-lined plate. Repeat with remaining tortillas and squash. Set aside.
7. In the same pan, add remaining 2 tablespoons of cooking oil over medium heat.
8. Sauté the onions until soft and translucent, approximately 5 minutes. Add adobo and cook for another minute.
9. Add chopped tomatoes and simmer for 10 minutes, making sure to break up the large chunks of tomato with the back of a spoon or spatula.
10. Return the tortillas and squash to the pan and simmer for another 5 minutes until heated through.
11. Serve over rice and garnish with cilantro and crumbled queso fresco.

#### RECIPE TIP:

Chayote is crisp when raw and softens as you cook. You can eat all parts of the chayote, including the skin and seeds. When choosing a chayote, look for light green color. For a softer chew, you can peel and cut the chayote into thinner rounds. You can also rinse the chayote under cold water to remove the sticky sap that sits just below the green skin.



# Licuado de Plátano




## Banana Smoothie

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup ice cubes
- 2 peeled bananas, ripe or frozen
- 2 cups milk
- ¼ teaspoon vanilla extract
- Sweetener to taste

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. To a blender, add all ingredients.
2. Blend until smooth, starting from a low-to-medium blend to prevent foam from forming. Add more ice for desired consistency as needed.
3. Pour into your favorite glass and garnish with fruit.

-  **YIELD:** 4 servings
-  **PREP TIME:** 10 minutes
-  **COOK TIME:** 5 minutes

### RECIPE TIP:

Don't throw ripe bananas away... freeze them! Frozen bananas can be stored for months, so you can be licuado-ready anytime. If you use frozen bananas, use less ice.



### WRITTEN BY VALERIA DIEGO, FIRST-GENERATION DIETETIC STUDENT

Licuado is a refreshing, fruit-based smoothie made from milk, fruit and a touch of sweetener, often enjoyed as a quick and nutritious drink across Latin America. This versatile beverage can vary in ingredients but always reflects the flavors of the fresh fruit available at the mercado. While this recipe uses banana, you can experiment with other fruits, including mango, strawberries or guava. This simple recipe is especially meaningful to me because during college, I had a roommate from Guatemala, and she often prepared Licuado for both of us in the morning before heading off to our busy schedules.



# Mosh

## Guatemalan Oatmeal



**YIELD:** 4 servings



**PREP TIME:** 5 minutes



**COOK TIME:** 45 minutes

### INGREDIENTS

1 cup quick cooking oats

5 cups milk, divided

½ teaspoon cinnamon

Sweetener of choice to taste

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Combine oats and 4 cups of milk in a large saucepan.
2. Over medium heat, bring the mixture to a low boil, then reduce heat to low and cook.
3. Stir for approximately 15 minutes until oats have absorbed the milk and the mixture is creamy.
4. When the oats are tender and the consistency is drinkable, add the remaining 1 cup of milk. Cook for another 20-30 minutes.
5. Add cinnamon and sweetener of choice. Stir over low heat for 1 minute.
6. Serve in mugs and top with dried or fresh fruit.

#### RECIPE TIP:

Soak oats overnight to save time the next day. Simply combine all ingredients in a bowl, then cover and refrigerate. In the morning, heat mosh over the stove on low heat until warmed through.



**WRITTEN BY VALERIA DIEGO, FIRST-GENERATION DIETETIC STUDENT**

This comforting, warm, drinkable whole grain cereal, simmered low and slow in lots of milk and flavored with warm cinnamon, is a popular breakfast food in Guatemala. This dish carries special memories for me, as my college roommate from Guatemala would often make it for us on cold, rainy, slow-paced weekends. Unlike the quick licuado we'd have on busy mornings, it gave us the chance to linger and savor our time together.



**PLANTAINS**

**ORANGES MILK**

# **DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

**COCONUT**

**PANELA CHEESE**



# Morir Soñando

## Milk and Orange Juice

 **YIELD:** 4 servings

 **PREP TIME:** 15 minutes

 **COOK TIME:** 5 minutes

### INGREDIENTS

2 (12-ounce) cans evaporated milk

½ cup granulated sugar

½ tablespoon clear vanilla extract

1 ½ cups ice cubes or crushed ice

2 cups orange juice

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Pour the evaporated milk into a large pitcher and chill for at least 30 minutes.
2. Add sugar, vanilla and ice to the pitcher. Stir to combine.
3. While stirring vigorously, pour in the orange juice. Stirring prevents the milk from curdling.
4. Pour into glasses and garnish each serving with a wedge of fresh orange. Serve with your favorite breakfast or alongside a snack plate.



#### **WRITTEN BY VALERIA DIEGO, FIRST-GENERATION DIETETIC STUDENT**

Fresh orange juice meets creamy, evaporated milk that should be the official drink of the Dominican summer. The name, which translates to “die dreaming,” reflects the pure joy and satisfaction this drink brings. Although I don’t have a personal connection to Dominican culture, I’ve grown to appreciate the richness and diversity of Latin American cuisine through my experiences with other Latin American dishes. This recipe, like many others in the region, carries cultural significance and is cherished for its unique flavors. I approach it with respect and enthusiasm, eager to honor its place in the Dominican culinary tradition.



# Mangù con los Tres Golpes



**YIELD:** 6 meals



**PREP TIME:** 15 minutes



**COOK TIME:** 20 minutes

## The Dominican Breakfast

This iconic and hearty Dominican breakfast is often celebrated as one of the best representations of the country's culinary fare. Traditionally served family-style, this meal features creamy mashed plantains (mangù), pan-fried cheese, savory salami and eggs, creating a deliciously satisfying start to the day.

### INGREDIENTS

4 green, unripened plantains, peeled and chopped  
1 ½ teaspoons salt  
2 tablespoons unsalted butter  
2 large red onions, thinly sliced  
¼ cup apple cider vinegar  
1 teaspoon salt  
1 sliced avocado  
12 eggs  
1 pound queso de freir, panela or plain halloumi cheese, cut into rectangles  
1 pound salami, cut into thin round slices  
Oil for frying

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Add the peeled plantains to a large pot. Fill the water line to sit just above the plantains, about 2 cups. Turn the heat to high until the water comes to a boil, then reduce to medium-high heat and continue to cook for 10-12 minutes or until a knife inserted into a plantain goes in easily with no resistance. Carefully drain water, then add butter and salt and mash the plantains with a fork or potato masher. Place mashed plantains in a serving bowl.
2. In a medium sauté pan, add sliced onions and cook over medium-low heat until fragrant and slightly translucent, approximately 5 minutes. Add the vinegar and salt, stirring to combine. Remove from heat and plate with some sliced avocado.
3. In a new pan with a little oil, fry the cheese on both sides over medium-high heat until it's golden and crispy, approximately 3-5 minutes per side.
4. Set aside cheese on a plate or platter. Then, using the same pan, fry both sides of the sliced salami at medium-high heat until brown and crispy, approximately 2 minutes per piece. Remove from oil and rest on a paper towel to absorb excess oil. Lower heat of burner to medium low.
5. Set the salami on the same plate with the cheese. Add more oil and fry 1-2 eggs at a time, sunny side up, until desired doneness. Plate the eggs with the fried cheese and salami.
6. Serve cheese, meat, eggs, avocado, pickled veggies and mashed plantains family-style.

#### RECIPE TIP:

Develop more flavor and pickle the onions in advance. Add leftover pickled onions on your favorite sandwich.



# Habichuelas con Dulce

 **YIELD:** 6 servings

 **PREP TIME:** 20 minutes

 **COOK TIME:** 25 minutes

## Dominican Sweet Beans

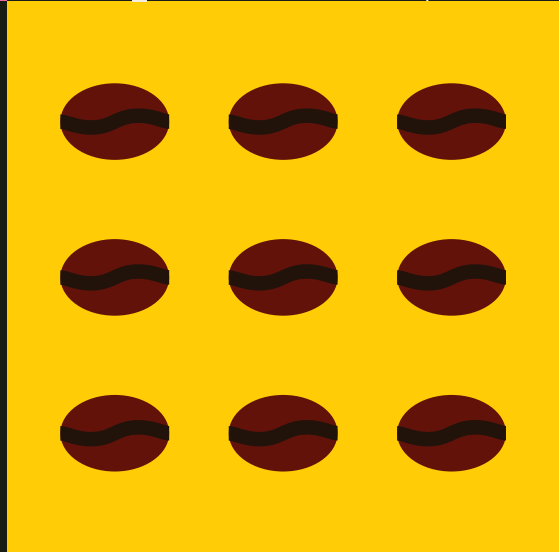
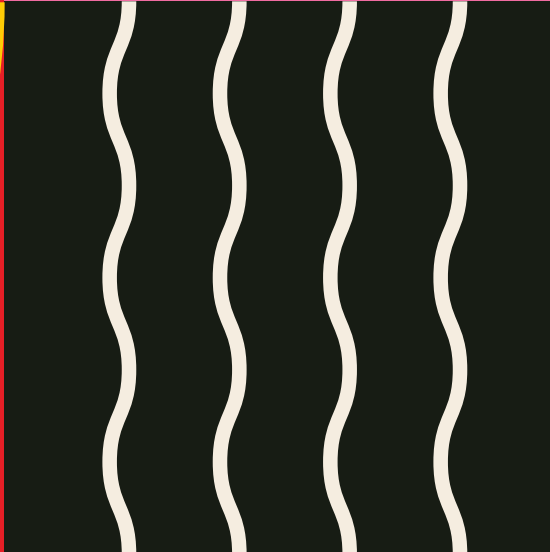
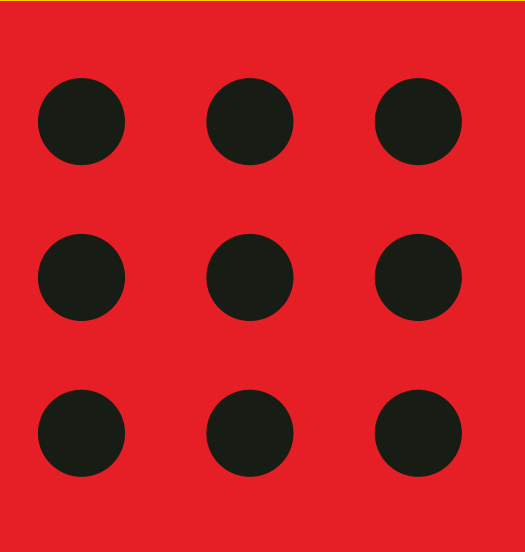
This traditional dessert from the Dominican Republic is especially enjoyed during Lent, showcasing a unique combination of beans, milk and sweet potato. The warmth of cinnamon and clove adds a delightful twist, creating an unexpectedly sweet treat that is both comforting and satisfying.

### INGREDIENTS

2 (12-ounce) cans red kidney beans, drained  
4 cups water  
2 (12-ounce) cans evaporated milk  
1 (14-ounce) can unsweetened coconut milk  
½ teaspoon salt  
1 cup granulated sugar  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
2 cinnamon sticks  
10 cloves  
½ pound of cooked or canned sweet potato, mashed or in cubes  
½ cup raisins

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a blender, add beans and water. Puree until smooth. Strain the beans to remove the skin and discard. Add strained liquid to a large pot.
2. To the pot, add the evaporated milk, coconut milk, salt, sugar, vanilla, cinnamon, cloves and cooked or canned sweet potatoes. Whisk, return to blender or use an immersion blender and puree until smooth. Simmer over low heat and stir often to avoid sticking for approximately 10 minutes.
3. Once warm, add raisins and let heat through for another 10 minutes. Remove cinnamon sticks and cloves. The consistency at this stage may be thin but will thicken once cooled.
4. Remove from the stove and cool to room temperature. Then chill in the fridge for at least 30 minutes.
5. Ladle the mixture into individual bowls. Top with buttered cassava bread or small Dominican cookies. Serve with a platter of seasonal fruit.



**MANGO**

**BLACK BEANS**

**CUBA**

**COFFEE BEANS**




**CAFÉ CON LECHE**

**PORK**



# Café con Leche

Coffee With Milk

 **YIELD:** 4 servings  
 **PREP TIME:** 5 minutes  
 **COOK TIME:** 5 minutes

## INGREDIENTS




4 (1-ounce) shots of Cuban espresso  
4 cups milk, steamed  
1 tablespoon butter, cut into 4 pieces

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. In large coffee cups, fill each cup with 1 cup of steamed milk.
2. Then, over each cup of steamed milk, add one shot of espresso.
3. Add a piece of butter to each café con leche, if desired. Enjoy warm.

## ALTERNATE METHOD

**Make this recipe using instant coffee and steaming milk without an espresso machine or milk steamer!**

 **YIELD:** 4 servings  
 **PREP TIME:** 10 minutes  
 **COOK TIME:** 5 minutes

## INGREDIENTS

4 single-serve packets or 2 teaspoons espresso instant coffee  
4 2-tablespoons water or 8 tablespoons total  
4 cups milk  
1 tablespoon butter, cut into 4 pieces (optional)

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. In each mug, heat up 2 tablespoons water in the microwave for 30 seconds.
2. Add 1 single-serve packet or 2 teaspoons espresso instant coffee into each mug and stir.
3. Heat up 4 cups of milk in a pot on medium heat.
4. Continuously stir until foam begins to form.
5. In each mug with the coffee base (1 shot of espresso), add approximately 1 cup of milk.
6. Stir and enjoy warm!
7. Optional: Add a piece of butter to each café con leche.






**WRITTEN BY VALERIA DIEGO, FIRST-GENERATION DIETETIC STUDENT**

Café con leche is a classic Cuban breakfast staple, known for its rich combination of strong coffee and steamed milk. Often enjoyed with buttered toast, this comforting drink creates a warm start to the day. Some may replicate the flavor by adding a little butter or a pinch of salt directly into their café con leche. For a more satisfying breakfast experience, it can be served alongside toast, eggs and sliced fruit. To adapt to a fast-paced lifestyle, there's an alternate recipe for those on a tight schedule who wish to enjoy café con leche made with instant coffee.



# Batido de Mango

## Mango Milkshake

 **YIELD:** 4 servings  
 **PREP TIME:** 5 minutes  
 **COOK TIME:** 5 minutes

### INGREDIENTS

4 cups milk  
¼ cup sweetened condensed milk  
4 cups frozen cubed mango  
1 medium banana  
½ cup ice

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Add the milk, sweetened condensed milk, mango, banana and ice to blender.
2. Blend until smooth, adding more milk for consistency if needed.
3. Pour batido into tall glasses, garnishing with sprigs of mint and fruit as desired.



**WRITTEN BY VALERIA DIEGO, FIRST-GENERATION DIETETIC STUDENT**

Batido, which means “beaten,” refers to Cuban milkshakes. Batidos can be flavored with a variety of ingredients, allowing for endless creativity. Similar to licuados, batidos can be enjoyed with an array of fruits, adding fiber and natural sweetness to the drink. This versatility not only makes batidos a refreshing treat but also a nutritious option that brings the flavors of the tropics to your glass. While I may not share a personal connection to Cuban culture, I embrace the opportunity to explore its diverse flavors and traditions through this beloved beverage.



# Sandwich Cuba Especial

 **YIELD:** 4 sandwiches

 **PREP TIME:** 10 minutes

 **COOK TIME:** 15 minutes

## Cuban Sandwich

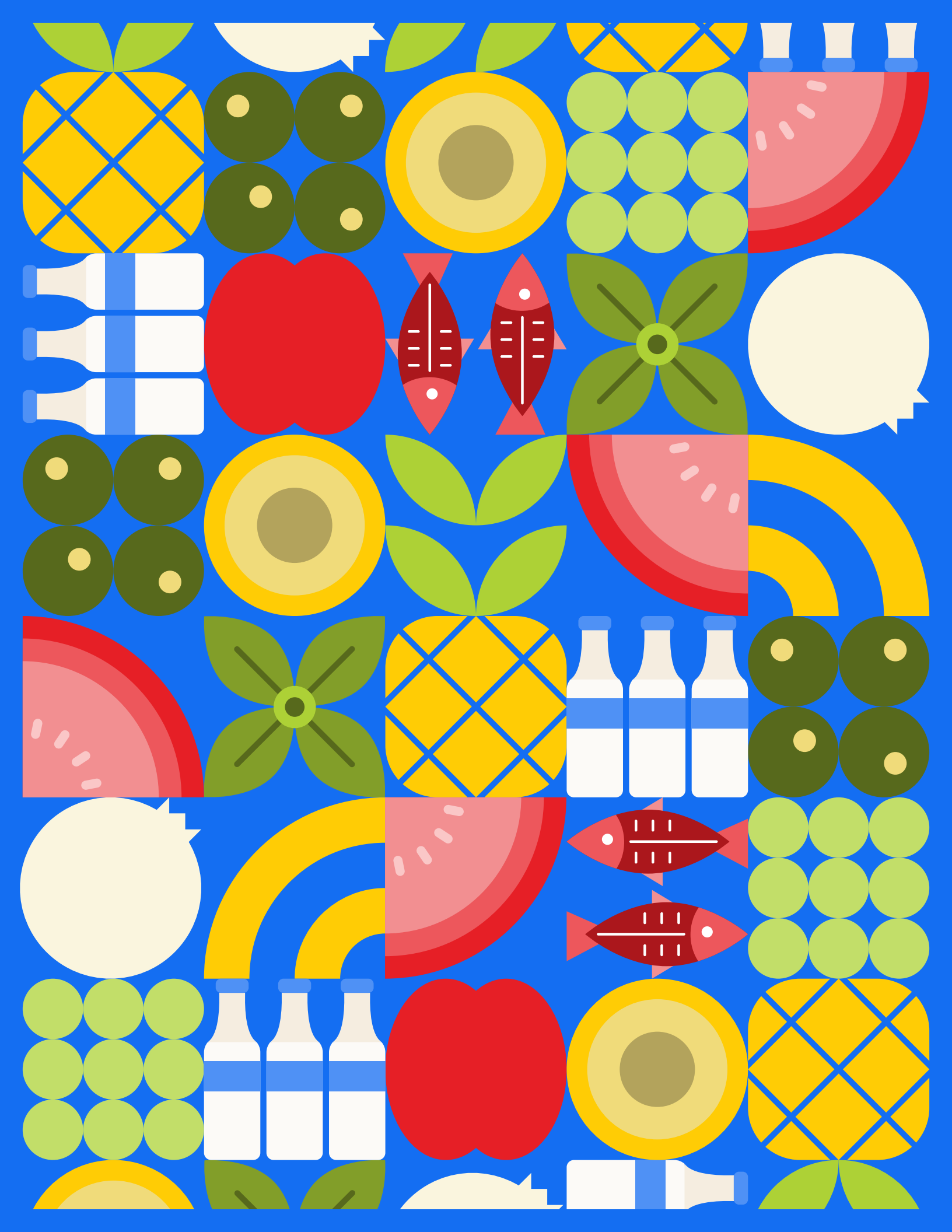
A variation of the traditional Cuban sandwich, this sandwich features olive salad or pickles. The Cuban sandwich quickly became a popular choice during lunch as it took root in cafeteria and restaurant menus in the 1930s. Today, the sandwich remains a satisfying blend of bread, meat and cheese and is served alongside high-fiber black beans.

### INGREDIENTS

1 loaf Cuban bread  
4 tablespoons butter, room temperature  
¼ cup olive salad, giardiniera or pickles of choice  
1 pound ham  
1 pound roasted pork, shredded  
1 pound Swiss cheese  
Mustard (optional)

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat a griddle on medium-low heat.
2. Cut the loaf of bread into 4 sections. Then cut each section in half and spread butter generously on the inside of the slices.
3. Assemble the sandwiches: spread mustard on the bread. Then add olive salad, giardiniera or pickles. Add some roasted pork, a couple slices of ham and two slices of cheese per sandwich. Close each sandwich.
4. Add a little butter or cooking spray to the hot griddle.
5. Place each sandwich on the griddle. Lay a heavy pan, press or foil wrapped brick on top to flatten sandwich. Grill both sides on medium-low heat until cheese is melted, approximately 3-5 minutes per side.
6. Slice each flattened sandwich in half diagonally. Serve with black beans.



**TOMATOES**

**PINEAPPLES MILK**

# **PUERTO RICO**

**RED SNAPPER OLIVES**

**PIGEON PEAS PLANTAINS**

**SOFRITO**



# Pastelón

## Plantain Lasagna

 **YIELD:** 8 servings

 **PREP TIME:** 20 minutes

 **COOK TIME:** 30 minutes

This dish offers the perfect blend of sweet and savory flavors, featuring sweet plantain slices nestled between layers of melted cheese and a savory picadillo filling made with lean ground beef. This comforting combination showcases the rich culinary heritage of Puerto Rico, where the balance of flavors creates a satisfying meal.

### INGREDIENTS

1 tablespoon unsalted butter  
1 large onion, diced  
4 cloves garlic, minced  
¼ cup sofrito  
1 pound lean ground beef  
1 ½ teaspoons dry adobo  
2 tablespoons tomato paste  
2 small potatoes, diced  
10 pimento-stuffed olives, cut in half  
2 bay leaves  
½ cup raisins (optional)  
1 cup water  
¼ cup tomato sauce  
4 ripe plantains  
3 eggs  
2 tablespoons milk  
2 ¼ cups white shredded cheese, divided  
Cooking oil

*Step-by-step photo instructions are included on the following pages.*

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 350° F. Grease a 9x9 glass casserole dish with the butter.
2. Prepare your Puerto Rican-style picadillo. In a large skillet over medium-high heat, add approximately 2 tablespoons of cooking oil. Sauté the onions until translucent. Then add the sofrito and garlic and sauté for a couple minutes more.
3. Next, to the same pan, add ground beef, adobo and salt. Once the meat is almost cooked through with very little pink, add the tomato paste, potatoes, olives, bay leaves, raisins and water to the skillet. Stir until well combined. Bring to a boil.
4. Lower the heat to medium, cover with a lid, and let the mixture simmer for at least 15 minutes. Uncover and let the picadillo simmer for an additional 15 minutes or until the sauce thickens and condenses down. If the mixture becomes too dry and begins sticking to the pan, add a tablespoon of water and lower the heat.
5. While the mixture simmers, cut the peeled plantains. Slice each plantain in half. Then carefully cut each plantain half into long strips. Once you've peeled all the plantains, slice each one in half down the length, about 1/4-inch thick. Set aside. Alternatively, you can also use a mandolin.
6. In a clean, large skillet, add cooking oil until the bottom of the pan is coated. In batches, fry slices of plantain over medium-high heat, approximately 2-3 minutes per side. Place on a plate lined with a paper towel and set aside.
7. To assemble, start with a thin layer of plantains, then add about a cup of picadillo, then a big handful of cheese, then repeat. The top layer is plantains and cheese, leaving about a quarter-cup of cheese for the next step. Leftover picadillo can be put in the freezer for future recipes.
8. Beat together the eggs and milk and pour over the pastelón. Let sit for 1-2 minutes. Top with remaining cheese.
9. Bake in the oven for 25 minutes until bubbly and brown. Let stand for 5-10 minutes before cutting. Serve with salad and sliced avocado.

## PASTELÓN STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS



1 Preheat the oven to 350° F. Grease a square 9x9 glass casserole dish with the butter.



2 Prepare your Puerto Rican-style picadillo. In a large skillet over medium-high heat, add approximately 2 tablespoons of cooking oil. Sauté the onions until translucent. Then add the sofrito and garlic and sauté for a couple minutes more.



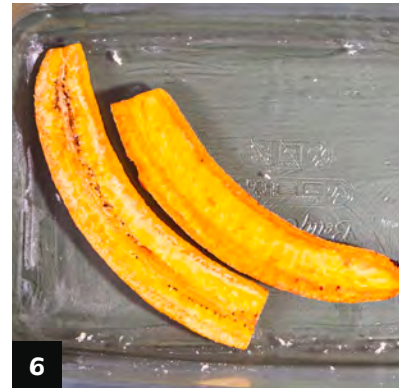
3 Next, to the same pan, add ground beef, adobo and salt.



4 Once the meat is almost cooked through with very little pink, add the tomato paste, potatoes, olives, bay leaves, raisins and water to the skillet. Stir until well combined. Bring to a boil.



5 Lower the heat to medium, cover with a lid, and let the mixture simmer for at least 15 minutes. Uncover and let the picadillo simmer for an additional 15 minutes or until the sauce thickens and condenses down. If the mixture becomes too dry and begins sticking to the pan, add a tablespoon of water and lower the heat.



6 While the mixture simmers, cut the peeled plantains. Slice each plantain in half. Then carefully cut each plantain half into long strips. Once you've peeled all the plantains, slice each one in half down the length, about 1/4-inch thick. Set aside. Alternatively, you can also use a mandolin.

## PASTELÓN STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS



7 In a clean, large skillet, add cooking oil until the bottom of the pan is coated. In batches, fry slices of plantain over medium-high heat, approximately 2-3 minutes per side. Place on a plate lined with a paper towel and set aside.



8 To assemble, start with a thin layer of plantains, then add about a cup of picadillo, then a big handful of cheese, then repeat. The top layer is plantains and cheese, leaving about a quarter-cup of cheese for the next step. Leftover picadillo can be put in the freezer for future recipes.



9 Beat together the eggs and milk



10 Pour egg and milk mixture over the pastelón. Let sit for 1-2 minutes. Top with remaining cheese.



11 Bake in the oven for 25 minutes until bubbly and brown. Let stand for 5-10 minutes before cutting. Serve with salad and sliced avocado.



# Flan

## Baked Custard

 **YIELD:** 16 servings

 **PREP TIME:** 25 minutes

 **COOK TIME:** 75 minutes

### INGREDIENTS

1 ¼ cup granulated sugar, divided into ½ cup and ¾ cup

1 (12 ounce) can evaporated milk

4 eggs

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Pinch of salt

Fruit of choice as garnish

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Fill a large, shallow pan with 1 inch of water and place it on the middle rack of the oven. Preheat the oven to 350° F.
2. Add ½ cup of sugar to a round aluminum baking pan or bundt pan without ridges. While holding the mold with a mitten, gently place the pan on the stovetop on medium-high heat. Move the pan so all the sugar melts without burning. The sugar will turn into a light brown color. Remove from the heat. Carefully, coat the sides of the pan with the caramel. Set aside.
3. In a blender, add the evaporated milk, eggs, vanilla, salt and ¾ cup sugar. Blend until well combined. Strain and pour over the caramel-coated pan.
4. Place the pan inside the large shallow pan inside the oven, being careful not to splash the water into the flan mixture. This is called a bain-marie or “baño de María.”
5. Bake for approximately 75 minutes. The flan is done when you insert a toothpick in the middle and it comes out dry and clean.
6. Remove the flan from the oven and set aside to cool. Then, cover with plastic wrap and place in the refrigerator for 2-3 hours. When you are ready to serve, uncover and place a large plate on top of the pan. Flip the pan. The caramel will pour to the sides of the flan. Serve cold and top with your favorite fruit.



**WRITTEN BY MARÍA EUGENIA RODRÍGUEZ LEÓN, MS, RDN, CSR, LND, KIDNEY DIETITIAN**

As a child, my family and I spent weekends and holidays at my maternal grandparent’s house in Ponce, Puerto Rico. Elisa, my grandmother, loved cooking and always fed everyone who came to visit. She always had flan in the fridge. Her recipe was a traditional vanilla flan. And as an adolescent, my interest in baking started. I remember calling for her famous flan recipe. I wrote down all the instructions but failed in the execution. She then came to San Juan, an hour-long drive from Ponce, with all her tools to teach me how to make her flan. I noticed she brought a small vintage coffee mug. When she measured the sugar, she used her coffee mug. Over the phone she told me “a cup of sugar,” but in reality, she used her coffee mug to measure the sugar. I instantly measured her “cup of sugar” with a traditional measuring cup, and it was about ¾ cup. To this day, I still have her handwritten index card with her flan recipe. It’s the only recipe I have from her. *Handed down to María Eugenia by her grandmother, Elisa Torres Cintrón.*



# Tres Leches

## Three Milk Cake With Coconut and Rum

 **YIELD:** 10 servings

 **PREP TIME:** 25 minutes

 **COOK TIME:** 45 minutes

### INGREDIENTS

#### For the cake:

- 1 tablespoon butter
- 5 large eggs, yolks and whites separated
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 ½ teaspoons baking powder
- ⅓ cup milk
- 2 teaspoons coffee liqueur, such as Kahlua
- 1 (12-ounce) can evaporated milk
- 1 (14-ounce) can sweetened condensed milk
- 1 (13.5-ounce) can coconut milk
- 2 tablespoons Puerto Rican rum

#### For the whipped cream:

- 2 cups heavy cream
- 4 tablespoons confectioner's sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 dash ground cinnamon
- 1 dash ground nutmeg, freshly grated

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350° F. Butter the bottom and sides of a 13x9 baking dish.
2. In a large bowl, use an electric mixer to beat egg whites on high until stiff peaks form, about 2 minutes. Reduce speed to medium and gradually beat in the sugar. Then beat in yolks one at a time.
3. In a separate mixing bowl, sift together flour and baking powder.
4. Gently fold the dry ingredients into the bowl with wet ingredients. Mix in milk and coffee liqueur, mixing gently enough that the egg white peaks don't deflate.
5. Pour mixture into a buttered baking dish.
6. Bake until golden and a toothpick inserted into center of cake emerges clean, about 30 minutes. Let cool for 5 minutes. After cooling, use a toothpick or skewer to puncture the cake's surface at 2-inch intervals.
7. In a large bowl, whisk together all canned milks and rum until well combined. Carefully pour onto cooled cake. Cover cake pan with foil and refrigerate at least 2 hours.
8. In a large bowl, use an electric mixer to beat together heavy cream, confectioner's sugar and vanilla on high until stiff peaks form, about 4-5 minutes.
9. Spread whipped cream on top of the chilled cake. Finish by sprinkling with ground cinnamon and freshly grated nutmeg.
10. Serve this cake bien frío – very cold. Its milky-sweet flavors shine that much brighter when it's super chilled. Top with berries.



**WRITTEN BY ALANA MARRERO GONZALEZ, DCN, MHSN, LND, PROUD LATINA DIETITIAN**

“Tres leches” literally means “three milks,” and the hallmark of this recipe is an ultra-light sponge cake soaked in a sweet milk mixture. It’s popular in Puerto Rico, Mexico, Latin America and throughout the United States as it’s often available at Mexican restaurants. Every person in my family would rank Tres Leches Cake in our top favorites of all time. I love that it’s not overly sweet, it’s super easy to make and it’s delicious. Just the smell brings me back to my childhood. I hope you enjoy this recipe as much as I do. *Inspired by Alana’s grandmother, Minnee De Choudens.*



**RICE**

**COFFEE**

**COLOMBIA**

**GUAVA MILK**


**SEAFOOD**

**CACAO**



# Plátanos Asados con Bocadillo y Queso

## Baked Plantains With Guava and Cheese

 **YIELD:** 4-6 servings  
 **PREP TIME:** 10-15 minutes  
 **COOK TIME:** 25 minutes

### INGREDIENTS

2 ripe plantains, peeled  
1 tablespoon butter, melted  
3 ounces guava paste (bocadillo), sliced into thin strips (approximately 85 grams)  
2 cups grated cheese: mozzarella or fresh cheese of your choice (cheese that melts)

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 390° F.
2. Make a lengthwise slit along each plantain, taking care not to cut all the way through.
3. Gently open the slits and brush the inside of each plantain with melted butter.
4. Fill the slits with slices of guava paste (also known as bocadillo).
5. Place the plantains flat on a lined baking sheet.
6. Bake the plantains in the oven for 35 minutes, or until they are tender (golden brown) and the guava paste (bocadillo) has melted.
7. Remove the plantains from the oven and sprinkle grated cheese over the top.
8. Return the plantains to the oven and bake for an additional 5 minutes, or until the cheese is melted and bubbly.
9. Serve warm with roasted chicken and sliced vegetables.






**WRITTEN BY OLGA LUCÍA PINZÓN-ESPITIA, RDN, LDN, PHD, POSTDOC, MSC, MHA, SPECIALIST, PGCERT, PGDIP, DEDICATED TEACHER & DIETITIAN**

Plantain with bocadillo, or guava paste, and cheese has always been a cherished traditional dish from the Caribbean region where my mother was born. My mother is the best chef I know and cooks with warmth and love. She used to roast the plantains until they were golden brown and crispy, while the sweet snack and cheese melted inside, creating that perfect combination of sweet and savory. Every time I eat it, I am transported back to those moments in the kitchen, watching her transform simple ingredients into something so special. Today, this tradition has crossed borders with the family making it in the United States, keeping the flavor of our country alive in every bite. *Inspired by Olga's mother, who she lovingly calls "the best chef."*



# Arepas de Queso

## Cheesy Cornmeal Cakes

 **YIELD:** 8 servings  
 **PREP TIME:** 10 minutes  
 **COOK TIME:** 20 minutes

### INGREDIENTS

2 cups precooked cornmeal  
1 teaspoon salt  
2 ½ cups milk  
2 tablespoons butter, melted  
2 cups grated cheese: mozzarella and fresh cheese of your choice

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a large mixing bowl, combine the precooked cornmeal and salt.
2. Gradually add the milk to the cornmeal mixture, stirring continuously until the dough forms.
3. Stir in the melted butter until fully incorporated.
4. Add the shredded cheese to the dough, mixing well to ensure the cheese is evenly distributed. The dough should be a shaggy, round ball.
5. Let the dough rest for 5 minutes to allow the cornmeal to absorb the liquid.
6. Divide the dough into 8 equal portions and shape each portion into a ball.
7. Flatten each ball into a disc, about 1/2 inch thick.
8. Heat a nonstick skillet or griddle over medium heat.
9. Place the arepas on the skillet and cook for 5-7 minutes on each side, until golden brown and fully cooked through.
10. Serve hot, with additional butter or cheese if desired. Serve alongside hot chocolate.



**WRITTEN BY OLGA LUCÍA PINZÓN-ESPITIA, RDN, LDN, PHD, POSTDOC, MSC, MHA, SPECIALIST, PGCERT, PGDIP, DEDICATED TEACHER & DIETITIAN**

Cheese arepas have always been a symbol of love and tradition in my family. Since I was a child, I've enjoyed the aroma of freshly made arepas while watching my mother, with her serenity, kneading the flour with unmatched dedication. She would cook them slowly, allowing the cheese to melt inside, creating that unmistakable flavor that I always remember. Over the years, that tradition was kept alive when my mother became a grandmother, preparing the same arepas for the entire family. Now, my husband is the one who prepares them, with the same love and dedication, keeping alive that family connection that unites generations around a simple but perfect cheese arepa. *Inspired by Olga's mother and husband.*



# Arroz con Leche

## Creamy Rice Pudding

 **YIELD:** 6-8 servings

 **PREP TIME:** 15 minutes

 **COOK TIME:** 45 minutes

### INGREDIENTS

1 cup white rice  
4 cups milk, divided  
1/2 cup granulated sugar  
2 teaspoons butter  
3 cinnamon sticks  
4 tablespoons condensed milk  
1/2 cup seedless raisins  
Cinnamon for dusting  
Cinnamon chips for garnish

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. To a large saucepan, add the rice, 3 cups of milk and cinnamon sticks over low heat. Stirring often, add the remaining 1 cup of milk little by little until the rice softens, about 30-35 minutes.
2. When the rice is cooked and most of the milk has been absorbed, add sugar, condensed milk, butter and raisins. Stir until it thickens, then turn heat off.
3. Once it is ready and has a smooth consistency, put it in a large baking dish and let it cool.
4. Serve cold on small plates garnished with cinnamon chips. Serve alongside a bowl of fresh or canned fruit of choice.



**WRITTEN BY OLGA LUCÍA PINZÓN-ESPITIA, RDN, LDN, PHD, POSTDOC, MSC, MHA, SPECIALIST, PGCERT, PGDIP, DEDICATED TEACHER & DIETITIAN**

My memories of Colombian rice pudding always take me back to afternoons at home. This dish is my husband's and my son's favorite dessert. The comforting aroma creates a cozy atmosphere full of smiles. Whenever I prepare it, I mix the ingredients in the pot with patience, making sure that each grain of rice soaks up the sweet flavor of the milk. It is the perfect dish for any occasion, a tradition that has been kept alive in my home. Every time I prepare it, I evoke those moments of family warmth. *Inspired by Olga's husband's family recipe.*



**MEATS**

**POTATOES**

**VENEZUELA**

**MILLED GRAINS PAPAYA**


**CASSAVA**

**NATA**



# Tequeños

## Fried Cheese Sticks

 **YIELD:** 20-25 tequeños

 **PREP TIME:** 60-80 minutes

 **COOK TIME:** 7 minutes

### INGREDIENTS

1 pound queso blanco or queso de frier

2 cups all-purpose flour

2 tablespoons butter, room temperature

1 egg

½ teaspoon of salt

1 tablespoon granulated sugar

4-5 tablespoons of cold water

Enough corn oil to deep fry

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Prepare cheese strips by cutting into pieces approximately 3/4 inch wide by 2 ¾ inches long.
2. Place the flour on a large flat surface; using your hands or a bench scraper, shape the flour into a circle with a hole in the center. Combine the egg and butter in the hole. Mix the salt, sugar and cold water together in small bowl. Slowly add the mixture to the flour, combining everything with your hands. Keep mixing and kneading until the dough is no longer sticky. When ready, shape into a ball, wrap in plastic wrap and let it rest for 30 minutes at room temperature.
3. After resting the dough, add a light dusting of flour on a clean, flat surface. Roll the dough into a square approximately 1/8 inch thick. Using a sharp knife, cut the flattened dough into long uniform strips until there is one strip to wrap around each piece of cheese.
4. Place a piece of cheese at one end of the first strip and roll it up until it is completely covered by dough. Make sure to press any open edges together to seal cheese in the dough completely so that it does not leak out when it is fried. Repeat this with the rest of the cheese pieces.
5. Heat approximately 1 inch of oil in a frying pan over medium-high heat. Once the oil is hot, lower to a medium setting. Carefully, fry the tequeños until golden brown and crunchy. Alternatively, you may use the air fryer at 400° for 7-8 minutes. Place on a paper towel to remove excess oil.
6. Serve warm. Dip tequeños in guasacaca, a creamy, tangy Venezuelan sauce that has avocado, vinegar, cilantro and jalapeño.



**WRITTEN BY MARIANELLA HERRERA-CUENCA MD, MSC, PHD, HUMANITARIAN & NUTRITION RESEARCHER**

A traditional Venezuelan appetizer, tequeños are a beloved homemade treat for children's parties. Tequeños provide carbs, fat, calcium and protein. For every 2 pieces of tequeños, you'll find a good source of calcium that's important for building strong bones. Traditionally fried, these can also be oven-baked or cooked in an air fryer. This appetizer brings back childhood memories of attending family events with my parents. *Inspired by Marianella's mother and grandmother.*



# Cachapas con Queso

## Cheesy Corn Pancakes

 **YIELD:** 4 pancakes  
 **PREP TIME:** 30 minutes  
 **COOK TIME:** 20 minutes

### INGREDIENTS

4 cups fresh or frozen corn kernels (defrost if frozen)  
2 large eggs  
1 cup milk  
2 teaspoons salt  
2 teaspoons brown sugar  
¼ cup vegetable oil  
1 cup all-purpose flour  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
1 ½ cups fresh mozzarella or queso de mano, shredded  
3 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a blender, puree the corn kernels with egg, milk, salt, sugar and vegetable oil. When blended well, add the flour and the baking powder and pulse again until you have a smooth batter.
2. To a large skillet or griddle, turn heat to medium and add a pad of butter.
3. Cook as you would a pancake: Pour some of the mix over the hot pan. When it bubbles around the edges, flip it with the spatula and cook until both sides are golden brown, about 2-3 minutes per side. When both sides are browned, fill it with cheese and fold the corncake in half to keep the cheese melting inside.
4. Serve hot with a fruit smoothie.



**WRITTEN BY MARIANELLA HERRERA-CUENCA MD, MSC, PHD, HUMANITARIAN & NUTRITION RESEARCHER**

I grew up with my mother making cachapas con queso for me before I'd go to school, and I've continued this food tradition with my own children. On Sunday mornings, my husband, our four children and I would drive to a mountainside town outside Caracas, Venezuela's capital. The rural village had the best woodfired cakes that were made with fresh corn and served with a beverage made with seasonal fruit like sweet mangoes or sour cherries. Now that my children are all grown up, this recipe carries a piece of my heart. *Inspired by Marianella's grandmother.*



# Torta de Platano

## Plantain Cake



**YIELD:** 8 servings



**PREP TIME:** 30-40 minutes



**COOK TIME:** 20 minutes

### INGREDIENTS

3 ripe plantains, peeled

5 eggs

1 ½ cups white cheese, like feta, queso Llanero, queso blanco tipo paisa or queijo Mineiro, shredded

3 tablespoons unsalted butter

½ cup Venezuelan cream (nata) or ½ cup sour cream with a splash of buttermilk

1/8 teaspoon cinnamon

1/8 teaspoon nutmeg

1/3 cup molasses or brown sugar

6 tablespoons of shredded molasses

½ cup plain breadcrumbs

Vegetable oil for frying

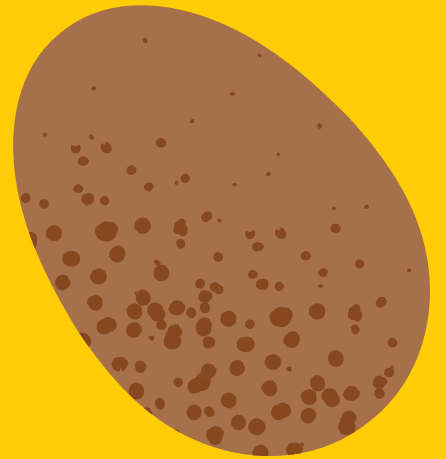
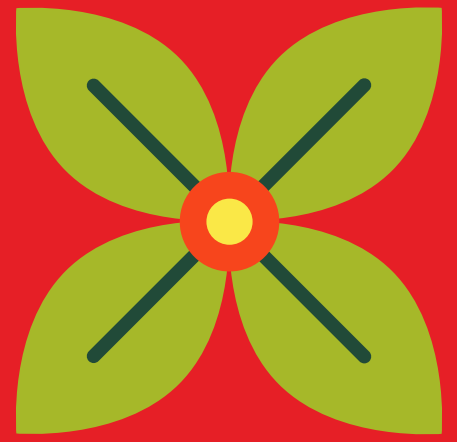
### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 350° F.
2. Using a sharp knife, cut the plantains in half widthwise. From each half, cut several long slices, then fry in a pan with 1 inch of oil over medium-high heat.
3. Butter the bottom and sides of an oven-safe casserole dish.
4. Sprinkle the breadcrumbs in a thin and even layer over the buttered pan.
5. Start building the layers: Add one layer of fried plantains, then cover with shredded cheese, then add another layer of plantains. Repeat the process, then finish with a layer of plantains covered with cheese and cream (nata). Leave about ½ inch between the plantains and the border of the baking dish.
6. Prepare a batter with the 5 eggs and pour it over, along with the molasses, cinnamon and nutmeg.
7. Place in the oven for 15 -20 minutes or until it is brown and bubbly. Serve with a traditional Sunday meal, like a beef roast, green salad and rice.



**WRITTEN BY MARIANELLA HERRERA-CUENCA MD, MSC, PHD, HUMANITARIAN & NUTRITION RESEARCHER**

My memories of this rich and warmly spiced dish are associated with big family gatherings, whether on Sundays, birthdays or any celebration that brings family together. We would gather over a nice meal, usually it consisted of a beef roast or juicy chicken, an enormous green salad and rice. A plantain cake was always beautifully displayed on the large table by the garden waiting to be served and eaten by all. The children in our family would always be anxiously waiting for a piece of this cake. What an aroma, in the middle of exciting conversations and great garden views. That is what this cake brings to my mind whenever I prepare it and taste it again and again. *Inspired by Marianella's mother.*



**POTATOES**  
**QUESO FRESCO**

**PERU**

**AJI PEPPERS**  
**CHOCLO**



# Papas a la Huancaína

 **YIELD:** 8 servings

 **PREP TIME:** 20 minutes

 **COOK TIME:** 25 minutes

## Potatoes in a Creamy and Spicy Cheese Sauce

### INGREDIENTS

12 small yellow potatoes, such as Yukon gold  
1 pound cream cheese, softened  
1 pound queso fresco, crumbled  
4–6 aji chile peppers, cooked (adjust to your heat preference)  
1 clove fresh garlic, chopped  
½ teaspoon ground black pepper  
¾ cup evaporated milk (or more if a thinner sauce is desired)  
8 leaves romaine lettuce  
8 hard-boiled eggs, cut lengthwise  
16 black olives, pitted and halved

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place potatoes into a large pot of water and bring to a rolling boil. Reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer until tender, about 20 minutes. Drain the water and allow to cool.
2. Bring a small saucepan of water to a boil. Cook the chile peppers until soft, approximately 5 minutes. Drain and allow the peppers to cool; remove the skin, then cut and remove the seeds.
3. Add Aji peppers, cream cheese, queso fresco, garlic and black pepper into a blender. Slowly add evaporated milk into the blended mixture so it becomes liquid and pourable. You may add more milk if you'd like to make the sauce less thick. Continue blending until it becomes creamy sauce.
4. Arrange lettuce leaves onto a platter, cut potatoes into circles and arrange onto lettuce leaves, and pour the creamy sauce over the potatoes. Garnish with eggs and olives.

#### RECIPE TIP:

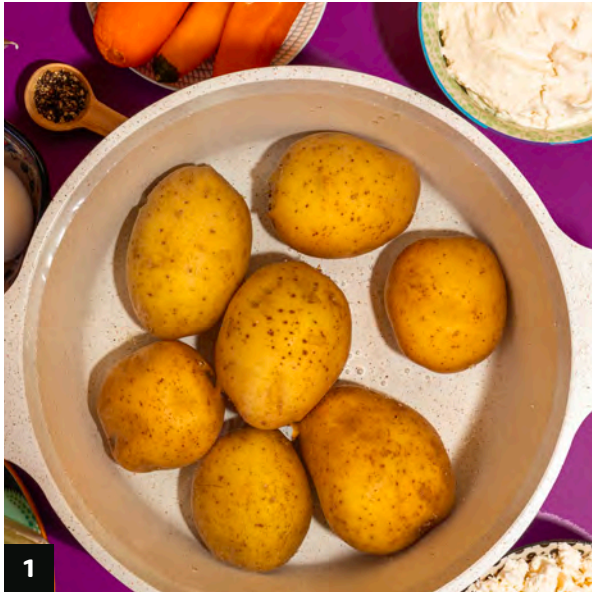
If you cannot find fresh Aji peppers, the jarred variety works well, too.



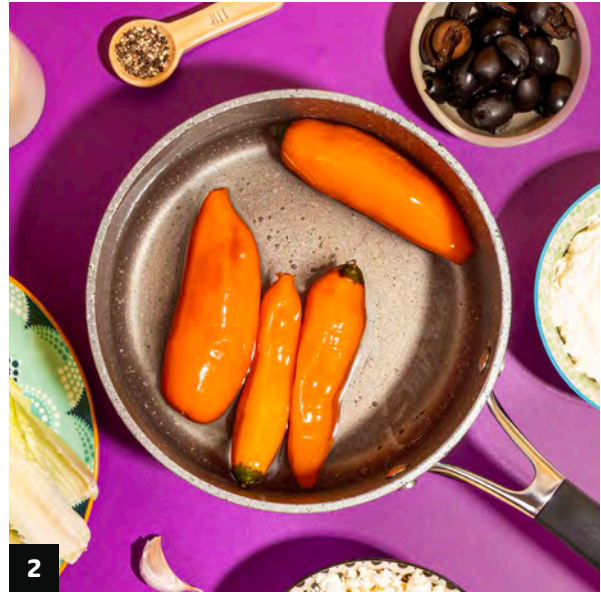
**WRITTEN BY LANA BALVIN FRANTZEN, PHD**, NUTRITION RESEARCHER, DEDICATED HEALTH EQUITY ADVOCATE & STRATEGIST

My Dad was born in Huancayo, Peru. This dish is representative of Huancayo and is arguably one of the most famous Peruvian dishes, especially if you're from the region. There are variations to this recipe, and I had to dig a bit to pinpoint the ingredients since many of my tias (aunts) had the recipe in their head and had not written it down! I grew up eating this dish, and it carries the heritage of my ancestors in every bite.

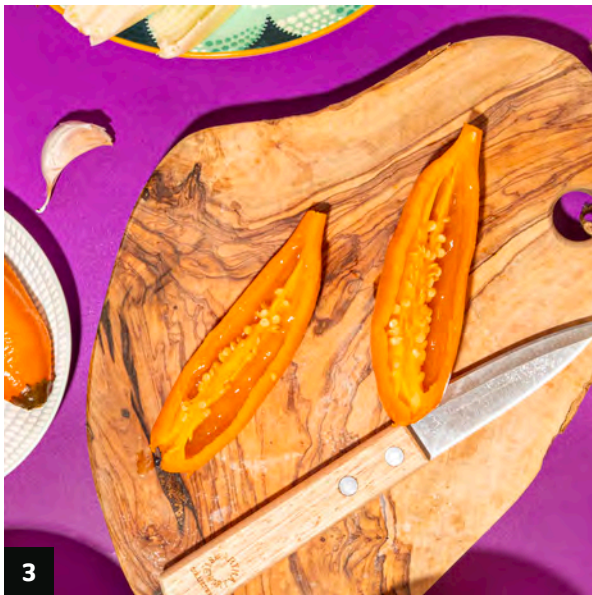
## PAPAS A LA HUANCAÍNA STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS



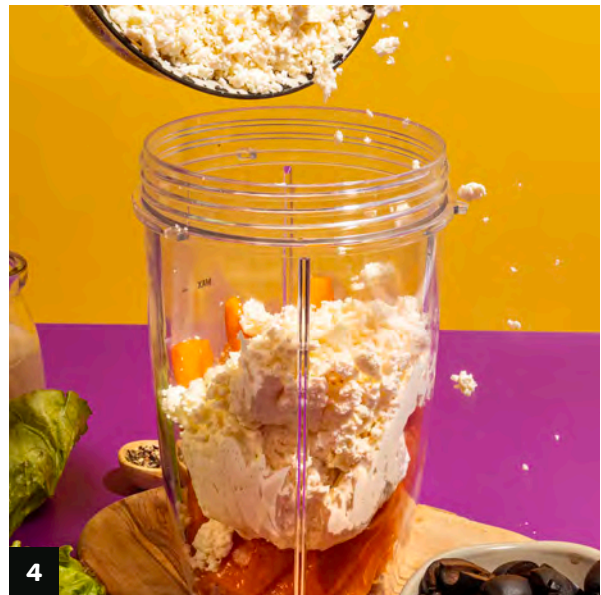
1 Place potatoes into a large pot of water and bring to a rolling boil. Reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer until tender, about 20 minutes. Drain the water and allow to cool.



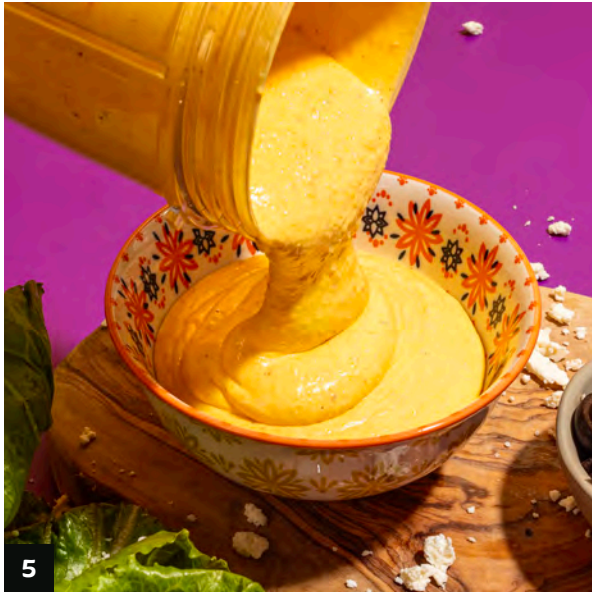
2 Bring a small saucepan of water to a boil. Cook the chile peppers until soft, approximately 5 minutes.



3 Drain and allow the peppers to cool; remove the skin, then cut and remove the seeds.



4 Add chile peppers, cream cheese, queso fresco, garlic and black pepper into a blender.



Slowly add evaporated milk into the blended mixture so it becomes liquid and pourable. Continue blending until it becomes creamy sauce.



Arrange lettuce leaves onto a platter, cut potatoes into circles and arrange onto lettuce leaves, and pour the creamy sauce over the potatoes. Garnish with eggs and olives.

