



THE BOOK OF LATIN AMERICAN COOKING

ELISABETH LAMBERT
ORTIZ

A K N O P F  B O O K



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Elisabeth Lambert Ortiz



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*For my husband and colleague, César Ortiz-Tinoco,
whose knowledge and enthusiasm were of
inestimable help in writing this book,
and for Judith Jones, most perceptive and helpful of editors*

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Elisabeth Lambert Ortiz,
New York

Introduction

I first became interested in Latin American food when I was at school for some time in Jamaica. It was the flavor of hot peppers that beguiled me, especially one that Jamaicans call a Scotch bonnet — small, lantern-shaped, fiery, and flavorful. I also had Cuban and Brazilian friends who gave me a tantalizing glimpse into this enormous cuisine that stretches from the Rio Bravo (Rio Grande) to the Antarctic. It wasn't until shortly after I was married, twenty odd years ago, and my husband was transferred from headquarters in New York to another United Nations assignment in Mexico, that I was able to pursue my research into flavors I have never been able to forget. So it was chance that I started with Mexico, perhaps the most complex and unique cooking of the whole region. Even now, when I have traveled to all the world's continents, Mexican food is still the most exotic of all.

Mexican cooking still rests firmly on its Aztec, and to a lesser extent Mayan, origins, interwoven with the cooking of Spain. But Spain itself was for almost eight hundred years dominated by the Arab empire, so its food has a strong Middle Eastern influence. All through my investigation of Mexican cooking I kept stumbling into the Middle East. Later on I went to the Middle East, Spain, and Portugal to sort out the influences. So many strands are woven into this complicated tapestry that I still find it hard to unravel them completely.

But no matter the sources, the reward is in the eating. From the start I was enchanted by the dishes of the corn kitchen, the most purely Mexican aspect of the food. My palate was utterly bewitched by simple snacks like *quesadillas de flor de calabaza* where an unbaked tortilla is stuffed with a savory mixture of cooked squash blossoms, folded over, and fried, or more rarely, baked. I had mouth-watering deep-green peppers stuffed with mashed beans, batter-coated, and fried; or even more exotic, stuffed with meat and masked with a fresh cheese and walnut sauce and garnished with pomegranate seeds. I had *huachinango a la Veracruzana*, beautiful red snapper with mildly hot *jalapeño* peppers in a tomato sauce very lightly perfumed with cloves and cinnamon. And *Mole Poblano de Guajolote*, that extraordinary mixture of different types of dried peppers, nuts, herbs, spices, and a little bitter chocolate made into a sauce for turkey and originally a favorite dish at Moctezuma's court. It was wholly unfamiliar, wholly delicious.

I found wonderful descriptions of the markets of pre-Conquest Mexico in the monumental work of a Spanish priest, Fray Bernardino de Sahagún, who was there before the Conquest was consolidated. A lively writer, he brought the markets to life, even describing how the local prostitutes lounged about, clicking their chewing gum. I hadn't realized that *chicle* (chewing gum) from the *zapote* tree was also a Mexican gift to the world, and that this same tree bears the pleasant *chico zapote* (sapodilla) fruit. Father Sahagún characterized and identified all the various kinds of tortillas on sale, and clearly he was not averse to sampling some of the cooked foods since he described a shrimp stew and other dishes with

such relish one can almost taste them. I needed no more urging — I went off to the markets, realizing they were still the best places in which to learn.

Because peppers, along with corn and beans, play such a vital role in the Mexican cuisine, and because my palate was still haunted by the flavor of the hot Jamaican peppers of my school days, I began to research this fascinating fruit. Botanically it is *Capsicum annuum* or *Capsicum frutescens* of the *Solanaceae* family, to which potatoes, tomatoes, and eggplant also belong. There has never been an accurate count of peppers, which were first cultivated as far back as 7000 B.C. The reason is that they are wind-pollinated and cross-fertilize easily, and since they have been doing this for thousands of years, there are now a great many different kinds. Some botanists put the number as low as sixty, while others can name over a hundred. Long before Columbus they had spread all over the Caribbean, as well as Central and South America. And since Columbus they have sprung up all over the world and have become so thoroughly naturalized that their national origin has been forgotten. They are sweet, pungent, or hot. They are first green, then change to yellow or red as they ripen — and some of them have all three colors in their cycle. They range from $\frac{1}{4}$ to 7 inches in length. They are used fresh or dried. Some are wrinkled; some are smooth; and quite apart from sweetness, pungency, or heat, they have flavor.

My first visit was to the large San Juan market. It was a blaze of color. There were enormous piles of ripe crimson tomatoes; and heaps of yellow squash blossoms, soft green zucchini, ripe red bell peppers and pimientos, bright green bell peppers and darker green *poblanos*; stalls selling the dried, wrinkled red peppers — *ancho*, *mulato*, and *pasilla* — brick red *chipotle* and *morita*, smooth red *guajillos*, and the little peppers, *cascabel* and *pequin*. There were more kinds than I could possibly take in at a single visit.

The sellers were mostly women with their dark hair in plaits, dressed in full cotton skirts and snowy white blouses with the traditional *rebozo* (stole) around their shoulders. Some, sitting on the ground, had before them only tiny piles of herbs or spices, or a pyramid of purple-skinned avocados. Others, often with husbands and children, had proper stalls laden with oranges; grapefruit; the paddles of the *nopal* (prickly pear) cactus, *nopalitos*; or its fruit, *tuna* — globes of green or purplish red. They called to me as I passed: “*Qué va a llevar, marchanta?*” (“What are you going to buy, customer?”) and when I explained that I wanted to learn about Mexican food, they were generous with their help. I found the pepper I had remembered from my school days. It came from Yucatán and was called, paradoxically, *habanero* (pepper from Havana), a migrant returned. Later I found it all over the Caribbean, in Bahia in Brazil, and in Guatemala where it is called *caballero*, gentleman pepper — one clearly to be reckoned with.

I bought peppers of all kinds, took them home, photographed them, learned their names, and cooked them. I have listed them in the ingredients section — not all, of course, only the ones I think are useful to North American cooks.

That first day I asked one of the market women how to make *quesadillas de flor de calabaza* (squash blossom turnovers), and she was delighted. She shouted to a tortilla seller to come over, and gradually gathered all the ingredients needed, then showed me how to put them together, folding the squash-blossom mixture in a tortilla and then frying it. She was careful to explain that she was using an already baked tortilla for convenience. Whereupon she sent me off to a stall to buy a fresh lump of tortilla dough, which is made

from the special cooked and ground corn that is sold dried as *masa harina* (literally “dough flour,” in markets such as this one, it is already mixed with water). That was a lovely day and I became a regular visitor to markets whether in La Merced, San Juan; or Medellín in Mexico City; in Guadalajara, Querétaro; in Mérida, Yucatán; or in Cuernavaca. Wherever I went I found wonderfully knowledgeable teachers, good friends who introduced me with great generosity and enthusiasm to all manner of new foods.

Tortillas are an essential accompaniment to Mexican food. I learned easily to make them from packaged *masa harina*, using a tortilla press, which is a very splendid colonial invention. Mexican cooks can pat a tortilla with their hands into a thin pancake, then slap it on to a *comal* (griddle) to bake. But I found I could make only rather thick, clumsy ones this way, so I tried using a cast-iron tortilla press (the original presses were made of wood). It works very well and can be bought, as can *masa harina*, from specialty stores selling Mexican foods.

Beans are also an integral part of Mexican food, whether served in bowls as a separate course — not dry, rather soupy — or mashed and fried in lard to make *Frijoles Refritos*, a rich-tasting bean paste, used in all sorts of delectable ways.

A key ingredient is the tomato, and I can't imagine Mexican cooking without it, whether it is the familiar red or yellow tomato of everyday use, or the little Mexican green tomato (*Physalis ixocarpa*) — a small pale-green or yellow tomato covered with a papery husk, whose flavor develops only as it is cooked, and which is usually available to us only canned, except in parts of the Southwest. Both types of tomato are used in cooked and fresh sauces, and in *Guacamole*, the avocado salad cum sauce that is another essential on the Mexican table.

Mexico, and indeed all of Latin America, adopted rice enthusiastically and it goes excellently with the *mollis* (Mexican stews) and most other dishes. Cooks all over the continent pride themselves on their rice. No matter what method they use to cook it, each grain is tender and separate.

During the years I lived in Mexico I traveled all over the country, from the northern cattle ranges where my husband's family comes from to Mayan Yucatán, from the Caribbean to the Pacific, in enthusiastic pursuit of recipes from family, friends, strangers, markets, and restaurants, captivated as I was by the exuberance of this wonderfully varied food. I worked happily in my kitchen to faithfully reproduce the dishes I found so seductive, and back in New York I put my discoveries into a cookbook. Then chance again, or should I say good fortune, took me to Central America, beginning with Guatemala — once the heart of the Mayan empire — and I realized there was a whole continent of intriguing new cookery, linked with Mexican food, still to discover.

My interest was stimulated by recent discoveries of food origins that showed that agriculture had been born simultaneously in the Middle East and in the Valley of Mexico about 7000 B.C. In the Middle East animals such as sheep, goats, pigs, and cattle were domesticated, and barley, wheat, peas, and lentils cultivated. Gradually this produce spread all over Europe and Asia. Rice was introduced from Asia about 3500 B.C. Peanuts, Guinea yams, and millet came from Africa some centuries later. At the same time in Mexico, that other cradle of agriculture, peppers, squash, and avocados were the first cultivated food plants. A couple of thousand years later corn and the common bean followed, then lima

beans, and later still, in 700 A.D., the tomato. These foods gradually spread all over the Americas. Potatoes and sweet potatoes, cultivated in the Andean highlands by the predecessors of the Incas about 2500 B.C., spread through the continent, and so did manioc (cassava) and peanuts from Brazil. Peanuts, as a matter of fact, have a dual origin, as they were independently cultivated both in Brazil and West Africa by 1500 B.C. All this cultivation was, of course, an ongoing process, with more and more fruits, vegetables, and crops being developed, so that by the time Columbus arrived, he found not only a whole new world, but a whole new world of food. These discoveries gave me an insight into the nature of the cuisine, for very soon after the Conquest there was a blending of cooking strains that evolved into the rich and varied cookery of Latin America today.

I knew it would take me a long time to travel the huge continent, to visit markets, to talk to cooks, to collect recipes, to learn about the food, and to cook it back home in my own kitchen. I also knew I would have a magnificent time doing so and I set off with enthusiasm, this book beginning to take tentative shape in my mind.

I found visiting the archaeological sites of the old Mayan empire a good way to trace the boundaries of the ancient cuisine. The Mayan empire began in Guatemala, spread to nearby Honduras, and into the states of Yucatán, Chiapas, and Campeche and the territory of Quintana Roo in Mexico. In this area today the cooking is Mayan, not Aztec Mexican. Since the civilization was already in decline at the time of the Conquest, not a great deal has survived. I wish more had, as it is subtle and delicate, except when it comes to fresh hot pepper sauce, which is really fiery. I love to cook with ground annatto seeds, which have a flowery fragrance when used whole, quite unlike the flavor of the colored oil or lard made from just the reddish-orange pulp surrounding the seeds. The cooking of the rest of Central America — Belize, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama, which together with Guatemala and Honduras make a land bridge between North and South America — is a mixture of Mayan, Aztec Mexican, Colombian, and Spanish cuisines, with cosmopolitan influences from recent times. There is also a Caribbean influence, mostly from island people coming to work in the banana plantations.

The Caribbean seemed my next logical step, and I went off island-hopping and again found generous-hearted cooks who welcomed me with my notebook into their kitchens and shared their cooking secrets with me. Of that great arc of islands that stretches from Florida in the north to the coast of Venezuela in the south, and which Columbus discovered in 1492, only Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico are part of Latin America. When Columbus arrived, first at Hispaniola (now the Dominican Republic and Haiti), the islands were inhabited by warlike Caribs and gentle Arawaks, both from South America. The Arawaks were good farmers and soon cultivated corn and peppers from Mexico, and sweet potatoes, yams, and manioc (cassava) which they must have brought with them. Their influence on the food of the islands persists in the wide use of root vegetables, hot peppers, allspice, and corn. African settlers brought okra and their own yams, but fundamentally the cooking of the Spanish-speaking islands is that of Spain — using a mixture of indigenous and introduced foods. It is a surprisingly rich and varied kitchen, particularly in the Dominican Republic where a *cocido* (stew) of chicken, beef, ham, and sausages, cooked with an assemblage of vegetables, is a veritable feast.

I could now see the pattern that the common heritage of Spain and Portugal and an early

shared agriculture wove into the tapestry that makes Latin American food into a richly diverse unity. And so I set off on a series of journeys to South America, lucky to have friends all over the continent to help me. I began with the Andean countries — Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, and Chile — visiting them one by one.

The 4,000-mile mountain chain of the Andes, which runs along the Pacific coast of South America from Venezuela to the tip of Chile, dominates the continent. The foothills begin at the coast, which is lushly subtropical in the north and desert from Peru on south. The mountains rise range upon range interspersed with high plateaus and cut by wild mountain rivers, until they descend into the valley of the Amazon. It is awe-inspiring country, and traveling in it I felt as if I were in a sea of mountains. Before air travel became commonplace, journeys were difficult so that cuisines developed independently of each other. It was just as hard for people and goods to get from the coast to the highlands as from country to country, so there is a tropical and a temperate cuisine as well. Modern roads and transportation have changed this, blurring the distinctions.

Venezuela's cuisine is small, as there was no great indigenous Indian civilization. The country was discovered in 1498 by Columbus when he found the mouths of the Orinoco River. Spanish settlement began in 1520. The basis of the cookery is colonial more than anything else with borrowings and adaptations from other Latin American countries. Black beans are a great favorite and Venezuelans call their mashed black beans *caviar criollo*, native caviar, surely the ultimate culinary compliment. The national dish is as eclectic as the rest of the cooking. It is based on a sixteenth-century Spanish recipe, *Ropa Vieja* (Old Clothes), made from shredded flank steak in a rich tomato sauce — very good, despite its name — and is served with fried eggs, black beans, rice, and fried plantains. There is also a good avocado sauce, *Guasacac*, derived from Mexico's *Guacamole*, and a fine fish dish, *Corbullón Mantuano* (Striped Bass in Sweet Pepper Sauce), that echoes Mexico's famous *Pescado a la Veracruzana* (Fish, Veracruz Style). The local corn bread is the *arepa*, made in a similar way to Mexico's tortillas but with a different type of corn. *Arepas* are much thicker, more like buns than pancakes, and the corn flavor is much less pronounced than in tortillas. German settlers of the last century are responsible for the very good cheeses of Venezuela and the excellent beer, for that matter. There is a delicious runny fresh cream cheese that turns an *arepa* into a feast when the corn bread is served hot, then pulled apart and stuffed with the cheese.

Colombia has a very grand geography with two seacoasts — one on the Pacific, one on the Caribbean — which gives the country a large choice of fish and shellfish. Three great mountain ranges, from six thousand to nineteen thousand feet, rise from the coast like the steps of a giant staircase, forming a series of plateaus at different heights so that the country has every type of climate and produces every kind of food. Wandering around the markets in the capital, Bogotá, I found piles of coconuts, bananas, plantains, pineapples, cherimoyas, papayas, sugarcane, avocados, guavas, and tropical root vegetables like yams, taros, sweet potatoes, cassava roots, and *arracacha* sharing space with peaches, pears, apricots, apples, grapes, and plums.

The conquering Spanish intermarried with the dominant Indians, the Chibchas, great gold workers who had a highly advanced civilization. The modern cuisine is very varied, sophisticated, and original. The coastal kitchen makes imaginative use of coconut milk —

with rice, fish, meats, and poultry. I particularly like *Arroz con Coco y Pasas* (Rice with Coconut and Raisins) and its twin dish *Arroz con Coco Frito y Pasas* (Rice with Fried Coconut and Raisins): the rice is dry and quite firm, *bien graneado*, which is the equivalent of *al dente* in pasta. I also like the subtle flavor of *Sábalo Guisado con Coco* (Shad Fillets in Coconut Milk), easy to make at home in the spring when shad is plentiful. The highlands produce wonderful stews, perhaps the most famous of which is *Ajiaco de Pollo Bogotano* (Bogotá Chicken Stew). There is the even grander *Sancocho Especial* (Special Boiled Dinner) with a great selection of meats and vegetables, some from the tropics. It is a splendid dish for a family gathering or a party. As in all of Latin America, fresh coriander is used a great deal and there is always a fresh hot pepper sauce on the table to be taken at one's discretion.

My next trip was to Ecuador. The highland region was part of the Incan empire. The tropical lowlands were not conquered until the arrival of the Spanish. Quito, the capital, at nearly ten thousand feet lies within an extinct volcano, Pichincha, which rises to fifteen thousand feet. Eight volcanoes — among them the fabled Chimborazo, over twenty thousand feet, and Cotopaxi, over nineteen thousand feet — can be seen on clear days from Quito. The equator is only fifteen miles away, giving the highlands a gentle climate. There is a great contrast between tropical sea level cuisine and highland cookery, especially as one was Incan, the other not.

On the wall of the cathedral in the main plaza of Quito is a plaque that says that the glory of Ecuador is that it discovered the Amazon River down which Francisco de Orellana floated in a homemade boat, arriving at the source in 1541. I think it could also be claimed that the glory of the Ecuadorian kitchen is its *seviches* (fish “cooked” in lime or lemon juice). They are quite different from other countries' *seviches* mostly because of the use of Seville (bitter) orange juice in a sauce of onion, garlic, and oil. I tasted *seviches* made from bass, shrimp, lobster, and an interesting black conch. They are best accompanied by chilled beer. In Latin America there is never any problem finding beer of excellent quality with a nice bite to it, sharp on the tongue, refreshingly dry.

Potatoes play a large role in Ecuadorian highland cooking. A favorite dish is *Locro*, a thick potato and cheese soup that is sometimes served with avocado slices. I find it makes a splendid light lunch or supper if followed by a dessert or fruit. With Ecuadorian friends at midday dinner, still the main meal in most of Latin America, I had it as a course that followed a corn soufflé and preceded the meat. It was made with a little sweet paprika, but the coastal version uses annatto (achiote), which has a more pronounced flavor. Another favorite potato dish is *Llapingachos*, fried potato and cheese patties that are served with various accompaniments either as a first or as a main course according to what goes with them. They make an admirable addition to broiled or grilled meat, fish, or poultry. On the coast they are usually fried in annatto lard or oil. Coastal rice is also usually cooked with annatto, which yellows it.

Vegetables are highly esteemed in Ecuador and are served in that gentle climate at room temperature, several at a time. Since water at ten thousand feet boils at a much lower temperature than at sea level, vegetables are always crisply tender without the cook making a great effort. I think of this as a cuisine that builds bridges between the exotic and the known, using mustard in imaginative ways and contrasting texture and flavor. I was

once served hot roast pork, cut into cubes and arranged in a circle on a serving dish, the center filled with slightly chilled, chopped ripe tomatoes. Delicious. There is, as everywhere, a hot sauce, *Salsa de Aji*, to be taken or not as one pleases, this one made from fresh hot red or green peppers simply ground with salt and mixed with a little chopped onion.

Of all the Andean countries the cuisine of Peru is the most exciting, though in creating it the brilliant agriculturists of the region had a most formidable geography to contend with. The narrow coastal plain is desert except where rivers create a brief oasis. The mountains rise abruptly, completely barren, but they create fertile valleys with great rivers running through them, and wide plateaus with temperate farm- and pastureland, though already as high as eleven thousand feet. Higher still, at fourteen thousand feet, are only barren, windswept uplands.

It was in the temperate highlands, the steep mountainsides terraced to provide more land for crops, that the ancient people of the region developed the sweet potato and over a hundred varieties of the potato some time around 2500 B.C. They freeze-dried potatoes, using the cold of the Andean highlands to freeze the vegetables overnight, thawing them in the morning sun and squeezing out the moisture. The resulting rock-hard potatoes were called *chuño* and kept indefinitely. The only large domestic animals were the cameloids — the llama and the alpaca — used by the Incas for their wool, as pack animals, and for meat, and they made a fresh cheese from their milk.

The Incan empire had an extensive highway system to which only the Roman is comparable, linking its more than thirty towns and cities. Farmers in this highly organized, highly urban society sent their produce to market in the town or city nearest them. A sophisticated cuisine developed with a characteristic use of hot peppers, *aji*. Peruvians like their food *picante* and are lavish in their use of peppers, of which they have a considerable variety, just about all of them hot. They are a wonderful sight in the markets, enormous piles of *rocotos* and *mirasols*, great heaps of sun yellow, flaming orange, or red as well as green peppers in various sizes, but it is the yellow ones that catch the eye. I like to speculate about this use of yellow in the food of countries that were sun worshipers before the Conquest brought Christianity. I don't think it can be an accident that Peru uses the herb *palillo*, ground to a sunshine-yellow powder, to color and flavor food. And there are the yellow potatoes — true potatoes, not sweet potatoes — which have yellow flesh, as well as yellow sweet potatoes, and plantains, yellow when ripe. The yellows continue in the squash family from the pale yellow of the huge *zapallo* to the deep yellow of other types, and in fresh corn. There are potato dishes that are a symphony of yellow and white, perhaps honoring the sun god and the moon goddess. In any case, they are lovely food in a cuisine full of marvelous dishes.

Little is known of the cooking of the Bolivian highlands, though this region was once the site of impressive civilizations. From the cook's point of view the altitude is rather daunting, for Bolivia tends to be high, higher, and highest. Lake Titicaca, which Bolivia shares with Peru, lies at 12,500 feet. Legend has it that an island in the lake is the legendary home of the Incas. Quite nearby are the ruins of Tiahuanaco, a pre-Incan city. After the Conquest Bolivia became part of Peru and was known as *El Alto Peru*, highland Peru. With independence the name was changed to Bolivia to honor the liberator, Simón

Bolívar. Like the Peruvians, the Bolivians like their food hot and are lavish in their use of hot peppers. Their most popular dishes are stews and hearty soups. However, my favorite is a very good chicken pie with a corn topping, *Pastel de Choclo con Relleno de Pollo*, which I recommend with enthusiasm.

The geography of Chile poses very different problems. The northern third of this stringbean of a country, twenty-six hundred miles long and sandwiched between the Pacific Ocean and the Andes, is unrelieved desert, the most total desert on earth. Flying over it, the shadows are so intensely dark they look like pools of water, a tantalizing illusion. It is strangely, movingly beautiful. The southern third is mountainous and storm-swept, with more rain than it needs, but the middle third is lovely, temperate, and fertile, with green valleys full of vineyards that produce very fine wines, splendid vegetables and fruits, among them notable strawberries. The southern part of this felicitous third is heavily forested with a series of lakes, a landscape of rare loveliness. And, of course, the snowcapped Andes make a permanently dramatic backdrop.

The cold Humboldt Current gives Chile the most unusual seafood in the world. I can only think of the giant sea urchins, *erizos*, giant abalone, *locos*, tender as chicken when properly beaten; of *picoroccos*, strange, beaked shellfish that taste like crabs; giant crabs; mussels; clams; shrimp; langostines; oysters; and *congrío*, a splendid fish unique to these waters. Only in Chile can one enjoy these gifts of the cold current. All the same I found many interesting dishes that are not dependent on special ingredients — dishes like *Congrio en Fuente de Barro* (Fish with Tomatoes and Onions), *Pollo Escabechado* (Pickled Chicken), and *Porotos Granados* (Cranberry Beans with Corn and Squash).

There was no great Indian civilization in what is now Argentina and Uruguay. Though they are today separate countries, before independence from Spain they were both part of the viceroyalty of the River Plate. Spanish cooking methods using indigenous and introduced ingredients produced the local cuisine, which has been somewhat modified by newer arrivals — Italian influence being predominant. Like Chile, Argentina produces good wine, and its beef ranks with the best in the world. *Matambre*, which translates literally into kill hunger, and into kitchen parlance as stuffed rolled flank steak, is an example of what Argentine cooks can do with a comparatively humble cut of beef. And the *Empanadas*, the pastry turnovers, variously stuffed, are the best I've ever had. There are some unusual and good meat stews with fruit, such as *Carbonada Criolla* (Beef Stew, Argentine Style) with peaches and *Carbonada en Zapallo* (Veal Stew in Baked Pumpkin), which includes pears and peaches and finishes cooking in a large, hollowed-out squash. It is a delicious combination.

Paraguay is a small landlocked country where Guaraní, the language of the Indians of the region, is co-equal with Spanish as an official language. The cooking is Spanish and Guaraní, with some international food, mostly French and Italian. My favorite Paraguayan dish is the magnificently named *So'O-Yosopy* (the last syllable is pronounced with an explosive PEH), that translates into Spanish as *sopa de carne* (beef soup). I know of nothing more restorative when one is worn-out. I'm almost as fond of *Sopa Paraguaya*, which is not a soup at all but a rich cheese and cornmeal bread that is traditionally served with steak; but as far as I am concerned, it is good by itself and goes with almost everything. Paraguay is also the home of *Mate* tea, a very ancient Indian drink that is pleasantly stimulating, since it has a good deal of caffeine.

Of all the cuisines in South America, the Brazilian is the most exuberant and varied. The country, taking up nearly half the continent of South America, is enormous, stretching from the tropics in the north to the temperate south, with great highlands and a long coastline. It bulges generously out into the South Atlantic toward Africa with which it is once believed to have been joined — perhaps accounting for the dual origin of the peanut. The ethnic mix is as varied as the climate, which ranges from torrid to temperate. There are the original Indians, the Portuguese, Africans, Italians, Germans, and so on. And there are all the foods of the world plus many cooking techniques, making a rich amalgam. The sheer size of the country has made for authentic regional cooking.

There was no great Indian civilization in Brazil. Today's cuisine has developed since the arrival of the Portuguese who in 1539 founded Salvador in the state of Bahia on the northeast coast, planted sugarcane, and brought in African slaves to work in the cane fields. From a combination of the foods and cooking methods of local Indians, Africans, and Portuguese, Brazil's most exciting cooking, the *cozinha baiana*, Bahian cookery, developed. The primary ingredients are *dendê* (palm) oil from Africa, which has a nutty flavor and colors food an attractive orangey-yellow, coconut, fresh coriander, fresh and dried shrimp, and nuts — almonds, cashews, peanuts — and of course, hot peppers. A hot sauce made with tiny *malaqueta* peppers steeped in *dendê* oil and *farofa* made from manioc (cassava) meal, often colored yellow with *dendê* oil, is always on the table. Brazilians in all parts of the country sprinkle meat, poultry, and other dishes with *farofa*, as others might use grated Parmesan cheese.

The cooking of Rio de Janeiro which supplanted Salvador as the capital in 1763 seems almost subdued by comparison. It is closer to Portuguese, using local ingredients, except for *Feijoada Completa*, a regional recipe from Rio which is now recognized as the national dish. It is a very splendid, colorful meal of meats and black beans cooked together so that the many flavors are blended, and it is served, lavishly garnished, with sliced oranges, rice, cooked kale or collard greens, *farofa*, and a hot pepper and lime juice sauce. I cannot think of a better dish for a party.

São Paulo and Minas Gerais to the south share a regional cuisine. It was the Paulistas who, in the seventeenth century, set out looking for gold and found it, together with diamonds and other mineral wealth in the mountainous country to the northeast. This is now the state of Minas Gerais, which means general mines, a succinct description of what the Paulistas found. It is hearty food, well suited to the cooler climate. One of its best dishes is *Cozido à Brasileira* (Stew, Brazilian Style), a splendidly robust pot-au-feu. The most famous dish is *Cuscuz Paulista*, an adaptation of the couscous that originated in Arabia and spread to North Africa. It is made with cornmeal instead of wheat, looks marvelously decorative, and is surprisingly easy to make.

Desserts all over Brazil are rich and very much in the Portuguese egg-yolk-and-sugar tradition with its strong Moorish overtones.

Throughout Latin America there are examples of the oldest form of cooking, the neolithic earth oven, now superseded for centuries by stoves of one kind or another from charcoal to electric or gas. It has persisted as holiday cooking. Country people in Mexico cook a whole lamb in an earth oven for a *barbacoa*, and less rural people have *barbacoa* parties on Sundays and holidays at special restaurants devoted to this form of cooking. In Yucatán the

earth oven is called a *pib*; in the Andes it is called *pachamanca* from the Quechua words for earth and pot. In southern Chile they have a *curanto*, best described as a clambake like those in New England. It is often lavish and includes a suckling pig as well as Chile's magnificent shellfish.

Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil all have barbecues like the kind popular in the United States. In Argentina there are splendid restaurants where meats are cooked on wall-size grills, and in Brazil there are *Churrascarias* where all manner of grilled meats are served. I think the best proof I ever had of the popularity of this form of cooking was on a main street in Montevideo, Uruguay, when I watched some road repairmen settle down to lunch. They made a fire, put a piece of wire netting on top of it, grilled a steak, opened a bottle of red wine, and with the addition of some good bread had an excellent meal.

Looking back to the day when I determined to collect Latin American recipes — true gems of cookery — into a book gives me a feeling of great pleasure. I have done what I so deeply wanted to do, to bring these delectable dishes into American kitchens. I have spent a long time on my research; I have made many exciting journeys and eaten a great deal of very good food. It has been infinitely worthwhile. I sought out the historical hows and whys of this intriguing cuisine and found academic answers which I recorded in my endless notebooks in a special kind of cook's shorthand. A fascinating analysis to be sure, of ancient peoples and cities, of the birth of agriculture, of the coming together, in the kitchen, of very different cultures. That was only part of what I sought. I found the rest quite simply in wonderful food, the focal point of family and social life. So the best part of my quest has been coming back to my own kitchen and bringing to life those scribbled words, turning them into dishes with the authentic flavors of Latin American cooking.

It isn't food that is difficult to cook or bristles with complicated techniques. For the most part it is straightforward and easy, though there are some cooking methods that may seem odd at first, like frying a paste of peppers and other ingredients in lard or oil as a preliminary to making a Mexican *mole*. And I did have to learn about unfamiliar fruits and vegetables and seek them out in my own markets back home, where I found them without much trouble. I remembered flavors, and altered recipes until the taste was right, and had loving friends and family in to share splendid meals with me. It was a joyous experience and I have never been happier than when I received the accolade bestowed on good cooks in Latin America, "*tiene buena mano*," "She has a good hand." It is my hope that readers will want to share my experience, and will cook, enjoy, and adopt these recipes as family favorites.



Ingredients

Aceite o Manteca de Achiote (Annatto Oil or Lard) is made by briefly steeping annatto seeds in hot oil or lard, then straining and cooling the fat, colored a deep orange-gold by the seeds, see [this page](#). It is used for both color and flavor in Latin America as well as in some non-Spanish-speaking parts of the Caribbean.

Aliño Criollo (Creole Style Seasoning Powder), a Venezuelan seasoning mixture made of herbs and spices, used with meat and poultry, in stews, and so on. Available in shaker-top glass jars from the spice section of supermarkets. Easy to make at home, see recipe, [this page](#).

Allspice or **pimiento** (*Pimenta officinalis*), the *pimiento de Jamaica* or *pimienta gorda* of the Spanish-speaking countries is the small, dark brown berry of an evergreen tree of the myrtle family found by the Spaniards growing wild in Jamaica. Most exports still come from the island. The dried berries, which closely resemble peppercorns, combine the flavor of cinnamon, nutmeg, and cloves. Available whole or ground wherever spices are sold.

Annatto is the English name given to the seeds of a small flowering tree of tropical America. Known as *achiote* in Spanish from the Nahuatl (Aztec) *achiotl*, the seeds are sometimes called *bija* or *bijol* in the Spanish-speaking islands of the Caribbean. The Caribs and Arawaks called the seeds *roucou*, a name by which they are still known in parts of the region. The hard orange-red pulp surrounding the seeds is used to make *Aceite o Manteca de Achiote* (Annatto Oil or Lard) and serves as a coloring and flavoring for meat, poultry, and fish dishes in the Caribbean, Colombia, Ecuador, and Venezuela. In Yucatán the whole seed is ground with various spices (such as cumin and oregano) into a paste, giving a more pronounced flavor. The taste is hard to define, fragrant, light, and flowery. Available in stores specializing in foods from Latin America or India.

Antojitos, literally little whims or fancies, the name given by the Spanish to the finger foods made with a base of tortillas that they found in Aztec Mexico. These foods fit perfectly into today's meal patterns as hors d'oeuvres or first courses. A large version, the *antojos*, whims or fancies, are ideal for light lunches or suppers.

Apio — see **Arracacha**.

Arepas, the corn bread of Venezuela, made from special flour of precooked Venezuelan corn, available, packaged, from Latin American groceries. See **Tortillas** for additional information.

Arracacha (*Arracacia xanthorrhiza*) is a leggy root vegetable found in markets in Colombia. It is a member of the celery family indigenous to the northern part of South America and a favorite pre-Columbian vegetable. Venezuela has a cylindrically shaped root vegetable called *apio*, also said to be *Arracacia xanthorrhiza*. They do taste the same, faintly reminiscent of celery with a hint of sweetness, a potatolike texture, and very pale yellow flesh. The only difference I've found is that *apio* is easier to peel. As *apio* is often available in tropical markets and *arracacha* only occasionally, they can be used interchangeably. Confusion arises from the fact that *apio* is the Spanish for celery. Venezuelans solve the problem by calling celery *apio de España* or *apio de Castilla* (Spanish celery). It can be a delicious substitute for potatoes, and makes a lovely dessert when cooked with pineapple.

Arrowroot, the edible starchy powder made from the underground rhizomes of *Maranta arundinacea*, is a delicate thickening agent for soups, stews, and sauces. It is widely available.

Avocado (*Persea americana*), of the laurel family, was cultivated in Mexico as far back as 7000 B.C. and was known as *ahuacatl* in Nahuatl, the language of the ancient Mexicans. Today it is called *aguacate*. It spread to South America before Columbus arrived and was cultivated in the Inca empire, where it was called *palta*. Today it is known in Quechua by that name though in many parts of South America it keeps its Mexican name. In Brazil it is called *abacate*. The fruit may be rough or smooth-skinned, green or black. It is hard when unripe but ripens in a few days if put into a brown paper bag and left at room temperature. An avocado is ripe when it yields to a gentle pressure at the stem end. Once an avocado is cut, it discolors quickly. Sprinkling lime or lemon juice on it helps, and if you are going to try to keep an unused portion of an avocado, leave the skin on, let the pit rest in the cavity, rub the cut sides with lemon or lime, wrap tightly in plastic wrap, and refrigerate.

An easy way to mash avocados is to cut them in half, remove the pits, and mash them in their shells with a fork, holding the shell in the palm of the left hand. Scoop out the flesh with a spoon and mash any bits that may have escaped the fork. This method is much easier than having them slither round a bowl and gives a texture with character. Avocado leaves are sometimes used in Mexican cooking in the same way as bay leaves and there is also the charming bonus of being able to grow the pits into very beautiful house plants. To toast avocado leaves, place them on an un-greased *comal* (griddle) or a heavy iron skillet and cook on both sides over moderate heat for about 1 minute.

Bacalao, Spanish for dried salted codfish, called *bacalhau* in Brazil, is extremely popular in all of Latin America. It is available in Latin American markets and in many supermarkets and fish stores, especially in the Northeast.

Bananas and banana leaves. Both green and ripe bananas are used in Latin American cooking, the green bananas as a vegetable. When a recipe calls for plantains ([this page](#)), bananas make a good substitute. Banana leaves, sometimes available in specialty food stores, are used as a wrapping in which to cook foods. Kitchen parchment or aluminum foil

make good substitutes.

Beans, black (turtle), red kidney, pink, mottled pinto, white Navy, or pea beans, all belong to the large grouping called *Phaseolus vulgaris* of the legume family, which originated in Mexico about 5000 B.C. They are an essential part of the Latin American kitchen and turn up in many guises. I follow the Mexican rules for cooking beans — namely, that they should not be soaked but should be put on to cook in cold water with their seasonings and that hot water is added as necessary during the cooking time. Salt should not be added until the beans are tender. It is impossible to give an exact time for cooking beans as it can vary from 1½ to 2½ hours according to the age of the beans. It is wise to buy beans from shops with a quick turnover, as stale beans may take a very long time to cook and even when cooked may have a dry texture. If there is reason to suspect that beans are stale, a desperate remedy may be in order. Soak them overnight in cold water with a little bicarbonate of soda (baking soda), ¼ teaspoon to 2 cups of beans, then rinse the beans very thoroughly before putting them on to cook in fresh water. It works wonders.

The Spanish and Portuguese brought chickpeas, sometimes called garbanzos or ceci (*Cicer arietinum*), also of the legume family, to the New World with them. These hard, round, yellow peas, native to the Middle East, do need soaking overnight in cold water before cooking. Another popular bean from the Middle East is the broad bean, also called fava or habas (*Vicia faba*). Other popular local beans are limas from Peru and cranberry or shell beans and, to a lesser extent, black-eyed peas, which originated in Africa. Whenever beans need soaking before cooking, instructions are given in individual recipes.

Calabaza, also called *ahuyama*, *zapallo*, *abóbora*, and, in English, West Indian or green pumpkin, is a winter squash available in Latin American and Caribbean markets. Not to be confused with American pumpkin, it comes in a variety of shapes and sizes but is usually large and either round or oval. Hubbard, or other winter squash, is a good substitute.

Carne sêca is the sun-dried salt beef, known in the United States as jerked beef, that is used in the Brazilian national dish *Feijoada Completa* (Black Beans with Mixed Meats). It is available in Latin American markets and in some specialty butcher shops. The salt beef used in *Sancocho Especial* (Special Boiled Dinner, see [this page](#)) from Colombia could be used instead, as the technique of salting and drying is similar.

Cassava (*Manihot utilissima*), also called manioc, mandioca, aipím, or yucca, is a handsome tropical plant whose tuberous roots, at least 2 inches in diameter and about 8 to 10 inches long, are best known as the commercial source of tapioca. Cassava originated in 1500 B.C. in Brazil and is widely used in the kitchens of Latin America. The roots are covered with a brown, barklike, rather hairy skin. Cassava should be peeled under running water and immediately dropped into water, as its white flesh tends to discolor on contact with the air. It may be boiled and used as a potato substitute in stews, or to accompany meat and poultry dishes, or it may be fried and served like potato chips.

In Brazil manioc meal is used to make *farofa*: the meal is toasted and mixed with butter and other ingredients such as onion, eggs, or prunes and served with *Feijoada* or with poultry, steaks, or roasted meats. *Farofa*, which looks like coarsely grated Parmesan cheese, is as common on Brazilian tables as salt and pepper.

Cassava is also used for making bread or cakes, mostly sold commercially in South America. To make them, you need cassava that is finely ground like cornstarch, not easily obtainable in the United States — and, anyway, the results are not particularly delicious.

Chayote (*Sechium edule*), of the squash family, is also known as christophene, cho-cho, and chuchu. The vegetable originated in Mexico, and the name comes from the Mexican *chayotl*. It is now widely grown in semi-tropical regions throughout the world. About 6 to 8 inches long, and roughly pear-shaped, chayote is usually a light, pretty green (though there are white varieties), with a slightly prickly skin and a single edible seed. The texture is crisp with a delicate flavor a little like zucchini but more subtle. It is best when young and firm. Avoid soft or wrinkled ones.

Chicha, a beerlike drink made from dried corn. Usually only slightly alcoholic. Popular throughout South America.

Chicharrones are fried pork rinds available packaged in Latin American markets and in supermarkets.

Coconuts and coconut milk. Choose coconuts that are full of liquid. Shake them to check. Nuts with little liquid are stale. Avoid those with moldy or wet “eyes.” With an ice pick, screwdriver, or similar sharp implement, pierce two out of the three eyes of the nut using a hammer to bang it through if necessary. Drain out and reserve the liquid. Strain it before use as there may be bits of coconut fiber in it. A medium-sized coconut yields about ½ cup liquid. Bake the coconut in a preheated hot (400° F.) oven for 15 minutes. Then put the coconut on a hard surface and hit it all over with a hammer. The hard shell will fall away. Lever out any bits that are left with a knife or screwdriver. If making coconut milk it is not necessary to peel off the brown inner skin, but if grated coconut is to be used in a recipe, peel this off with a small, sharp knife. Chop the coconut pieces coarsely, then put into a blender or food processor fitted with a steel blade and grate as fine as possible. The grated coconut is now ready for use. If the coconut water is not to be used separately in a recipe, add it to the blender or food processor with the coconut pieces as this helps in the grating. This makes about 4 cups per coconut.

To make thick (rich) coconut milk squeeze the grated coconut through a damp cloth, squeezing and twisting the cloth to remove as much liquid as possible. Set this aside. To make ordinary coconut milk put the squeezed-out coconut into a bowl and pour 1 cup boiling water over it. Let it stand 30 minutes. Squeeze out the liquid through a damp cloth, add the coconut water, and set aside. Repeat the entire process. Discard the coconut.

Unless a recipe calls for thick coconut milk to be used separately, mix the thick and ordinary coconut milk together and use. When thick coconut milk is left to stand, the cream

risers to the top. This is delicious instead of cream with desserts. If the coconut water drained out of the nut at the beginning is not needed for any culinary purpose, it makes a wonderful mix with gin or vodka.

If coconuts are not available, canned moist coconut is a good substitute for grated fresh coconut. Creamed coconut available from tropical markets and specialty stores is a good substitute for coconut milk. Simply dilute to the desired consistency with warm water or milk.

Freshly grated coconut keeps well frozen.

Coriander (*Coriandrum sativum*), of the carrot family, indigenous to the Mediterranean and the Caucasus, is a very old herb, mentioned in Sanskrit and ancient Egyptian writings. Its antiquity is proved by the fact that the Romans introduced it to Britain before the end of the first century A.D. It has spread throughout the world and is very important in Indian and Thai cooking, indeed in most of Asia including China. It is often sold as Chinese parsley and though the leaves are a lighter green, it does resemble flat-leaved parsley, also of the carrot family and a close relative.

Many Mexicans think of coriander as indigenous. Certainly it is hard to imagine the Mexican green tomato dishes or *Guacamole* (Avocado Sauce) without it. If there could be said to be a favorite herb in the Mexican kitchen it would be coriander, though oregano, cumin, and to a lesser extent the indigenous herb *epazote* are all popular. I have never been able to find out when coriander first arrived in Mexico, but I think it was introduced after the Conquest and was adopted with enthusiasm. Certainly it is popular in all of Latin America. But there is a puzzle here. Coriander is not used in Spanish cooking today, although it is a favorite Middle Eastern herb and Spain was occupied for nearly eight centuries by the Arabs. In fact, Columbus had discovered America before Spain had reconquered all its occupied provinces, so the Spanish of that time, eating Arab foods, may have brought coriander with them to the New World. Or it may have arrived via the Philippines, where it is popular; there was a great deal of trade between Mexico and the Philippines, then a Spanish possession, in early colonial times. Some kitchen mysteries may never be solved, though it is great fun trying. There is no mystery, however, about its arrival in Brazil, as it is a favorite Portuguese herb.

The fresh herb is increasingly available. Latin American, Chinese, and Korean markets, as well as some specialty stores, carry it. In Latin American markets it is called cilantro, less usually *culantro* or *culantrillo*. In Chinese and Korean markets it is called Chinese parsley, or, in Chinese, *yuen-sai*. It is sold with its roots on and it does not keep well. The roots should not be removed for storage and the coriander should not be washed but simply wrapped in paper towels, roots and all, and stored in a plastic bag in the refrigerator. This is the simplest method and the one I use. Some recommend washing the coriander with its roots on, drying thoroughly, and refrigerating in a jar with just enough water to cover the roots. Others simply refrigerate roots and all in a glass jar with a screw top.

To have coriander available for flavoring soups and stews, I remove the roots, wash the coriander well, and purée it, including the stems, without the addition of any water in a food processor, then freeze the purée in an ice cube tray. When frozen, I store the cubes in a plastic bag. One cube is the equivalent of about 1 tablespoon of the freshly chopped

leaves. This works well where flavor — not appearance — is what matters. Sometimes the coriander roots are quite sizeable. In Thailand, the country, incidentally, in which I became a coriander addict, they are scraped and used in curries. They add a very intense flavor. I always keep an eye out for these fat roots, a happy bonus.

The tiny brown seedlike fruits of coriander are also used in cooking, especially in curries, and to flavor gin. They are available in jars in the spice section of supermarkets and I have grown coriander from them.

Crème fraîche. Venezuela has a lovely runny fresh cream cheese that is wonderful with hot *arepas* (corn bread). It is very like French *crème fraîche*. A good imitation of *crème fraîche* can be made by mixing 1 tablespoon of buttermilk with 1 cup heavy cream and heating the mixture to lukewarm in a small saucepan. Pour it into a jar and let it stand until it has thickened, about 8 hours in a warm room. It will then keep for several days refrigerated.

Dendê oil (palm oil), originally from Africa and very much used in Bahian cooking in Brazil. It is a deep, beautiful orange-gold and has a pleasant nutty flavor. Available in Latin American stores and specialty markets. It lends color and some flavor to dishes but one can manage without it.

Epazote (*Chenopodium ambrosioides*), one of the Anserinas, from the Nahuatl *epazotl*, known under a variety of names in English — Mexican tea, wormseed, lamb's quarters, goosefoot, and Jerusalem oak. It is ubiquitous, growing wild all over the Americas and in many parts of Europe. It dries excellently and is often available dried in Latin American markets. To dry it yourself, pick the epazote or lamb's quarters on a dry morning (early if possible, as the sun draws out the volatile oil) and spread on paper towels in a dark, warm cupboard until dry, turning occasionally. This may take a week. Or put on a tray in the oven with the pilot light on. Turn from time to time. This will take only a matter of hours. Strip the leaves from the stalks when dry, put into a screw-top glass jar, and store away from light. It is used quite a lot in Mexican cooking, especially in the center and south, in black bean and tortilla dishes. There is no substitute. Fortunately the herb is not vital to the success of the dishes.

Garlic. Peruvian garlic, purple-skinned, and Mexican garlic, sometimes purple-skinned, sometimes white, are both often available in specialty food stores and supermarkets. They have quite enormous cloves, which comes in handy when one has to peel a number of them. The size of garlic cloves varies so widely, as does a taste for garlic, that I have adopted in most instances the system of simply giving the number of cloves needed so that those who are particularly fond of garlic may seek out the big ones with a clear conscience.

Guascas or **huascas** (*Galinsoga parviflora* Lineo) is a Colombian herb that grows in the Andes. It is sold in jars, dried and ground into a green powder, in Colombian food shops. Though it has no relationship whatsoever to Jerusalem artichokes, its smell is reminiscent

of that vegetable. It adds a delicious flavor to soups and stews, particularly those made with chicken. Since specialty food stores constantly increase the range of their imports, I have included it here in case it should become available, but it is not essential to the success of any of the recipes in this book.

Hearts of palm, in Spanish and Portuguese *palmito*, are the tender heart buds of any one of several species of palm trees. Their delicate flavor is exquisite in salads and soups. Though they are eaten fresh in the countries of origin, they are always canned for export and are available in supermarkets.

Huacatay, an herb of the marigold family, is used in Peru in sauces and dishes such as *Picante de Yuca* (Cassava Root with Cheese Sauce). It is not available here and there is no substitute. The flavor is unusual and is certainly an acquired taste, rather rank at first try. I find I don't miss it.

Jerusalem artichokes, despite their name, are the edible tubers of a plant native to Canada and the northern United States. Their botanical name is *Helianthus tuberosus*, and they are a species of sunflower belonging to the daisy family. Jerusalem is apparently a corruption of *girasole*, the Italian word for sunflower. They are called *topinambur* in South America and are sometimes called sunchokes in U.S. markets. They have a lovely crisp texture reminiscent of water chestnuts. They make a delightful soup, an excellent salad, and are a lovely change of pace from the more usual potatoes as a starchy root vegetable. They are a little tricky to peel since the small tubers are knobby in shape. I always pick out the largest and least knobby ones available, but I have also found recently that newer varieties are easier to peel. When I scrape them I'm not all that fussy about a bit of skin left on, as it is not at all unpleasant, and I just shave off the little knobs. It is very important not to overcook them since they lose their crisp texture and turn mushy.

Jícama, pronounced HEE-kama (*Exogonium bracteatum*), of the morning glory family, is a tuberous turnip-shaped root vegetable with a light brown skin, originally from Mexico, where it is usually eaten raw, sliced, with a little salt and a sprinkling of hot chili powder (cayenne), or in salads. It has crispy, juicy white flesh. Water chestnuts or tart green cooking apples are the best substitutes. It is available in markets in the Southwest and in markets specializing in tropical fruits and vegetables.

Malanga — see **Taro**.

Mate, a tea made from the dried leaves of the South American evergreen *Ilex paraguayensis*. Especially popular in Paraguay, Uruguay, Argentina, and Brazil. Available in specialty and health food stores. Make according to package directions, or see [this page](#).

Mole, pronounced MO-lay, from the Nahuatl (Mexican) word *molli*, meaning a sauce made

from any of the peppers, sweet, pungent, or hot, usually a combination, together with other ingredients. The most famous of the *moles* is the *Mole Poblano de Guajalote*, the turkey dish from Puebla using bitter chocolate, but there are a host of others playing variations on a theme.



Nopal is the prickly pear cactus. It is available canned in stores selling Mexican foods and fresh in some markets in the Southwest. Used mainly in salads, it has an attractive fruit, *tuna*, which may be green or pinkish red.

Oranges, bitter, sour, Seville, or Bigarade, to give this fruit all the names by which it is commonly known, are not raised commercially in the U.S., but can sometimes be found in specialty food stores or markets. The large, rough-skinned, reddish-orange fruit has a delicate and quite distinctive flavor, but the pulp is too sour to be eaten raw. The juice, which is used a great deal in Latin American cooking, freezes successfully, and the peel need not be wasted but can be used to make marmalade. A mixture of one-third lime or lemon juice to two-thirds sweet orange juice can be used as a substitute.

Palillo is a Peruvian herb used dried and ground to give a yellow color to food. Since so many Peruvian foods are yellow or white, I'm sure it is a reflection of pre-Conquest Inca sun (and moon) worship. *Palillo* is not available here but I have found that using half the amount of turmeric gives much the same result.

Pepitas, Mexican pumpkin seeds, available in jars in supermarkets and health food stores.

PEPPERS

Peppers, sweet, pungent, and hot, all belong to the genus *Capsicum annuum* or *Capsicum frutescens* of the *Solanaceae* family, to which potato, tomato, and eggplant also belong. They were first cultivated in the Valley of Mexico about 9,000 years ago and their original name in Nahuatl was *chilli*. Varieties are legion and have not yet been fully classified botanically. They have spread all over the world and become naturalized so quickly that their national origin has been forgotten. Peppers are widely used in Latin American cooking, especially in Mexico and Peru. The number of varieties used is, fortunately, limited. They are widely available in markets specializing in Latin American and tropical foods and often in supermarkets and neighborhood stores. They fall into two main categories, the dried and the fresh.

The Dried Peppers

Ancho. This is the most widely used of all the peppers in the Mexican kitchen. It is quite large, with a wrinkled skin, about 4 inches long by about 3 inches wide. It has a deep, lovely color and a rich, full, mild flavor. It is the base of many cooked sauces.

Chipotle and **morita.** These are dried wrinkled peppers, brick red in color. Both are smaller than *ancho* peppers, with the *morita* smaller than the *chipotle*. Though they are available dried and sometimes ground, they are more usually canned. They have the most distinctive flavor of all the Mexican peppers and are very, very hot. If used sparingly, the exciting flavor comes through without excessive heat.

Guajillo. This is a long (4-inch), slender, tapering, smooth-skinned bright red pepper, which, like its fresh counterpart, the pale green *chile largo*, is mostly used whole to flavor pot-au-feu dishes.

Mulato. Much the same size and shape as the *ancho* but darker in color, closer to brown than red, and longer and more tapering. Its flavor is more pungent than the mild *ancho*. It is wrinkled.

Pasilla. This is a long, slender pepper, 6 to 7 inches in length and about an inch or so wide, and very much darker in color than the *ancho*. Like ancho and mulato peppers, it is wrinkled and some varieties are so dark they are called *chile negro* (black peppers). It is very hot but at the same time richly flavored. In Mexico these three peppers are often used in combination.

SMALL HOT DRIED PEPPERS

There are a number of small hot dried red peppers under various names, *cascabel*, *pequín*, *tepín*, which can be used interchangeably whenever dried hot red peppers are called for. One variety, a Japanese migrant, is called *hontaka* and should be treated with respect as it is very hot indeed. Hot paprika or cayenne pepper can be used instead: $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon is about the equivalent of a whole *pequín*.

Mirasol. This is a medium-sized tapering, wrinkled, dried hot pepper from Peru, which may be either red or yellow. It is not available here, but dried hot red peppers are an excellent substitute. The larger ones like the Japanese *hontaka* are the most suitable.

How to Use Dried Red Peppers

The method used in Mexican cooking is the same for *ancho*, *pasilla*, *mulato*, *chipotle*, and *morita* chilies. Rinse in cold water, tear off the stem end, and shake out the seeds. Tear the chilies roughly into pieces and soak in warm water, about 6 to 1 cup, for half an hour. If they are very dry, soak them a little longer. Purée them with the water in which they have soaked in a blender or food processor fitted with a steel blade. The resulting almost pastelike purée is then ready to be cooked in hot lard or oil with the other ingredients

specified in the recipe to make the sauce.

Canned *chipotle* and *morita* chilies are puréed right out of the can without soaking, or used as the recipe specifies. The small hot dried red chilies are usually just crumbled with the fingers.

Always wash the hands in warm soapy water after handling chilies. Hot chili accidentally rubbed in the eyes can be temporarily very painful.

Dried chilies are best stored in plastic bags in the refrigerator or another cool place. They dry out if exposed to the air.

The Fresh Peppers

HOT FRESH PEPPERS

A number of small and medium-sized hot green peppers are sold fresh in supermarkets and greengrocers all year round. They are not usually identified beyond being called hot peppers. In Mexico the most commonly used small fresh peppers are the *serrano*, about 1½ inches long, tapering, smooth-skinned, medium green, and the *jalapeño*, which is slightly darker in color and larger, about 2½ inches long. Both are quite hot. *Jalapeño* is sold interchangeably with *cuaresmeño*, a pepper so like it that some botanists classify them as the same. The shape is slightly different and I think the *cuaresmeño* is hotter. As most of the heat in these peppers is in the seeds and veins, remove them, unless fiery heat is wanted. These peppers are also sold canned in Mexican food stores and are very useful since they can be used when fresh peppers are not available.

There is a tiny hot pepper that in Brazil is called *malagueta*. It is fiery. A larger one, sometimes called cayenne chili, is widely available year round in greengrocers and can also be found in Chinese and Japanese markets. These two are sometimes sold ripe, when they have turned red. They are then slightly less hot, and have a somewhat richer flavor.



In the West Indies there is a lantern-shaped pepper that the Jamaicans call Scotch Bonnet, usually quite small, about 1½ inches long, with a most exquisite flavor. It is the *habanero* of Yucatán and is also popular in tropical Brazil. This pepper is sold green, yellow, and red in its three stages of ripening. It is fiery hot but has a flavor that makes it worth seeking. I have found it fresh in Caribbean markets and also bottled, usually imported from Trinidad. The bottled version keeps indefinitely in the refrigerator.

Any of these peppers can be used when fresh hot red or green peppers are called for.

Peppers vary a great deal in strength. There is only one way to find out how hot they are and that is by tasting. Nibble a tiny bit of hot pepper, and if it seems very fiery, use it sparingly. But tastes vary as much as peppers do, so the only true guide is to please yourself. As with dried peppers, always wash your hands in warm, soapy water after handling.

Visiting markets in Peru, I came upon great heaps of yellow peppers, *ají amarillo* (fresh hot yellow peppers), an astonishment to the eye. Surely nothing short of gold is as yellow as these peppers. Yellow peppers are almost never available here. Fresh hot red or green

peppers are just as good from the point of view of flavor.

SWEET FRESH PEPPERS

Perhaps the most widely used of all peppers is the green bell pepper, available year round everywhere. There is a splendid Mexican pepper, the *poblano*, dark green and tapering and about the same size as the bell pepper, which is not available in Eastern markets. It is used especially for stuffed peppers and the bell pepper makes a good substitute. There is another sweet green pepper, pale green and tapering, called California or Italian pepper. It is similar to the Mexican *chile güero* and can be used whenever chopped bell peppers are called for. These tapering peppers are not usually large enough to be stuffed.

The green bell pepper turns red when ripe. A similar pepper, though a different variety, is the *pimiento*, tapering in shape where the bell pepper is squat. It is always sold canned or in jars, often labeled *pimientos morrones*. It is tomato red whereas the ripe bell pepper is a true crimson. When red bell peppers are unavailable, use the canned *pimientos*. Already peeled and cooked, they can be used straight from the jar and make a very attractive garnish.

How to Peel Red or Green Bell Peppers

Stick a cooking fork into the stem end of the peppers and toast them over a gas flame or electric burner, turning frequently, until the skin blisters and blackens. Wrap the peppers in a cloth wrung out in hot water and leave for 30 minutes. The burned part of the thin papery skin will rinse off easily under cold running water and most of the rest can be pulled away. If a few bits of skin remain, it does not matter. Toasting the peppers in this way also brings out their flavor.

Piloncillo, Mexican brown sugar packaged in pyramid-shaped pieces. Similar molded brown sugar is called by a variety of names. Use dark brown sugar instead.

Plantains, *plátanos* in Spanish, are members of the same family as bananas — bird-of-paradise (*Strelitzia*). They are much larger and are not edible until cooked even when they are quite ripe and their skins are black. They are fried or boiled green, half-ripe, and ripe, and are usually served as a starchy vegetable to accompany meat, poultry, or fish. They also make a good cocktail nibble when green (*verde*), thinly sliced, and deep fried.

How to Peel a Plantain or Green Banana

Neither plantains, except very ripe ones, nor green bananas peel readily by hand. The simplest method is to make shallow lengthwise cuts along the natural ridges of the fruit and pull the skin off in sections.

Potatoes. The people we call the Incas for convenience, though it was quite likely a much earlier civilization, now lost in time, first cultivated potatoes in the high Andes. They developed a bewildering variety, some of which survive today. Among the survivors are large, yellow-fleshed potatoes that look beautiful used in the Peruvian potato dishes. However, this is more a matter of aesthetics than flavor as any good-quality potato that

takes to boiling can be used instead. Colombia has a small version of the Peruvian potato. They are also yellow-fleshed, are called *papas criollas*, and are the size of new potatoes. As they stay firm when cooked, Colombians use them in stews with other, softer potatoes, which disintegrate to thicken the gravy, leaving the *papas criollas* intact. Any good small new potato, especially a waxy one, does very well as a substitute.

Sausages. There are no problems in finding the right sausages for Latin American cooking. Chorizos, Spanish-style hot, spicy pork sausages, are widely available in the United States. Blood sausages are very little different from *morcilla*, and Polish *kielbasa*, available in supermarkets, is a splendid substitute for Spanish *longaniza* or Brazilian *linguiça*.

Shrimp (dried) are used a great deal in Bahian cooking in Brazil. They are tiny and are ground before being used in dishes like *vatapá*. A food processor fitted with a steel blade takes the hard work out of this chore. A blender can also be used. If the shrimp are very dry, a brief soaking in warm water helps. Available in Chinese and Japanese markets and in Latin American markets.

Sierra (Spanish mackerel) is a large fish that can reach 10 to 15 pounds. It is very attractive, with yellow the predominating color on its back scales instead of the steely blue of Atlantic mackerel. Found off Florida and the Gulf coast, it is a popular fish in South America and is used in *Sopa de Almejas* (Clam Soup) from Colombia. Red snapper, or similar fish, is a better substitute than Atlantic mackerel, which is too strongly flavored.

Smoked ham. When South American recipes call for smoked ham, the one most usually used is Spanish *jamón serrano*, which has been aged in spices. Italian prosciutto, German Westphalian, French Ardennes, or Bayonne hams are perfect substitutes.

Squash blossoms or pumpkin flowers, whatever they are called, are the pretty golden yellow blooms of one or other of the cucurbits of the squash family. They are not the female blossoms, which would turn into little squash, but are the male flowers, which if not gathered and cooked would die upon the vine. Female blossoms have recognizably squashlike swellings behind them; male blossoms do not. The latter make a marvelous soup among other things.

Sweet potato (*Ipomoea batatas*) is an edible tuber originally from tropical America, though its precise birthplace is not known. Only slightly sweet, it is in no way related to the potato family. The most popular variety grown in the United States is the Louisiana yam, with moist, orange-colored flesh and brown skin. Its name is also confusing as it is not related to the yams, which are an entirely different botanical group, the Dioscoreas. The white sweet potato with drier white flesh and pink or white skin is known as *boniato* (pronounced bon-ee-AH-toe) and is the variety most popular in Latin America. It is widely available in tropical markets and increasingly in ordinary greengrocers. It makes a

delicious substitute for potatoes.

Taro and **malanga** are tropical plants that bear edible tubers and are members of the very large *Arum* family. There are a great many of them and they have been cultivated for more than 2,000 years. I think of all the root vegetables they are, apart from potatoes, the most subtly flavored, the most delicious. The type of taro most widely cultivated in the United States is called *dasheen* and can be found in tropical markets, though in some markets specializing in Caribbean foods it may be called *coco* or *eddo*. They can also be found in Japanese markets as *sato-imo*, or Japanese potatoes. A closely related group, the malangas, which belong to the genus *Xanthosoma*, are known by a wide variety of names, malanga, tannia, and *yautía* being the ones most likely to be encountered in tropical markets in the U.S. The skins are usually brown, the flesh white to yellow, and they can be cooked like potatoes. When I first went looking for them in markets, I wrote down all the names and asked for them in a sort of litany. I found people very understanding and helpful, and they sorted things out for me in a charmingly good-humored way.

Tomatoes, green or husk (*Physalis ixocarpa*), which have a loose, brown papery outer covering, should not be confused with ordinary green (unripe) tomatoes. Though members of the same family, they are a different species. The Aztecs called the fruit *miltomatl*, but today in Mexico it is usually called *tomatillo* (little tomato), as it is never very large, usually only about an inch across. It has other names, *tomate verde*, *tomatitto*, and *fresadilla*. In English it is sometimes called Spanish tomato. When the tomatoes, which cannot be skinned as nothing would be left of them, are marketed as peeled, it means that the papery brown husk has been removed. The green tomato is very important in Mexican, and to a lesser extent Guatemalan, cooking, giving a distinctive flavor to the “green” dishes and sauces. The flavor is delicate and slightly acid, and the fruit must be cooked for 2 or 3 minutes for its special flavor to develop. It is available fresh in markets in the Southwest and canned from stores specializing in Mexican foods. The canned version needs no further cooking and is ready to use. The flesh is rather delicate and the can may be full of broken fruit. When this happens, use the liquid from the can in a sauce, reducing the amount of stock or other liquid, and save the whole fruit for sauces where no liquid is required. Green tomatoes are grown easily from seed.

Tortillas and **arepas**. The tortilla of Mexico, and the *arepa* of Venezuela, and to a lesser extent Colombia, are unique in the world of bread since they are made from cooked flour. Dried corn kernels are boiled with lime (to loosen the skin), then the kernels are drained and ground, and, if not for immediate use, are dried and packaged as flour. Though the method of cooking the corn is the same for both tortillas and *arepas*, the end result is very different because of the difference in the type of corn used. The corn for *arepas* has very large kernels, giving a rather starchy flour. The packaged flours identify themselves very clearly as *masa harina* (literally dough flour) for tortillas, or flour for *arepas*. It is not possible to confuse them. Shops specializing in Latin American foods carry them.

Yams are members of a vast assemblage of edible tubers of the Dioscorea family, which has about 250 different species, most of them originating in the tropical regions of the world. They can be as small as a new potato or weigh up to 100 pounds, though most of them weigh about a pound and are the size of a large potato. The skins are usually brown and may be rough, smooth, or hairy, and the shape is usually cylindrical. The flesh is white or yellow, the texture mealy, and the flavor pleasantly nutlike. They are available in tropical markets and increasingly in supermarkets and greengrocers. They may be encountered in markets as *ñame* (pronounced ny-AH-may), yampi, cush-cush, mapuey, or a number of other names. A good plan on seeing an unfamiliar tuber in a market is to ask if it is a kind of yam, always remembering that these yams should not be confused with the Louisiana yam, which is a sweet potato. They may be cooked in the same way as potatoes. The smaller varieties are usually the best ones to buy for texture and flavor, and they are well worth getting to know.

Hors d'Oeuvres and Appetizers

Entremeses

Hors d'oeuvres and appetizers in our modern sense were not a large part of the traditional cooking of Latin America. But there are innumerable small foods that were once used as accompaniments to main dishes or were served only to gentlemen in bars or eaten from stalls in the market, which have been adapted for comparatively new styles of eating: finger foods to go with drinks, or light first courses at lunch or dinner, often taking the place of soup.

From country to country they rejoice in a variety of names, which are as different and varied as the hors d'oeuvres themselves. They are known as *botanas*, meaning literally the stoppers on leather wine bottles; *bacaditos*, little mouthfuls; *antojitos*, little whims or fancies; *boquillas*, things to stop the mouth; *fritangas*, fried things and fritters; *tapados*, nibbles; *picadas*, things on a toothpick; *entremeses*, side dishes; *entradas*, dishes to be served at table; *salgadinhos frios*, small, cold, salty things; and *salgadinhos quentes*, small, hot, salty things.

These are the hors d'oeuvres I find exciting, not the almost universal modern canapes, which are mostly borrowed or adapted from our own cocktail foods and have become popular throughout Latin America in recent years as industrialization has changed social patterns from feudal to modern. One comes upon canapes of caviar, ham, shrimp, anchovies; even *crudités* turn up. There are clam or onion-soup dips, cheese cubes alternating with pineapple on toothpicks, tiny frankfurters, salmon caviar with sour cream, and grilled bacon-wrapped prunes. They appear in recipe books under the heading *Cocina Internacional*, International Cookery, and have a certain glamour in Latin America because they are foreign and unfamiliar, which is very understandable.

But fortunately they have not elbowed out the traditional appetizers with exciting flavors that are new to us. These traditional foods range from the simplest of nibbles — toasted corn, fried chickpeas, tiny fried potatoes, French fried plantain slices, yucca and banana chips — to the heartier *Empanadas* (Turnovers) and the *seviches* (fish cooked in lime or lemon juice), which make particularly splendid first courses for summer dining. And the *antojitos* (little whims or fancies) and *tacos*, *chalupas*, *sopes*, *quesadillas*, which all derive from some form of tortillas imaginatively stuffed and seasoned, can compose a whole cocktail buffet or informal luncheon.

All of these appetizers are easy to make and most of them are served at room temperature. They can be prepared ahead of time, and some, like the *empanadas*, can be made well in advance and frozen. They make ideal hors d'oeuvres for a cocktail party. I have enjoyed them in restaurants and in the homes of friends throughout Latin America. They fit perfectly into the pattern of today's living, where meals tend to have fewer courses and be less elaborate than in the past, and where the habit of having drinks before lunch or dinner is increasingly accepted.

It is surprising that the hors d'oeuvres of the region owe so little to their Spanish heritage. Though one might have expected the *tapas* of Spain to appear on New World

tables changed, but recognizable, this has not happened. It always surprises me in the world of culinary borrowings, what gets taken, what gets left — and this is especially true of appetizers. After nearly eight centuries of Moorish domination, Spain gained its independence and united its provinces into a nation, turning its back at the same time on the *mezze*, the hors d'oeuvres of the Middle East, which are one of the most attractive features of the food of that region. Latin America, with a few exceptions such as *empanadas*, has behaved in much the same way, so that it is the ancient dishes of the pre-Columbian kitchens and the dishes of the creole cuisine that have been adapted as today's appetizers.

The old tradition of foods eaten in the market has survived in Latin America in a very charming way. Snack foods, cakes, and drinks of all kinds are served in *confeitárias* in Brazil, in *sandwicherías* in Uruguay, and *whiskerías* in Argentina, while each station on the subway in Buenos Aires has a stall selling coffee, a variety of drinks, and snack foods. In Chile *empanadas*, cakes, and snack foods of all kinds are sold in *salas de onces*. *Onces* (*once* is the number eleven), named for the English custom of having tea or coffee and cookies at eleven in the morning, have become, by some extraordinary transmutation, afternoon tea, so that a *sala de onces* is a tea shop. Ecuador has restaurants devoted to its famous *seviches* while Mexico has its *taquerías*, with an astonishing variety of fillings for the simple *tortilla*.

Anticuchos

Skewered Beef Heart

PERU

These are without doubt the most famous of all the Peruvian *entradas*, or appetizers — dishes traditionally served sometimes before, sometimes after the soup, but before the roast in the days when appetites were more robust than they are now. Many of the *entradas* make excellent lunches or suppers; some, like these spiced pieces of beef heart that are skewered and grilled, make a good first course but are also fine as a snack or an accompaniment to drinks. When served as lunch or supper they may be accompanied by corn on the cob, boiled sweet potatoes, and boiled yucca (cassava), bland foods that go very well with the spicy beef hearts. Peruvians like their *picante* foods to be really hot and *anticuchos* are no exception. The dried chili used is *mirasol*, not available here. I have found the *hontaka*, dried hot red chili peppers sold packaged in Japanese markets, to be an admirable substitute.

The amount of peppers given in the recipe, 1 cup, will make a very fiery sauce just the way Peruvians like it but too hot for most of us. A good idea is to begin with $\frac{1}{8}$ cup peppers. If the sauce seems too bland, add more peppers. Peppers themselves vary a great deal in hotness, and I have found when dealing with them it is wise to experiment.

Anticuchos are a very old, pre-Columbian dish; I suspect they used to be made with llama hearts since there were no cattle until after the Conquest. The name translates from the Quechua into “a dish from the Andes cooked on sticks.”

My favorite place to buy *anticuchos* is from stalls outside Lima's *plaza de toros*, built in 1768 and said to be the second oldest bullring in the world. Eaten right there, accompanied by beer and rounded out with a dessert of *picarones*, deep-fried sweet potato and pumpkin

fritters, they make a wonderful impromptu meal.

Serves 8 to 10 as an hors d'oeuvre, or 6 as a main course

beef heart, weighing about 4 pounds

head garlic (about 16 cloves), peeled and crushed

tablespoon fresh hot red or green peppers, seeded, coarsely chopped, and puréed in a blender or food processor

tablespoon ground cumin Salt, freshly ground pepper

cup red wine vinegar

FOR THE SAUCE

cup dried hot red peppers

tablespoon ground annatto (achiote) seeds

tablespoon vegetable oil

It

Remove the nerves and fat from the beef heart, and cut it into 1-inch cubes. Place in a large bowl. Combine the garlic, fresh hot peppers, cumin, salt, pepper, and vinegar, stir to mix, and pour over the beef heart, adding more vinegar, if necessary, to cover. Refrigerate, covered, for 24 hours. Remove the beef heart from the marinade and set them both aside.

Shake the seeds out of the dried peppers and soak in hot water to cover for 30 minutes. Drain the peppers and put them into a blender or food processor with the annatto, oil, and about $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of the reserved marinade. Season to taste with a little more salt if necessary and blend until smooth. The sauce should be quite thick. Thread the beef-heart cubes on skewers. Brush them with the sauce, and broil, turning to cook all sides, either over charcoal or under a gas or electric broiler, about 3 inches from the heat, for about 4 minutes. Serve with the remaining sauce on the side. Accompany with boiled corn, sweet potato, and yucca.

Acarajé

Black-Eyed Pea Fritters

BRAZIL

Black-eyed peas are originally African, brought to the New World by slaves. The fritters turn up all over the Caribbean as well as in South America. The most elegant version, *acarajé*, comes from Bahia in Brazil and makes an unusual cocktail nibble. I have occasionally come across packaged black-eyed pea flour, *harina para bollitos*, which I have found very good indeed and useful when one is in a hurry. It is worth looking out for in Latin markets. As the flour is a ready mix and needs only the addition of water, it saves one all the bother of cooking the peas, rubbing off the skins, and grinding them. To make the fritters from the pea flour, simply follow package instructions. The *dendê* (palm) oil, used a

great deal in Bahian cooking, is also an African contribution. A rich reddish-orange in color, it turns the fritters a beautiful deep gold. They have a crispy texture and a nutty flavor with an attractive hint of shrimp from the sauce.

Makes 24

1 pound (2 cups) black-eyed peas

1 cup dried shrimp

1 medium onion, chopped

1 lb

1/2 cup dendê (palm) oil

Soak the black-eyed peas overnight in cold water to cover. Drain. Rub off and discard the skins. Soak the shrimp in cold water to cover for 30 minutes. Put the peas, shrimp, and onion through the fine blade of a food grinder, or purée them in a blender or food processor. Season to taste with salt if necessary. The shrimp may be quite salty. Pour enough *dendê* oil into a deep fryer or saucepan to fill it to a depth of 2 to 3 inches. When the oil is hot (365° F. on a frying thermometer), fry the mixture by the tablespoon, turning the fritters once, until they are golden. Drain on paper towels and serve at room temperature with *Môlho de Acarajé*.

Môlho de Acarajé

Black-Eyed Pea Fritter Sauce

BRAZIL

Makes about 1¼ cups

1 cup dried shrimp

1 medium onion, chopped

1/2 tablespoon crushed dried hot red peppers

1/2 teaspoon chopped fresh ginger root

1/2 tablespoons dendê (palm) oil

Soak the shrimp in cold water to cover for 30 minutes. Drain the shrimp and pulverize them in a blender or food processor with the onion, peppers, and ginger root. Heat the oil in a skillet and sauté the shrimp mixture for about 3 minutes. Transfer to a bowl and serve with the *acarajé*.

Variation: For *Abará* (Steamed Black-Eyed Peas), make 1 recipe *Acarajé* (Black-Eyed Pea Fritters), but do not fry them. Beat the mixture thoroughly until it is fluffy with 3 tablespoons *dendê* oil and fresh hot red peppers, seeded, coarsely chopped, and puréed in a blender or food processor, to taste. Place tablespoons of the mixture in the center of 6-inch squares of kitchen parchment or aluminum foil, push a whole dried shrimp into the center

of the pea mixture, then fold up into a neat package. If using parchment, tie securely with kitchen string. Steam the packages for 1 hour and serve directly from the packages at room temperature. Traditionally, banana leaves, which are sometimes available from specialty shops, are used for *Abará*. Makes about 24.

Variation: There is a simpler, but very attractive, version, *Buñuelitos de Frijol* (Bean Fritters) from coastal Colombia. The black-eyed peas are soaked overnight in cold water and the skins rubbed off and discarded. The peas are ground fine and seasoned with salt, then beaten with a wooden spoon until they are light and fluffy. They are deep fried by the tablespoon in vegetable oil or lard until golden brown.

Garbanzos Compuestos

Toasted Chickpeas

MEXICO

Chickpeas were brought to the New World by the Spanish and even though the common bean (red kidney, etc.) was first cultivated in the Valley of Mexico as early as 5000 B.C. and had long spread to other parts of the continent by the time of the Conquest, chickpeas were given a warm welcome and have been widely used in the kitchen ever since. I think, however, that toasted chickpeas as a cocktail nibble are a piece of culinary borrowing from South America, where a special type of large-kernel white corn was developed by the Incas, presumably sometime after corn reached them from Mexico, its birthplace. Called *cancha* in Peru, the corn is soaked, fried in lard, seasoned with salt, and served alone, or with *seviche*, *anticuchos*, and so on. In Ecuador the same dish is called *Maíz Tostado* and is always served with the *seviches*.

Makes about 4 cups

Use 1-pound cans of chickpeas, or 1 pound dried chickpeas, soaked overnight

1 teaspoon salt

1 cup olive oil

1 clove garlic

1 round hot red pepper

Drain the chickpeas, cover with fresh water, and simmer for 30 minutes. Add the salt and continue cooking until the chickpeas are tender. Drain and cool. Heat the olive oil in a skillet and sauté the chickpeas with the garlic until they are golden brown. Drain on paper towels and sprinkle with the hot pepper.

If using cooked canned chickpeas, rinse, drain, and then fry them.

Patacones

Green Plantain Chips

COLOMBIA

Fried plantain slices are popular in many parts of Latin America under different names and cooked by slightly different methods. Sprinkled lightly with salt, they are served with drinks, or as an accompaniment to meat, fish, or poultry. My favorite is this one from the northern coast of Colombia.

vegetable oil for deep frying

large green plantain, peeled and cut into 1¼-inch slices

It



Pour enough oil into a deep fryer or saucepan to fill it to a depth of 2 to 3 inches. Heat to moderate, 325° F. on a frying thermometer. Drop in the plantain slices and fry until tender, about 5 minutes. Lift out and drain on paper towels. Cover with wax paper and press until each is about ¾ inch thick. I find a clenched fist does as well as anything. In fact in Costa Rica, where the usual name is *tostones*, they are sometimes called *plátanos a puñetazos*, “plantains hit with the fist.”

Raise the temperature of the oil to hot, 375° F. on a frying thermometer, and fry the slices until they are brown and crispy on the outside, tender inside, a minute or two. Traditional cooks dip the slices in cold, salted water before this second frying to make them crustier. I don’t find this extra fussiness makes much difference. Sprinkle lightly with salt before serving.

Variation: In Venezuela the chips are called *tostones de plátano*, and cut into 1-inch slices. Some cooks put them in overlapping pairs after the first frying and before flattening them. This gives a very thick, soft center with crispy edges. In lieu of the clenched fist, the heel of the hand, or a rolling pin, I’ve seen cooks on this coast use large stones from the beach to do the flattening for them.

Variation: *Tostones* in Puerto Rico, cut diagonally into ½-inch slices, are soaked for 30 minutes in cold, salted water before they are either sautéed, or deep fried in oil or lard. They are dipped again in salted water before the second frying.

Variation: Also in Puerto Rico green plantains are very thinly sliced, soaked in ice water for 30 minutes, drained, patted dry, deep fried until crisp in hot oil or lard, and sprinkled with salt before serving. Called *platanutri*, they are *tostoncitos* in the Dominican Republic and *chicharritas de plátano verde* in Costa Rica. Green bananas are often used in the same way. They make a pleasant change from potato chips.

Yuca Frita

Cassava Chips

In Colombia hors d'oeuvres are called *picadas* and any fried *picada* is called a *fritanga*. Cassava chips, deliciously light and crisp and no trouble at all to make, are among the *fritangas* I enjoy most. This root vegetable is such an astonishment. First cultivated in northern Brazil in 1500 B.C. it has now spread all over the world. I once saw it growing outside a country pub in Wiltshire, England, where its tall spike of white flowers towered flamboyantly over roses and wallflowers. We know it best as tapioca, but Latin America uses it much more widely, added to stews, boiled and mashed. Its squeezed-out juice is the basis of *cassareep*, used in the Guyanese national meat and poultry stew. And of course there is always a bowl of *farofa* (cassava meal) on the table in Brazilian restaurants and homes (see [this page](#)). I like cassava in all its forms whether it is called yucca, manioc, mandioca, aipím, cassava, or botanically, *Manihot utilissima*.

1 pound cassava (yucca) root, about

1 lb

vegetable oil or lard

Peel the vegetable under cold running water as it discolors quickly. Cut into 1-inch slices and boil in salted water to cover until tender, about 30 minutes. The pieces often break up during cooking but this does not matter. Drain, pat dry with paper towels. In a skillet heat about ½ inch oil or lard and fry the pieces until they are crisp and golden all over. Serve at room temperature with drinks. The chips are also a pleasant accompaniment to meats or poultry.

For crisper chips, freeze the boiled vegetable for an hour or so before frying it and fry it frozen. The chips can be deep fried if preferred.

Variation: In the Colombian highlands *Papas Criollas Fritas* (Fried Creole Potatoes) are a popular appetizer. These are small local potatoes with yellow flesh; the smallest bite-sized ones are chosen and deep fried, skin and all, sprinkled with salt and eaten while still hot as an accompaniment to drinks. They are sometimes available in tropical markets; if not, use very small new potatoes.

Variation: Puerto Ricans use breadfruit to make *Hojuelas de Panapén* (Breadfruit Chips). Peel and core a breadfruit and quarter it. Cut it into thin crosswise slices and drop into boiling salted water. Boil for 2 to 3 minutes, drain, and pat dry. Fry in deep oil or lard until the chips are golden and crisp. Sprinkle with salt and serve at room temperature. Canned breadfruit can be used, in which case simply pat it dry, slice, and fry it.



SEVICHE

Seviche or *ceviche* — the spelling varies — is raw fish marinated in lime or lemon juice. The fish loses its translucent look as the juice “cooks” it and needs no further cooking. It doesn’t taste raw. The idea almost certainly originated in Polynesia and like all migrant dishes has evolved in its new home; I have found versions of it all over Latin America. The best *seviches* in Mexico are from the state of Guerrero, especially from Acapulco on the Pacific coast. The fish principally used are sierra, or Spanish, mackerel, pompano, and porgy. I am always rather surprised at how well the mackerel *seviche* comes out, with the full-flavored and oily fish tempered by the lime or lemon juice. *Seviche* in Peru, served with sweet potatoes, lettuce, ears of corn, and toasted corn (*cancha*), is almost a meal in itself. The most popular fish there is bass, which makes a very delicate *seviche*, though octopus, conch, and scallops are also used. I’ve enjoyed *seviche* in restaurants overlooking Acapulco Bay, with its indestructible charm, and at a beach club in the strangely beautiful desert landscape of the Peruvian coast, but I think the best *seviches* I’ve ever had were in Ecuador. They are quite different from the Mexican variety though not wholly unlike those from Peru since bitter (Seville) oranges are used in both countries. Made from shrimp, lobster, bass, and an interesting local black conch, they have a reputation for being a splendid pick-me-up, and one is encouraged to try them at noon with a glass of cold beer. Marinated fish or shellfish should be eaten 5 to 6 hours after the marinating was begun.

Aguacate Relleno con Seviche de Camarones

Avocado Stuffed with Marinated Shrimp

MEXICO

This unusual variation on the standard *seviche* is from Acapulco and makes a rather grand and rich beginning to a special lunch or dinner. It would make an admirable light lunch served with soup as a first course and a dessert to finish.

Serves 2

1 pound small shrimp, shelled and deveined
1/2 cup or more fresh lime or lemon juice
1 medium tomato, peeled and chopped
1 canned jalapeño chili, rinsed, seeded, and cut in strips
1/2 teaspoon pimienta, chopped
1/4 tablespoon fresh coriander (cilantro), chopped, or use parsley
1 small white onion, finely chopped
1 small pitted green olives, halved
1/4 tablespoons vegetable oil
1/2 lt, freshly ground pepper
1 large avocado, halved and pitted

ttuce leaves

If small shrimp are not available, cut larger ones into ½-inch pieces. Put into a bowl with enough lime or lemon juice to cover, about ½ cup. Refrigerate for about 3 hours, or until the shrimp are opaque. Add the tomato, chili, pimiento, coriander, onion, olives, oil, and salt and pepper to taste. Toss lightly to mix.

Spoon the shrimp mixture into the avocado halves and serve on plates garnished with lettuce leaves.

Seviche de Sierra

Mackerel Marinated in Lime Juice

MEXICO

Serves 6

ound skinned fillets of mackerel, or use pompano or porgy, cut into ½-inch squares

½ cups lime or lemon juice, about

medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped

canned serrano chilies, rinsed and chopped

cup vegetable oil

teaspoon oregano

lt, freshly ground pepper

medium onion, finely sliced

large avocado, peeled, pitted, and sliced

Put the fish into a glass or china bowl and pour the lime or lemon juice over it. There should be enough to cover the fish. Add a little more, if necessary. Refrigerate the fish for 3 hours, turning it from time to time. Add the tomatoes, chilies, oil, oregano, and salt and pepper to taste. Toss lightly to mix and divide among 6 bowls. Garnish with the onion slices and the avocado.

Seviche de Corvina

Bass Marinated in Lime Juice

PERU

Serves 8

½ pounds fillets of striped bass, or similar fish, cut into 1-inch pieces

lt, freshly ground pepper

fresh hot red peppers, seeded and thinly sliced

teaspoon paprika

large onion, thinly sliced
cup lemon or lime juice
*cup bitter (Seville) orange juice**
pound sweet potato, preferably the white type
ears corn, each cut into 4 slices
lettuce leaves

Put the fish into a large glass or china bowl and season to taste with salt and pepper. Add 1 of the peppers, the paprika, and the onion, reserving a few rings for the garnish. Add the lemon or lime and bitter orange juice, mix lightly, cover, and refrigerate for about 3 hours, or until the fish is opaque, “cooked” by the juices.

Peel the sweet potatoes, cut into 8 slices, drop into salted water, bring to a boil, and cook until tender, about 20 minutes. Drop the slices of corn into boiling salted water and boil for 5 minutes. Drain and reserve the vegetables.

Line a serving platter with lettuce leaves. Arrange the fish on the platter, garnish with the reserved onion rings and the hot pepper strips. Arrange the corn and sweet potato slices around the edge of the dish. Serve with *concha* (toasted corn).

Seviche de Corvina

Bass Marinated in Lime Juice

ECUADOR

Serves 6 to 8

½ pounds fillets of striped bass, or similar fish, cut into ½-inch pieces
cup lime or lemon juice
cup bitter (Seville) orange juice†
fresh hot red or green pepper, seeded and finely chopped
medium onion, thinly sliced
clove garlic, chopped
lt, freshly ground pepper
cup vegetable oil

Put the fish into a large glass or china bowl and add the lime or lemon juice to cover, adding a little more if necessary. Refrigerate for about 3 hours, or until the fish is opaque, “cooked” by the lime or lemon juice. Drain. Transfer to a serving bowl and mix with the bitter orange juice, pepper, onion, garlic, salt and pepper to taste, and the oil. Serve with *Maíz Tostada* (Toasted Corn) on the side.

Seviche de Camarones

Marinated Shrimp

Serves 6

pounds medium shrimp, shelled and deveined

It

*cups bitter (Seville) orange juice**

medium onion, finely chopped

fresh hot red or green pepper, seeded and finely chopped

large tomato, peeled, seeded, and chopped

freshly ground pepper

Drop the shrimp into a large saucepan of boiling salted water and boil for 2 or 3 minutes, or until the shrimp are cooked. Drain and mix with the orange juice, onion, hot pepper, tomato, and salt and pepper to taste. Let stand an hour before serving. Serve with *Maíz Tostada* (Toasted Corn) on the side.

Seviche de Ostras

Oysters Marinated in Lime Juice

GUATEMALA

I came across this unusual *seviche* in Guatemala, where there are still echoes of Mayan cooking, which must have been an exciting one.

Serves 8

dozen oysters, shucked

cup lime or lemon juice

large tomatoes, peeled and chopped

large onion, finely chopped

fresh hot red pepper, seeded and chopped

tablespoons mint leaves, chopped

It, freshly ground pepper

lettuce leaves

Put the oysters into a large glass or china bowl with the lime or lemon juice, cover, and refrigerate overnight. Strain the oysters, reserving the juice. In the bowl combine the oysters with the tomatoes, onion, hot pepper, mint leaves, and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the reserved juice. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Line a serving bowl with lettuce leaves and pour in the oyster mixture.



Siri Recheado

Stuffed Crabs

BRAZIL

A similar dish, *crabes farcies*, is popular in the French Caribbean islands. I think it is very probable that the original inspiration came from West Africa. Whether in the West Indies or in Brazil, I have never had exactly the same version of stuffed crabs, which makes eating them a perpetual adventure. Cooks let imagination, not rule books, guide them.

If live crabs are not available, use $\frac{3}{4}$ pound (12 ounces) fresh, frozen, or canned crab meat, picked over to remove any shell or cartilage, and stuff scallop shells.

Serves 3 to 6

small, live hard-shelled crabs

olive oil

2 tablespoons lime or lemon juice

2 cloves garlic, crushed

salt, freshly ground pepper

1 medium onion, grated

2 scallions, chopped, using white and green parts

2 medium tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped

2 tablespoons fresh coriander (cilantro), chopped

or 2 fresh hot red peppers, seeded and chopped

1 cup fresh breadcrumbs

1 egg, beaten

1/2 cup bulgar wheat

lettuce leaves

1/2 cup pitted black and green olives

Plunge the crabs into boiling water and boil for 10 minutes. Lift out and cool. Carefully remove the meat from the shells and claws, and chop. Discard the spongy fiber. Scrub the empty shells, dry them, and brush the insides with a little olive oil. Season the crab meat with the lime or lemon juice, garlic, salt and pepper to taste, and set aside.

Heat 2 tablespoons olive oil in a skillet and sauté the onion, scallions, and tomatoes until

the mixture is soft and well blended. Cool to room temperature and combine it with the crab mixture. Add the coriander leaves, the hot peppers, and the breadcrumbs, and mix well. Stuff the crab shells with the mixture, brush with beaten egg, and sprinkle with a little bulgar wheat. Bake in a preheated moderate (350° F.) oven for 30 minutes, or until lightly browned. Garnish serving plates with the lettuce leaves and olives. Serve as a first course.

Variation: Parsley is sometimes used instead of coriander leaves and mandioca (cassava, or manioc, meal) is used instead of bulgar wheat. In Bahia *dendê* (palm) oil often replaces olive oil.



EMPANADAS

Turnovers

One could write a small book on *empanadas*, *empanaditas*, *pasteles*, *pastelitos*, *empadhinás*, and *pastèizinhos* — those delicious turnovers, patties, and pies, stuffed with meat, poultry, fish, shellfish, and other mixtures, and baked or fried, which are so popular throughout Latin America. Each country has its own favorite pastries, its own favorite filling, and the *empanadas* of Argentina and Chile are as different as one turnover can be from another. They come in small sizes for cocktails, larger ones for first courses, snacks, light luncheons, or picnics. They are very versatile, and I often use a pastry from one country, a filling from another, according to my fancy. I am not attempting to give a representative selection of these delights, only those I have especially enjoyed making and eating.

I remember at Viña del Mar, on the Chilean coast, sitting on the terrace of a friend's house overlooking the sea in the cold winter sunshine and eating *empanadas de locos* bought from a small shop in nearby Quintero and washing them down with the local, very acceptable champagne. *Locos* are the enormous abalone of this coast, where the cold Humboldt Current makes for a fabulous harvest of fish and shellfish. There were also turnovers with other fillings, but it is the juicy onion-enriched abalone ones I remember best, and for which I have worked out an approximation. Use the recipe for the 6-inch Argentine *Empanadas* (Turnovers) pastry, [this page](#), with 2 tablespoons filling. Have ready equal amounts of coarsely chopped, canned abalone and finely chopped onion. Sauté the onion in *Color Chilena* (Paprika Oil), [this page](#). Add the abalone, salt, pepper, and a little chopped parsley. Place the filling across the center of the pastry, top with 2 small black olives, pitted, and a slice of hardboiled egg.

As for the *empanadas* of Argentina, some of which I ate decorously in a *whiskería* (a felicitously evolved tea shop) in Buenos Aires, the crust was so light and flaky I felt the *empanada* might fly from the plate. The filling combined beef with pears and peaches — utterly delicious. I remember too taking some with me for an al fresco lunch on the banks of the River Plate, the Rio de la Plata, which looked like a vast sea of silver, not like a river

at all. And on the other side of the river, later in Montevideo, in Uruguay, eating *empanadas* in a *sandwichería*, which again belied its name by selling all manner of marvelous small foods as well as drinks.

Empanadas of course have strong echoes of Spain, Portugal, and the Middle East. They probably originated in the Middle East, which would be natural enough considering that wheat was cultivated there as early as 7000 B.C. But they are of mixed ancestry. The *pasteles* of the Middle East, for example, are believed to have been taken to Turkey from Spain or Portugal by Sephardic Jews a long while ago. They are very like the *empadhinhas* of Brazil, which are cousins of the *empanadas*. However, many of the turnovers incorporate foods of the New World — potatoes, tomatoes, peppers, even using corn for the pastry, thus linking them with the indigenous Indian kitchens.

EMPADHINAS and PASTÊIZINHOS

Little Pies and Turnovers

One of my pleasantest memories of Brazil is of eating *empadhinhas* and *pastêizinhos*, little savory pies and turnovers in a *confeitaria*, a pastry shop in downtown Rio which seemed to me to be full at all hours with people eating pies and cakes and drinking tiny cups of exquisitely strong coffee. The generic term for these pies and turnovers is *salgadinhos*, little salt things, and they form an enchanting part of the Brazilian cuisine, allowing the inventive cook endless freedom to experiment. If you make them in larger sizes, they are called *empadas* and *pastéis*, and they are fine for lunches.

Massa Para Empadhinhas

Pastry for Little Pies

BRAZIL

Makes about 30

½ cups all-purpose flour

teaspoon salt

tablespoons (¼ cup) lard

tablespoons (¼ cup) butter

egg yolks

ater

egg

Sift the flour with the salt into a large bowl. Cut the lard and butter into little bits and rub into the flour with the fingertips to make a coarse meal. Make a well in the center of the flour and stir in the egg yolks with enough cold water (4 to 5 tablespoons) to make a soft but not sticky dough or mix quickly in a food processor. Cover with wax paper and refrigerate for 1 hour. Roll out on a lightly floured surface to $\frac{1}{16}$ th-inch thickness and cut

into circles 1½ inches larger than the circumference of the cupcake, muffin, or tart tin you are using. Cut an equal number of circles the same size as the tins. Press the larger circles into the tins. Add enough filling to come about three-quarters of the way up the tin, and if the recipe calls for it a small piece of sliced hardboiled egg and a slice of pitted olive. Moisten the edges of the pastry with a little egg beaten with ½ teaspoon water, cover with the smaller circle of pastry, and seal firmly with the fingers. Brush the tops with egg and bake in a preheated moderate (350° F.) oven for 30 minutes or until golden brown. Makes about 30 in muffin tins measuring 2½ inches across.

The pastry may be used to make 1 large double-crust pie, in which case use a 9-inch pie tin and bake the pastry for about 10 minutes longer.

Picadinho de Carne

Meat Filling

Chopped beef fillings are popular all over Latin America. In this one the meat is steamed; making it moist and giving it a softer texture and more delicate flavor than its namesake, Mexican *picadillo*.

Makes about 2 cups

1 tablespoon olive oil

1½ pounds lean ground beef

1½ teaspoons salt, freshly ground pepper

2 cloves garlic, crushed

1 medium onion, grated

1½ cups tomatoes, peeled and chopped

1 fresh hot red pepper, chopped (optional)

4 hardboiled eggs, sliced

1 cup sliced pitted black or green olives

In a skillet heat the oil and add the beef, salt, pepper, and garlic, mixing well. Sauté for a minute or two, then add the onion, tomatoes, and the hot pepper, if liked. Stir to mix, cover, and cook over low heat until the meat is tender, about 20 minutes. Allow to cool. Then fill the pies three-quarters full and put a piece of sliced egg and a slice of olive on top of each before covering with the top crust.

Recheio de Sardinhas

Sardine Filling

Makes about 2 cups

1½ tablespoons olive oil

1 medium onion, finely chopped

medium tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped
fresh hot red pepper, seeded and chopped
1/2 lb, freshly ground pepper
2 cans (4-ounce) sardines, drained
2 teaspoons lime or lemon juice
2 tablespoons chopped fresh green coriander (cilantro)
2 hardboiled eggs, chopped
1/2 cup pitted black or green olives, sliced

In a skillet heat the oil and sauté the onion until it is softened. Add the tomatoes and the pepper, season to taste with salt and pepper, and simmer, stirring from time to time, until the mixture is thick and well blended, about 10 minutes. Cool. Mash the sardines with the lime or lemon juice and coriander, and fold into the tomato mixture with the eggs and olives.

Recheio de Queijo

Cheese Filling

Makes about 2 cups

1 1/2 pound (1 1/2 cups) ricotta cheese
1/2 lb, freshly ground white pepper
1/2 teaspoon sweet paprika
1/2 cup scallions, trimmed and chopped, using white and green parts
2 egg yolks, lightly beaten

Mix all the ingredients together. Chill slightly before using.



Recheio de Camarão Baiano

Shrimp Stuffing, Bahian Style

Makes about 2 cups

1/2 cup dendê (palm) oil

medium onion, finely chopped
medium green bell pepper, seeded and chopped
fresh hot red or green pepper, seeded and chopped
pound fresh shrimp, peeled and chopped
lt
cup palm hearts, chopped
egg yolks
cup thick coconut milk ([this page](#))
tablespoon fresh green coriander (cilantro), chopped

In a skillet heat the palm oil and sauté the onion and the peppers until they are softened. Add the shrimp, salt to taste, and palm hearts, and cook for a minute or two. Beat the egg yolks with the coconut milk and stir into the shrimp mixture. Add the coriander and cook, stirring over low heat until the mixture has thickened. It should have the consistency of a medium white sauce. If necessary thicken with ½ teaspoon arrowroot or cornstarch dissolved in 1 teaspoon water and cook for a minute or two longer. Cool.

Recheio de Galinha

Chicken Filling

Makes about 2 cups

tablespoons butter
cup mushrooms, finely chopped
scallions, trimmed and chopped, using white and green parts
cup finely diced cooked chicken breast
cup thick Béchamel sauce ([this page](#))
tablespoon grated Parmesan cheese (optional)

In a skillet melt the butter and sauté the mushrooms over fairly brisk heat until they have given up all their liquid and are very lightly browned, about 4 minutes. Stir the mushrooms, scallions, and chicken meat into the Béchamel sauce, which should be highly seasoned. Add the grated cheese, if liked. Cool before using.

I sometimes like to follow the example of Brazilian cooks who vary the sauce by using equal amounts of chicken stock and milk, making the sauce lighter with a beautiful chickeny flavor.

Massa Para Pastéis Fritos

Pastry for Fried Turnovers

2 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 cups butter
2 eggs, lightly beaten
1/2 cup vegetable oil for deep frying

Sift the flour with the salt into a large bowl. Cut the butter into little bits and rub into the flour with the fingertips to make a coarse meal. Make a well in the center of the flour and pour in the eggs. Stir with a fork to mix and add enough water (about 1 tablespoon) to make a soft but not sticky dough. Knead until the pastry is elastic. A food processor may be used to mix and knead the dough; spin until the dough forms a ball. Cover and allow to stand for 1 hour. Roll out on a floured surface to a thickness of $\frac{1}{16}$ inch, cut into 3-inch rounds with a cookie cutter, or a glass, and stuff with 2 teaspoons of any of the fillings on [this page](#). Moisten the edges with water or milk, fold over, and press together. Seal with the tines of a fork. I sometimes put a small piece of sliced hardboiled egg and a slice of black or green olive on top of the filling, a very popular touch in Brazil.

To fry: Pour enough oil into a fryer or saucepan to reach a depth of 2 to 3 inches. Heat to moderate, 350° to 360° F. on a frying thermometer. An easy way to check the temperature is to stir the oil with wooden chopsticks, then wait to see if tiny bubbles form on the sticks. If they do, the temperature is right. Fry the turnovers, a few at a time, until golden brown, turning once, cooking a total of 4 to 5 minutes. Drain on paper towels and keep warm.

Empanadas

Turnovers

ARGENTINA

Makes 16 first-course or luncheon-size turnovers

FOR THE PASTRY

2 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoons baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 cups lard, or 3/4 cup each lard and butter

Sift the flour, baking powder, and salt into a large bowl. Cut the fat into small pieces and rub into the flour with the fingertips to form a coarse meal. Mix to a fairly stiff dough with cold water, gather into a ball or mix in a food processor, and refrigerate, covered with wax paper, for 1 hour. Roll out on a floured surface to about $\frac{1}{8}$ inch thick. Cut into 6-inch circles using a small plate or bowl as a guide.

FOR THE FILLING

medium onions, finely chopped
cups finely diced raw potatoes
pound finely chopped lean round steak
lt, freshly ground black pepper
tablespoons beef stock
egg, beaten with ½ teaspoon water

Mix all the ingredients, except the egg, together. Spoon 2 tablespoons of the mixture across the center of each circle of pastry, leaving ¼ inch at the edges. Moisten the edges of the pastry with the egg and fold the pastry over to make a turnover, pressing the edges firmly together. Curve the turnover slightly to form a crescent shape, then turn about ¼ inch of the pastry back over itself, pinching it between the thumb and forefinger to form a rope-like pattern round the edge. Prick the tops of the turnovers 2 or 3 times with the tines of a fork and brush with the egg mixture. The *empanadas* are now ready to bake and may be frozen until ready to use. Let them thaw for 3 hours at room temperature before cooking.

To bake: Bake the turnovers on an ungreased cookie sheet for 10 minutes in a preheated hot (400° F.) oven. Reduce the heat to 350° F. and bake for 30 minutes longer, or until golden brown.

ANOTHER FILLING

tablespoons butter
medium onion, finely chopped
green bell pepper, seeded and chopped
pound lean ground beef
large tomato, peeled and chopped
large pear, peeled, cored, and chopped
large peaches, peeled, pitted, and chopped
lt, freshly ground pepper
cup dry white wine

Heat the butter in a skillet and sauté the onion and pepper over moderate heat until softened. Add the meat, breaking it up with a fork, and sauté for a few minutes longer. Add all the remaining ingredients and cook for 5 minutes over low heat. Cool and stuff the turnovers with the mixture in the same way as for the other filling. If using both fillings, double the amount of pastry.

Variation: In Cuba a similar pastry is enlivened by the addition of ½ cup dry sherry, 2 eggs and 2 egg yolks, and a tablespoon of sugar. The lard and butter are reduced to 2

tablespoons each. This is a very old recipe from colonial times and an attractive one. The fillings used are any cooked meat or poultry, chopped and mixed with chopped onion, sautéed in butter, peeled and chopped tomatoes, raisins, olives, capers, and chopped hardboiled eggs, combined and seasoned with salt and pepper. Wonderful for using leftovers.



Empanaditas

Little Turnovers

VENEZUELA

Makes 75 cocktail turnovers

FOR THE PASTRY

cups all-purpose flour

teaspoon salt

ounces ($\frac{3}{4}$ cup) butter

egg and 1 yolk, lightly beaten

Sift the flour with the salt into a large bowl. Cut the butter into small pieces and rub into the flour with the fingertips to form a coarse meal. Or use a food processor. Make a well in the center of the flour and add the egg and yolk, stir to mix, and add water (about $\frac{1}{3}$ cup), tablespoon by tablespoon, mixing with a fork, to make a soft but not sticky dough. Form the dough into a ball and refrigerate it, covered, for 1 hour. Roll out the dough on a floured surface to $\frac{1}{16}$ th inch thick and cut into 2½-inch squares. Put a teaspoon of filling into the center of each square, fold over, and seal the edges. The turnovers may be frozen at this point until ready to use. Let them thaw for 3 hours at room temperature before cooking. If preferred, they may be completely covered and simply reheated in the oven just before serving.

To fry: Fry as for the Colombian *Pastelitos Rellenos de Cerdo* (Pork-Filled Turnovers), [this page](#).

1 pound lean boneless pork, chopped
 4 tablespoons vegetable oil
 1 medium onion, finely chopped
 1 green bell pepper, seeded and finely chopped
 2 medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped
 1 tablespoon small pimiento-stuffed green olives, chopped
 1 tablespoon capers, chopped
 1 tablespoon seedless raisins
 1/2 teaspoon salt, freshly ground pepper
 1/2 cup aliños criollos en polvo, to taste
 1/4 cup dry sherry
 1 hardboiled egg, chopped

Put the pork into a saucepan with water barely to cover and simmer, covered, until tender, about 30 minutes. Drain, reserving the pork stock. In a skillet heat the oil and sauté the onion and pepper until they are softened. Add the pork and sauté for a minute or two longer. Add the tomatoes, olives, capers, raisins, salt, pepper, *aliño criollo* to taste, and the sherry. If the mixture seems a little dry, add some of the reserved pork stock. Simmer, uncovered, until the liquid has almost evaporated. Allow to cool. Add the egg, mixing well.

Variation: Chile has a turnover very similar to the Venezuelan one. It may be fried or baked. Make the pastry in the same way. Use chopped sirloin steak or top round instead of pork, omit the green bell pepper, the capers, and the *aliño*, and add 1 tablespoon sweet paprika, 1/2 tablespoon hot paprika, and 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin (or to taste). Cut the pastry into 5-inch rounds using a small bowl or plate as a guide, stuff with about 1/2 tablespoons of the mixture, paint the edges with a little egg mixed with 1/2 teaspoon water, fold over, and seal firmly, pressing the edges with a fork. Cut 2 or 3 slits in the top, brush with the egg mixture. To bake, place the turnovers on an ungreased cookie sheet in a preheated hot 400° F. oven for 10 minutes, then reduce the heat to 350° F. and cook for about 20 minutes longer, or until golden brown. The turnovers may be fried in the same way as the Venezuelan and Colombian ones.

A great many different fillings are used for turnovers in Chile; a piece of cheese, such as Münster or Monterey Jack, very thick béchamel sauce, highly flavored and mixed with grated Parmesan cheese, or with chopped cooked green vegetables such as green beans, spinach, Swiss chard, or with shrimp, fish, or any of the marvelous shellfish that the coast of Chile is blessed with. The seafood is often mixed with a thick béchamel seasoned with tomato.

Some turnovers are even simpler. Just a little chopped onion, salt and pepper, the shellfish, and its natural juices, baked in a pastry shell. There is no end to the inventiveness of Chilean cooks when it comes to *empanadas*.

Pastelitos Rellenos de Cerdo

Pork-Filled Turnovers

COLOMBIA

Makes about 100

FOR THE PASTRY

3 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 pound (1/2 cup) butter
1/2 teaspoon lemon juice
1/2 cup lukewarm water
1/2 cup vegetable oil for deep frying

Sift the flour and salt into a large bowl. Cut the butter into small pieces and rub into the flour with the fingertips to form a coarse meal. Mix the lemon juice with the water. Using a fork, stir in the water quickly to make a soft dough. Gather into a ball and refrigerate, covered with wax paper, for 30 minutes. Roll out the pastry on a floured surface to a thickness of $\frac{1}{16}$ inch and cut into 2½-inch circles with a cookie cutter or glass. Put ½ tablespoon of filling in the center of each pastry circle, fold the pastry in half to make a turnover, and seal the edges by pressing with the tines of a fork. The turnovers may be frozen at this point until ready to use. Let them thaw for 3 hours at room temperature before cooking.

To fry: Pour enough vegetable oil in a fryer or saucepan to reach a depth of 2 to 3 inches. Heat to moderate, 350° F. on a frying thermometer. An easy way to check the temperature is to stir the oil with wooden chopsticks, then wait to see if tiny bubbles form on the sticks. If they do, the temperature is right. Fry the turnovers, a few at a time, until golden brown, turning once, about 5 minutes. Drain on paper towels and keep warm.

If preferred the *pastelitos* may be baked. Brush with egg yolk beaten with a little water in a preheated hot (400° F.) oven for 5 minutes. Reduce the heat to 350° F. and bake for 15 minutes longer, or until golden brown. Serve as an accompaniment to drinks.

They may also be cooked and later reheated in the oven just before serving.

FOR THE FILLING

1/2 pound ground pork
1/2 large onion, grated
1/2 tablespoons capers
1/2 hardboiled egg, finely chopped
1/2 cup deviled ham, or 1/4 pound finely chopped boiled ham Salt, freshly ground pepper to taste

Thoroughly mix all the ingredients together. Instead of pork, ground beef, chicken breast, or drained, canned tuna fish may be used. If using tuna, omit the ham and use 2 hardboiled eggs instead of 1.



ABOUT TORTILLAS

If one were to compile all the recipes that are in existence for tortilla-based appetizers, one would end up with an encyclopedia that would dizzy the reader. So I am giving here only my favorites, though I confess the choice has not been easy.

The Spaniards named them *antojitos*, little whims or fancies, and to me they are perhaps the most exciting aspect of pre-Columbian Mexican cooking. We have some very good descriptions of the markets of old Tenochtitlán, now modern Mexico City, before the Conquest was completed, when the city was virtually untouched by the invaders. In his *Historia General de las Cosas de Nueva España* Fray Bernardino de Sahagún, a Spanish priest, tells, among other things, of the types of tortilla on sale in the market; it is enough to make one's head spin — with envy. That marvelous early war correspondent, Bernal Díaz del Castillo, a captain who was with Cortés before and during the campaign, gives in his memoirs, *Historia de la Conquista de Nueva España*, a remarkable picture of dining in Mexico, so we do know that there was a great deal more, now alas lost, of this cuisine. However, loss was soon balanced by gain, as post-Conquest Mexicans made good use of the foods the Spanish brought from Europe and Asia, and their *antojitos* were enhanced by beef, pork, chicken, olives, almonds, raisins, and so on.

With the exception of *arepas*, the corn bread of Venezuela, tortillas are unique among breads in being made from a cooked, not a raw, flour. Dried corn is boiled with lime until the skins are loosened and the cooked, skinned kernels are then dried and ground to make the *masa harina*, dough flour, that is used for tortillas. Happily for anyone wanting to make them, it is sold packaged by the Quaker Company. The flour is mixed with water to a fairly soft dough, pressed on a tortilla press or patted into a flat pancake by hand, and baked on a *comal*, an ungreased griddle, for a minute or so. It is not possible to speak of a raw tortilla, only of an unbaked one. Tortillas for those who don't want to make them are available frozen.

Arepas are also made from a cooked flour, and since it was in the Valley of Mexico in 5000 B.C. that corn was first cultivated, not arriving in South America until about 1500 B.C., it is a safe bet that the technique of cooking the corn before making it into flour was established in Mexico long before Venezuela invented *arepas*. In any event they are quite different.

Tortillas for *antojitos* are made in a variety of shapes and sizes and with a variety of fillings. Sternly traditional cooks parcel the fillings out among the shapes with some rigidity. However, when we make such things in the States, we should have the freedom to follow our own whims and fancies.

A selection of *antojitos* makes a fine buffet lunch when accompanied by a dessert.

Tortillas

MEXICO

Mexican cooks pat out tortillas by hand. They take a small ball of tortilla dough and with quick, deft movements pat the dough from one hand to the other, transforming it in no time at all into a thin pancake, which is then baked. I have managed to produce a recognizable tortilla by this method, though most of my hand-patted ones were a little on the thick side. I am pretty sure that if I had spent two or three years at it I could have mastered the art of making tortillas by hand! However, since colonial Spain had faced the problem and come up with the solution in the form of a tortilla press, I gave up trying and bought myself a press. The old colonial ones were made of wood. Mine is cast iron. It works extremely well and many Mexican cooks who can hand-pat a tortilla use it for convenience. I use a plastic liner on the press — a plastic bag cut in half is ideal. However, some people prefer to use wax paper.

Makes about eighteen 4-inch tortillas

cups masa harina

⅔ cups lukewarm water

Put the *masa harina* into a bowl, pour in 1 cup of the water, and stir to mix to a soft dough. Add the remaining water if necessary, as it probably will be. It is impossible to be absolutely precise about the amount of water needed. If the *masa harina* is very fresh it will need less water, and I have even found that an extremely humid day has its effect. The corn flour picks up moisture from the air. The dough should be flexible and hold together nicely. If it is too wet, it will stick to the tortilla press, in which case simply scrape it off the plastic sheet or wax paper, and add it to the dough with a little more flour. The dough is not hurt by being handled. If the dough is too dry, floury bits will show up on the cooked tortilla. Sprinkle the dough with a little more lukewarm water. Traditionally salt is not added to tortillas. However, a teaspoon of salt may be added to the flour by those who find the unsalted tortilla insipid.

Divide the dough into balls the size of small eggs and flatten on the tortilla press between 2 sheets of plastic or wax paper to thin pancakes about 4 inches across. Peel off the top piece of plastic or paper. Put the tortilla, paper side up, in the palm of the left hand, peel off the paper, then flip the tortilla onto a moderately heated, ungreased *comal* or griddle. It's a knack, but very easily learned. Cook until the edges begin to curl, about 1 minute, then, using a spatula or the fingers, turn the tortilla over and cook for about a minute longer. It should be very lightly flecked with brown. The side that is cooked first is the top. Pressing the first side with a spatula while the second side is cooking will turn it into an *inflado* — meaning something swollen with air; it subsides on being taken off the *comal* — which is said to be good luck. It certainly makes the stuffing of *panuchos* easier.

As they are done, stack the tortillas in a cloth napkin. When a dozen are stacked up, wrap them, napkin and all, in foil and put them into a preheated barely warm (150° F.)

oven, where they will stay warm for hours. If it is necessary to reheat cold tortillas, dampen the hands and pat the tortillas between them. Place the tortillas over direct heat, fairly low heat, turning constantly for about 30 seconds.

For appetizers use a piece of dough about the size of a walnut and flatten it out to about 2 inches. Even smaller tortillas may be made if desired, using a piece of dough about the size of a large grape.

Variations

Tacos. Make 4-inch tortillas, stuff them with any filling, roll them into a cylinder, and eat by hand, or secure them with a toothpick and fry them in shallow oil or lard until crisp. Usually called soft and fried tacos.

Sopes. Pinch off a piece of tortilla dough about the size of a walnut, roughly 2 teaspoons, and pat or press it into a pancake about 2 inches in diameter. Bake it on an ungreased griddle, iron skillet, or *comal* until it is lightly flecked with brown on both sides, about 1 minute a side. Pinch up a ¼-inch border all round the *sope*, then fry in vegetable oil or lard on the flat side. Stuff with any filling, the most usual of which is *Frijoles Refritos* (Refried Beans), [this page](#), topped with a little grated cheese, a little chopped white onion, and a hot chili sauce with a radish slice for a garnish. The basic tortilla dough for *sopes* is often mixed with another ingredient. Half a cup of cottage cheese may be added to the dough, or 2 or 3 *ancho* chilies, soaked and ground, or 2 or 3 *serrano* chilies, seeded and ground in a blender or food processor.

Chalupas (little canoes). These are oval tortillas with a pinched-up rim. Pinch off a piece of tortilla dough, about 2 tablespoons, and roll it into a cylinder about 4 inches long. Flatten it into an oval on a tortilla press or pat it into shape by hand. Bake on a *comal* or griddle in the usual way, then pinch up a ¼-inch rim all the way round. Fry in vegetable oil or lard on the flat side. Some cooks spoon a little hot fat into the *chalupa* when frying it. Use any filling, but the most usual is shredded chicken or pork, crumbled or grated cheese, and a red or green chili sauce.

Totopos. Ordinary tortillas cut into 4 or 6 wedges, fried until crisp in lard or vegetable oil, and used for dips or with *Frijoles Refritos* (Refried Beans) are usually called *tostaditas*. However, in Mexico's Federal District they are often called *totopos*. This leads to some confusion as there is an entirely different *antojito* also called a *totopo*. To make *totopos* remove the seeds from 3 *ancho* or *pasilla* chilies, soak them in hot water, and purée them in a blender. Mix the chilies with the *masa harina* and ½ cup cooked, mashed red kidney beans. Season with salt and make into rather thicker than usual tortillas using about 2 teaspoons of dough for each *totopo*. Fry the *totopos* in hot lard or vegetable oil on both sides. Drain on paper towels and spread with *guacamole* topped with grated Parmesan cheese, or use any topping.

Tostadas. These are 6- or 4-inch tortillas fried until crisp in hot lard or vegetable oil and topped with various combinations of poultry, meat, fish, or shellfish and various garnishes, lettuce, chili sauce, and so on. Use 2-inch tortillas for appetizers.



FILLINGS

The most popular fillings are shredded chicken, shredded pork, or *Picadillo* (Chopped Beef), combined with various sauces such as *Salsa Cruda* (Uncooked Tomato Sauce), *Salsa de Tomate Verde* (Green Tomato Sauce), and *Salsa de Jitomate* (Cooked Tomato Sauce); chilies such as *serrano* or *jalapeño*, available canned; shredded lettuce, romaine or iceberg; grated cheese such as Parmesan or Münster; and *Frijoles Refritos* (Refried Beans). *Guacamole* can be added to almost any *antojito* to advantage. Radishes, sliced or cut into radish roses, and olives are a popular garnish.

Chorizo. Skin chorizos (hot Spanish sausage) and chop coarsely. Sauté in vegetable oil with a little chopped onion, and tomato if liked. Drain any excess fat. Mix with a little grated Parmesan or Romano cheese (in Mexico *queso de Chihuahua* or *queso añejo* would be used). If not using tomato, add a little tomato sauce, red or green. Garnish with shredded lettuce.

Sardine. Sauté a medium onion, chopped, in 1 tablespoon vegetable oil, add 2 medium tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped, and chopped *serrano* or *jalapeño* chilies to taste. Cook until thick and well blended. Mash in 1 cup *Frijoles Refritos* (Refried Beans), [this page](#), mixing well. Fold in 1 can sardines packed in olive oil, drained, boned, and chopped. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese.

Cream cheese. Mash 3 ounces cream cheese with 3 tablespoons heavy cream and combine with 1 cup shredded pork or chicken. Top with a tomato sauce or a bottled chili sauce and garnish with shredded lettuce.

Panuchos

Fried Stuffed Tortillas

MEXICO

Panuchos are one of the most popular appetizers in the Mayan cuisine of the Yucatán peninsula. The garnish may vary slightly, but black beans are always used. They make a fine snack or light meal, and I have found that if I make my tortillas a little thicker than usual, they are easier to stuff. Pressing down lightly on the tortilla with a wooden spoon, or a spatula, when it is baking makes it puff up and this puffed-up layer is easy to lift up to insert the stuffing.

Serves 4 to 6

cup black beans

teaspoon epazote (see [this page](#)), if available

1 lb dried pinto beans
1 medium onion, thinly sliced
1 cup mild white vinegar
12elve 4-inch tortillas
1/2 cup lard or vegetable oil
1 head redheaded lettuce, romaine or iceberg
1 whole cooked chicken breast, boned and shredded
1/2 slices tomato

Wash the beans and pick them over. Put into a saucepan with cold water to cover by about 1/2 inch, add the *epazote*, crumbled, and simmer, covered, until tender, adding a little hot water from time to time if necessary. Add salt when the beans are tender and continue cooking, uncovered, until almost all the liquid has evaporated. Mash to a thick paste. Keep warm.

Chop the onion and soak it in salted water for 5 minutes. Drain. Transfer the onion to a small saucepan, pour in the vinegar, bring to a boil, remove from the heat and cool. Strain, discard the vinegar, and set the onion aside.

Using the point of a small sharp knife, lift up the top skin of the tortilla, leaving the skin still attached to the tortilla on one side. Carefully spread a layer of beans inside each little pocket. Replace the tortilla layer. Heat the lard or oil in a skillet and fry the tortillas, bottom side down, until lightly browned. Drain on paper towels. Place a layer of lettuce, chicken, and onion on each tortilla, and top with a slice of tomato.

Variation: If liked, a slice of hardboiled egg may be put on top of the beans. Use 2 eggs for 12 tortillas. Cooked shredded pork may be used instead of chicken breast.

Sambutes

Stuffed Miniature Tortillas

MEXICO

Sambutes, sometimes spelled *salbutes*, are another Yucatán specialty — they taste just as good no matter how they are spelled.

Makes about 18

FOR THE FILLING

1/2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1/2 pound lean ground pork
1 medium onion, chopped
1 medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped

It, freshly ground pepper

Heat the oil in a skillet and sauté the pork until it is lightly browned. Purée the onion and tomatoes in a blender or food processor and add to the pork. Season to taste with salt and pepper and simmer, uncovered, until the mixture is thick and fairly dry. Set aside.

FOR THE TORTILLAS

cups masa harina

teaspoon salt

tablespoons all-purpose flour

vegetable oil for deep frying

Mix the *masa harina*, salt, and flour together. Add enough water (about a teaspoon) to make a fairly stiff dough. Pinch off pieces of the dough about the size of walnuts and roll into balls. Flatten on the tortilla press into miniature tortillas not more than 2 inches across. Do not bake. Holding one tortilla in the palm of the hand, place a tablespoon of the filling on it. Cover with another tortilla and pinch the edges together. Continue until all the tortillas and the fillings are used up.

Into a fryer or saucepan pour enough oil to reach a depth of 2 to 3 inches. Heat to about 375° F. on a frying thermometer. Fry the stuffed tortillas, a few at a time, turning once, until they are golden brown, about 3 minutes. Drain on paper towels and eat hot.

If liked, these can be made even smaller, an inch across, pinching off a piece of dough not much bigger than a good-sized grape. Fill with 1 teaspoon of the stuffing.

Sambutes are often served as an appetizer accompanied by the same pickled onion as in *Panuchos* ([this page](#)) and with a tomato sauce made by peeling and chopping ½ pound tomatoes and reducing them to a purée in a blender or food processor with 1 fresh hot seeded pepper, or 1 canned *serrano chili*. The sauce is not cooked and is spooned on top of the stuffed tortilla, which is then topped with a little onion. They make a marvelous accompaniment to drinks.

* If bitter (Seville) orange juice is not available, use 1½ cups lemon juice and ½ cup orange juice.

† If bitter (Seville) orange juice is not available, use ½ cup lime or lemon juice and ½ cup orange juice.

‡ If bitter (Seville) orange juice is not available, use 1½ cups orange juice and ½ cup lemon juice.

§ *Aliños criollos en polvo* is a Venezuelan seasoning sold ready made. It is a mixture of sweet paprika, cumin, black pepper, ground annatto, garlic powder, oregano, and salt. Add a little of all or any of the ingredients to the filling according to taste. *Aliño*, sold as *Aliño Preparado* by McCormick in a glass shaker bottle, may sometimes be available in Latin markets. It makes a characteristic and remarkably pleasant addition to soups, stews, etc., and also adds a little color. It is easy to make at home (see [this page](#)).

Soups

Sopas

Soup is extremely popular in Latin America, and most people there would regard a main meal without soup as a poor thing indeed. Soups were not part of the indigenous cooking but were introduced in the colonial period and range from the bowl of richly flavored amber chicken consommé, so highly esteemed at the beginning of Sunday or holiday midday dinner in Mexico, to the hearty soup-stews, the pot-au-feu dishes that Colombia, particularly, excels in, and that are a meal in themselves.

From a very large array of soups, I have made a small selection of those I have particularly enjoyed. The varied soup repertoire evolved from local ingredients, chayote, zucchini, squash blossoms, sweet red peppers, corn, coconut, winter squash, yams, yucca, hearts of palm, and from the marvelous fish and shellfish of the region's coasts. They are not run-of-the-mill soups, of which Latin America has its full share — the soups one could call universal — vegetable, onion, cream of tomato, celery, watercress, green pea. No matter how good these may be, their Latin American cousins have not changed enough from the versions with which we are all familiar to make it worthwhile including them. My choice has been soups that will introduce new combinations of flavors, refreshing to any palate that is pleased with change.

Nowadays, with excellent canned beef or chicken stock available, one need not go to the trouble of making one's own stock. But Latin American cooking methods do have a pleasant bonus. Many dishes are cooked on top of the stove because, in the past, cooking was done mostly over charcoal, and ovens were not greatly used. As a result, when poaching a flank steak for a Venezuelan *Pabellón Caraqueño*, or a chicken for a Mexican *mole*, I get stock as an extra. I seldom freeze it, just refrigerate it, though I make a point of boiling it up and simmering it for 3 or 4 minutes if it hasn't been used in 2 or 3 days, which doesn't happen often as one always seems to need stock in the kitchen. And a nice thing is that stock does not sneer at leftovers or bits of this and that but welcomes them. When I boil up a refrigerated stock, I take the opportunity of adding any extras I may have around. The good rich stock comes in very handy for soup making.

Sopa de Aguacate

Avocado Soup

MEXICO

Avocado soup is popular in Latin America from Mexico all the way south to Chile. I don't think I've ever had an avocado soup I didn't enjoy. The beautiful pale green color and the buttery richness of the flavor are seductive, yet one of my favorite avocado soups is also one of the simplest. It comes from Mexico and is good hot, marvelous chilled. It is vitally important when making the soup not to let the avocado cook, as cooked avocados tend to develop a bitter taste. I like the soup garnished with chopped fresh coriander leaves as this

adds a very special flavor.

Serves 6

large, ripe avocados

cups rich chicken stock

cup heavy cream

lt, freshly ground white pepper

tablespoon fresh green coriander

ilantro), finely chopped

optional)

tortillas, quartered and fried crisp in lard or oil

Peel and mash the avocados and put them through a sieve. Place them in a heated soup tureen. Heat the chicken stock with the cream. Pour the stock into the avocados, stirring to mix, or beat lightly with a wire whisk. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Sprinkle with the coriander, if desired. Serve immediately with the crisp tortillas.

For summer dining the soup is splendid chilled. In which case do not heat the tureen and make sure that the chicken stock has been skimmed of all fat. Combine the avocados, stock, cream, salt, and pepper in a blender or food processor and blend until it is smooth. Chill quickly and serve as soon as possible, as the soup tends to darken on top if left for long. If it darkens, simply stir it before serving. The flavor is not affected and the small amount of darkening won't show. Keeping air from the soup helps to minimize darkening, so it is useful to cover it with plastic wrap while it is chilling.

Variation: This *Sopa de Paltas* (Avocado Soup) from Chile is an interesting example of a culinary combination from the opposite ends of the earth. The avocado and the Béchamel go very well together, producing a soup that is subtly flavored. In a fairly large saucepan heat 4 tablespoons butter and sauté 1 medium onion, finely chopped, until it is soft. Add 4 tablespoons flour, and cook, stirring, for about 2 minutes over low heat without letting the flour take on any color. Gradually add 2 cups milk, stirring constantly until the mixture is smooth and thick. Stir in 2 cups chicken stock and continue to cook over low heat, stirring from time to time, for about 5 minutes. Cut 2 large, ripe avocados in half and remove the pits. Mash them in their shells, turn them into a warmed soup tureen, season with a little lemon juice, and continue to mash until they are quite smooth. Pour the hot béchamel mixture over the avocados, stirring to mix, or beat with a wire whisk. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Serves 4 to 6.

Variation: For *Sopa de Aguacate y Papas* (Avocado Vichyssoise) from Colombia, peel and dice 1 pound potatoes and put into a large saucepan with the white part of 2 leeks, washed and sliced, and 1 medium onion, sliced. Pour in 4 cups chicken stock, cover, and simmer until tender. Put the vegetables and broth through a sieve, return the mixture to the saucepan, stir in a cup of heavy cream, and heat just to a boil. Peel and mash 2 large

avocados and put them into a heated soup tureen. Add the hot soup and stir to mix thoroughly. Season to taste with salt and white pepper. The soup is also very good served chilled. Serves 6.

Variation: For *Sopa de Aguacate* (Avocado Soup) from Venezuela, scoop out the flesh of 2 large avocados and put into a blender with 1½ cups clam juice, 1½ cups chicken stock, 1 cup light cream, and salt and white pepper to taste. Blend until smooth, chill, and serve garnished with a little chopped parsley and a little sweet paprika. If preferred, omit the cream and use 2 cups each chicken stock and clam juice. Serves 6.

Sopa de Creme de Palmito

Creamed Hearts of Palm Soup

BRAZIL

Hearts of palm are a commonplace in Brazil, where their delicate flavor and texture is taken for granted. I will always think of them as a luxury, even though most supermarkets have them canned. I particularly like to serve this soup when I am having a beef dish as a main course and want something elegantly light in contrast to the robust flavor of the meat. The soup can be prepared ahead of time and finished at the last minute. It is simplicity itself with a lovely, unusual, delicate flavor.

Serves 6

tablespoons rice flour

cup milk

14-ounce can hearts of palm

cups chicken stock

lt, white pepper

egg yolks

In a small bowl mix the rice flour with the milk. Drain and chop the hearts of palm and purée in a blender or food processor with 1 cup of the chicken stock. Pour the mixture into a saucepan and stir in the rice flour mixture and the rest of the chicken stock. Season to taste with salt and pepper and cook, stirring, over low heat until the soup is smooth and thickened slightly. In a bowl beat the egg yolks. Beat in a little of the hot soup, then pour the egg yolk mixture into the soup, and cook, stirring, for about 1 minute. Do not let the soup boil as it will curdle.

Antonia's Sopa de Chayote

Chayote Soup

MEXICO

This soup from Cuernavaca in the state of Morelos has a lovely light texture and delicate flavor. The main ingredient, chayote, the pale green pear-shaped vegetable, is worth looking out for in tropical markets.

Serves 6

large chayotes, peeled and sliced

lb

medium onion, finely chopped

clove garlic, chopped

tablespoons butter

tablespoon flour

cups chicken stock

white pepper

Put the chayotes in a saucepan with salted water to cover and simmer, covered, until they are tender, about 20 minutes. Transfer the chayotes to a blender or food processor with 2 cups of the cooking liquid and blend until smooth. Discard any remaining cooking liquid.

In a saucepan sauté the onion and garlic in the butter until the onion is soft. Stir in the flour and cook, stirring, for a minute without letting it brown. Add the chicken stock and cook, stirring, until the mixture is smooth. Combine the stock with the chayote mixture, season to taste with salt and white pepper, and simmer, covered, for 5 minutes longer, stirring from time to time. If liked, the soup may be put through a sieve for a finer texture.

Variation: I found an interesting variation of this soup in Nicaragua. It is made in exactly the same way except that just before serving, 1 cup (about ½ pound) cooked, shredded chicken breast is added and heated through, and the soup when served is garnished with croutons.

Sopa de Jitomate

Tomato Soup

MEXICO

This is a very fresh, simple tomato soup from Mexico, where the tomato originated and where it is sold large and ripe and sweet. I wait until the tomato season reaches its peak before cooking this, or better still until some home-grown tomatoes are ripe on the vine. I sometimes add a tablespoon of dry sherry to each serving, but mostly I prefer the unadorned flavor of tomato.

Serves 6

tablespoons butter or vegetable oil

large onion, finely chopped

clove garlic, chopped

large ripe tomatoes, peeled and coarsely chopped
cups chicken or beef stock
lt, freshly ground pepper
tablespoons dry sherry (optional)

Heat the butter in a fairly large saucepan and sauté the onion and garlic until the onion is soft. Add the tomatoes and cook, stirring, for 2 or 3 minutes. Pour in the stock and simmer the mixture for 10 minutes. Cool slightly and purée in two or three batches in a blender or food processor. Reheat, add salt and pepper to taste, and serve in bouillon cups with the sherry, if liked.

Sopa de Pimientos Morrones

Sweet Red Pepper Soup

MEXICO

When I was first married and my husband was transferred to Mexico for some years, my mother-in-law found me a cook who had long associations with the family. Her name was Francisca and she was a Zapotecan Indian from Oaxaca, a tiny woman with a beautiful tranquil high-cheekboned face, framed by long plaits, quite gray. This soup was one she made for me, using bell peppers for their rather more robust flavor. It is important that they be smooth and shiny, as even slightly wrinkled peppers will have less flavor and the texture of the finished soup will not be so smooth. This is a beautiful soup to look at with its deep, rich color and I love its pleasantly unusual flavor. The addition of hot peppers to the pot is a matter of taste — I prefer it without.

Serves 6

tablespoons vegetable oil
medium onion, finely chopped
large ripe red bell peppers
cups chicken or beef stock
cup tomato juice
fresh hot red or green pepper, whole and with stem left on (optional)
lt, freshly ground pepper

Heat the oil in a small skillet and sauté the onion until it is soft. Set aside. Peel the peppers according to the instructions on [this page](#). Seed and chop coarsely. Purée the peppers with the onion and a little stock in a blender or food processor. Transfer the purée to a saucepan, add the rest of the stock, the tomato juice, and if liked the hot pepper. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Simmer, covered, for 15 minutes. Remove and discard the pepper.

Sopa de Flor de Calabaza

Squash Blossom Soup

MEXICO

Squash, one of the oldest vegetables in the world, originated in Mexico. The flowers used in this recipe are usually from zucchini, although blossoms from any type of squash or pumpkin can be used. A popular Italian dish consists of the flowers dipped in batter and fried, so that Italian as well as Latin American markets are good places to go looking for squash blossoms. These are the male flowers, which produce no fruit. It is the female flower that gives us the zucchini, so one may eat the blossoms with a clear conscience. The male blossoms are attached to short, thin stems; the female flowers are attached to miniature squashes. *Epazote*, which adds a slight but distinctive flavor to the soup, is not often available in local markets, but the soup, with its subtle flavor, is still very good without it.

Serves 6

1 pound squash blossoms

4 tablespoons butter

1 medium onion, finely chopped

4 cups chicken stock

1/2 t, freshly ground pepper

1 sprig epazote, [this page](#) (optional)

Remove and discard the stems from the squash blossoms and chop the flowers coarsely. Heat the butter in a saucepan and sauté the onion until it is soft. Add the flowers and sauté for 3 or 4 minutes longer. Pour in the stock, season to taste with salt and pepper, cover, and simmer until the blossoms are tender, about 5 minutes. Purée in a blender or food processor, in more than one batch if necessary. Return to the saucepan and reheat with the sprig of *epazote* if it is available. Discard the *epazote* before serving.

Variation: For *Sopa de Flor de Calabaza con Crema* (Cream of Squash Blossom Soup), a rather richer soup, whisk 2 egg yolks with 1 cup of heavy cream, then whisk 1 cup of the hot soup into the egg mixture, beat this into the soup, and cook, without letting it boil, until the soup is lightly thickened. Mexican cooks always use only egg yolks. I find whole eggs do a much better job, and I use them even though this is a departure from tradition.

Variation: For *Sopa de Flor de Calabaza con Jitomate* (Squash Blossom and Tomato Soup), add 2 medium tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped, to the onion with the squash blossoms. This makes a very pleasantly different soup with an interesting blend of flavors.

Caldo de Zapallo Tierno

Zucchini Soup

This lovely simple recipe was given me by a friend, Josefina Velilla de Aquino, when I visited her in Asunción, Paraguay. She is a gifted cook and teacher of cooking, with a great feeling for traditional cuisine. Another version of it, from a family cook in Cuernavaca, is even more simple, and I often make that one when I am alone, or in a hurry, and the more elaborate one when I have guests. I often leave the rice out of the Paraguayan recipe for a more purely vegetable flavor.

Serves 6

2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 medium onion, finely chopped
2 cloves garlic, chopped
4 cups chicken stock
1 1/2 tablespoons raw rice
1 pound zucchini, grated
1/2 teaspoon salt, freshly ground pepper
1 egg
1/2 cup tablespoons freshly grated Parmesan cheese
1/2 cup tablespoon finely chopped parsley

Heat the oil in a fairly large saucepan and sauté the onion and garlic until the onion is soft. Add the chicken stock and the rice and simmer, covered, for 10 minutes. Add the zucchini. Season to taste with salt and pepper and simmer until the zucchini is very tender, about 15 minutes. In a soup tureen beat the egg with the cheese and parsley, then whisk in the soup, mixing well.

Variation: Antonia Delgado's *Sopa de Calabacita* (Zucchini Soup) from Cuernavaca, Mexico. In a saucepan sauté 1 medium onion, finely chopped, and 1 large scallion, using the white and green parts, coarsely chopped, in 2 tablespoons butter until the onion is soft. Add 1 pound zucchini, coarsely chopped, and stir for a minute. Pour in 5 cups chicken stock and simmer, covered, until the zucchini is tender, about 15 minutes. Purée in two or three batches in a blender or food processor. Pour the soup back into the saucepan, season to taste with salt and pepper, and reheat. Remove from the heat and stir in 1/2 cup heavy cream. Serve immediately. Serves 6.

Sopa de Crema de Coco

Cream of Coconut Soup

This is a subtle and unusual soup from Cartagena in coastal Colombia, where coconut plays a large role in the kitchen. I like it especially as the beginning to a summer lunch or dinner.

coconut
cups chicken stock
tablespoons butter
medium onion, grated
tablespoons flour
lt, freshly ground white pepper

Follow the instructions for extracting the thick milk from a coconut ([this page](#)), and set it aside. There will be $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 cup. Heat 1 cup of the chicken stock and pour it over the grated coconut, from which the thick milk has been squeezed, and let it stand about 30 minutes. Squeeze out the liquid through a double layer of dampened cheesecloth. Repeat the process two or three times to extract as much flavor from the coconut as possible. Set aside. Do not mix the two lots of milk. Discard the grated coconut.

Heat the butter in a saucepan and sauté the onion until it is very soft. Stir in the flour and cook, stirring, over low heat for 2 minutes. Gradually whisk in the thin coconut milk made with the stock, and the rest of the stock. Add a little more stock if there is only $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of the thick coconut milk, to make 6 cups in all. Season to taste with salt and pepper, cover, and simmer for 15 minutes. Stir in the thick coconut milk and heat the soup through but do not let it boil. Serve in bouillon cups.

Sopa de Repollo

Cabbage Soup

CHILE

Chile's temperate, sunny climate produces lovely fruits and vegetables and the cabbages are no exception, firm and heavy in the hand. Green cabbage is the best kind for this delicious, fresh-tasting soup.

Serves 6

small green cabbage, weighing about 1 pound
large or 2 medium potatoes
large leek
tablespoons butter
cups beef or chicken stock
lt, freshly ground pepper
cup coarsely grated Münster or similar cheese

Wash and finely shred the cabbage. Peel the potato, slice thinly, then cut each slice into 3 or 4 fingers. Trim the leek and split it lengthwise. Wash thoroughly, then slice finely. Heat the butter in a saucepan large enough to hold all the ingredients. Add the cabbage,

potatoes, and leek and cook, stirring with a wooden spoon, until the vegetables have absorbed the butter and the cabbage and leek are wilted, about 3 or 4 minutes. Pour in the stock, season to taste with salt and pepper, and simmer, covered, over moderate heat for 30 minutes, until the cabbage is tender. Stir in the cheese, and serve in soup bowls.

Sopa de Lima

Lime Soup

MEXICO

This soup is one of Mexico's great regional dishes. It comes from Yucatán, where the Mayan kitchen predominates, and it owes its unique flavor to a local species of lime that is seldom available, even in Mexico, outside the Yucatán peninsula. I have sometimes found these limes in the great Mexico City markets, but even then not regularly or often. Fortunately I've found that the soup loses very little of its authentic — and marvelous — flavor when made with our limes. In Mérida, Yucatán's capital, I had an interesting and very pleasant variation of the soup. Instead of the chicken gizzards and livers, a whole chicken breast, boned, poached, and shredded, was added. The chicken breast was cut in half, then simmered very gently in the stock for 10 minutes, allowed to cool, then skinned, boned, and shredded with the fingers. It was added to the soup just long enough to heat through before serving.

Serves 6

1/2 cup lard or vegetable oil
1 medium onion, finely chopped
1 medium tomato, peeled and chopped
1 green bell pepper, seeded and chopped
1 or 3 canned serrano chilies, chopped
4 cups chicken stock
1/2 cup juice of 1 1/2 lime and the shell
1 chicken gizzard
1 raw chicken livers, chopped
1/2 tsp salt, freshly ground pepper
4 tortillas, cut into thin strips
1 lime, thinly sliced



Heat 2 tablespoons of lard or vegetable oil in a saucepan and sauté the onion until it is softened. Add the tomato and sweet pepper and sauté for 2 or 3 minutes longer. Add the chilies, the chicken stock, the lime juice, and lime shell. Simmer for 2 minutes. Remove and

discard the lime shell.

Put the chicken gizzards into a small saucepan with water to cover. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat, cover, and simmer gently until the gizzards are tender, about 30 minutes. Drain, remove the gristle, chop, and set aside. Add the gizzards to the soup with the chicken livers. Simmer until the livers are done, about 5 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Have ready the tortillas, fried until crisp in lard or vegetable oil and drained on paper towels. Serve the soup garnished with the tortilla strips and thin slices of lime.

Quibebe

Winter Squash Soup

BRAZIL

This is a Bahian specialty but it is a safe bet to say that winter squash soup in one form or another is popular throughout Latin America, reflecting the New World origin of the vegetable. The *calabaza* (West Indian pumpkin) available in many tropical markets is closer in flavor to the varieties used in Latin America but I have had successful results using Hubbard, butternut, and crookneck squashes. Our American pumpkin won't do. It is both too strongly flavored and too sweet.

Serves 6

6 tablespoons (¼ cup) butter

1 medium onion, chopped

1 medium tomato, peeled, seeded, and chopped

2 cloves garlic, minced

or 2 fresh hot red peppers, seeded and chopped

4 pounds winter squash, preferably calabaza (West Indian pumpkin), peeled and cut into ½-inch cubes

4 cups beef stock

1 lb

1 teaspoon sugar

2 tablespoons Parmesan cheese (optional)



Melt the butter in a large saucepan; add the onion, tomato, garlic, and hot peppers; and cook until the onion is softened and the mixture thick and well blended. Add the squash and the stock to the saucepan, season to taste with salt, stir in the sugar, and simmer, covered, for 20 minutes or until the squash has disintegrated and thickened the soup, which should retain some texture and not be completely smooth. If liked, the soup may be sprinkled with 1 tablespoon Parmesan cheese for each serving.

Variation: In Chile the squash is cooked in stock or water, mashed until smooth, and combined with a sautéed onion and an amount of milk equal to the stock, 3 cups of each to 1 pound of squash. At the last minute a well-beaten egg is stirred into the soup.

Variation: In Colombia 2 pounds of squash are cooked in beef stock until the squash is tender. The soup, which should be thick, is put through a sieve or reduced to a purée in a blender or food processor. A little butter is added just before serving.

Variation: In Argentina, as in Chile, the soup is a thinner one, using 1½ pounds of squash to 3 cups each beef stock and milk. It is served with croutons. At the last minute 2 egg yolks beaten with a tablespoon or so of Parmesan cheese are stirred into the soup.

Variation: In Paraguay ¼ cup raw rice is cooked with the squash. At the last minute a whole egg is beaten with a tablespoon or so of grated Münster or Parmesan cheese together with a tablespoon of chopped parsley and stirred into the soup.

Variation: In Ecuador the squash is put on to cook with 1 sliced onion, 1 medium sliced tomato, peeled, 1 clove garlic, chopped, and water barely to cover, about 3 cups. When the squash is tender, purée it in a blender with all the liquid and return the soup to the saucepan. Add 2 cups milk and season to taste with salt and pepper. Mix 2 tablespoons butter with 2 tablespoons flour, and add, bit by bit, to the soup. Simmer gently, stirring, over low heat until the soup is thickened. Serve with grated Münster cheese.

Locro

Potato Soup

ECUADOR

This is a highlands dish. There is a coastal version in which 1 teaspoon ground annatto is used instead of the paprika.

Serves 6 to 8

4 tablespoons (¼ cup) butter

1 teaspoon sweet paprika

1 medium onion, finely chopped

4 pounds potatoes, peeled and sliced

2 cups each milk and light cream

1 pound Münster cheese, grated

1 lb

In a large, heavy saucepan heat the butter and stir in the paprika. Add the onion and sauté over moderate heat until the onion is softened. Pour in 4 cups water, bring to a boil, add the potatoes, and simmer over low heat, uncovered, stirring occasionally. When the potatoes are almost done, add the milk and cream and continue to cook, stirring from time

to time, until the potatoes begin to disintegrate. Stir the cheese into the potatoes, season to taste with salt, and serve immediately. Avocado slices are sometimes served with the *Locro*, on separate plates but to be eaten at the same time.

Variation: In coastal Ecuador shrimp fritters are sometimes added to the potato soup. Peel 2 dozen medium shrimp and set them aside. In a skillet heat 1 tablespoon butter and sauté the shrimp shells until they turn pink. Put the shells into a small saucepan with 1 cup water, cover, and simmer for 5 minutes. Strain, discard the shells, and stir the stock into the *Locro*. Chop the shrimp. Grate a medium ear of corn — there should be ½ cup. In 1 tablespoon butter sauté 1 medium onion, very finely chopped, with 1 medium tomato, peeled, seeded, and chopped, until the onion is tender and the mixture very thick and well blended. Allow the mixture to cool. Season to taste with salt and pepper, add the shrimp, the corn, and 1 egg, lightly beaten. Fry by the tablespoon in hot lard or vegetable oil until lightly browned on both sides. Add to the soup when serving.



Sopa de Elote

Corn Soup

CUBA

Serves 6

4 cups corn kernels, preferably fresh; if frozen, thoroughly defrosted

4 cups chicken stock

1 cup light cream

1/2 tsp, freshly ground white pepper

2 eggs, lightly beaten

2 tablespoons chopped parsley

Put the corn into a blender or food processor with the chicken stock and blend to a purée. Do this in two batches. Pour the purée into a saucepan, stir in the cream, and simmer over very low heat, stirring from time to time, for 5 minutes. Work the purée through a sieve, return it to the saucepan, and season it to taste with salt and pepper. If it is very thick, thin it with a little more chicken stock, and bring to a simmer. Stir ½ cup of the soup into the eggs, then stir the egg mixture into the soup and cook, stirring, for 1 or 2 minutes. Serve garnished with a little chopped parsley.

Sopa de Maní

Peanut Soup

Peanut soup turns up all over Latin America, each version a little different from the others, though not very much so. My favorite is this creamy, delicate soup from Ecuador.

Serves 6

tablespoons butter
medium onion, finely chopped
cup toasted peanuts, finely ground
pound fresh potatoes, cooked and chopped
cups chicken or beef stock
cup light cream
lt, freshly ground pepper
tablespoons chopped chives

Heat the butter in a skillet and sauté the onion until it is soft. In a blender or food processor combine the onion and any butter in the skillet, the peanuts, potatoes, and a little of the stock. Blend to a smooth purée, pour into a saucepan, stir in the rest of the stock, and simmer gently, covered, for 15 minutes. Stir in the cream, season to taste with salt and pepper, and simmer just long enough to heat through. Pour into soup bowls and garnish with the chopped chives.

Sopa de Topinambur

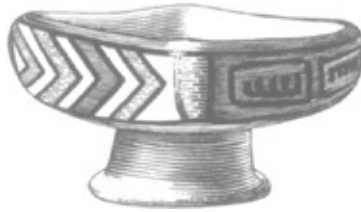
Jerusalem Artichoke Soup

CHILE

Chile was the only country in South America where I encountered this soup. Though differently made, it reminded me of my mother's artichoke soup, a family favorite. Autumn is the season for Jerusalem artichokes and I have found the soup comforting on a blustery evening, though it is richly delicate rather than hearty.

Serves 4

pound Jerusalem artichokes
large onion, finely chopped
½ cups chicken stock
lt, freshly ground white pepper
cup heavy cream
tablespoons fresh coriander (cilantro) or parsley, chopped



Wash and scrape the artichokes and slice thinly. Put into a saucepan with the onion and the chicken stock, bring to a boil and simmer, covered, until the artichokes are soft, about 20 minutes. Reduce to a purée in a blender or food processor and pour back into the saucepan. Season to taste with salt and pepper, stir in the cream, and heat through. Pour the soup into bowls and garnish with the chopped coriander or parsley.

Sopa de Plátano Verde

Green Plantain Soup

Traditionally the plantains for this soup, which I first had in Puerto Rico, are grated on a grater but I find a blender or food processor does the job admirably. Recipes vary from country to country though not in essentials.

Serves 6

green plantain (see [this page](#))

cups chicken or beef stock

lt, freshly ground pepper

Grate the plantain on the second finest side of a grater, or chop it and purée it in a blender or food processor with a little stock if necessary. Pour the cold stock into a saucepan, add the plantain, and cook over moderate heat, stirring with a wooden spoon, until the soup is thick. Season to taste with salt and pepper and simmer, covered, for 10 minutes.

Sopa de Batata Doce

Sweet Potato Soup

BRAZIL

This is one of the most delicious soups I have ever had, whether as *sopa de camote* in Spanish-speaking Latin America or as *sopa de batata doce* in Brazil. It is a beautiful golden-yellow color with a lovely tart hint of tomato flavor balancing the slight sweetness of the potato. The type of sweet potato used is the delightful *boniato*, which has a pink or brownish skin and white flesh and is available in Caribbean markets — it is well worth looking for.

Serves 6

pound boniatos (white sweet potatoes)

lt

tablespoons butter

medium onion, finely chopped
medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped
cups beef stock
eshly ground pepper
tablespoons chopped parsley or fresh coriander (cilantro), optional

Peel the sweet potatoes, slice thickly, and put into a saucepan with cold salted water to cover. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat, and simmer, covered, until tender, about 20 minutes. Drain thoroughly and chop coarsely.

Heat the butter in a skillet and sauté the onion until it is soft. Add the tomatoes and cook for about 5 minutes longer. Put the mixture into a blender or food processor with the sweet potatoes and 1 cup of the stock and reduce to a smooth purée. Pour into a saucepan with the rest of the stock. Season to taste with salt and pepper and reheat. I have sometimes had the soup garnished with chopped parsley or coriander, and though it looks pretty I feel this really adds very little to the incomparable flavor of the soup.

So'O-Yosopy

Beef Soup

PARAGUAY

This is a wonderfully comforting soup and needs little more than dessert to make a light supper. Its name in Guaraní, an official language in Paraguay, translates in Spanish into *sopa de carne*. It is easy to make if the simple rules are followed.

Serves 6

pounds ground lean sirloin or round steak
tablespoons vegetable oil
medium onions, finely chopped
green bell pepper, seeded and finely chopped, or 1 or 2 fresh hot peppers, seeded and chopped
medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped
cup rice or vermicelli
lt
ated Parmesan cheese

Have the butcher grind the meat twice, then mash it in a mortar to make sure it is completely pulverized, or use a food processor. Set the meat aside together with any juices.

Heat the oil in a skillet and sauté the onions and pepper until the onions are softened. Add the tomatoes and cook until the mixture is thick and well blended, about 5 minutes longer. Cool the mixture slightly. Put the beef and its juices into a saucepan. Stir in the sautéed onions, pepper, and tomatoes, known as the *sofrito*, and 8 cups cold water, mixing well. Bring to a boil over moderate heat, stirring with a wooden spoon. Add the rice or

noodles and simmer, still stirring, until tender, about 15 minutes. At this point, season to taste with salt. If salt is added earlier, the meat and liquid, which should be completely blended, may separate. Some cooks believe that constant stirring is the most important step, others that the point at which the salt is added is the vital factor. Superstition has it that if anyone who does not enjoy cooking is present in the kitchen they may cause the *So'O-Yosopy* to separate and spoil the dish.

Serve with a baked sweet potato or a thick slice of boiled yucca (cassava), or both, and *Sopa Paraguaya*, Paraguayan Corn Bread despite its misleading name. Sprinkle, if liked, with grated cheese. Water biscuits may also be served with the soup.

Variation: Omit the rice or noodles and add 2 thinly sliced carrots to the onion and tomato mixture with a teaspoon of oregano and freshly ground pepper.

Variation: *Chupi* (Meat Soup) from Argentina is a very simple but traditional soup, easy to make and grand in winter weather. It is obviously related to Paraguay's exotically named *So'O-Yosopy*. Heat $\frac{1}{4}$ cup vegetable oil in a saucepan and sauté 1 large onion, finely chopped, and 1 red bell pepper, seeded and chopped (or use 2 canned pimientos, chopped), until onion and pepper are both tender. Add 1 pound lean beef, round or sirloin, coarsely chopped in a food processor, or by hand, and sauté, stirring to break up the beef for a few minutes. Add 3 medium potatoes, peeled and cubed, 1 tablespoon chopped parsley, $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon of cayenne (optional), 6 cups beef stock or water, and salt and pepper to taste. Bring to a simmer and cook, covered, for 30 minutes, stirring once or twice during the cooking time. Serves 6.

Sopa de Garbanzo

Chickpea Soup

MEXICO

Though this is a regional Mexican dish from Oaxaca, its overtones are very Middle Eastern with its union, of chickpeas and mint. It is clearly an old colonial dish. The fried egg is an interesting addition.

Serves 6

tablespoons vegetable oil

medium onion, finely chopped

clove garlic, minced

tablespoon fresh mint leaves, chopped, or $\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoon dried

cups beef or chicken stock

cups cooked chickpeas (1 $\frac{1}{4}$ -pound can), or $\frac{1}{2}$ pound dried chickpeas, soaked overnight in cold water

lt, freshly ground pepper

eggs

Heat 2 tablespoons of the oil in a skillet and sauté the onion and garlic until the onion is soft. Transfer the contents of the skillet to a blender or food processor, add the mint leaves, and ½ cup of the stock, and reduce the mixture to a purée. Pour the mixture into a medium-sized saucepan.

Put the cooked chickpeas in the blender or food processor with the liquid from the can. If using dried chickpeas, cook these in water to cover until tender, about 1 hour. Purée the chickpeas in a blender with 1 cup of the water in which they have cooked. Add the chickpea purée to the onion mixture and stir in the remaining stock. Season to taste with salt and pepper, bring to a simmer, and cook, stirring from time to time, until the flavors are blended, about 5 minutes.

Heat the remaining 2 tablespoons of oil in a skillet and fry the eggs. Pour the soup into bowls. Slide a fried egg into each bowl.

FISH SOUPS

The fruits of the sea, with which Latin America is so lavishly endowed, are used in some very fine soups, robust enough to be the main course of lunch or dinner. They may be enriched with corn, tomatoes, sweet peppers, or beans, with root vegetables like yams, yucca (cassava) root, or potatoes, with okra, zucchini, or other green vegetables, with coconut milk as well as stock, sometimes enlivened with a touch of hot pepper, and always with well-orchestrated seasonings, a symphony of flavors.

Sopa de Almejas

Clam Soup

COLOMBIA

This clam soup is a coastal favorite in Colombia, which is richly blessed in having both the Caribbean and the Pacific wash its shores. I had it with Colombian friends at a family gathering when there were twelve of us to lunch. The day was hot, the sun brilliant, and the soup hearty, but this did not stop even more substantial dishes following. At home I like it as a winter soup and make it the central dish of a family lunch or dinner, serving larger helpings; this recipe would serve 3 or 4 as a main dish, 6 as a soup.

In Colombia the large Spanish mackerel sierra (see [this page](#)) is used. The stronger flavored Atlantic mackerel won't do for this dish, so substitute red snapper if Spanish mackerel is not available.

Serves 6

cup olive oil

medium onion, finely chopped

clove garlic, chopped

red and 1 green bell pepper, or use 2 red or 2 green peppers, seeded and chopped

medium tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped
pound (about 3 medium) potatoes, peeled and sliced
lt, freshly ground pepper
bay leaf
rich ground cloves
teaspoon cumin
teaspoon sugar (optional)
dozen clams, well washed
pounds fillets of Spanish mackerel, red snapper, or similar fish, cut into 12 pieces
cups clam juice
cups water
tablespoons finely chopped parsley

Heat the oil in a fireproof casserole and sauté the onion, garlic, and peppers until the onion is soft. Add the tomatoes and sauté for a minute or two longer. Add the potatoes. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Add the bay leaf, cloves, cumin, and sugar (if desired). Cover and simmer until the potatoes are almost tender, about 15 minutes. Add the clams, pieces of fish, clam juice, and water. Cover and simmer for 5 minutes longer, or until the clams have opened and the fish has lost its translucent look. Sprinkle with parsley and serve in soup bowls.



Chupe de Camarones

Shrimp Stew

PERU

More like a bouillabaisse, this soup is really a meal in itself. The word “*chupe*” actually means a savory stew containing potatoes, cheese, eggs, etc. Peru, Ecuador, and Chile all have magnificent *chupes*.

Serves 6

cup vegetable oil
medium onions, finely chopped

cloves garlic, chopped
medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped
or 2 fresh hot red or green peppers, seeded and chopped
teaspoon oregano
lt, freshly ground pepper
½ quarts fish stock, or half clam juice, half water
medium potatoes, peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes
pounds jumbo shrimp
cup rice
large potatoes, peeled and halved
½ pounds peas, shelled, or use one (10-ounce) package frozen peas, thawed
ears corn, each cut into 3 slices
eggs
cup light cream
tablespoons finely chopped fresh green coriander (cilantro), or use parsley, preferably flat Italian

Heat the oil in a large saucepan and sauté the onions and garlic until the onions are softened. Add the tomatoes, hot peppers, oregano, salt and pepper to taste, and cook for a few minutes, stirring to mix well. Add the fish stock and the diced potatoes. Peel the shrimp and add the shells to the saucepan. Set the shrimp aside. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat, and simmer gently, covered, for about 30 minutes. Strain through a sieve, pressing down on the solids to extract all the juices. Rinse out the saucepan and return the broth to it.

Add the rice, halved potatoes, and peas, cover, and simmer until the potatoes are tender, about 20 minutes. Add the corn and the shrimp and cook for 5 minutes longer. Break the eggs into the soup, one at a time, stirring, so that the eggs coagulate in strips. Pour in the cream and cook just long enough to heat through. Pour into a warmed soup tureen and sprinkle with the coriander or parsley. Ideally this is served in large, deep, old-fashioned rimmed soup plates. Serve in large bowls holding about 2 cups.

Variation: Use only 1 pound of shrimp. Add six 1-inch slices of fillet of bass, fried in oil at the last minute. Leave out the stirred-in eggs and top each soup plate with a poached egg and, if liked, a strip of lightly sautéed sweet red or green pepper. Serves 6.

Variation: In Chile, that paradise of fish and shellfish, there is a simple, very pleasant version of these hearty fish soup-stews, *Chupe de Pescado* (Fish Stew). It is light enough to serve as a soup, not as a meal in itself. Peel, quarter, and boil in salted water 6 fairly small potatoes. Set aside. In a saucepan sauté 2 finely chopped onions in 3 tablespoons vegetable oil and 1 tablespoon sweet paprika until the onions are soft. Add 2 cups freshly made breadcrumbs, 1 finely grated carrot (optional), 3 cups milk, 1 ½ cups fish stock or clam juice or water, salt and pepper to taste, ½ teaspoon oregano, and 1 pound mackerel fillets

or hake or cod, cut into 1-inch pieces. Add the potatoes. Cover and simmer gently until the fish is done, about 5 to 8 minutes. The *chupe* should be about as thick as a medium Béchamel sauce. If it seems too thick, add a little more milk. Serve sprinkled with finely chopped hardboiled egg, using 2. Serves 6.

Sopa de Candia con Mojarras

Okra and Pompano Soup

COLOMBIA

The foods of the Andean countries, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru, have more distinctive regional characteristics because the countries, until recently, were so cut off from one another. Though now with modern transportation they enjoy one another's foods, the old regional kitchens have, happily, retained their identity. This is a typical coastal dish from Cartagena, which has a very lively cuisine. I first enjoyed it high up in Bogotá.

Serves 6

quarts fish stock
medium onions, finely chopped
cloves garlic, chopped
large tomato, peeled, seeded, and chopped
fresh hot peppers, seeded and chopped
teaspoon each ground cumin and allspice
lt
tablespoons lemon juice
pound small, fresh okra, quartered
pound small yams, peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces
ripe plantains, peeled and sliced
tablespoons butter
fillets pompano
tablespoons tomato paste
tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
lt, freshly ground pepper

In a kettle combine the fish stock, onions, garlic, tomato, hot peppers, and cumin and allspice. Bring the mixture to a boil and simmer it, covered, for 15 minutes over low heat. To a saucepan of boiling salted water add the lemon juice and okra. Bring back to a boil, remove from the heat, drain the okra, and rinse it in cold water. Add the okra to the kettle with the yams and plantains and cook, covered, over very low heat for 1 hour.

In a skillet heat the butter and sauté the fish until the fillets are golden. Cut the fish into 1-inch pieces and add to the soup with the tomato paste, Worcestershire sauce, and salt and

pepper to taste. Simmer for 30 minutes longer.

Variation: Coconuts are used a great deal in coastal cooking. Instead of the fish stock, use 3 cups thin coconut milk (see [this page](#)), increase the cumin to ½ teaspoon, and omit the allspice. Add 1 pound yucca (cassava) root, peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces, when adding the okra. Omit the tomato paste and Worcestershire sauce. When the soup is ready, pour in 1 cup thick coconut milk and simmer for a few minutes longer.

Chupe de Corvina y Camarones

Striped Bass and Shrimp Stew

ECUADOR

This is Ecuador's version of the Peruvian *Chupe de Camarones* (Shrimp Stew), but a distinctively different dish.

Serves 6

½ pounds striped bass fillets, cut into 1½-inch slices

our

lt, freshly ground pepper

cup vegetable oil

pound small or medium shrimp

tablespoons butter

teaspoon sweet paprika

large onion, finely chopped

pounds potatoes, peeled and sliced

cups milk or half milk, half light cream

pound Münster cheese, grated

hardboiled eggs, sliced

Rinse the fish and pat dry with paper towels. Season the flour with salt and pepper. Dredge the fish in the flour. Heat the oil in a skillet and sauté the fish slices until lightly browned on both sides. Set aside.

Shell the shrimp, reserving the shells. Cut the shrimp into ½-inch pieces and set aside. Melt a tablespoon of the butter in a saucepan, add the shrimp shells, and cook, stirring, until the shells turn pink. Add 3 cups water, bring to a boil, cover, and simmer for 5 minutes. Strain, discard the shells, and measure the stock. Bring it up to 3 cups with a little water if necessary. Set the stock aside.

Heat the rest of the butter in a large saucepan. Add the paprika and the onion and sauté until the onion is softened. Add the potatoes and the shrimp stock, cover, and simmer until the potatoes are tender, about 20 minutes. Add the milk, or milk and cream, to the saucepan and continue to cook the potatoes, stirring from time to time, until they are

partly disintegrated. Add the cheese and stir to mix thoroughly. Season to taste with salt and pepper, then fold in the fish and the shrimp. Cook over low heat for about 3 minutes, or until the shrimp are cooked. Serve in bowls topped with slices of hardboiled egg. This should be thick, but still recognizable as a soup. Thin with a little milk if necessary.

Variation: This is also Ecuadorian, a simpler version, *Chupe de Corvina* (Striped Bass Stew). Heat 4 tablespoons butter in a large saucepan. Add 1 tablespoon sweet paprika; 1 large onion, finely chopped; 2 cloves garlic, chopped, and sauté until the onion is soft. Add 2 pounds potatoes, peeled and sliced, and 3 cups water. Cover and simmer until the potatoes disintegrate. Season to taste with salt and pepper, stir in 1 cup light cream and ½ pound grated Münster cheese or, if available, Spanish *queso blanco*, crumbled. Cut 1 pound striped bass fillets into 1-inch slices. Dust with flour and fry in vegetable oil until golden brown on both sides. Drain and fold into the potato soup. Serve garnished with slices of hardboiled egg, using 2 eggs. Serves 4 to 6.



Caldillo de Congrio

Fish Soup

CHILE

Congrio is a magnificent firm-fleshed fish found in Chilean waters. I have found cod to be the most acceptable substitute.

Serves 4

2 pounds cod, cut into 4 steaks

1 lb

1 cup lemon juice

2 carrots, scraped and thinly sliced

2 pounds small potatoes, peeled and thinly sliced

2 medium onions, halved and thinly sliced

2 cloves garlic, chopped (optional)

1/2 tsp freshly ground pepper

1/2 tsp oregano

1/2 cup dry white wine

2 cups fish stock

2 tablespoons olive oil

Put the fish steaks into a casserole, preferably earthenware, large enough to hold them in a single layer. Season with salt and the lemon juice. Cover with a layer of carrots, then a

layer of half the potatoes, then the onions and garlic, and the rest of the potatoes. Season with salt, pepper, and oregano. Pour in the wine, fish stock, and olive oil. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat, and simmer until the potatoes and carrots are tender, about 30 minutes. Serve in soup bowls accompanied by crusty bread and butter. With the addition of dessert, or cheese, this makes a splendid lunch or dinner.

Fanesca

Spring Soup

ECUADOR

A traditional dish for Lent, when spring vegetables — peas, green beans, and so on — are first available, this soup is a meal in itself.

Serves 8 to 10

1 pound salt cod

6 tablespoons (¼ cup) butter

2 medium onions, finely chopped

1 clove garlic, minced

1 teaspoon oregano

1 teaspoon ground cumin

1 bay leaf

1½ teaspoons freshly ground pepper

1½ cups long-grain rice cooked in 1 cup milk and 1 cup water

1 cup cooked corn kernels

½ cups cooked shredded cabbage

1 cup cooked, mashed winter squash

1 cup cooked, chopped zucchini

1 cup cooked baby lima beans or broad (fava) beans

1 cup cooked green peas

1 cup cooked green beans, cut into ½-inch pieces

½ cup peanuts, ground

1½ cups milk

1 cup light cream

1 cup Spanish fresh cheese (queso fresco or queso blanco) or Münster, chopped

1 egg

4 hardboiled eggs, sliced

1 cup grated Parmesan cheese

Soak the cod in cold water to cover for 12 hours or more, changing the water frequently.

Drain the fish and put it into a saucepan with fresh water to cover. Bring to a boil, lower the heat, and simmer until the fish is tender, about 15 minutes. Drain, and reserve the fish stock. Remove any skin and bones from the fish and cut it into ½-inch pieces. Set aside.

Heat the butter in a large saucepan and sauté the onions and garlic until the onions are soft. Add the oregano, cumin, bay leaf, and several grinds of black pepper and sauté for a minute or two longer. Add 1 cup water, bring to a boil, and add the cooked rice, corn, cabbage, squash, zucchini, lima or fava beans, peas, green beans, ground peanuts, the fish and fish stock, the milk, and the cream. Stir to mix and simmer very gently for about 5 minutes to blend the flavors. Add the chopped cheese and salt to taste. The soup should be about as thick as a minestrone. If it seems too thick, thin it with a little more milk and simmer for a few minutes longer.

Pour the soup into a tureen and serve in soup plates. Garnish the servings with sliced hardboiled egg. Have the grated Parmesan cheese in a bowl on the table to be used as liked.

Sopa de Frijol Negro con Camarones

Black Bean Soup with Shrimp

MEXICO

This is a recipe from Oaxaca, where avocado leaves are often used in cooking. Since I find it hard to prune my potted avocado trees, lost as I am in affectionate admiration for their beautiful glossy foliage, I am grateful to recipes like this, which urge me to pluck a couple of leaves. The flavor they add is less pronounced than bay leaf, which is also often used. The leaves may be toasted lightly before they are added to the pot. Some cooks insist this is a vital step, but from experience I do not think it matters a great deal, if at all. The soup is absolutely delicious with a most exciting flavor, the richness of the black beans contrasting unexpectedly with the fresh flavor of the shrimp.

Serves 4

cup black beans, washed and picked over

teaspoon ground cumin

teaspoon oregano

bay leaf, or 2 avocado leaves

tablespoons olive oil

medium onion, finely chopped

clove garlic, chopped

medium tomato, peeled and chopped

lt, freshly ground pepper

cups chicken stock

pound peeled raw shrimp, cut into ½-inch pieces

tablespoons dry sherry



In a medium saucepan combine the beans, cumin, oregano, bay leaf or avocado leaves, with 3 cups water. Bring to a boil over moderate heat, reduce the heat to low, cover, and simmer until the beans are very tender, about 2½ hours. Cool a little, remove, discard the bay leaf or avocado leaves, and pour the beans and liquid into a blender or food processor.

Heat the oil in a skillet and sauté the onion and garlic until the onion is soft. Add the tomato and simmer until the mixture is well blended, 2 or 3 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper and add to the blender or food processor. If necessary do this in two batches. Reduce the mixture to a smooth purée and pour it into the saucepan. Stir in the chicken stock and bring to a simmer over moderate heat. Add the shrimp and cook for 2 minutes longer. Serve immediately, as overcooking toughens shrimp. Stir 1 tablespoon of sherry into each serving.

Fish and Shellfish

Pescados y Mariscos

As I have noted, fish and shellfish in Latin America are superb, with the cold Humboldt Current that runs up the coasts of Chile and Peru being responsible for some of the most magnificent seafood in the world. *Erizos*, the sea urchins of Chile, which often measure as much as 4 and 5 inches across, provide an unrivaled gastronomic experience. I remember having *erizos al matico*, raw sea urchins served with a sauce of chopped onion, parsley, oil, and lemon juice, a soup spoon, and a pile of thin, hot buttered toast, at the Hotel Crillon's dining room in Santiago, and marveling not only at their exquisite flavor but at their astonishing size.*

It is the same with *locos* (abalone), which also reaches wildly generous proportions yet loses nothing in delicacy and flavor. At a beach club near Lima, Peru, I had huge scallops with their coral served on the half shell and accompanied only by the small tropical lemon-lime that I am sure is indigenous to tropical America, its flavor more lemon than lime, but muted, delicate. Shrimp, crabs, oysters, lobsters, clams, and scallops are found in abundance, and there are also strange shellfish like the *picoroccos*, beaked creatures that live in colonies of rocklike tubes and taste like crabs when cooked. Among the fish, *congrío* with its large head and tapering body is unique, and *corvina*, sea bass, is very fine. Mexico's waters produce excellent shrimp, conch, red snapper, and other fish and shellfish, and the same is true of the waters off Ecuador, Colombia, Argentina, and Brazil.

Perhaps because of this abundance of good seafood, recipes are not as numerous, or as varied, as for meat and poultry dishes, since the best way to cook splendid fish and shellfish is often the simplest. But there are a number of very good, original recipes, especially those from Brazil, suitable for fish usually available in any fish store. And there are the *seviches*, fish and shellfish "cooked" in a marinade of lime or lemon juice, and the *escabeches*, lightly pickled fish.

Salt cod is as popular in South America as it is in Spain and Portugal, with cooks combining indigenous and introduced foods to create exciting new dishes. Mexico cooks salt cod with a sauce of the mild but richly flavored *ancho* pepper and almonds. The north of Brazil marries coconut milk with tomatoes and sweet peppers for its salt cod Bahia style, in great contrast to the cod of Minas Gerais to the south, where tomatoes, sweet peppers, and cabbage are included.



Pescado a la Veracruzana

Fish, Veracruz Style

MEXICO

Pescado a la Veracruzana (Fish in the Style of Veracruz) is Mexico's best-known fish dish and rightly so for it is admirable. There are a great many versions of it, each one differing in minor details. This is the one I prefer and I never tire of it. When I first visited Venezuela, I realized I was meeting its culinary, and almost certainly younger, cousin, *Corbullón Mantuano*, made with striped bass, and in Buenos Aires the *Corvina a la Porteña*, also with bass, seemed to be the Argentine cousin. Subtle variations make all three worth trying; they come to table surprisingly different.

Serves 4

2 pounds red snapper fillets

Salt, freshly ground pepper

Juice of a small lemon or lime

1/2 cup olive oil

2 medium onions, finely chopped

2 cloves garlic, chopped

2 medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped

2 tablespoons capers

1/2 lb small pimiento-stuffed green olives

1 or 3 canned jalapeño chilies, seeded and cut into strips

1 lb small new potatoes, freshly cooked, or 6 medium potatoes, halved

6 slices firm white bread

2 tablespoons butter for frying

Season the fish with salt and pepper and the lemon or lime juice. Set aside. Heat the oil in a skillet and sauté the onions and garlic until the onions are soft. Reduce the tomatoes to a purée in a blender or food processor and add to the skillet with the capers, olives, *jalapeño* chilies, and the fish. Season with a little more salt and pepper and cook over very low heat until the fish is tender and the sauce slightly thickened, about 10 to 15 minutes. Transfer to a warmed platter and garnish with the potatoes. Cut the bread into 6 triangles, sauté in butter until golden, and arrange as a border round the edge of the platter.

Variation: *Corbullón Mantuano* (Striped Bass in Sweet Pepper Sauce) from Venezuela. Remove the head and tail from a 2½-pound striped bass and cut it into 1½-inch slices. Season with salt and freshly ground pepper. Heat 4 tablespoons butter and 1 tablespoon olive oil in a large skillet and sauté the fish until it is lightly browned on both sides. Transfer the fish to a platter and keep it warm. In the fat remaining in the pan sauté 2 medium onions, thinly sliced, and 1 green and 1 red bell pepper, seeded and thinly sliced,

until the onions are soft. Add 6 medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped, ½ small fresh hot red pepper, or ¼ teaspoon ground hot red pepper (cayenne), 2 tablespoons capers, and 20 small pimiento-stuffed green olives, and simmer for 2 or 3 minutes. Add 1 cup dry red wine and ¼ cup olive oil and simmer until the sauce is well blended, about 10 minutes. Add the fish and cook just long enough to heat it through. Arrange on a warmed platter. Peel and slice 1½ pounds potatoes and boil, covered, in salted water until tender, about 15 to 20 minutes. Drain and arrange around the edge of the platter with the fish. Serves 4.

Variation: *Corvina a la Porteña* (Striped Bass, Buenos Aires Style) is an Argentine cousin of both dishes. Cut a 2½- to 3-pound striped bass with head and tail removed into 1½-inch slices and dredge them in flour. Pour ½ cup olive oil in a baking dish and arrange the fish slices in it. In a skillet heat another cup of olive oil and sauté 2 medium onions, chopped, until softened. Add 2 tomatoes, peeled and chopped, 2 sliced green bell peppers, a bay leaf, ½ teaspoon oregano, and salt and freshly ground pepper to taste. Simmer the mixture until it is thick and well blended. Pour the sauce over the fish and bake in a preheated moderate (350° F.) oven for 20 minutes, or until the fish is done. Discard the bay leaf. Transfer to a warmed platter and sprinkle with a tablespoon of chopped parsley. Serves 4.

Corvina a la Chorrillana

Striped Bass with Vegetables

PERU

This is bass in the style of Chorrillos, a resort 10 miles out of Lima. The annatto oil gives a distinctive flavor to this robust and satisfying dish. Chorrillos means literally “the little streams,” which flow down from the Andes creating a green patch on this desert coast so that the town can exist — and hence the dish.

Serves 6

tablespoon annatto oil (see [this page](#))

large onions, finely sliced

cloves garlic, chopped

large tomatoes, peeled and sliced

large or 4 small fresh hot red or green peppers, seeded and sliced

teaspoon oregano

lt, freshly ground pepper

pounds striped bass, cut into 6 steaks

tablespoons peanut oil

ice of 1 lemon



Pour the annatto oil into a heavy casserole so that it covers the bottom evenly. Make a layer of half the onions, garlic, tomatoes, and peppers. Sprinkle with half the oregano and season to taste with salt and pepper. Arrange the fish on top of the vegetables and cover with the remaining vegetables. Season with the rest of the oregano, salt and pepper, the peanut oil, and the lemon juice. Cover the casserole and cook over low heat for 20 to 30 minutes, or until the vegetables are tender. Serve with *Arroz Graneado* (Peruvian Style Rice).

Variation: Omit the oregano and use 2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh green coriander (cilantro) instead.

Corvina Rellena

Stuffed Striped Bass

ARGENTINA

Serves 4

3- to 3½-pound striped bass, cleaned and boned, with head and tail left on

1/2 lb, freshly ground pepper

1 medium onion, finely chopped

2 cloves garlic, finely chopped or crushed

1/2 cup finely chopped parsley

1/2 cup fresh breadcrumbs

1/2 cup milk

2 tablespoons butter

2 tablespoons olive oil

1/2 cup dry white wine

Rinse the fish and pat dry with paper towels. Season the inside of the fish with salt and pepper. In a bowl combine the onion, garlic, parsley, breadcrumbs, and salt and pepper to taste. Moisten the mixture with a little milk and stuff the fish with the mixture. Fasten with toothpicks. Butter a shallow, heatproof casserole that will hold the fish comfortably, and arrange the fish in it. Dot the fish with the butter and pour the olive oil over it, then pour the white wine over it. Bake in a preheated hot (400° F.) oven for 40 minutes, or until the fish feels firm when pressed with a finger. The wine will have reduced, combining with the butter and oil to form a sauce. Serve directly from the casserole. Accompany with rice or potatoes and a green vegetable or salad.

Mero en Mac-Cum

Striped Bass in Sauce

This dish with achiote (annatto), cumin, and Seville orange juice is typical of the Mayan kitchen of Yucatán.

Serves 4

4 pounds striped bass, or any firm-fleshed, non-oily white fish, cut into 4 steaks

6 large cloves garlic, crushed

1/2 teaspoon black pepper

1/2 teaspoon ground cumin

1/2 teaspoon oregano

1/2 teaspoon achiote (annatto), ground

Salt

1/2 cup Seville (bitter) orange juice, about, or a mixture of two-thirds orange juice to one-third lime juice

1/2 cup olive oil

1/2 large onion, thinly sliced

2 cloves garlic, minced

2 tomatoes, sliced

2 medium red bell peppers, seeded and sliced, or 2 canned pimientos, cut into strips

1 fresh hot pepper, seeded and chopped (optional)

2 tablespoons chopped parsley

Put the fish steaks on a platter in a single layer. Make a dressing of the garlic, 6 or more grinds black pepper, cumin, oregano, achiote (annatto), salt to taste, and enough orange juice to make a thin paste. Coat the steaks on both sides with the mixture and let stand for 30 minutes. Pour a little of the olive oil into a shallow baking dish large enough to hold the fish steaks. Use only enough oil to coat the bottom of the dish. Arrange the fish steaks, with any remaining marinade, in the dish. Top the steaks with the onion, minced garlic, tomatoes, and peppers. Pour the rest of the oil over the fish, cover, and cook over low heat until the fish loses its translucent look, about 15 minutes. Sprinkle with the parsley and serve with rice. Fresh hot tortillas may also be served.

Peixe em Mólho de Tangerina

Fish in Tangerine Sauce

NORTHERN BRAZIL

Serves 4

3-pound red snapper or bass, cleaned, with head and tail left on

2 tablespoons lemon juice

1/2 lb, freshly ground pepper

utter
tablespoon olive oil
tablespoon melted butter
pound mushrooms, sliced
tablespoon chopped parsley
scallion, chopped, using green and white parts
cup dry white wine
cup tangerine juice

Season the fish with lemon juice, salt, and pepper. Put the fish in a buttered baking dish just large enough to hold it and pour over it the olive oil and melted butter. Sprinkle the fish with the mushrooms, parsley, and scallion. Pour the wine and tangerine juice over it and bake in a preheated hot (400° F.) oven for 25 to 30 minutes, or until it flakes easily when tested with a fork.

Pescado con Cilantro

Fish with Coriander

MEXICO

Fresh coriander leaves give this dish a delectable flavor, especially for addicts of the herb, of which I am one. It is a colonial dish, and very easy to make, which is unusual as many of the older recipes are rather long-winded. Plain White Rice (*Arroz Blanco*), cooked in the Mexican style, is the perfect accompaniment.

Serves 6

pounds fillets of red snapper, striped bass, flounder, or any firm white-fleshed fish
lt, freshly ground pepper
cup lemon juice
tablespoons vegetable oil
medium onion, finely chopped
cup chopped fresh coriander (cilantro)
canned jalapeño chilies, rinsed, seeded, and chopped

Season the fish with salt and pepper and sprinkle with the lemon juice. Heat 4 tablespoons of the oil in a skillet and sauté the onion until it is soft. Lightly film with oil the surface of a shallow ovenproof casserole large enough to hold the fish comfortably, in more than one layer if necessary. Arrange the fish fillets, with any liquid they may have yielded, in the casserole, cover with the onion and the oil, and sprinkle with the coriander and chilies. Drizzle with the remaining tablespoon of oil. Bake in a preheated moderate (350° F.) oven for 20 minutes, or until the fish has lost its translucent look.



Pescado Frito con Salsa de Vino Tinto

Fried Fish with Red Wine Sauce

COLOMBIA

The red wine and tomatoes combine here to make a full-flavored sauce with the subtle pinch of allspice that I find very attractive and out of the ordinary.

Serves 4

pounds fish steaks, cut into 4 pieces, using any firm-fleshed white fish such as red snapper, striped bass, tile fish, etc.

lt, freshly ground pepper

our

tablespoons vegetable oil

medium onions, finely chopped

cloves garlic, minced

medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped

bay leaf

each cayenne pepper and ground allspice

cup dry red wine

Season the fish steaks with salt and pepper and coat lightly with flour, shaking to remove the excess. Heat the oil in a skillet and sauté the fish until lightly browned on both sides. Transfer to a platter and keep warm. In the oil remaining in the pan (add a little more if necessary), sauté the onions and garlic until the onions are soft. Add the tomatoes, bay leaf, cayenne pepper and allspice, and salt and pepper to taste, and sauté, stirring from time to time, until the mixture is thick and well blended, about 5 minutes. Stir in the wine and bring to a simmer. Add the fish and simmer for 2 or 3 minutes. Transfer the fish to a warmed serving dish and pour the sauce over it. Serve with rice, potatoes, or any starchy accompaniment.

Pargo al Horno

Baked Red Snapper

VENEZUELA

Serves 4

3- to 3½-pound red snapper, cleaned and boned, with head and tail left on, or striped or black bass

1½ tablespoons freshly ground pepper

1½ tablespoons butter

½ cup lime or lemon juice

½ cup fish stock or clam juice

½ cup heavy cream

1½ teaspoons Worcestershire sauce

Rinse the fish and pat dry with paper towels. Season the fish inside and outside with salt and pepper. Using 1 tablespoon of the butter, grease a shallow, heatproof casserole that will hold the fish comfortably and arrange the fish in it. Combine the lime or lemon juice and fish stock and pour over the fish. Dot the fish with 1 tablespoon of the butter and bake in a preheated hot (400° F.) oven for 30 minutes, or until the fish feels firm when pressed with a finger. Using 2 spatulas, lift the fish out onto a serving platter and keep warm. Pour the liquid from the casserole into a small saucepan. Stir in the heavy cream and bring it to a simmer over moderate heat. Cut the remaining 2 tablespoons of butter into small pieces and stir in. Taste for seasoning and add more salt and pepper if necessary. Spoon a little of the sauce over the fish and serve the rest separately in a sauceboat. Accompany with potatoes or rice and a green vegetable.

Congrio en Fuente de Barro

Fish with Tomatoes and Onions

CHILE

Congrio, that very splendid large fish found in Chilean waters, is considered by Chileans to be the finest of all their food fishes. There are three kinds, *congrío colorado*, *congrío negro*, and *congrío dorado*, red, black, and gold fish. They made a fine sight when I saw them hanging up in a Santiago fish market, looking rather like eels with their big heads and tapering bodies — which explains their equivocal common name, for *congrío* is the Spanish word for eel. Eels these are not. They are *Genypterus chilensis*, living in the waters off Chile's long Pacific coast and existing as far north as Peruvian waters. Their only known relatives are a New Zealand fish known as ling, but not to be confused with the European ling to which it is not related.

The fish is firm-fleshed and when cooked breaks into large flakes. In my experience cod is the best substitute, though any firm-fleshed non-oily fish can be used successfully. The term “*fuelle de barro*” simply means cooked in earthenware. Though any casserole may be used, the dish is better when cooked in earthenware. A lovely, satisfying, full-flavored dish.

Serves 4

1½ pounds fillets of scrod or cod, cut into 4 pieces

1½ tablespoons freshly ground pepper

tablespoons lemon juice

tablespoons butter

teaspoon sweet paprika

large onion, finely chopped

medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped

slices firm white bread, fried in butter, or 1 pound potatoes, boiled and sliced

hardboiled eggs, sliced

sweet red pepper, seeded and cut into strips

cup milk (optional)

tablespoon chopped parsley

Season the fish with salt, pepper, and lemon juice, and set aside. Heat the butter in a skillet, stir in the paprika, add the onion, and sauté over moderate heat until it is soft. Add the tomatoes and sauté for a few minutes longer. Butter an earthenware casserole and put a layer of the tomato mixture, then the fish, more tomato, the fried bread or potatoes, and more tomato. Repeat until all these ingredients are used up. Or you may have a casserole large enough to hold the fish in a single layer. Top with the sliced hardboiled eggs and pepper strips. Cover and bake in a preheated moderate (350° F.) oven for 30 minutes. If the dish seems to be drying out during cooking, add up to ½ cup milk. This should not be necessary if the tomatoes are fully ripe and juicy. Sprinkle with parsley and serve.



Variation: I was quite astonished one day in Asunción, capital of landlocked Paraguay, to be given a dish remarkably like *Congrio en Fuente de Barro* from Chile, which is more seacoast than anything else and has a most remarkable harvest of fish and shellfish. The fish in this *Guiso de Dorado* was from the Paraguay River, a great, noble waterway. It seemed to me in flavor and texture very like the Spanish *dorado*, dolphin fish, and so it turned out to be, though not, of course, to be confused with the mammalian dolphin. *Dorado* is a famous fish of Paraguayan rivers and wholly delectable. Any firm-fleshed white fish would make a suitable substitute.

For *Guiso de Dorado* (Fish Stew), put 2 pounds fish, cut into 4 steaks, into a flat dish and season them with salt and pepper. Pour ¼ cup lemon juice over the steaks and let them stand 1 hour, turning once or twice. Lift out, pat dry with paper towels, and dust with flour. Heat ½ cup olive or vegetable oil in a casserole and sauté the fish steaks until golden on both sides. Arrange half the fish steaks in the casserole. Have ready 2 medium onions, thinly sliced, 2 cloves garlic, minced, 2 tomatoes, peeled and sliced, 2 red or green bell peppers, seeded and sliced, and 2 medium potatoes, peeled and thinly sliced. Arrange half of the onions, garlic, tomatoes, peppers, and potatoes over the fish. Top with a bay leaf, a

sprig of thyme, and 2 or 3 sprigs of parsley. Season to taste with salt and pepper and top with the rest of the fish and the remaining vegetables. Season again with salt and pepper. Pour $\frac{1}{2}$ cup each dry white wine and fish stock, or clam juice, or water, over the fish, cover tightly, bring to a simmer, and cook for 20 to 30 minutes, or until the potatoes and fish are both tender. Check to see if the fish is drying out during the cooking time and add a little more stock or wine if necessary. Serves 4.

Pescado en Escabeche

Fish in Oil and Vinegar Sauce

PERU

Pescado en Escabeche is very popular throughout Latin America. The cooking technique is of Spanish origin, but cooks have changed recipes adding an herb or vegetable, altering things a little, so that there is a whole group of New World *escabeche* dishes that make splendid appetizers or main courses.

Serves 6

6 pounds of any firm-fleshed white fish such as red snapper or striped bass, cut into 6 fillets or 6 steaks

1 1/2 tablespoons salt, freshly ground pepper

1/2 cup

4 tablespoons butter or lard

1/2 cup olive oil or vegetable oil

1 medium onion, thickly sliced

1/2 cup or 2 fresh hot red or green peppers, seeded and cut into strips

1/2 teaspoon oregano

1/4 cup tablespoons white vinegar

Season the fish with salt and pepper and dredge in flour, shaking to remove the excess. Heat the butter or lard in a skillet and sauté the fish until lightly browned on both sides. Transfer the cooked fish to a shallow serving dish and keep warm. Heat the oil in a medium-sized saucepan, add the onions and pepper strips, and cook over low heat until the onions are soft and very lightly browned. Stir in the oregano and cook for a minute longer. Pour in the vinegar, stir, and pour over the fish. Serve immediately.

For a more robust dish, garnish with 3 ears of freshly cooked corn, each cut into 4 slices, 3 hardboiled eggs, halved, lettuce leaves, and olives.

Variation: This Argentine version, *Merluza a la Vinagreta* (Hake in Vinaigrette Sauce), is quite different from the Peruvian one. Wash and pat dry 3 pounds of hake fillets, cut into 12 pieces, or use cod or any firm-fleshed white fish. Sprinkle the fish with salt, preferably coarse salt, and let stand for 1 hour. Rinse and dry. Dredge in flour, shaking to remove the

excess, and sauté in 3 tablespoons olive oil until the fish has lost its translucent look. A good rule is to measure the thickness of the fish and give it 10 minutes to the inch, 5 minutes on each side. Arrange the cooked fish in a shallow dish and pour on a sauce made by mixing 1 clove garlic, peeled and finely chopped, 4 cornichons, chopped, 2 hardboiled eggs, chopped, 2 tablespoons capers, 2 tablespoons finely chopped parsley, salt, freshly ground pepper, 1 cup wine vinegar, and 1 cup olive oil. Let the fish stand for at least an hour before serving. Serve, garnished with lettuce leaves, at room temperature. Serves 12 as a first course.

Variation: *Pescado en Escabeche* from Mexico can be made with a variety of fish including pompano, mackerel, red snapper, or snook. Cut 2 pounds of fish fillets into 8 pieces and sprinkle them with 3 tablespoons lemon juice. Let the fish stand for 15 minutes, turning the pieces once. Rinse gently in cold water and pat dry. In a skillet heat 4 tablespoons of olive oil and sauté the fish until it has lost its translucent look and is lightly browned on both sides. Lift the fish out of the skillet and place in a dish.

In a saucepan combine 2 whole cloves, a 1-inch piece of stick cinnamon, 6 peppercorns, 2 cloves garlic, $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon ground cumin, $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon thyme, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon oregano, 2 bay leaves, 2 whole fresh hot green peppers, preferably *serrano*, with stems left on, 6 sliced scallions, using white and green parts, salt to taste, and 1 cup white vinegar. Bring to a boil, lower the heat, and simmer, uncovered, for 2 or 3 minutes, or until the scallions are soft. Set aside. In another small saucepan or skillet heat 1 cup olive oil with 2 cloves garlic and fry the garlic over low heat until browned. Lift out and discard the garlic. Pour the oil into the saucepan with the vinegar mixture, heat to a simmer, and pour the mixture over the fish. Allow to cool, cover, and refrigerate for 24 hours. To serve, lift out the fish onto a shallow serving platter and sprinkle with a little oregano crumbled between the fingers, if liked. Garnish the platter with shredded lettuce tossed in vinaigrette sauce ([this page](#)), 2 tablespoons capers, 2 canned *jalapeño* chilies, cut into strips, 1 bunch radishes, cut into flowers, and about 24 small pimiento-stuffed green olives. Serve with tortillas as an appetizer for 8. This makes a pleasant light lunch for 4.



Variation: For *Pescado en Escabeche* from Cuba, sauté 2 pounds fillets of red snapper or similar fish, cut into 8 pieces, in 1 cup olive oil until the fish has lost its translucent look and is lightly browned on both sides. Lift out the fish and arrange it in a shallow casserole or serving dish. Sauté 3 medium onions, thinly sliced, and 2 cloves garlic, chopped, in the oil remaining in the skillet until the onion slices are soft. Pour the onions, garlic, and oil over the fish. In a small saucepan heat $\frac{1}{2}$ cup wine vinegar with 1 bay leaf, 6 peppercorns, $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon each thyme and marjoram, and 1 teaspoon paprika. Pour the mixture over the fish, allow to cool, and refrigerate for 24 hours. Serve as a first course garnished with

lettuce leaves, small pitted green olives, and cornichons. Serves 8.

Variation: For *Escabeche de Atún* (Fresh Tuna in Oil and Vinegar Sauce), put a 1-pound slice of tuna in a skillet with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup olive oil, 4 tablespoons lemon juice, and a bay leaf and simmer, turning once, until the fish is done, 10 minutes for each inch of thickness. Lift out, remove any bones and skin, and cut into 4 pieces. Rinse out and dry the skillet. Heat $\frac{1}{4}$ cup olive oil in the skillet and sauté 2 medium onions, thinly sliced, and 2 red bell peppers, seeded and sliced, until the onions are tender. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ pound cooked, sliced carrots, $\frac{1}{2}$ pound cooked green beans cut into 1-inch pieces, and $\frac{1}{2}$ pound cooked potatoes, peeled and sliced. Sauté for 2 or 3 minutes. Add the tuna, 2 tablespoons vinegar, and salt and pepper to taste. Remove from the heat, cool, and serve on a bed of lettuce. Mustard pickles are sometimes served with this. Serves 4 as an appetizer, 2 as a main course.

Sábalo Guisado con Coco

Shad Fillets in Coconut Milk

COLOMBIA

Coconut milk is used a great deal in the cooking of coastal Colombia, giving dishes an interestingly different flavor, rich yet delicate.

Serves 6

1 pound boned shad fillets, cut into 6 pieces

2 medium tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped

1 medium onion, finely chopped

1 or 2 fresh hot red or green peppers, left whole with stem on

1/2 tsp salt, freshly ground pepper

1 cup thin coconut milk, about (see [this page](#))

1/2 cup thick coconut milk (see [this page](#))

Arrange the fish fillets in a shallow flameproof casserole and cover with the tomatoes and onion. Lay the hot peppers on top. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Pour in the thin coconut milk, and simmer for about 10 minutes or until the fish is no longer translucent. A simple rule is to measure the thickness of the fish and cook it 10 minutes to the inch. Carefully lift out the fish onto a serving platter and keep warm. Discard the hot peppers. Reduce the liquid in the casserole to about 1 cup over brisk heat. Add the thick coconut milk and simmer just long enough to heat the sauce through. Strain the sauce but do not push the solids through the sieve. Pour the sauce over the fish. Serve with rice.

The fish may be cooked in a preheated moderate (350° F.) oven. In this case bring the liquid just to a simmer on top of the stove, transfer the casserole to the oven, and cook for 10 minutes to the inch, which will be about 10 minutes for fillets. Make the sauce in the same way. Any firm-fleshed white fish can be used for this dish when shad is not in season, making it *Pescado Guisado con Coco* (Fish Cooked in Coconut Milk).

If the peppers are very hot (nibble a tiny bit to check), the sauce may be too *picante* for some tastes. A simple solution is to take the peppers out of the sauce after 2 or 3 minutes instead of leaving them there for the full cooking time.

MOQUECAS

The mixture of indigenous Indian, African, and Portuguese cooking that makes up Bahian cuisine is particularly apparent in the *moquecas*, which I translate as stews for want of a better word. According to that great authority on the Bahian kitchen Darwin Brandão, *moquecas* were originally Indian *pokekas* — dishes wrapped in banana leaves and cooked over charcoal. Africans brought over as slaves and working as cooks for the Portuguese in the great houses of the sugar plantations around Bahia modified the indigenous dishes, and today *moquecas*, whether of shrimp, fish, crab, or whatever, are cooked in a saucepan on top of the stove. Coconut milk, *dendê* oil, and hot peppers are typical ingredients in these flavorful dishes.

Moqueca de Peixe

Fish Stew

BRAZIL

Serves 6

pounds fillets of sole or any white fish
medium onions, chopped
or 2 fresh hot peppers, seeded and chopped
medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped
clove garlic, chopped
tablespoons fresh coriander (cilantro)
lt
tablespoons lime or lemon juice
cup dendê (palm) oil

Cut the fish into 2-inch pieces and place in a large bowl. In a blender or food processor combine the onions, hot peppers, tomatoes, garlic, coriander, salt to taste, and the lime or lemon juice, and reduce to a purée. Pour the purée over the fish, mixing lightly, and allow to stand for 1 hour. Transfer the fish and the marinade to a saucepan. Add ½ cup cold water and ⅓ cup of the *dendê* oil. Cover and simmer until the fish is done, about 8 minutes. Pour in the remaining ⅓ cup *dendê* oil and cook just long enough to heat the oil through. Transfer the stew to a heated serving platter and surround with a border of plain white rice.

Variation: *Moqueca de Camarão* (Shrimp Stew). This is a very interesting *moqueca*. Substitute 2 pounds raw shrimp, shelled and deveined, for the fish. Shorten the cooking time to about 3 minutes, or just long enough for the shrimp to turn pink and lose their translucent look. Stir in 1 cup thick coconut milk with the shrimp. Omit the water. Serves 6.



Moqueca de Camarão

Bahian Shrimp Stew

BRAZIL

Serves 6

cup olive oil

large onion, finely chopped

small carrots, scraped and thinly sliced

green bell pepper, seeded and chopped

red bell pepper, seeded and chopped

medium tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped

lt, freshly ground pepper

pounds large shrimp, shelled and deveined

tablespoons dendê (palm) oil

Heat the olive oil in a large, heavy skillet and sauté the onion, carrots, and green and red peppers until the onion is soft. Add the tomatoes and salt and pepper to taste, and cook for a few minutes longer over moderate heat. Stir in the shrimp and the *dendê* oil and cook, turning the shrimp once or twice, until the shrimp are pink and have lost their translucent look, about 3 minutes. Serve on a warmed platter surrounded by white rice. Serve separately with *Môlho de Pimenta e Azeite de Dendê* (Hot Peppers in Palm Oil), [this page](#), or *Môlho de Pimenta e Limão* (Hot Pepper and Lime Sauce), [this page](#).

SHRIMP DISHES

Shrimp in Latin America are magnificent in quality and abundant in quantity and in my experience almost always beautifully cooked, juicy, and well flavored. It takes discipline in Bahia to eat anything *but* shrimp, they are so delicious. Tomatoes and peppers, both sweet and hot, are used a great deal with shrimp, but because each country uses different seasoning, or different ways of preparing them, the finished dishes are quite varied in flavor. Perhaps the most unusual is the *Vatapá de Camarão e Peixe* (Shrimp and Fish in Coconut, Nut, and Shrimp Sauce), which illustrates the exuberance of this extraordinarily imaginative kitchen, where improbable combinations, such as dried and fresh shrimp,

almonds and cashew nuts, *dendê* oil and coconut milk, marry in an exciting way — a lovely dish for a party (and fortunately a food processor simplifies the work).

Vatapá de Camarão e Peixe

Shrimp and Fish in Coconut, Nut, and Shrimp Sauce

BRAZIL

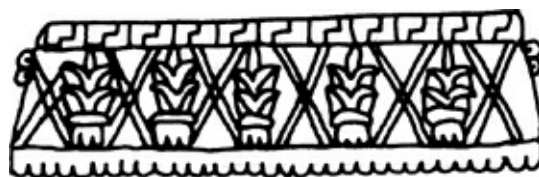
Serves 6 to 8

cup dried shrimp
cup dendê (palm) oil or olive oil
medium onions, grated
cloves garlic, crushed
cup cashew nuts, ground
cup blanched almonds, ground
cup fresh breadcrumbs
cups thin coconut milk (see [this page](#))
or more tablespoons dendê (palm) oil
tablespoons olive oil
pounds see bass fillets, or other white fish
pound shrimp, shelled and deveined

Soak the dried shrimp in warm water to cover for 15 minutes. Drain the shrimp, then purée in a blender or food processor, or put through a food mill, using the fine blade. Set aside.

Heat $\frac{1}{4}$ cup *dendê* or olive oil in a heavy skillet and sauté the onions, garlic, cashew nuts, almonds, and the puréed shrimp for 5 minutes. Stir in the breadcrumbs and the coconut milk, and simmer, stirring occasionally, until the mixture has the consistency of a thick béchamel sauce. Add more breadcrumbs if necessary. Remove from the heat and stir in 2 or more tablespoons of *dendê* oil to taste.

Heat 2 tablespoons olive oil in a skillet and sauté the fish lightly. Add the fresh shrimp, and sauté for about 2 minutes, or until the shrimp turn pink. Fold the shrimp and fish mixture into the coconut milk sauce. Serve with *Angú de Arroz* (Molded Rice) and a hot pepper sauce (see [this page](#)), if liked.



Camarones Acapulqueños

Shrimp, Acapulco Style

Serves 4

*1 pound medium to large shrimp**6 tablespoons butter**4 cloves garlic, minced**1/2 cup parsley, finely chopped**2 medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped**2 tablespoons tomato paste**1/2 tsp salt, freshly ground pepper**1/4 cup brandy*

Peel and devein the shrimp and set aside. Put the shrimp shells into a small saucepan with 2 cups water, bring to a boil, reduce the heat, and simmer, uncovered, for 20 minutes. Strain and discard the shells. Measure the liquid. There should be 1 cup. If necessary, reduce it over brisk heat or make up the quantity with water. Reserve.

Heat the butter in a casserole and add the garlic and parsley, and sauté for 2 minutes, taking care not to let the garlic burn. Add the tomatoes and simmer until the mixture is thick, about 10 minutes. Add the reserved shrimp stock and the tomato paste, stir to mix, season with salt and pepper, and add the brandy. Bring to a simmer, add the shrimp, cover, and cook for 2 to 3 minutes, according to the size of the shrimp, until they are pink, taking care not to overcook. Serve on a bed of rice.

Camarão com Leite de Côco

Shrimp in Coconut Milk

BRAZIL

A Bahamian dish that I find enticing.

Serves 6

*1/2 pounds large shrimp**4 cloves garlic, crushed**2 tablespoons lime or lemon juice**1/2 tsp salt, freshly ground pepper**1/4 cup vegetable oil**1 large onion, grated**1/2 cup scallions, chopped, using white and green parts**2 medium tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped**1/2 cups thick coconut milk (see [this page](#))*

Peel and devein the shrimp, saving the shells. Put the shrimp in a bowl with the garlic,

lime or lemon juice, and salt and pepper to taste. Set aside.

Place the reserved shrimp shells in a saucepan with 3 cups water and simmer briskly, uncovered, for 30 minutes, or until the liquid is reduced to $\frac{3}{4}$ cup. Strain, discard the shells, and set the stock aside.

Heat the oil in a skillet and sauté the onion and scallions for 3 minutes, or until the onion is softened. Add the tomatoes and the shrimp stock to the skillet and simmer until the mixture is well blended and quite thick, about 5 minutes. Stir in the thick coconut milk and the shrimp with their liquid, and cook, uncovered, until the shrimp are pink and have lost their translucent look, about 3 minutes. Turn the shrimp over once or twice during the cooking. Be careful not to overcook the shrimp as they toughen very quickly. Taste for salt and pepper and add a little more if necessary. Serve on a bed of plain white rice.

Cuajado de Camarones

Shrimp and Potato Omelet

COLOMBIA

Cuajado means a dish made in a skillet with meat, fish, or fruit, and eggs to hold it together. “Omelet” seems the best word to describe it but the eggs do not play as large a role as they would in a French omelet, pushed off center stage by the onions, tomatoes, potatoes, and shrimp. Though not a heavy dish, this is robust and satisfying and served with a green salad makes an excellent lunch or dinner.

Serves 4

6 tablespoons butter

1 teaspoon sweet paprika

2 medium onions, finely chopped

2 large tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped

1/2 lb, freshly ground pepper

2 medium-sized new potatoes, cooked and cubed

4 large eggs, separated

1/2 pound small or medium-sized raw shrimp, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch pieces

Heat the butter in a large (10-inch) skillet, stir in the paprika and the onions and sauté over moderate heat until the onions are soft. Add the tomatoes and salt and pepper to taste and cook until the mixture is thick and well blended, about 5 minutes. Add the potatoes and cook for a few minutes longer. Beat the egg yolks until they are thick and lemony. In a separate bowl beat the egg whites until they stand in firm peaks. Fold the whites and yolks together with a spatula. Return the skillet to the heat, fold the shrimp into the sauce, cook 2 minutes for small shrimp, 3 for medium-sized ones. Then fold in the eggs, mixing thoroughly. Cook until the eggs are lightly set.

Arroz con Mariscos

Rice with Shellfish

PERU

This is a really festive dish with its shrimp-flavored rice and rich mixture of shellfish. The secret is in cooking the shellfish just until they are done and not a second longer as they toughen very quickly with overcooking.

Serves 4 to 6

*2 tablespoons olive oil, about
1 large onion, finely chopped
4 cloves garlic, minced
2 fresh hot peppers,[†] preferably red, seeded and cut into strips
2 cups long-grain rice
2 cups shrimp stock
or 2 tablespoons fresh coriander (cilantro), chopped
1 1/2 pound medium-sized shrimp, about 18
1 1/2 pound scallops — if small, left whole; if large, halved
1/2 cherrystone or littleneck clams
1/2 oysters*

Heat the oil in a skillet and sauté the onion, garlic, and pepper strips until the onion is soft. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the onion mixture to a casserole. There should be about 2 tablespoons oil left in the skillet. Add a little more if necessary. Add the rice and sauté until the rice has absorbed the oil, taking care not to let it brown. Transfer the rice to a casserole. Add the shrimp stock, bring to a boil over high heat, reduce the heat to low, and cook, covered, until the rice is tender and all the liquid absorbed, about 20 minutes. Add the coriander and the shrimp, scallops, and clams, folding them well into the rice. Cook, covered, over low heat for about 3 to 5 minutes, or until the shrimp have turned pink and lost their translucent look. Add the oysters, folding them into the rice and cook just long enough to plump them, about 1 minute. Serve immediately.

To make shrimp stock: In a small saucepan heat 1 tablespoon olive oil and toss the shrimp shells in this until they turn pink. Add 1 sprig parsley, 1 slice onion, or a sliced scallion, using white and green parts, 1 sprig thyme or 1/8 teaspoon dried, 3 or 4 peppercorns, and 4 cups water. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat, and simmer, covered, for 30 minutes. Strain and measure. There should be about 3 cups. Measure the liquid from the oysters and clams. If there is more than 1 cup, reduce the shrimp stock, uncovered, over brisk heat so that there will be 4 cups stock. Cool the stock and stir in the oyster and clam liquid. Season to taste with salt.

Moqueca de Siri Mole

Softshell Crabs in Coconut Milk

Serves 2

softshell crabs, cleaned and ready for cooking
tablespoons dendê (palm) oil or olive oil
small onion, finely chopped
medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped
tablespoon fresh coriander (cilantro), chopped
or 2 fresh hot red peppers, seeded and chopped
tablespoon lime or lemon juice
cup thin coconut milk (see [this page](#))
lt, freshly ground pepper

Rinse the crabs, pat them dry with paper towels, and set aside. In a skillet heat the oil and add the onion, tomatoes, coriander, hot peppers, and lime or lemon juice. Cook, stirring from time to time, over moderate heat for 5 minutes. Add the coconut milk and the crabs and cook for about 8 minutes, turning the crabs once or twice. Serve with plain rice or *Pirão de Arroz* (Rice Flour Pudding).

Variation: Omit the coconut milk and use 4 tomatoes.



SALT COD DISHES

Many fish stores, some supermarkets, and most Latin American markets and specialty stores sell salt cod, so that it will be easy to duplicate these typical Latin American dishes. It is sold packaged by the pound, sometimes in a box, sometimes as a piece cut from a whole fish, often very large. There is no important difference between the two except that the packaged fish is usually boneless while pieces from the whole fish may be quite bony, involving a little extra work.

Bacalao en Salsa de Chile Ancho y Almendra

Salt Cod in Mild Red Chili and Almond Sauce

Serves 4 to 6

pounds salt cod
medium onion, chopped

whole clove garlic

recipe Salsa de Chile Ancho y Almendra (Mild Red Chili and Almond Sauce), [this page](#)

teaspoon red wine vinegar

Soak the cod in cold water to cover for 12 hours or more, changing the water 5 or 6 times. Drain the fish and put into a saucepan with the onion and garlic and cold water to cover. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat, and simmer, covered, for 15 minutes, or until the fish is tender. Drain the fish. Strain and reserve the stock. Remove any skin and bones from the fish and cut into 2- to 3-inch pieces.

Make the sauce and thin it with 2 cups of the reserved fish stock, stir to mix, and simmer for a minute or two. Add the fish and the vinegar and simmer for 5 minutes. Serve with rice.

Bacalhau a Baiana

Salt Cod, Bahia Style

BRAZIL

This Brazilian dish of salt cod cooked in a tomato mixture is the most original of these popular dishes, but other versions are good, too.

Serves 4

ound salt cod

tablespoons vegetable oil

medium onion, grated

clove garlic, crushed

sweet peppers, 1 red, 1 green, seeded and chopped

tomatoes, peeled and puréed

cup hot water

lt, freshly ground pepper

tablespoon dendê (palm) oil

cup thick coconut milk (see [this page](#))

cup scallions, chopped, using white and green parts

Soak the cod in cold water to cover for 12 hours or more, changing the water frequently. Drain the fish and remove any skin and bones. Pat the fish dry with paper towels and cut it into 2-inch pieces. Heat the oil in a saucepan and sauté the onion, garlic, and peppers until the onion and peppers are soft, about 5 minutes. Add the tomatoes, fish, and hot water. Cover and simmer for 15 minutes, or until the fish flakes easily when tested with a fork. Season to taste with salt, if necessary, pepper, and *dendê* oil. Stir in the coconut milk and the scallions and heat through without letting the mixture boil.



Variation: *Bacalao a la Criolla* (Salt Cod, Creole Style), from Venezuela. Prepare the cod as for *Bacalhau a Baiana*. Heat 4 tablespoons of olive or vegetable oil in a casserole and sauté 1 large onion, finely chopped, with 3 cloves garlic, minced, until the onion is tender. Add 3 large tomatoes, peeled and chopped, ½ teaspoon cumin, ½ teaspoon oregano, pepper to taste, and a bay leaf, and simmer for 5 minutes. Add the fish, 1 cup dry white wine, 2 tablespoons lemon juice, and salt if necessary. Simmer until the fish is tender, about 15 minutes. Accompany with rice. Serves 4.

Bacalhau a Mineira

Salt Cod and Cabbage, Minas Gerais Style

BRAZIL

Serves 4

1 pound salt cod
4 tablespoons olive oil
1 onion, finely chopped
3 cloves garlic, crushed
1 sweet red pepper, seeded and chopped, or 1 green pepper
3 medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped
½ cup chopped parsley
½ cup dry white wine
1 dashy ground pepper
1 pound (5 cups) shredded cabbage
Salt

Soak the cod in cold water to cover for 12 hours or more, changing the water frequently. Drain the fish and remove any skin and bones. Pat the fish dry with paper towels and cut it into 2-inch pieces. Heat the oil in a large skillet and sauté the onion, garlic, pepper, tomatoes, and parsley for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the fish, wine, pepper to taste, and cabbage. Stir to mix and simmer, partially covered, until the cabbage is tender and the fish flakes easily when tested with a fork, about 15 minutes. Season with salt, if necessary.



Pudim de Bacalhau com Ovos

Salt Cod with Eggs

BRAZIL

This is an unusual and delicious first-course or breakfast dish. The salt cod in the tomato-flavored white sauce makes a rich topping for the egg.

Serves 6 as a first course, 3 as a breakfast

1 pound salt cod fillets
2 tablespoons cornstarch
2 cups milk
4 tablespoons (¼ cup) butter plus 1 tablespoon
1 medium onion, grated
2 medium tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped
2 tablespoons drained capers
1/2 teaspoon salt, freshly ground pepper
4 tablespoons butter for ramekins
2 eggs
2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese

Soak the cod in cold water to cover, changing the water several times, for 24 hours. Drain and rinse the fish. Put it into a saucepan with water to cover and poach it for 15 to 20 minutes, or until it flakes easily when tested with a fork. The water should just simmer. Drain and flake the fish and set it aside.

Mix the cornstarch with a little of the milk, add the rest of the milk, and pour the mixture into a small saucepan. Add 1 tablespoon of butter and cook, stirring, over moderate heat until the mixture is smooth and lightly thickened. Set aside.

In another saucepan heat the 4 tablespoons of butter, add the onion, and cook, stirring, for a few minutes. Add the tomatoes and cook until the mixture is thick and well blended. Stir in the Béchamel sauce and the capers. Fold in the codfish and add a little salt if necessary. Season generously with pepper. Cool slightly.

Butter six ⅔-cup-size ramekins and break an egg into each. Pour the codfish mixture over

the eggs and sprinkle each ramekin with ½ tablespoon grated Parmesan cheese. This may also be cooked in a single shallow Pyrex dish. Bake in a preheated hot (400° F.) oven for 8 minutes.

**Erizos* (sea urchins) are sometimes available canned from specialty stores. Serve them with *Salsa de Perejil* (Parsley Sauce).

† Peruvians for the most part like their food hot and are lavish in their use of *ajíes*, hot peppers, which in fact lend flavor as well as heat. A wicked Peruvian friend of mine says that his compatriots like *picante* food as it gives them an excuse to quench the fire with *pisco* sours, a lovely local drink, or with anything else alcoholic. However, use just as much, or as little, of the hot pepper as suits your personal taste.

Meats

Carnes

Nowhere in Latin American cooking is there such a coming together of introduced and indigenous foods and cooking methods as there is in the meat and poultry dishes. All of South and Central America, as well as Mexico, was poorly supplied with animals for meat. There were no sheep, goats, or cattle, all of which had been domesticated thousands of years before in the Middle East, and no domestic pigs or chickens, which had been supplying meat for a long while in Asia.

But the Aztecs did cultivate turkeys, ducks, quails, and doves among other birds, and they hunted a type of wild boar. Yucatán was known as the land of *Faisán y Venado* (the curassow pheasant and deer). From Mexico on south there were many rabbitlike animals from the small agouti to the *ñeque* or *paca*, the *viscacha*, and the huge *capybara*, weighing up to 150 pounds; this may explain why modern Latin America has so many splendid rabbit recipes. The *cuy* (pronounced kwee), a type of guinea pig, is still popular in Peru and tastes like young rabbit. The Incas bred the llama, vicuna, and alpaca from *guanacos*, small camel-like animals that still roam wild in herds in the Andean highlands. They supplied milk, meat, and soft, fleecy wool, while the llama did extra duty carrying loads as well.

The Spanish introduced sheep, goats, cattle, pigs, and chickens quite soon after the Conquest, and these were welcomed with varying degrees of enthusiasm into the Aztec, Inca, and Chibcha kitchens, among others. Pork and chicken were the favorites, reflected in the cooking of today. The new meats were incorporated into existing local dishes and, as the colonial kitchens evolved, new dishes were created, some with echoes from Spain's own colonial past, when the country had been dominated for nearly eight centuries by the Arabs. The Middle Eastern influence can still be seen in meat dishes cooked with almonds, raisins, cinnamon, and cloves, or with fruits, either dried or fresh. In Brazilian meat dishes, once again you find the contributions of the rich Portuguese cuisine, the indigenous foods of Africa like yams, nuts, and palm oil, blending with the local produce of the Indians. Dried shrimp and nuts may be ground together and mixed with coconut milk and rice flour to form a sauce colored gold with *dendê* oil — as luscious to the palate as to the eye.

The meeting of conqueror and conquered produced astoundingly rich and varied results, new food and old combined in a harmony of contrasting flavors, exuberant often, but never bland or dull. Chili peppers join chocolate to make an exotic sauce for Mexico's national dish, *Mole Poblano de Guajalote* (Turkey in Chili and Chocolate Sauce). Peppers and tomatoes used with nuts, and the herbs of both Old and New Worlds make aromatic sauces. In Peru, Brazil, and Ecuador shellfish, especially shrimp, make fascinating combinations with both meats and poultry. Fruits, fresh as well as dried, enhance beef or veal stews in Argentina and may be cooked in a large, hollowed-out squash, the vegetable itself becoming the cookpot. Tropical root vegetables, yams, taros, and sweet potatoes, transform everyday dishes into something unctuous, attractive, and different, and beans make all sorts of unusual combinations in dishes ranging from grand affairs like Brazil's *Feijoada Completa* (Black Beans with Mixed Meats) to simple ones like their *Tutu a Mineira* (Black

Beans, Minas Gerais Style), where the vegetable dominates. Annatto and allspice, very much New World spices, enliven meat dishes.

Many traditional meat dishes in Latin America are types of stew, cooked on top of the stove, largely because reliable ovens are a comparatively new feature in kitchens where until recently tiled charcoal stoves were commonplace. Also much of the continent is mountainous and altitude is an important feature in cooking. It was discovered early that long, slow cooking gives very flavorful results, making meat tender and juicy. An advantage is that dishes can be prepared ahead of time and need little watching.

Argentina, which is famous for its beef, and Brazil, whose south is great cattle country, both have wonderful outdoor feasts, the *asado criollo* and the *churrasco*.

On this diverse continent there is a whole new world of flavors to be explored.



MEAT STEWS WITH VEGETABLES AND WITH FRUIT

There is a seemingly inexhaustible range of meat stews — made from beef, veal, pork, lamb, kid — with vegetables and with fruits in the Latin American kitchen. Taste, texture, and aroma are balanced in excitingly different combinations, gentle, pungent, fiery, earthy, or elegant. Unusual ingredients are put together in subtle partnerships to produce a wonderful array of dishes, splendid for everyday eating, grand for guests as all the work can be done ahead of time. And despite a rich complexity of ingredients, cooking is straightforward. Long, slow simmering makes even the cheaper cuts of meat juicy and tender. Orange juice, wine, or vinegar is used to flavor and tenderize, nuts are used for flavor and to thicken the already richly flavored cooking liquid, and fruits, fresh and dried, lend a hint of acid blended with sweetness to the robustness of meat.

Seco de Carne

Beef Stew

PERU

This stew is very curiously named, since *seco* means dry. Once upon a time stews were very much more soupy than they are now and the *seco* here is simply to indicate that this is not

a soupy stew like a pot-au-feu. The ingredients are not exotic but the flavor of the finished stew is far from ordinary, as the garlic, hot pepper, fresh coriander, and lemon juice combine to give the sauce a fine flavor.

A similar stew made with kid, *Seco de Cabrito*, is a great favorite. Kid is more strongly flavored than beef and Peruvian cooks take advantage of this, adding extra coriander and white wine or *chicha*, a sort of corn beer, as well as stock to the dish, with very savory results. *Seco de Carnero* (Lamb Stew) and *Seco de Chanco* (Pork Stew) belong to the same family.

In Peru the potatoes used would be ones with yellow flesh, not to be confused with sweet potatoes. Though they are delicious as well as pretty, they taste the same as ordinary white potatoes.

Serves 6

tablespoons lard or vegetable oil

cloves garlic, finely chopped

medium onion, finely chopped

teaspoon ground hot pepper or cayenne

pounds beef chuck, cut into 1-inch cubes

cups beef stock

lt, freshly ground pepper

tablespoons fresh coriander (cilantro), chopped

ice of 1 lemon

pounds potatoes, boiled and halved

Heat the lard or oil in a casserole and sauté the garlic, onion, hot pepper, and beef cubes until the beef is lightly browned. Add the beef stock, salt and pepper to taste, and the coriander. Cook, partially covered, over low heat until the beef is tender, 1½ to 2 hours. The liquid should be reduced so that the sauce is quite thick and not very abundant. Just before serving stir in the lemon juice and cook a minute or two longer. Heap the stew onto a warmed serving platter and surround with the freshly cooked, hot potato halves.

Variation: *Seco de Cabrito*. Make the stew as for the beef stew above, using 3 pounds boneless kid cut into 1-inch pieces instead of the beef. Use 1 fresh hot red or green pepper, seeded and finely chopped, instead of cayenne pepper, and increase the amount of fresh coriander to 1 cup. Use equal amounts of dry white wine and stock for the cooking liquid but use only enough barely to cover the meat. An authentic Peruvian touch would be to use 1 cup of *chicha* (corn beer). When the stew has been simmering, partially covered, for 2 hours, or when the kid is almost tender, add 6 medium-sized potatoes, peeled and halved, and cook for 20 minutes longer, or until both kid and potatoes are tender. Omit the lemon juice and add 1 cup cooked green peas just before serving. The stew is cooked partially covered to reduce the liquid as the gravy should not be abundant. Serves 6.

Carne en Jocón

Beef in Tomato and Pepper Sauce

GUATEMALA

This is called *Carne en Adobo* in some parts of Guatemala.

Serves 6

cup peanut oil
medium onion, finely chopped
cloves garlic, chopped
red or green bell peppers, seeded and chopped
fresh hot red or green pepper, seeded and chopped
pounds lean, boneless beef chuck, cut into 1-inch cubes
10-ounce can Mexican green tomatoes and liquid from the can
medium tomatoes, peeled and coarsely chopped
bay leaf
cloves
teaspoon oregano
lt, freshly ground pepper
cup beef stock, more or less
stale tortillas, or 2 tablespoons masa harina, or 2 tablespoons cornmeal

Heat the oil in a heavy saucepan or casserole and sauté the onion, garlic, and peppers until the onion is soft. Add the meat and all the other ingredients except the tortillas. The liquid should barely cover the meat. Add a little more stock, if necessary. Cover, and simmer gently until the beef is tender, about 2 hours. If using tortillas soak them in cold water, squeeze them out, and crumble like breadcrumbs. Add to the casserole and simmer, uncovered, until the sauce is thickened. If using *masa harina* or cornmeal, mix it with a little cold water and stir into the stew, cooking just until the sauce is thickened (cornmeal will take a few minutes longer to thicken). Serve the stew on a bed of *Arroz Guatemalteco* (Rice, Guatemalan Style).

Tomaticán

Beef and Tomato Stew

CHILE

Serves 4

tablespoons paprika oil (Color Chilena), see [this page](#)
½ pounds lean, boneless beef, cut into 1½-inch cubes
large onion, chopped

clove garlic, chopped
teaspoon oregano
tablespoon parsley, finely chopped
lt, freshly ground pepper
medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped
medium potatoes, peeled and quartered
cup corn kernels

Heat the paprika oil in a heavy casserole and add the beef, onion, garlic, oregano, parsley, and salt and pepper to taste, and sauté, stirring frequently, for about 5 minutes. Add the tomatoes, cover, and cook over very low heat until the meat is almost tender, about 1½ hours. Add the potatoes and cook until both meat and potatoes are tender, about 30 minutes longer. Stir in the corn and cook for 5 minutes longer. If liked, the dish may be garnished with slices of hardboiled egg. Some cooks fry the potatoes in oil before adding to the casserole.

Tenera en Pipián Verde

Veal in Pumpkin Seed Sauce

MEXICO

Pipián is a stew of meat or poultry where the liquid is thickened with ground nuts or seeds — pumpkin, sesame, peanuts, almonds — whatever the cook chooses. It may be red or green according to the type of peppers and tomatoes used. This one has a delicious flavor and is a lovely color. It looks truly elegant accompanied by rice, and green beans for their contrastingly darker green.

Serves 6

pounds boneless veal, shoulder or shank, cut into 2-inch pieces
cups chicken or veal stock, about
cup pepitas (pumpkin seeds)
medium onion, chopped
clove garlic, chopped
fresh hot green peppers, seeded and chopped (serrano or jalapeño peppers, if available)
cup chopped fresh coriander (cilantro) leaves
10- or 12-ounce can of Mexican green tomatoes, drained
romaine lettuce leaves, preferably the darker green outside leaves, chopped
tablespoons lard or vegetable oil Salt, freshly ground pepper

Put the veal into a heavy casserole and pour in the stock, adding a little more if necessary barely to cover. Simmer over low heat, covered, until the meat is tender, about 1½ hours.

In an ungreased skillet toast the pumpkin seeds for a few minutes. Cool slightly and pulverize in a blender or food processor fitted with a steel blade. Add to the blender or food processor the onion, garlic, hot peppers, coriander, green tomatoes, and romaine, and reduce to a pastelike purée. If necessary add a little of the stock.

In a skillet heat the lard or vegetable oil and cook the pumpkin seed mixture, stirring, for about 3 minutes. Thin the pumpkin seed mixture with about 2 cups of the stock, or until it is the consistency of heavy cream. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Drain the veal and set the meat aside. Return the veal to the casserole, pour on the sauce, and cook just long enough to heat through.



Ternera con Zanahorias

Veal with Carrots

PERU

I have often admired the great heaps of small, deep orange carrots in markets throughout Latin America, exquisitely clean and glowing with color. They make a great contribution to this veal stew.

Serves 6

3 pounds shank or shoulder of veal, cut into 2-inch pieces

1/2 lb, freshly ground pepper

1/2 teaspoon grated nutmeg

4 large cloves garlic, crushed

1/2 cup dry white wine

4 tablespoons butter

1 medium onion, finely chopped

1/2 pound small young carrots, scraped and thinly sliced

2 1/2 cup beef stock, about

Season the veal pieces with salt, pepper, nutmeg, and garlic and put into a large bowl. Pour the wine over them. Cover and marinate in the refrigerator for about 4 hours, turning once or twice.

Heat the butter in a heavy casserole and sauté the onion and carrots until the onion is very soft, about 10 minutes. Add the veal and the marinade and enough beef stock barely to cover. Simmer, covered, over very low heat until the veal is tender, about 1½ hours. The

carrots should be very soft, almost disintegrating in the sauce. Serve with a green vegetable.

Chanco Adobado

Spicy Pork

PERU

Serves 6

whole head garlic

tablespoons ground annatto (achiote)

teaspoons ground cumin

lt, freshly ground pepper

cup white vinegar

pounds shoulder of pork, cut into 2-inch cubes

tablespoons lard or vegetable oil

ice of 1 Seville (bitter) orange, or ¼ cup orange juice

½ pounds sweet potatoes

Peel the garlic cloves and reduce them to a purée in an electric blender with the annatto, cumin, salt and pepper to taste, and vinegar. Put the pork pieces into a large bowl and pour the garlic marinade over them, mixing well. Marinate overnight in the refrigerator, covered. Strain, reserving the marinade. Pat the pork cubes dry with paper towels. Heat the lard or oil in a large skillet and sauté the pork pieces until golden brown all over, transferring them to a casserole as they are done. Pour the reserved marinade over the pork, add the orange juice, cover, and cook over very low heat until the meat is tender, 1½ to 2 hours. If the meat seems to be drying out, add a little water; 3 or 4 tablespoons will probably be enough. There should be very little gravy when the dish is finished.

Peel the sweet potatoes and cut them into slices about ¾ inch thick. Cook in boiling salted water until tender, 15 to 20 minutes. Drain.

To serve, heap the pork in the center of a large warmed platter and surround with the sweet potato slices moistened with a little of the meat gravy. White rice is another traditional accompaniment to this dish.



Seco de Chanco

Pork Stew

ECUADOR

Serves 6 to 8

2 tablespoons annatto oil or lard (see [this page](#))
3 pounds lean pork shoulder, cut into 2-inch cubes
1 large onion, finely chopped
4 large cloves garlic, minced
1 large tomato, peeled, seeded, and chopped
1 red bell pepper, seeded and coarsely chopped, or 2 canned pimientos, chopped
1 fresh hot red or green pepper, seeded and finely chopped
2 tablespoons fresh coriander (cilantro), chopped coarsely
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon oregano
1/2 lb, freshly ground pepper
1/2 pinch sugar (optional)
2 cups beer

Heat the oil or lard in a heavy skillet and lightly sauté the pork cubes. With a slotted spoon remove the pork pieces to a heavy flameproof casserole. Remove all but 2 tablespoons of fat from the skillet, add the onion and garlic, and sauté the mixture until the onion is soft. Add the tomato, the sweet and hot peppers, coriander, cumin, and oregano, and simmer until the mixture is well blended, about 10 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper and, if liked, the pinch of sugar. Pour over the pork, add the beer, cover, and cook over very low heat until the pork is tender, about 2 hours. The sauce should be quite thick. If it seems at all Watery, partially uncover the casserole during the second hour of cooking. Serve with rice.

Jamón del País

Peruvian Fresh Ham

PERU

Though this is called ham (*jamón*), it is really fresh pork spiced and cooked in a most unusual way — marinated, simmered until tender, then browned in hot fat. Very different and marvelous for a buffet either hot or transformed when cold into a delicious dividend, *Butifarras*, special Peruvian sandwich rolls. It can be made with a boned leg of pork but I find the shoulder a more manageable size. Incidentally, though the meat is strictly speaking stewed, the finished dish is more like a baked meat.

Peruvian and Mexican garlic have quite enormous cloves, which comes in handy when one has to peel a number of them. I have specified large cloves of garlic but if these are not available, a whole head of garlic should be used. It will not overpower the other flavors.

Serves 12 or more

1½ large cloves garlic, peeled, or 1 whole head

1½ tablespoons annatto (achiote) seeds, ground

1½ teaspoons cumin, ground

1½ tablespoons salt, freshly ground pepper

about 6 pounds pork shoulder (cali), boned and rolled

1½ tablespoons lard

Crush the garlic cloves and mix to a paste with the annatto, cumin, and salt and pepper to taste. Spread this on the pork, put the pork into a baking dish, cover loosely with foil, and refrigerate overnight. Put the pork, and any liquid in the pan, into a very large saucepan or kettle and pour in enough water to cover it. Cover, bring to a boil, reduce the heat to low, and simmer gently until the meat is tender, 2½ to 3 hours. When it is cool enough to handle, remove it from the cooking liquid and pat it dry with paper towels. Heat the lard in a very large skillet or baking dish and sauté the pork until it is browned all over. Transfer the pork to a serving platter and serve hot, sliced with rice or potatoes, a green vegetable or a salad, or allow to cool and use to make *Butifarras* (Peruvian Ham Sandwiches).

Variation: For *Butifarras*, put thinly sliced onions into a bowl with an equal amount of thinly sliced radishes; fresh hot peppers, seeded and sliced; and salt and pepper to taste. Pour in enough white vinegar to cover the vegetables and let them stand at room temperature for 2 hours before using. The amount of hot peppers will depend on taste. Strain and discard the vinegar. Have ready crusty rolls, cut three-quarters of the way through. Butter the rolls if desired and place a lettuce leaf, a slice of ham, and a layer of the pickled vegetables in each roll. Serve as a snack.

Cordero Criollo

Lamb, Creole Style

Lamb and kid are used interchangeably in Latin America, though kid requires a little longer cooking time. There are not a great many recipes calling for these meats, but the few that exist are very good indeed. Annatto (achiote) lends a marvelous fragrance to this Peruvian roast leg of lamb. The herbs and spices in the dressing are the same as those in *aliño criollo* (Venezuelan creole style seasoning powder), and I find the prepared version exactly right for this dish, though I add a large clove of crushed garlic to the mixture. Shoulder of lamb or kid can also be used successfully.

Serves 6

4-pound leg or shoulder of lamb or kid
tablespoons aliño criollo (see [this page](#))
cup red wine vinegar
large clove garlic, crushed
cup olive oil
large potatoes, peeled and halved lengthwise
lettuce leaves, preferably romaine
canned pimiento, cut into strips

Trim the lamb of all but a thin layer of fat. Mix the seasoning powder with the vinegar, add the garlic, then beat in the oil with a fork. Rub this marinade into the lamb and let it stand for at least 2 hours, turning the meat from time to time and spooning the marinade over it. When ready to cook scrape off and reserve the marinade. Put the lamb into a baking pan brushed over with oil and surround with the potatoes. Bake in a preheated moderate (325° F.) oven for 1 hour (15 minutes to the pound), for rare lamb, 130° to 135° F. on a meat thermometer. Cook for 15 minutes longer if medium rare lamb is preferred. Baste every 20 minutes with the reserved marinade and any pan juices. Turn the potatoes halfway through the cooking time.

Remove the lamb to a carving board and let it stand 15 minutes before carving. Arrange the potatoes round the edge of a serving platter and keep warm in the turned-off oven. Slice the lamb and arrange it on the platter. Garnish the edge of the dish with lettuce leaves and strips of pimiento. Spoon the fat off the pan juices and put into a gravy boat with the juices from the meat as it is carved. Either spoon over the meat or serve as gravy. There will not be a great deal.



Variation: A most delicious variation, which has overtones of the Middle East in its use of mint, is *Carnero o Cabrito al Horno* (Roast Lamb or Kid). Make a dressing of 3 tablespoons butter creamed with 8 large cloves crushed garlic, salt, freshly ground pepper, and 4

tablespoons finely chopped fresh mint. Spread over the lamb or kid and roast as above. Baste with 1 cup dry white wine instead of the marinade.

Cazuela de Cordero

Lamb Casserole

CHILE

This lamb stew is a Chilean standby, a family favorite, both rich and simple at the same time. The winter squash slightly thickens the sauce, and the final whisking in of beaten eggs finishes it.

Serves 6

3 pounds boneless lamb for stew, cut into 2-inch pieces

1 onion, coarsely chopped

1 leek, sliced

1 carrot, scraped and sliced

1 small stalk of celery with leaves

1 teaspoon oregano

1/2 teaspoon ground cumin

1 sprig parsley

1 bay leaf

2 small potatoes, peeled, or 3 large potatoes, peeled and halved

1/2 pound winter squash, peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes

1/2 teaspoon salt, freshly ground pepper

1 small zucchini, cut into 1-inch slices

1/2 pound green beans, cut into 1-inch pieces

1/2 cups fresh corn kernels

2 eggs, lightly beaten

Put the lamb, onion, leek, carrot, celery, oregano, cumin, parsley, and bay leaf into a large saucepan or casserole. Pour in enough water to cover, about 6 cups, bring to a boil, skim off any froth that rises to the surface, lower the heat, cover, and simmer until the meat is almost tender, about 1½ hours. Lift out the pieces of lamb onto a plate and set aside. Strain the stock, pressing down to extract all the juices. Discard the solids. Rinse out and dry the casserole.

Return the lamb pieces to the casserole and add the potatoes and winter squash. Pour in the strained stock, adding a little water if necessary to cover the lamb and vegetables. Season to taste with salt and pepper and simmer 15 minutes. Add the zucchini, beans, and corn, and simmer until the beans are tender, about 10 minutes.

Whisk a cup of the hot stock gradually into the eggs, then pour the mixture into the

saucepan, stirring to mix. Do not let the liquid boil, as the eggs will curdle. Cook over very low heat until the eggs have thickened the sauce. The winter squash will have disintegrated, also thickening the sauce slightly. Serve in soup plates, making sure that each serving has a little of everything.

Arvejado de Cordero

Lamb Stew with Green Peas

CHILE

This Chilean lamb stew is characterized by the interesting use of paprika oil (*Color Chilena*).

Serves 6

tablespoons paprika oil (Color Chilena), see [this page](#)

pounds boneless lamb for stew, cut into 1-inch pieces

large onion, finely chopped

tablespoon flour

lt, freshly ground pepper

cups fresh green peas

eggs, lightly beaten

cup chopped parsley

Heat the paprika oil in a casserole or large saucepan. Add the lamb pieces and the onion, and sauté until the onion is soft. Add the flour and cook for a minute or two longer, stirring with a wooden spoon to mix thoroughly. Add 2 cups water, season to taste with salt and pepper, cover, and simmer until the lamb is almost done, about 1½ hours. Add the peas, bring back to a simmer, and cook for 15 minutes longer, or until the peas are tender. Transfer the meat and peas to a serving dish and keep warm. Stir the eggs and parsley into the liquid in the casserole and cook over very low heat, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, until the sauce has thickened lightly. Do not let it boil, as it will curdle. Pour the sauce over the lamb and serve with boiled potatoes or any puréed root vegetable or plain rice.

Carnero en Adobo

Lamb in Chili and Vinegar Sauce

MEXICO

Lamb and kid are very popular in the north of Mexico, much of it mountain country well suited to these animals. Julia, the cook of my husband's uncle, General Procopio Ortiz Reyes, who lives in Torreón, Coahuila, cooked this for me and gave me her recipe. It is easy yet exotic. *Ancho* chili is mild and full flavored, *mulato* chili a little *picante*. Using both gives a sauce full of character.

pounds boneless lamb (shoulder or leg), cut into 1½-inch pieces

medium onions, chopped

cloves garlic, chopped

or 4 sprigs fresh coriander

It

ancho and 3 mulato chilies

teaspoon ground cumin

teaspoon oregano

tablespoons red wine vinegar

tablespoons lard or vegetable oil

Put the lamb into a heavy saucepan or casserole with 1 onion, 1 clove garlic, the coriander sprigs, salt, and water barely to cover. Bring to a boil, lower the heat, and simmer, covered, over moderate heat until the meat is tender, about 1½ hours. Drain the lamb, strain the stock, and set aside. Rinse out and dry the casserole and return the lamb to it.

Prepare the chilies ([this page](#)) and put them with the soaking water into a blender or food processor fitted with a steel blade. Add the remaining onion and garlic, the cumin, oregano, vinegar, and salt, and blend until fairly smooth. The mixture should be more of a paste than a purée. Heat the lard or oil in a skillet and cook the mixture, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, for about 5 minutes, over moderate heat. Thin with 1½ cups of the reserved lamb stock. The mixture should be the consistency of a medium white sauce. Add more stock if necessary. Pour the sauce over the lamb and simmer over very low heat for 20 minutes. Serve with rice, beans, and a green vegetable. Tortillas are good with this.

Variation: Mexican friends who like their food hot and very highly flavored suggest adding a canned *chipotle* or *morita* chili to the blender when making the sauce. It makes a delicious change.

Variation: For *Carnero en Salsa de Chile Ancho* (Lamb in Mild Red Chili Sauce) from Mexico, sauté the lamb in 2 tablespoons olive oil in a skillet and transfer to a casserole. Prepare 6 *ancho* chilies ([this page](#)) and put them with the soaking water into a blender or food processor fitted with a steel blade. Add 1 chopped onion, 1 clove garlic, and 4 medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped, and reduce to a purée. If necessary, add enough oil to the skillet to make the quantity of fat up to 2 tablespoons. Add the chili mixture and cook, stirring constantly, for about 5 minutes over moderate heat. It has a tendency to splutter. Pour over the lamb, season to taste with salt and freshly ground pepper, a pinch of cinnamon, and ⅓ teaspoon of cloves. Cover and simmer over low heat until the lamb is tender, about 1½ hours. Soak ¼ cup small, pimiento-stuffed olives, about 12, in cold water for 15 minutes to get rid of the brine, drain and halve them. Put the lamb in a serving dish and garnish with the olives and ⅓ cup slivered, toasted almonds. Serve with rice and a

green vegetable. Depending on the juiciness of the tomatoes, it may be necessary to add a little more liquid to the lamb, though the sauce should not be abundant. Add tomato juice, stock, or water. Serves 6.

Seco de Carnero

Lamb Stew

PERU

Don't be afraid of the amount of garlic used here. The flavor will not be at all aggressive, indeed it will be quite gentle as the pungent oils cook out. The coriander, garlic, fruit juices, and hot peppers combine into a most delicious sauce.

Serves 6 to 8

cup fresh coriander (cilantro), chopped

or 3 fresh hot red or green peppers, seeded and chopped

whole head garlic, peeled and chopped

cup olive oil

medium onions, finely chopped

pounds lean, boneless lamb (shoulder or leg), cut into 1-inch cubes

lt, freshly ground pepper

cup bitter (Seville) orange juice, or use two-thirds fresh orange juice and one-third lime or lemon juice

pounds potatoes, peeled and sliced

pound green peas, or 2 packages frozen peas



In a blender or food processor combine the coriander leaves, hot peppers, and garlic, and reduce to a purée. Set aside. Heat the oil in a casserole and sauté the onions until they are soft. Stir in the coriander mixture and cook for a minute or two longer. Add the lamb pieces and cook for about 5 minutes, turning the pieces to coat them with the sauce. Season to taste with salt and a generous amount of pepper. Add the bitter (Seville) orange juice or the orange and lime (or lemon) juice mixture and enough water to cover, about 1½ cups. Cover and simmer until the lamb is tender, about 1½ hours. The stew may be cooked to this point a day ahead and refrigerated so that any fat may be removed. Let the casserole stand until it reaches room temperature before reheating.

Boil the potatoes in salted water until they are tender. Drain and add to the casserole. Boil the peas in salted water until they are tender, drain, and add to the casserole. Bring

the casserole to a simmer and cook just long enough to heat it through.

Posta en Frutas Secas

Beef and Dried Fruit Stew

COLOMBIA

This is one of the Latin American meat and fruit stews that have links, via Spain when it was a Moorish colony, to ancient Persia, where these delectable dishes were first concocted. Interestingly there are also links with the cooking of present-day Morocco, where dishes very similar to those of ancient Persia survive. Most Colombians take advantage of modern marketing and use an 11-ounce package of dried mixed fruit, but you can make the mixture yourself.

Serves 6

1 11-ounce package mixed dried fruit (prunes, dried apricots, peaches, and pears)

2 tablespoons olive or vegetable oil

2 pounds lean beef, preferably top round, cut into 1-inch cubes

1 medium onion, finely chopped

2 clove garlic, minced

1 medium carrot, scraped and chopped

Salt, freshly ground pepper

1 cup dry red wine

1 tablespoon soft butter (optional)

1 tablespoon flour (optional)



Put the mixed dried fruit into a bowl with 1½ cups warm water and leave to soak for 1 hour, turning the fruit from time to time. Drain, reserve the soaking water, and set the fruit aside.

Heat the oil in a heavy casserole or saucepan and sauté the beef, onion, garlic, and carrot for about 5 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Pour in the wine and the reserved soaking water from the fruit. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat to low, and simmer, covered, for 2 hours, or until the beef is almost tender. Add the fruit. The prunes and apricots should be left whole, the pears and peaches halved or quartered. Cover and simmer 30 minutes longer. If the sauce is too thick, add a little more wine. If you want a slightly thicker sauce, mix the butter and flour together and drop a few smooth pieces into the casserole, blending well. Serve with rice.

Carne con Salsa de Frutas

Beef in Fruit Sauce

ECUADOR

A particularly delicious beef stew, with the flavors of the fruits and the tomatoes subtly blended and enriched by the cream, though still nicely tart.

Serves 6

4 tablespoons vegetable oil

1 large onion, finely chopped

2 pounds boneless beef chuck, cut into 1-inch cubes

1 cup dry white wine

1 cup beef stock

1/2 t, freshly ground pepper

1/2 quinces, peeled, cored, and chopped, or 2 peaches, peeled, pitted, and chopped

1/2 apples, peeled, cored, and chopped

1/2 pears, peeled, cored, and chopped

1/2 large tomatoes, peeled and chopped

1/2 tsp salt, to taste

1/2 cup heavy cream

Heat 4 tablespoons of the oil in a skillet and sauté the onion until it is soft. Using a slotted spoon transfer the onion to a casserole. In the oil remaining in the skillet sauté the beef until it is browned on all sides. Add it to the casserole with the wine, stock, and salt and pepper to taste. Cover and simmer until the meat is tender, about 2 hours. Arrange the meat on a serving platter and keep warm. Reserve the stock.

Heat the remaining 2 tablespoons of oil in a saucepan and add the fruit, including the tomatoes. Cook for a few minutes, stirring. Add a little sugar, if liked. The sauce should be quite tart. Add enough of the reserved stock barely to cover, and simmer, stirring from time to time, until the mixture is thick and well blended. In the old days cooks had to work the mixture through a sieve, a tedious procedure; today a blender or food processor does the job. Return the purée to the saucepan and taste for seasoning, adding a little salt if necessary. Stir in the cream and cook just long enough to heat through. Pour the sauce over the meat. Serve with rice.

Variation: Guava shells or nectarines may be used instead of quinces or peaches. Boneless pork loin may be used instead of beef. The sauce is also pleasant served with grilled lamb chops. If preferred, serve with *Llapingachos* (Potato Cakes) instead of rice.

Chuletas de Cerdo con Frutas

Pork Chops with Dried Fruit

The use of dried fruits, especially apricots, in meat dishes is very much a Middle Eastern thing. In Iran lamb and dried apricots are used together in a most delectable dish. A lot of old dishes have survived in the Dominican Republic and this one was obviously brought over by the Spanish, using pork instead of lamb. It works beautifully.

Serves 4

pound, about 1 cup, pitted prunes

pound, about 1 cup, dried apricots

pound, about 1 cup, dried pears

pork loin chops, weighing 2 pounds

lt, freshly ground pepper

tablespoons vegetable oil

medium onion, finely chopped

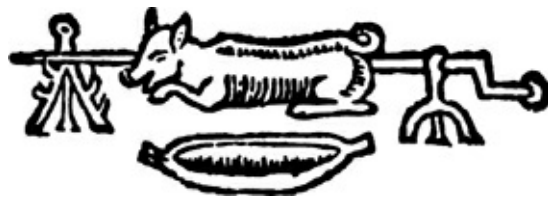
clove garlic, chopped

cup chicken stock, about

cup dry white wine, about

Put the prunes in a bowl with the apricots, halved, and the pears, quartered. Pour in enough cold water barely to cover and let soak for 30 minutes.

Season the chops with salt and pepper. Heat the oil in a skillet and sauté the chops until golden on both sides. Transfer the chops to a casserole. In the fat remaining in the pan sauté the onion and garlic until the onion is softened. Add to the casserole. Arrange the fruit over and around the pork chops. Pour in the chicken stock and wine, adding a little more of each if necessary to cover. Cover the casserole with aluminum foil, then the lid, and bake in a preheated moderate (350° F.) oven for about 1½ hours or until the pork is tender.



Chirmole de Puerco

Pork Stew with Peppers and Greengage Plums

MEXICO

Serves 6

pounds lean, boneless pork, cut into 2-inch cubes

ancho chilies

fresh or canned hot green serrano peppers, seeded

cloves garlic, chopped

large onion, chopped

teaspoon ground cinnamon

lt, freshly ground pepper

pound greengage plums

medium tomatoes, sliced

teaspoon crumbled, dried epazote (optional)

cup masa harina

cup Seville (bitter) orange juice, or use two-thirds orange juice and one-third lime juice

tablespoons lard or vegetable oil (optional)

Put the pork into a large, heavy saucepan or casserole, add water barely to cover, and simmer, covered, until almost tender, about 1½ hours.

Pull off the stems and shake out the seeds from the peppers and tear them into pieces. Rinse and put into a bowl with ½ cup hot water. Let the peppers soak for 1 hour, turning them frequently. Combine the *ancho* chilies, the water in which they were soaked, the *serrano* peppers, garlic, onion, and cinnamon in an electric blender or food processor and reduce to a coarse purée. Drain the pork, reserving the stock, and return the meat to the saucepan. Add enough of the stock to the purée to make a thin sauce. Season to taste with salt and pepper and pour over the pork, mixing well. Pit the greengages and cut each plum into 4 pieces. Add them to the pork. Add the tomato slices, and if it is available the *epazote*. Simmer, covered, until the pork is tender. Mix a little of the remaining stock with the *masa harina*. Stir the orange juice into this mixture and add to the pork stew. The lard or vegetable oil may be added at this time, if liked. Simmer, stirring gently, for a minute or two longer.

Ternera en Salsa de Ciruelas Pasas

Veal in Prune Sauce

MEXICO

This is an old colonial dish that I particularly like to serve when friends are coming to dinner. The prunes give the dark sauce a rich, subtle flavor.

Serves 6

½ cups large, pitted prunes, chopped

cup dry red wine

tablespoons lard or vegetable oil

½ to 3½ pounds boneless veal roast, preferably top round

medium onions, finely chopped

cloves garlic, chopped
medium tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped
cups beef or veal stock, about
lt, freshly ground pepper

Put the prunes to soak in the wine for at least 2 hours.

Heat the lard or oil in a heavy casserole and sauté the veal until it is golden brown all over. Lift out of the casserole and set aside. In the oil remaining in the casserole sauté the onions and garlic until the onions are soft. Add the tomatoes and cook until the mixture is well blended. Add the prunes and wine. Add the veal and pour in just enough stock to cover. Simmer, covered, over low heat until the veal is tender, about 2 hours. Lift out the veal to a serving platter, slice, and keep warm. Season the sauce to taste with salt and pepper. During cooking the prunes should have disintegrated, thickening the sauce. If necessary, cook the sauce over fairly brisk heat, stirring, for a few minutes to amalgamate the solids and reduce the sauce a little. It should be thick but not completely smooth. Spoon a little sauce over the veal slices and serve the rest in a sauceboat. Serve with rice or any starchy root vegetable.

Tenera con Aceitunas

Veal with Olives

MEXICO

The stuffed green olives add a distinctive flavor to this dish.

Serves 4 to 6

tablespoons olive or vegetable oil
pounds shank or shoulder of veal, cut into 1-inch cubes
ounces boiled ham, coarsely chopped
medium onion, finely chopped
clove garlic, chopped
cup chopped parsley
i small pimiento-stuffed green olives
cup dry white wine
cup beef stock
lt, freshly ground pepper
eggs

Heat the oil in a skillet and sauté the veal with the ham. Lift out into a casserole. In the oil remaining in the skillet sauté the onion and garlic until the onion is soft. Add to the casserole with the parsley. Soak the olives in cold water for 10 minutes, drain, and add to the casserole. Pour in the wine and stock, season to taste with salt and pepper, cover, and

simmer until the veal is tender, about 1½ hours. Lightly beat the eggs, then whisk ½ cup of the hot liquid into them. Pour the mixture back into the casserole and cook, stirring, until the sauce is lightly thickened. Do not let the sauce boil, as it will curdle. Serve with rice or a starchy root vegetable and a green vegetable or salad.

FLANK STEAK DISHES

South Americans hold flank steak in high esteem for its fine flavor and adaptability. It may be braised, stewed, and broiled, stuffed, baked, or shredded. And it may be served hot or cold. It is used for the national dish of Venezuela with the traditional accompaniments of rice, black beans, and fried plantains. It is stuffed with spinach, or even more exotically with an omelet, asparagus tips, and strips of pimiento to make a party dish that is not only satisfyingly hearty but elegant in appearance. It has the added merit of being a lean and tender cut that is also economical.

Pabellón Caraqueño

Steak with Rice, Black Beans, and Plantains

VENEZUELA

This national dish of Venezuela is said to look like a flag (*pabellón*) because of the different colors of meat, rice, beans, and plantains. It is a robust and satisfying dish.

Serves 6

½ pounds flank steak or skirt steak

½ cups beef stock, about

medium onion, finely chopped

clove garlic, minced

medium tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped

It

tablespoons olive oil

recipe Arroz Blanco (White Rice), [this page](#)

eggs, fried in olive oil

recipe Caraotas Negras (Black Beans), [this page](#)

ripe plantain, or 2 underripe bananas

tablespoons vegetable oil

Cut the steak into 2 or 3 pieces to fit conveniently into a saucepan, and add the stock to cover. If necessary add a little more. Bring to a simmer and cook, covered, over very low heat until the meat is tender, 1½ to 2 hours. Allow to cool in the stock, drain, reserve the stock for another use, and shred the meat with the fingers. Combine the meat with the onion, garlic, and tomatoes. Season to taste with salt. Heat the oil in a skillet and sauté the

meat mixture until the onion is cooked and the mixture is quite dry. Put the rice in the center of a large, warmed platter and heap the meat on top of it. Arrange the fried eggs on top of the meat. Surround the rice with the black beans and decorate the edge of the platter with the fried plantains or bananas.

To fry the plantains or bananas: Peel the plantains and cut them in half lengthwise, then crosswise into thirds. If using bananas, peel and cut into thirds. Heat the oil in a skillet and fry the plantains or bananas until golden brown on both sides, about 2 or 3 minutes.

Matambre

Stuffed Rolled Flank Steak

ARGENTINA

This translates literally as “kill hunger” and it is indeed a very satisfying dish whether eaten hot as a main course, or cold with salads, ideal for a picnic. In more modest amounts, it makes an unusual first course.

Serves 4

teaspoon oregano

cloves crushed garlic

½ pounds flank steak

lt, freshly ground pepper

cup spinach leaves, about

small carrot, thinly sliced

hardboiled egg, thinly sliced

cayenne pepper (optional)

cups beef stock, about

Mix the oregano and garlic and spread over the steak. Season the steak with salt and pepper to taste, then cover with the spinach leaves, leaving about a ½-inch margin. Top the spinach with the carrot and egg and sprinkle with a little cayenne pepper, if liked. Roll up with the grain and tie with kitchen string at about 1-inch intervals. Place in a casserole into which it fits comfortably but quite snugly. Pour in the beef stock. There should be enough to cover the steak. Bring to a boil, skim off any froth that rises, reduce the heat, and simmer gently for 1½ to 2 hours, or until the beef is tender. Lift out, remove the strings, slice, and serve hot, moistening the steak with a little of the stock. Serve with potatoes or rice. Or allow the steak to cool in the stock and serve cold, sliced, with salad. Reserve the leftover stock for another use. Serve with *Salsa Criolla* (Creole Sauce), [this page](#).

Variation: For *Matambre al Horno* (Baked Flank Steak), put the stuffed steak into the casserole with 3 cups stock. Bring the stock to a boil on top of the stove, cover the

casserole, and transfer to a preheated moderate (350° F.) oven for about 1 hour, or until the steak is done.

Variation: In Uruguay, where this dish is also popular, the steak is sometimes just seasoned and stuffed with spinach.

Variation: *Matambre a la Cacerola* (Casseroled Flank Steak). Heat 2 tablespoons butter in a skillet, add 1 small onion, finely chopped, ½ cup finely chopped celery, and 1 small carrot, scraped and finely chopped. Sauté until the onion is soft, about 5 minutes. Remove from the heat and stir in 2 tablespoons finely chopped parsley and 2 cups cubed bread. Season with salt and pepper. Stir in 2 tablespoons beef stock, mix well, and spread over the steak, leaving a ½-inch margin. Roll up with the grain and tie at 1-inch intervals with kitchen string. Heat 2 tablespoons vegetable oil in a casserole large enough to hold the steak, and brown the steak all over. Pour in enough stock, about 8 cups, to cover, and simmer for 1½ to 2 hours. Or cook in a preheated moderate (350° F.) oven for 1 hour or so, in which case add only enough stock to come about one-third of the way up the steak, about 3 cups. If liked, thicken about 2 cups of the stock with a *beurre manié* (see [this page](#)). Serve with carrots and potatoes and a green vegetable.



Variation: *Malaya Arrollada* (Rolled Flank Steak) is a Chilean version of *Matambre*, and why this particular cut of steak is called a *malaya* in Chile is entirely beyond me. Admittedly, women in Malaya wear sarongs and sarongs are wrapped around ladies, while the *malaya* is wrapped around a filling, but this is surely stretching a linguistic point too far. Season the steak with salt, pepper, and 1 teaspoon oregano. Cover it with 1 onion, finely chopped, 1 stalk celery, finely chopped, 1 carrot, scraped and finely sliced, and 1 hardboiled egg, thinly sliced. Roll up with the grain, tie with string, and place in a flameproof casserole that holds it snugly. Pour in enough stock to cover and simmer until it is tender, 1½ to 2 hours. Let it cool in the stock. Lift out, remove the string and slice. Serve as a first course with any salad. Serves 8.

Sobrebarriga

Flank Steak

2-pound flank steak, with layer of fat left on
medium onion, chopped
cloves garlic, chopped
medium tomatoes, chopped
carrot, scraped and chopped
bay leaf
or 3 sprigs parsley
teaspoon thyme
teaspoon oregano
lt, freshly ground pepper
ef stock or water
or 2 tablespoons butter, softened at room temperature
cup fresh breadcrumbs

Put the steak into a large saucepan with the onion, garlic, tomatoes, carrot, bay leaf, parsley sprigs, thyme, oregano, and salt and pepper to taste. Add enough stock or water to cover the meat and cook it, covered, over low heat for about 2 hours, or until it is tender. Remove the meat from the liquid, pat it dry with paper towels, and place it in a broiling pan, fat side up. Spread the butter over the meat and cover with breadcrumbs. Broil until the crumbs are golden brown. Slice the steak and arrange it on a heated platter. Strain the hot seasoned liquid into a sauceboat. Serve with *Papas Chorreadas* (Potatoes with Cheese, Tomato, and Onion Sauce) and *Ensalada de Aguacate* (Avocado Salad).

Sobrebarriga Bogotana

Flank Steak, Bogotá Style

COLOMBIA

Serves 4 to 6

medium onion, finely chopped
cloves garlic, chopped
medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped
tablespoon parsley, chopped
teaspoon thyme
bay leaf, crumbled
teaspoon prepared mustard
teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
lt, freshly ground pepper
2-pound flank steak, trimmed of all fat

cups beef stock or water, about
cups dark beer, about
tablespoons butter, softened at room temperature
cup fresh breadcrumbs

Mix together the onion, garlic, tomatoes, parsley, thyme, bay leaf, mustard, Worcestershire sauce, and salt and pepper to taste. Spread the mixture on the steak. Roll the steak up with the grain and tie securely with string. Place in a flameproof casserole, cover, and refrigerate until the following day. Cover with equal quantities of beef stock or water, and dark beer. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat to a bare simmer, and cook, partially covered, until the steak is tender and the liquid reduced, about 2 hours. Remove the steak from the casserole, brush it with the butter, and roll it in the breadcrumbs. Arrange the steak in a baking tin and bake in a preheated hot (400° F.) oven until the crumbs are lightly browned, about 15 minutes. Heat the sauce remaining in the casserole and serve in a sauceboat. Slice the steak and arrange on a warmed platter. Serve with *Papas Chorreadas* (Potatoes with Cheese, Tomato, and Onion Sauce) and *Ensalada de Aguacate* (Avocado Salad).

Roupa Velha

Old Clothes

BRAZIL

This is the Brazilian version of the Spanish dish *Ropa Vieja* (Old Clothes). Ideally flank steak is used since the cooked meat should be shredded, as old clothes can be said to shred into rags and tatters. The dish is infinitely more appetizing than its name, and occurs very widely in Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking countries, varying from place to place. The Brazilian version, though it is not as rich as, for example, the Cuban version, is very good. Traditionally leftover beef from a *cozido* (pot-au-feu), or similar dish, is used, and if you have some, by all means use it.

Serves 4 to 6

2-pound flank steak, or 2 pounds cooked boiled beef
medium onion, stuck with a clove
carrot, scraped and halved
stalk celery
sprig parsley
bay leaf
clove garlic
peppercorns
tablespoon salt

Put the steak into a flameproof casserole with the onion, carrot, celery, parsley, bay leaf,

garlic, peppercorns, and salt and enough cold water to cover. Bring to a boil, simmer for 5 minutes, and skim the froth that rises to the surface. Cover, lower the heat, and simmer for 1½ hours, or until the steak is tender. Leave the steak in the stock until it is cool enough to handle. Lift it out of the stock onto a chopping board. Strain the stock into a jar and refrigerate for another use. Cut the steak in half crosswise, then shred it along the grain into strips. Set aside.

FOR THE SAUCE

cup olive oil
medium onions, thinly sliced
medium tomatoes, peeled and sliced
cup finely chopped parsley
lt, freshly ground pepper
ch of sugar
tablespoons vinegar
tabasco sauce (optional)

Heat the oil in a skillet and sauté the onions until they are lightly browned. Add the tomatoes, parsley, salt and pepper to taste, and the sugar. Cook the mixture for 5 minutes longer, stirring occasionally. Add the steak, vinegar, and a little Tabasco sauce, if liked, and cook, stirring, until the steak is heated through. Transfer to the center of a heated platter and surround it with plain white rice.



PORK LOIN DISHES

Pork is one of the best-liked meats in Latin America, and pork loin one of the favorite cuts. In my view pork shoulder is just as attractive and much more economical though it will need a little longer cooking time. Recipes are quite varied, ranging from an Ecuadorian dish where the meat is larded with raw shrimp and braised, reminding one of the flavors of Chinese food, to an Argentine dish where the meat is baked in milk and emerges deliciously tender with a creamy sauce, to pork simmered in orange juice, tender and delicate, to pork loin, Chilean style, served with a fiery pepper sauce to be taken with discretion.

Lomo con Camarones

Pork Loin with Shrimp

ECUADOR

The combination of pork and shrimp braised in wine is unusual and exciting — the flavor exquisite. This is one of my party favorites.

Serves 6

3-pound boned loin of pork

1 pound raw shrimp, peeled and coarsely chopped

1 hardboiled egg, chopped

1/2 t, freshly ground pepper

2 cloves garlic, crushed

3 tablespoons butter

1 cup dry white wine

1 tablespoon flour

White wine or chicken stock



With a steel, or with a sharp, narrow knife, make holes about the thickness of one's thumb all over the loin, almost to the center of the meat. Season the shrimp and egg with salt and pepper. With your fingers, stuff half the holes with the shrimp, the other half with chopped egg, or mix the shrimp and egg together and use as a stuffing. Season the loin with salt, pepper, and the crushed garlic. Heat 3 tablespoons of the butter in a flameproof casserole large enough to hold the loin comfortably (an oval casserole is best) and sauté the meat until it is golden all over. Pour in the wine and bring to a simmer. Remove from the heat. Cover with aluminum foil and the casserole lid and bake in a preheated moderate (325° F.) oven for 2 hours, or until the pork is tender. Lift the pork onto a warmed serving platter and remove the string. Slice the pork and keep warm. Mix the flour with the remaining tablespoon of butter and stir it, over moderate heat, into the casserole, stirring until the sauce is lightly thickened. If the liquid has reduced a great deal during cooking and the sauce is too thick, add a little wine or chicken stock to thin it to medium consistency. Taste, and season with more salt and pepper, if necessary. Spoon a little of the sauce over the pork slices, and pour the rest into a sauceboat. Serve with shoestring potatoes, sliced tomatoes, and *Ensalada de Habas* (Fresh Broad Bean Salad).

Lomo de Cerdo a la Caucana

Pork Loin Baked in Milk

This is an unusual version of a meat cooked in milk. The lemon juice clabbers the milk slightly and also tenderizes the pork. At the end of the cooking time there are about 3 cups of slightly thickened milk in the baking dish. This makes a very light and attractive sauce when reduced. Boned shoulder of pork, a more economical cut, can also be used, in which case increase the cooking time by about half an hour.

Serves 6

pounds boneless pork loin or boned shoulder

cups milk

cup lemon juice

lt, freshly ground pepper

tablespoons butter



Put the pork into an oblong Pyrex or other flameproof baking dish that will just hold it comfortably. Mix the milk with the lemon juice and pour it over the pork. Cover the dish lightly and leave overnight in a cool place. When ready to cook, lift the pork out of the milk mixture and pat it dry. Season with salt and pepper. Heat the butter in a skillet and brown the pork lightly all over. Put the pork back into the dish with the milk together with the pan drippings, and bake it, uncovered, in a preheated moderate (350° F.) oven for 1½ to 2 hours, or until the pork is tender. Lift the pork out onto a warmed serving platter and remove the string tying it up. Skim the fat from the sauce and pour the sauce into a saucepan. Reduce it over brisk heat to 1½ cups. Pour it into a sauceboat and serve separately. Slice the meat and serve hot with rice or potatoes and a green vegetable.

This is also good served cold with *Guasacaca* (Avocado Sauce) from Venezuela ([this page](#)) or *Guacamole* (Avocado Sauce) from Mexico ([this page](#)) and salad.

Lomo en Jugo de Naranja

Pork Loin in Orange Juice

Serves 6

tablespoons butter

large onion, finely chopped

1 clove garlic, minced

3-pound loin of pork, boned

1/2 lb, freshly ground pepper

1 tablespoon grated orange rind

1/2 fresh hot red or green pepper, seeded and ground, or 1 teaspoon hot pepper sauce such as Tabasco

1/2 cups orange juice

1 cup chicken stock

1/2 teaspoons cornstarch



Heat the butter in a skillet and sauté the onion and garlic until the onion is soft. With a slotted spoon transfer the onion and garlic to a flameproof casserole large enough to hold the pork loin. Season the pork with salt and pepper and brown all over in the fat remaining in the skillet. Add the pork to the casserole with the grated orange rind, the hot pepper or hot pepper sauce, orange juice, and enough stock barely to cover. Bring to a bare simmer and cook, covered, over very low heat for about 2 hours, or until the meat is tender. Put the meat on a serving platter, slice it, and keep it warm. Measure the liquid in the casserole and reduce it over brisk heat to 2 cups. Mix the cornstarch with a little water and stir it into the sauce. Cook, stirring, over moderate heat until the sauce is lightly thickened. Spoon a little of the sauce over the pork and serve the rest separately in a sauceboat. Accompany the pork with a salad made of cooked sliced beets, carrots, and potatoes in a vinaigrette sauce made with a teaspoon of Dijon mustard. If liked, toss the vegetables separately in the vinaigrette sauce and arrange them in heaps on a bed of lettuce leaves on a platter. Or serve with plain rice and a green vegetable.

Chanco a la Chilena

Pork Loin, Chilean Style

CHILE

Serves 6 to 8

1/2 cup vegetable oil

3 pounds boneless pork loin

medium onions, sliced
cloves garlic, chopped
carrot, scraped and sliced
stalk celery, cut into 1-inch pieces
bay leaf
teaspoon oregano
teaspoon thyme
teaspoon ground cumin
lt, freshly ground pepper
cup red wine vinegar

Heat the oil in a large flameproof casserole and brown the meat lightly all over. Add all the other ingredients to the casserole with enough water to cover. Bring to a boil, cover, reduce the heat, and simmer gently until the meat is tender, about 3 hours. Allow the meat to cool completely in the stock, then remove to a serving platter. Reserve the stock for another use.

Serve the pork sliced with *Salsa de Ají Colorado* (Red Pepper Sauce), [this page](#), separately. In Chile the pork slices would be covered with the sauce. But since it can be quite incendiary if the peppers used are very hot, it is wiser to test one's palate with a little at a time.

GROUND MEAT DISHES

Albóndigas

Meatballs

URUGUAY

Albóndigas enjoy great popularity in Latin America and are obviously inspired by the Middle East, where the range and variety of delicious meatballs seem inexhaustible. The countries of Latin America, adding their own very special touches, make their meatballs with beef, veal, or pork or a combination. They are usually lightly sautéed first, then cooked in a broth or sauce, seasoned quite differently from the meatballs themselves, thus creating a counterpoint of flavors that is very intriguing. Often there is the added richness that wine gives to the sauce. In Mexico the full-flavored yet mild *ancho* chili or the peppery, exotic *chipotle* adds unusual flavor to the sauces. With such variety in seasonings it would be hard to tire of them.

Makes about 18 meatballs, serves 4 to 6

tablespoons vegetable oil
medium onion, finely chopped
medium tomato, peeled and chopped

fresh hot red pepper, seeded and chopped
teaspoon sugar
lt, freshly ground pepper
pound veal, finely ground
cup fresh breadcrumbs
tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
cup seedless raisins
teaspoon grated nutmeg
eggs
milk, if necessary
our

FOR THE BROTH

tablespoon vegetable oil
medium onion, finely chopped
½ cups beef stock
½ cups dry red wine
teaspoon thyme
teaspoon oregano
bay leaf
lt, freshly ground pepper
ditional stock and wine, if necessary

In a skillet heat 2 tablespoons of the oil and sauté the onion until it is soft. Add the tomato, hot pepper, sugar, and salt and pepper to taste. Cook, stirring from time to time, until the mixture is thick and quite dry. Let the mixture cool. In a bowl mix together the veal, breadcrumbs, Parmesan cheese, raisins, nutmeg, and the tomato mixture. Add the eggs, mixing thoroughly. If the mixture is too dry to hold together, add a very little milk. Form into balls, about 2 inches in diameter, and flour them lightly. Heat the remaining 3 tablespoons of oil in the skillet and sauté the meatballs until lightly browned. As they are done, lift them out and set aside.

To make the broth: Heat the tablespoon of oil in a saucepan and sauté the onion until it is very soft. Add the stock, wine, thyme, oregano, and bay leaf, and simmer for a few minutes to blend the flavors. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Add the meatballs, cover, and cook over low heat until they are done, about 30 minutes. If necessary to cover the meatballs, add more stock and wine in equal amounts.

Serve the meatballs with rice or any starchy vegetable, using the broth as gravy. The broth may be a little thin, or too abundant, in which case lift out the meatballs to a serving dish and keep them warm. Reduce the broth over brisk heat until it is slightly thickened. If

any is left over, I find it comes in handy for use in other sauces. *Ensalada de Habas* (Fresh Broad Bean Salad) from Ecuador makes a very pleasant accompaniment.

Variation: For *Albóndigas* from Chile, use ground beef instead of veal and mix the beef with 1 finely chopped onion, 1 cup fresh breadcrumbs, salt, pepper, and 2 eggs, adding a little milk if the mixture is too dry. Form into balls, and poach in beef stock until tender, about 30 minutes. While the meatballs are poaching, make a sauce: In a saucepan heat 2 tablespoons butter and sauté 1 onion, finely chopped, until it is soft. Add 1½ cups each beef stock and dry red wine, 1 very finely grated carrot, ¼ teaspoon ground cumin, 1 bay leaf, and salt and pepper to taste. Bring to a boil and simmer, covered, for 30 minutes, then strain. Return the sauce to the pan and thicken with a *beurre manié*. Mix 2 teaspoons flour with 2 teaspoons butter and stir it into the hot sauce bit by bit. Reserving the poaching stock for another use, remove the meatballs to a serving dish and pour the sauce over them. Serve with rice. Serves 4 to 6.

Variation: For *Albóndigas en Caldo* (Meatballs in Stock) from Paraguay, thoroughly mix together 1 pound ground beef, 1 cup cornmeal or fresh breadcrumbs, 1 onion, finely chopped, 1 clove garlic, minced, 2 tablespoons finely chopped parsley, 1 fresh hot red pepper, minced, ¼ teaspoon oregano, salt and pepper to taste, and 2 eggs. Add a little stock if the mixture seems too dry. Form into balls, about 2 inches in diameter, putting a piece of hardboiled egg in the center of each ball. Set aside. Heat 1 tablespoon vegetable oil in a saucepan and sauté 1 onion, finely chopped, 2 medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped, 1 fresh hot red pepper, seeded and chopped, and salt and pepper, until the onion is soft. Add 3 cups beef stock and bring to a boil. Add the meatballs and simmer until they are done, about 30 minutes. Serve with rice. Serves 4 to 6.

If liked the meatballs may be made small, 1 inch in diameter, and the amount of stock increased to 8 cups. Cook the meatballs with 3 tablespoons well-washed rice for 20 minutes and serve in soup plates, with the stock, as a soup. The cornmeal will give this version a slightly drier texture, the breadcrumbs a very soft one. Both are good. Serves 4 to 6.

Variation: For *Albóndigas Picantes* (Peppery Meatballs) from Paraguay, put 1½ pounds lean beef, ground twice, in a bowl with 2 cloves garlic, minced, 1 cup fresh breadcrumbs, ½ teaspoon each ground oregano and cumin, salt and pepper to taste, and a beaten egg. Mix very thoroughly, adding a little milk or stock if the meat mixture seems too dry. Make into balls 1½ inches in diameter and roll lightly in flour. Sauté the balls in vegetable oil until lightly browned all over and set aside.

Next make a sauce: Heat 3 tablespoons vegetable oil in a saucepan and sauté 2 medium onions, finely chopped, 1 bell pepper, seeded and chopped, preferably red (if red peppers are not available, use 2 canned *pimientos*, chopped). Add 2 fresh hot red or green peppers, seeded and chopped, or use 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper or 1 teaspoon hot pepper sauce such as Tabasco. (If using cayenne or Tabasco, add these later with the tomato purée.) When the onion is soft, add 1 bay leaf, 1 teaspoon sugar, and salt and pepper to taste. Stir

in 2 cups beef stock and 6 cups tomato purée and simmer, covered, for 15 minutes. Remove and discard the bay leaf and purée the liquid in a blender or food processor. Return to the saucepan and bring to a simmer, add the meatballs and simmer, uncovered, for 15 minutes longer, or until the meatballs are done. Serve with white rice. There should be a generous amount of sauce to go over the rice. It may be reduced over brisk heat or thickened with a little flour if it is too abundant. Serves 4 to 6.

Variation: Perhaps of all the meatballs in Latin America, the Mexican ones are the most exotic. There is one version with a choice of sauces — either a gentle *ancho* chili sauce or a hot *chipotle* or *morita* chili sauce, so that all tastes are accommodated happily.

For *Albóndigas Mexicanas*, in a bowl thoroughly mix together ½ pound each twice-ground beef, pork, and veal. Add ½ cup fresh breadcrumbs, 1 medium onion, finely chopped, ½ teaspoon oregano or ground cumin, according to preference, salt, freshly ground pepper, and 1 egg, lightly beaten. Mix thoroughly, adding a little milk if necessary. Form into 1½-inch balls, roll lightly in flour, and set aside. If liked, a little cooked rice, a little hardboiled egg, or a slice of green olive, or a combination of all three, may be put in the center of each meatball. Makes 24 meatballs.

For the Ancho Chili Sauce: Pull the stems off 3 dried *ancho* chilies, shake out the seeds, and tear the peppers into pieces. Rinse and put to soak in a bowl with ½ cup warm water. Leave to soak for about 1 hour, turning from time to time. Put into a blender or food processor with the liquid and reduce to a purée. Set aside. In a skillet heat 3 tablespoons vegetable oil and sauté 1 medium onion, finely chopped, with 1 clove garlic, minced, until the onion is soft. Add the puréed *ancho* chili and 2 cups peeled, seeded, and finely chopped tomato, and sauté, stirring frequently, for 5 minutes over moderate heat. Pour the mixture into a fairly large saucepan, add 1 cup or more of beef stock to thin the mixture to a souplike consistency. Season to taste with salt, pepper, and ¼ teaspoon sugar. Bring to a simmer, add the meatballs, and simmer, uncovered, until the meatballs are tender, about 20 minutes. Serve with rice. Serves 4 to 6.

For the Chipotle or Morita Chili Sauce: Follow the instructions for the preceding sauce, but omit the *ancho* chili. Put the 2 cups peeled, seeded, and chopped tomato in a blender or food processor with 1 *chipotle* or 2 *morita* chilies, coarsely chopped, and blend to a purée. Sauté with the onion and thin with the beef stock, adding more stock if necessary. The sauce will be quite hot, and very much thinner than the mild but full-flavored *ancho* sauce.

Variation: For *Albóndigas* from Venezuela, in a bowl combine 1 pound finely ground lean beef, ¼ pound boiled ham, ground, 1 finely chopped onion, ½ cup fresh breadcrumbs, 2 lightly beaten eggs, and salt and freshly ground pepper to taste. Mix thoroughly and form into balls about 1 inch in diameter. Heat 4 tablespoons vegetable oil in a skillet and sauté the meatballs, in batches, until they are browned all over. Transfer to a flameproof casserole or saucepan. In a blender or food processor combine 1 onion, chopped, 1 tablespoon chopped parsley, 4 medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped, salt and freshly ground pepper to taste, and 1 cup dry white wine. Blend until the mixture is smooth. Pour over the meatballs, adding a little beef stock if necessary to barely cover. Simmer, covered,

over low heat until the meatballs are cooked, about 20 minutes. Serve with rice or potatoes, and a green vegetable or salad as a main course. Serves 6.

The meatballs may be made half size, speared with toothpicks and served as an accompaniment to drinks. Drain them thoroughly and reserve the sauce for another use.

Picadillo

Seasoned Chopped Beef

MEXICO

Picadillo is a great favorite throughout Latin America and every country has its own version. In Mexico it is much appreciated as a filling for tacos, *empanadas*, tamales, and green peppers. In the north of the country it is popular on its own and is eaten as a main dish, accompanied by rice, beans, *guacamole*, and tortillas.

Serves 6

4 tablespoons olive or vegetable oil

2 pounds lean ground beef

1 large onion, finely chopped

2 clove garlic, finely chopped

2 medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped

2 tart cooking apples, peeled, cored, and chopped

1/2 cup or more fresh hot green peppers, seeded and chopped, or 2 or 3 canned jalapeño chilies, seeded and chopped

1/2 cup raisins, soaked 10 minutes in warm water

1/2 cup pimiento-stuffed olives, halved crosswise

1 teaspoon oregano

1 teaspoon thyme

1/2 teaspoon salt, freshly ground pepper

1/2 tablespoon butter

1/2 cup slivered almonds

Heat the oil in a large, heavy skillet. Add the beef and sauté until it is lightly browned, stirring to break up any lumps. Add the onion and garlic and sauté for 5 minutes longer. Add all the remaining ingredients except the butter and the almonds. Mix well and simmer, uncovered, over moderate heat, stirring from time to time, for 20 minutes. In a small skillet heat the butter and sauté the almonds until they are golden brown. Mound the beef onto a serving platter and sprinkle with the almonds. Surround it with a border of *Arroz Blanco* (White Rice).

Variation: Instead of oregano and thyme, use a pinch or two of cinnamon and 1/8 teaspoon

ground cloves. This makes an interesting difference in flavor, giving the dish an almost Middle Eastern taste.

Variation: In Chihuahua, the apple is left out and 4 medium potatoes, cooked and cubed, and 2 cups cooked green peas are added to the beef at the end of the cooking time for just long enough to heat them through. This makes a nice one-dish meal.

Variation: *Picadillo de la Costa* from the state of Guerrero, best known for the beach resort of Acapulco, uses the tropical fruits in which the region abounds, and instead of beef uses an equal mixture of ground pork and veal. The method is the same but the meats, with the onion, garlic, tomatoes, hot peppers, salt, and pepper, are cooked, uncovered, for 15 minutes. Then 1½ cups pineapple chunks, 2 pears, peeled, cored, and cut in chunks, and 2 bananas, peeled and sliced, are added and the mixture simmered for 15 minutes longer over low heat. Sprinkle with almonds just before serving. This is a delicious summer dish, good with plain rice.

Picadinho de Porco

Pork Hash

BRAZIL

Serves 6

tablespoon butter

medium onion, grated

large tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped

pounds ground pork

pound chorizo or other spiced, smoked pork sausage, skinned and chopped

tablespoons lemon juice

lt, freshly ground pepper

cup chopped parsley

hardboiled eggs

large bananas, peeled

utter

Heat the butter in a skillet and sauté the onion for 2 minutes. Add the tomatoes and cook, stirring occasionally, until the mixture is thick and well blended. Add the pork and the sausage and continue cooking for 20 minutes until the pork is cooked through, breaking up the meat with a fork. Add the lemon juice and salt and pepper to taste and cook for a few minutes longer. Transfer the hash to a warmed serving dish and sprinkle with the parsley, the egg whites, finely chopped, and the egg yolks, sieved. Keep warm.

Halve the bananas crosswise, then lengthwise, and sauté in butter until lightly browned. Surround the hash with the bananas.

If preferred, omit the bananas and serve with *Angú de Farinha de Milho* (Molded Cornmeal), or include with both accompaniments.



RABBIT DISHES

Rabbit, with its lean, flavorful meat, is very adaptable, taking happily to a wide variety of seasonings. In Latin America, where it is a favorite, having superseded its indigenous relatives like the *agouti* or *paca* in modern markets, it may be cooked with white wine in the simplest of ways, or exotically with sweet peppers and thick coconut milk, with annatto, with orange juice, or even more exotically with ground peanuts. A friend of mine uses peanut butter, but I prefer the texture of the sauce when home-ground nuts are used. Excellent quality frozen rabbit cut up in ready-to-cook pieces is available in supermarkets. However, a whole rabbit is very easy to cut up.

Usually the head has already been removed. If not, cut it off using a sharp, heavy knife. Split it in two and use it to enrich the dish. There is a small amount of meat on it and the brains can be eaten separately. Cut off the forelegs — easy, as they are not jointed. Cut across the rabbit just under the rib cage, then cut the rib cage in half. Cut across the section with the hind legs, then split it in two, separating the legs. Cut the part remaining, the saddle, into two pieces crosswise. One piece will contain the kidneys. There will be eight pieces in all but the two rib pieces have very little meat.

Guiso de Conejo

Rabbit Stew

PERU

Serves 4

cloves garlic

teaspoon each cumin, oregano, and rosemary

lt, freshly ground pepper

cup vegetable oil

cup white wine vinegar

2½-pound rabbit, or 2½ pounds of kid, cut into serving pieces

slices bacon, chopped

cups dry white wine

1 small white onions, peeled

Grind the garlic, cumin, oregano, and rosemary together with a mortar and pestle or in a small blender jar. Add salt to taste and a generous amount of pepper. Mix with ¼ cup of the oil and all the vinegar. Put the rabbit pieces in a bowl and pour the mixture over them. Cover with plastic wrap and marinate overnight in the refrigerator, turning once or twice. Lift out the rabbit pieces, pat dry. Reserve the marinade.

In a skillet heat the remaining ¼ cup of oil and sauté the bacon until it is crisp. Push it to one side of the skillet and sauté the rabbit pieces in the fat until they are golden. Transfer the rabbit and the contents of the skillet to a flameproof casserole or heavy saucepan. Add the marinade, the wine, and the onions. Cover and simmer until the rabbit is tender, about 1½ hours. Arrange the rabbit and the onions in a serving dish and keep warm. Reduce the sauce over brisk heat until it is slightly thickened. Pour over the rabbit. Garnish if liked with black olives and parsley sprigs and serve with boiled potatoes.

Conejo con Leche de Coco

Rabbit in Coconut Milk

COLOMBIA

In Colombia this is made with *ñeque* or *paca*, an animal like a hare, but rabbits are enough like hares for the substitution to succeed. It is a coastal dish and uses both annatto and coconut milk, typical of the cooking of this region. *Conejo Guisado con Coco* (Rabbit Stew with Coconut Milk), also from the coast, uses coconut milk too, but the flavors of the two dishes are very different and demonstrate the versatility of this attractive cuisine.

Serves 4

1 large cloves garlic

1 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon cayenne pepper

1 teaspoon ground cumin

1 grinds black pepper, about

1 tablespoons white vinegar

2½-pound rabbit, cut into 8 serving pieces

1 tablespoon annatto oil or lard (see [this page](#))

1 medium onion, chopped

1 large tomato, peeled, seeded, and chopped

1 tablespoon tomato paste

1 cup thick coconut milk (see [this page](#))

In a mortar crush the garlic with the salt, cayenne pepper, cumin, and black pepper. Stir in the vinegar. Spread this mixture over the pieces of rabbit in the casserole in which they are to be cooked and marinate at room temperature for about 4 hours, turning the pieces once or twice.

Heat the annatto oil or lard in a skillet and sauté the onion until it is softened. Add it to the rabbit with the tomato and tomato paste and enough water barely to cover. Bring to a boil, cover, and cook over low heat until the rabbit is tender, about 1½ hours. Lift the rabbit pieces onto a serving dish and keep warm. Over brisk heat reduce the liquid in the casserole to about 1 cup, stirring frequently. Stir in the coconut milk and heat it through. Do not let it boil. Pour the sauce over the rabbit. Serve with rice.

Conejo Guisado con Coco

Rabbit Stew with Coconut Milk

COLOMBIA

Serves 4

tablespoons butter

2½-pound rabbit, cut into 8 serving pieces

large onion, finely chopped

cloves garlic, chopped

green bell pepper, seeded and chopped

fresh hot red or green pepper, seeded and chopped

large tomato, peeled and chopped

pimiento, chopped

lt, freshly ground pepper

cups beef or chicken stock

cup thick coconut milk (see [this page](#))

Heat the butter in a skillet and sauté the rabbit pieces until they are lightly browned. Transfer the rabbit to a flameproof casserole. In the fat remaining in the skillet sauté the onion, garlic, and the sweet and hot peppers. Add to the casserole with the tomato, pimiento, salt and pepper to taste, and the stock. Bring to a boil, cover, and cook over very low heat until the rabbit is tender, about 1½ hours. Remove the rabbit pieces to a serving dish and keep warm. Over brisk heat reduce the liquid in the casserole to about half. Lower the heat and stir in the coconut milk. Cook, stirring, for a few minutes, then pour the sauce over the rabbit. The sauce should be quite thick. Serve with rice.

Variation: Omit the coconut milk, and reduce the amount of stock to 1 cup and add 1 cup red wine instead. Reduce the liquid in the casserole in the same way, as the sauce should not be abundant.

Conejo con Maní

Rabbit in Peanut Sauce

CHILE

Serves 4

cup vegetable oil
tablespoon sweet paprika
2½-pound rabbit, cut into serving pieces
large onions, finely chopped
clove garlic
cup roasted peanuts, finely ground
lt, freshly ground pepper to taste
teaspoon ground cumin
tablespoon white wine vinegar
½ cups chicken stock
½ cups dry white wine

Heat the oil in a heavy casserole and stir in the paprika, taking care not to let it burn. Add the rabbit pieces and sauté lightly. Lift out and set aside. Add the onions and garlic to the casserole and sauté until the onions are softened. Return the rabbit pieces to the casserole. Add all the other ingredients, mix well, cover, and simmer until the rabbit is tender, about 1½ hours. Serve with rice and a salad.

Variation: Peru has a *Conejo con Maní* using the very hot yellow peppers that are a feature of this kitchen. It can however be made with fresh hot red or green peppers instead. Sauté the rabbit pieces in a mixture of 2 tablespoons vegetable oil and 2 tablespoons butter. Transfer the rabbit to a casserole. In the fat remaining in the skillet sauté 3 medium onions, cut into thick slices, and add to the casserole with 1 or 2 hot peppers ground in a blender with 2 cloves garlic and 1 teaspoon salt. Cover with chicken stock or water, 2 to 3 cups, and simmer for 1 hour. Add 1 cup roasted ground peanuts and simmer until the rabbit is tender, about 30 minutes longer. Just before serving, add 8 small whole cooked potatoes. The peanuts will thicken as well as flavor the stew.

Conejo en Salsa de Naranja

Rabbit in Orange Sauce

CHILE

Serves 4

tablespoons vegetable oil

2½-pound rabbit, cut into serving pieces
medium onions, finely chopped
clove garlic, chopped
½ cups dry white wine
½ cups orange juice
lt, freshly ground pepper
tablespoon flour
tablespoon butter
eggs, lightly beaten
hardboiled egg, finely chopped
tablespoon chopped parsley

Heat the oil in a skillet and sauté the rabbit pieces until they are lightly browned. Transfer to a flameproof casserole. In the oil remaining in the pan, adding a little more if necessary, sauté the onions and garlic until the onions are softened. Add to the casserole. Pour the wine into the skillet and scrape up all the brown bits. Pour into the casserole. Add the orange juice to the casserole and season to taste with salt and pepper. Cover and simmer until the rabbit is tender, about 1½ hours. Transfer the rabbit pieces to a serving dish and keep them warm.

Work the flour and butter into a paste. Add it to the liquid in the casserole and cook over low heat, stirring, until it is lightly thickened. Beat ½ cup of the sauce into the eggs, then pour the eggs into the casserole, stirring constantly. Do not let the sauce come to a boil, as it will curdle. Pour the sauce over the rabbit and sprinkle with the egg and parsley. Serve with rice, potatoes or noodles, and a green vegetable.

INNARDS, OR VARIETY MEATS

✳ Tripe Dishes

Of all the *interiores* (innards) none is so popular in Latin America as tripe, understandably so since few dishes are as appetizing when well prepared from an imaginative recipe. Tripe, which generally means the first and second stomach of beef, comes to the market from the packing house, ready prepared and partially cooked. The best kind is honeycomb, but plain tripe is also good. Pig and sheep tripe are also sometimes sold. Tripe is quite tough and needs to be simmered 2 or more hours to tenderize it, but a word of warning must be sounded — much depends on how long the tripe has been precooked before being sold. It is wise to test from time to time during the cooking process so as not to overcook it. It should be tender but with a good, firm texture, a nice bitey resistance. Overcooked tripe has no character.

I have chosen a group of recipes that come from Mexico and all over South America — all deliciously appetizing, easy to cook, earthy dishes to be enjoyed at any time of the year. They need little in the way of accompaniment, potatoes if they are not already included in the recipe, or perhaps rice, a green vegetable, or a salad. And your excellent dish of tripe has the added merit of being inexpensive.



Mondongo Serrano

Tripe, Mountain Style

MEXICO

This is quite a fancy dish from northern Mexico, with a wonderful blending of flavors and a fine aroma. I like to serve it to close friends or family.

Serves 6 to 8

6 pounds honeycomb tripe, cut into 1-inch squares

1 cup lemon juice

6 cups beef stock, about

1 cup vegetable oil

1 large onion, finely chopped

1 chorizos (hot Spanish sausages), coarsely chopped

1 ½-pound piece boiled ham, cut into ½-inch dice

1 1-pound can cooked garbanzos (chickpeas), or ½ pound dry chickpeas, soaked overnight and boiled until tender (about 2 hours)

1 cup seedless raisins

1 cup blanched almonds, ground

1 cup orange juice

1 fresh hot green peppers, seeded and chopped, or canned Mexican serrano or jalapeño chilies

1 cup small pitted green olives, halved

1 each each ground cloves and cinnamon

1 teaspoon thyme

1 teaspoon oregano

1 bay leaf

1 lt, freshly ground pepper

1 2shly grated Parmesan cheese

Wash the tripe in water mixed with the lemon juice, rinse, and put into a heavy saucepan or casserole with the beef stock, adding a little more if necessary to cover. Cover and simmer over low heat until the tripe is barely tender, about 1 to 2 hours. Test often for doneness, as the cooking time for tripe varies greatly. Lift the tripe out of the stock with a slotted spoon and pat dry with paper towels. Reserve the stock.

Heat the oil in a skillet and sauté the onion and chorizos until the onion is soft. Lift out with a slotted spoon and put into the casserole. In the fat remaining in the pan sauté the tripe and add to the casserole with all the remaining ingredients except the cheese. Pour in the reserved stock, cover, and simmer over very low heat for 30 minutes, or until the tripe is tender. Add a little more stock if necessary as the sauce should be quite abundant. Serve in rimmed soup plates with the cheese served separately. Accompany with crusty bread and a green salad.

Tripa de Vaca a Brasileira

Tripe with Vegetables, Brazilian Style

BRAZIL

This is another rather fancy dish made special by the fresh coriander and the dry Madeira, which lend a lovely flavor.

Serves 6

pounds honeycomb tripe

tablespoons lime or lemon juice

cups beef broth

tablespoons olive oil

large onion, finely chopped

large clove garlic, chopped

sweet red pepper, seeded and chopped

medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped

bay leaf

tablespoons fresh coriander (cilantro), chopped

cup dry Madeira

small pitted black olives

cup grated Parmesan cheese

Wash the tripe in cold running water and cut it into strips about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch by 2 inches. Put the tripe into a flameproof casserole and add the lime or lemon juice, stir to mix, and leave for 5 minutes. Add the beef broth to the casserole. Heat the oil in the casserole and sauté the onion, garlic, and Drain the tripe and set it aside. Reserve the broth. Rinse out and dry the casserole. Heat the oil in the casserole and sauté the onion, garlic, and sweet pepper until the onion is soft. Add to the casserole the tomatoes, bay leaf, fresh coriander, Madeira,

tripe, and 2 cups of the reserved stock. Simmer, partially covered, until the tripe is tender and the sauce slightly thickened, about 1 hour. Stir from time to time with a wooden spoon to prevent the tripe from sticking. Add the olives and cook for a minute or two longer. Stir in the cheese. Serve with *Angú de Farinha de Milho* (Molded Cornmeal).

Chupe de Guatitas

Tripe Stew

CHILE

A very flavorful stew with a modestly fiery accent from the hot pepper combined with the richly subtle flavor of sweet red peppers. Chileans often use breadcrumbs, as is done here, to thicken sauces.

Serves 4 to 6

pounds honeycomb tripe

cup paprika oil (Color Chilena), [this page](#), made with olive or vegetable oil

medium onion, finely chopped

red bell pepper, seeded and chopped, or 2 canned pimientos, chopped

cup parsley, chopped

teaspoon oregano

fresh hot red pepper, seeded and chopped, or ½ teaspoon cayenne

lt, freshly ground pepper

cup fresh breadcrumbs

cup milk

cup grated Parmesan cheese

hardboiled egg, sliced

Put the tripe into a large saucepan or flameproof casserole with cold, unsalted water to cover, bring to a boil, lower the heat, and simmer, covered, until the tripe is barely tender, about 1 to 2 hours. Test during the cooking period as tripe varies greatly. Drain, cut the tripe into strips about ½ inch by 2 inches, and set aside. Reserve the stock.

Heat the paprika oil in the saucepan and add the onion and bell pepper. If using pimientos, add later with the parsley. Sauté until the onion and pepper are soft. Add the parsley, oregano, hot pepper or cayenne, salt and freshly ground pepper to taste, and the pimientos, if using. Stir to mix, and simmer, uncovered, for about 5 minutes, or until well blended.

Put the breadcrumbs and milk into a small saucepan and cook, stirring from time to time, for about 5 minutes. Purée in a blender or food processor. This step is not absolutely necessary but it does give a finer textured sauce. Add the breadcrumb sauce to the casserole, stirring to mix. Add the tripe. If the sauce is very thick, thin with ½ cup or more of the reserved tripe stock. Simmer, uncovered, over very low heat, stirring from time to time, for

20 minutes to blend the flavors. Pour into a heated serving dish. Sprinkle with the grated cheese and garnish with the hardboiled egg slices. Serve with crusty bread and a green salad.

Variation: For *Guatitas con Tomates* (Tripe with Tomatoes), cook the tripe in the same way but omit the bell pepper in the first sauce, and omit the breadcrumb sauce altogether. Sauté the onion and garlic, then add 6 medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped, and 2 carrots, scraped and grated. When the tomato sauce is well blended, add 6 medium potatoes, peeled and quartered, the tripe, and enough of the reserved tripe stock to cover. Simmer, covered, over low heat until the potatoes are tender. Thicken the sauce with 1 tablespoon flour mixed with a little stock to a paste, stirred into the casserole, and simmered until the sauce is lightly thickened. Omit the hardboiled egg garnish, and sprinkle the dish with grated Parmesan cheese.

Variation: A simple dish, great as a meal in itself, *Mondongo a la Criolla* (Tripe, Creole Style) is popular throughout Latin America. This is an Argentine recipe. Soak ½ pound dried lima beans overnight, drain, and put into a saucepan with salted water to cover. Simmer until the beans are tender, 1 to 1½ hours. Drain and set aside. In a flameproof casserole heat ½ cup olive oil and sauté 1 large onion, finely chopped, 1 large stalk celery, chopped, and 1 red bell pepper, seeded and chopped, until the onion is soft. Add 2 large tomatoes, peeled and chopped, and simmer for a few minutes to blend the flavors. Add 2 pounds honeycomb tripe cut into 1½- by ½-inch strips, 1 bay leaf, ¼ teaspoon each thyme and oregano, 2 cups beef stock, 1 tablespoon tomato paste, and salt and pepper to taste. Simmer, covered, over low heat for 1 to 2 hours, or until the tripe is barely tender. Test often, as the cooking time for tripe varies greatly. Add 1 cup well-washed long-grain rice and simmer until the rice is tender, about 20 minutes. If necessary add a little more stock as there should be plenty of sauce. Add the beans and heat through. Serve in rimmed soup plates with plenty of freshly grated Parmesan cheese, crusty bread, and a green salad.

Two 1-pound cans of *cannellini* (white kidney beans), rinsed and drained, and 2 canned pimientos, chopped, can be used instead of lima beans and bell pepper. Add just before serving and heat through.

Variation: The ground peanuts used in this Ecuadorian recipe for *Guatita* (Tripe) may seem a little startling at first. They add a delightful nutty taste, not at all overwhelming, and thicken the sauce at the same time. The annatto adds a subtle grace note of flavor, light and fragrant, while giving the dish an attractive yellow color. This is a most imaginative recipe yet the flavor of the finished dish is in no way bizarre.

Cook the tripe in the same way as for *Chupe de Guatitas* (Tripe Stew, see [this page](#)). In a skillet heat 4 tablespoons annatto oil or lard (see [this page](#)) and sauté 1 large onion, finely chopped, 2 cloves garlic, minced, 1 green bell pepper, seeded and chopped, until the onion is soft. Add 1 large tomato, peeled, seeded, and chopped, season with salt, and cook until the mixture is well blended. Stir in 1 cup ground peanuts and enough of the reserved tripe

stock to thin to a medium thick sauce. Add the tripe and 1 pound potatoes, cooked and cubed, and simmer until heated through. Serve sprinkled with chopped coriander or parsley. Accompany with a green vegetable or a salad. Serves 4.

Variation: For *Caucau a la Limeña* (Tripe, Lima Style), Peruvian cooks would use hot yellow peppers, but I find fresh hot red or green peppers a perfect substitute, and where Peruvians would use 1 tablespoon of ground *palillo*, a yellow herb, I use 1½ teaspoons of turmeric, with fine results. Cook the tripe in the same way as for *Chupe de Guatitas* (Tripe Stew, see [this page](#)). In a large, heavy skillet that has a lid, heat 1 cup vegetable oil and add 1 or more, according to taste, fresh hot red or green peppers, seeded and pounded in a mortar or puréed in a blender, 4 medium onions, finely chopped, and 6 cloves garlic, chopped. Sauté over moderate heat until the onions are soft and beginning to brown. Add the tripe and 2 pounds potatoes, peeled and cut into ½-inch cubes. Sauté for 2 or 3 minutes, then add 1½ teaspoons ground turmeric mixed with ½ cup tripe stock, a sprig of mint or parsley, and salt and freshly ground pepper to taste. Cover and simmer over low heat until the potatoes are almost done. Cook, uncovered, until the dish is quite dry. If necessary add a little more tripe stock during cooking, but only enough to cook the potatoes. Before serving pour a tablespoon of oil over the tripe, folding it into the mixture. Serves 4.

✳ Tongue

Lengua en Salsa Picante

Tongue in Hot Pepper Sauce

CHILE

Fresh beef tongue is popular as a main dish in all of Latin America. This dish from Chile is not very peppery. There is just enough hot chili in the sauce to justify the name, but only enough to give a pleasant piquancy.

Serves 6 to 8

fresh beef tongue, weighing about 3 pounds

onion, sliced

sprig each parsley and coriander (cilantro)

small stalk celery

bay leaf

teaspoons salt

Wash the tongue and put into a large saucepan or flameproof casserole with all the remaining ingredients and enough cold water to cover. Bring to a boil, skim as necessary, reduce the heat, cover, and simmer until the tongue is tender, about 3 hours. Uncover and leave in the stock until it is cool enough to handle. Lift out onto a platter, remove skin and any bones or fat, and cut into ½-inch slices. Strain the stock into a jug. Rinse out and dry

the casserole and return the tongue to it.

FOR THE SAUCE

shallots, finely chopped

cup red or white wine vinegar

tablespoons butter or vegetable oil

tablespoons flour

cups tongue stock

or more fresh hot peppers, preferably red, seeded and finely chopped

tablespoons chopped parsley

Put the shallots into a small saucepan with the vinegar and simmer until the shallots are tender, about 3 minutes. Set aside. Heat the butter or oil in a saucepan and add the flour. Cook, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, for 2 minutes over low heat without letting the flour brown. Stir in the stock and simmer over low heat for 10 minutes. Stir in the vinegar and shallot mixture, the hot pepper, and parsley, and pour over the tongue. Simmer just long enough to heat the tongue through. Arrange on a platter and serve surrounded by halved cooked potatoes, or with rice served separately.

Variation: Ecuador has a similar recipe. Also called *Lengua en Salsa Picante*, the tongue is cooked in the same way but the sauce differs, and I find it makes an interesting change from the Chilean version. In 2 tablespoons vegetable oil or butter, sauté 1 medium onion, finely chopped, with 1 clove garlic, chopped, until the onion is soft. Stir in 1 tablespoon dry mustard, mixing well. Add 1½ cups stock from the cooked tongue and simmer for 5 minutes. Add 1 tablespoon capers, 2 tablespoons chopped parsley, 1 pimiento, coarsely chopped, 1 tablespoon lemon juice, and salt and pepper to taste. Pour the sauce over the sliced tongue and simmer just long enough to heat through.

Variation: The very first Mexican dish I learned to cook was *Lengua en Salsa de Tomate Verde* (Tongue in Green Tomato Sauce), using the little green husk tomatoes that have such a special, and delicious, flavor. The tongue is cooked in the same way as in the previous recipes. In a blender or food processor combine 1 medium onion, coarsely chopped, 2 cloves garlic, chopped, ½ cup coriander (cilantro) sprigs, chopped, 1½ cups canned Mexican green tomatoes, drained, and 3 or 4 canned *serrano* chilies, or 1 or 2 fresh hot green peppers, seeded and chopped, and reduce to a coarse purée. Heat 3 tablespoons lard or vegetable oil in a skillet, pour in the purée, and cook, stirring, for about 4 minutes. Add 1 cup stock from the cooked tongue, season to taste with salt, and pour over the tongue. Simmer just long enough to heat through. Serve with small new potatoes.

If fresh Mexican green tomatoes are available, peel off the brown outer husk and chop coarsely before adding to the blender or food processor.

Variation: Another favorite Mexican recipe is *Lengua en Salsa de Chile Ancho y Almendra* (Tongue in Mild Red Chili and Almond Sauce). Simply heat the tongue through in 2 cups of the sauce (see [this page](#)).

Variation: There is usually quite a lot of stock left over from cooking a tongue, and Latin American cooks frequently use it to make soup, saving the trimmings of the tongue for garnish. Recipes are not very formal. Vegetables such as carrots, turnips, potatoes, Swiss chard, or cabbage are cubed or chopped and may be cooked in a little butter for a few minutes before being added to the stock, or just added and simmered until tender, about 25 minutes. A little sherry is sometimes added to the finished soup, and sometimes it is sprinkled with grated cheese. Rice, vermicelli, or cornmeal is also sometimes added, in short whatever is on hand. The result is a very pleasant unpretentious soup augmented by a feeling of virtue for having avoided waste.

✳ Pig's Feet

Patitas de Cerdo

Pig's Feet

ARGENTINA

Pig's feet, with their bland flavor and delicious gelatinous quality, are a favorite wherever pork is eaten. Latin America has some excitingly different recipes for this splendidly economical dish. I sometimes like to serve the pig's feet whole, instead of boned and cut up. I have borrowed a trick from James Beard, a dear friend always generous with help. I wrap the feet in cheesecloth and tie them with string before cooking them. It gives them a neat and tidy look, prevents broken skin, and makes for a much more attractive presentation.

Serves 4

pig's feet

ripe red bell pepper, seeded and chopped

cloves garlic

FOR THE DRESSING

teaspoon Spanish (hot) paprika or cayenne

cup red wine vinegar

lt

cup vegetable oil

ripe red bell pepper, peeled ([this page](#)) and seeded

ttuce leaves

Wrap each of the pig's feet tightly in cheesecloth and tie with string. Put into a large saucepan with the pepper and garlic and enough water to cover. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat, and simmer, covered, for 3 to 4 hours, or until tender. Let the pig's feet stand in the pan until cool enough to handle. Lift out and remove cheesecloth wrapping. Put into a shallow dish and pour on the dressing. Let stand at room temperature, turning once or twice, for at least an hour before serving.

To make the dressing mix the ground hot paprika or cayenne with the vinegar and salt to taste. Beat in the oil. Cut the pepper into strips and add. Serve the pig's feet on plates garnished with lettuce leaves, 2 per person, as a main course, or serve 1 per person as an appetizer. Accompany with crusty bread and butter.

Patitas de Cerdo con Chile Poblano

Pig's Feet in Poblano Pepper Sauce

MEXICO

In Mexico the flavorful dark green *chile poblano* would be used for this recipe. Green bell pepper is a good substitute.

Serves 4

pig's feet

medium onion, coarsely chopped

teaspoon thyme

teaspoon oregano

bay leaf

sprig parsley or coriander (cilantro)

FOR THE SAUCE

medium onion, chopped

cloves garlic, chopped

medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped

tablespoons vegetable oil

green bell peppers, peeled ([this page](#)), seeded, and cut into strips

ch of sugar

lt, freshly ground pepper

Wrap each of the pig's feet tightly in cheesecloth and tie with string. Put into a large saucepan with the onion, thyme, oregano, bay leaf, and parsley or coriander, and enough water to cover. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat, and simmer, covered, for 3 to 4 hours, or until tender. Let the pig's feet stand in the pan until cool enough to handle. Lift out and remove the cheesecloth wrapping. Return to the saucepan.

To make the sauce put the onion, garlic, and tomatoes into a blender or food processor fitted with a steel blade and reduce to a purée. Heat the oil in a skillet and add the tomato mixture and the pepper strips. Add the sugar and season to taste with salt and pepper. Simmer, uncovered, stirring from time to time, until the mixture is thick and well blended. Pour over the pig's feet and simmer until they are heated through. Serve with tortillas.

Variation: Leftover sauce from dishes like *Ternera en Pipián Verde* (Veal in Pumpkin Seed Sauce), *Pollo Verde Almendrado* (Chicken in Green Almond Sauce), *Pollo en Pipián de Almendra* (Chicken Stew with Almonds), *Mole Coloradito de Oaxaca* (Chicken in Red Sauce, Oaxaca Style), or *Salsa de Chile Ancho y Almendra* (Mild Red Chili and Almond Sauce), [this page](#), can be used with pig's feet.

Patitas de Chanco a la Criolla

Pig's Feet, Creole Style

PERU

Served at room temperature, this is more a salad for a luncheon main course or an hors d'oeuvre.

Serves 4 as luncheon dish, 8 as first course

pig's feet, about 2 pounds

It

medium onions, very thinly sliced

medium tomatoes, peeled and sliced

fresh hot red or green pepper, seeded and sliced lengthwise

cooked medium-sized potatoes, halved and sliced

tablespoons vegetable oil

tablespoons white vinegar or lemon juice, or a mixture

It, freshly ground pepper

ttuce leaves for garnish

Wash the pig's feet and put them into a saucepan with salted water to cover, bring to a boil, reduce the heat, and simmer, covered, for 3 hours, or until tender. Cool in the stock, lift out, bone, and cut into 1-inch pieces, about. Discard the stock.

In a large bowl combine the pig's feet, onions, tomatoes, hot pepper strips, potatoes, oil, vinegar or lemon juice, salt and pepper to taste, and mix lightly. Allow to stand for about 15 minutes, then place in a serving dish garnished with lettuce leaves and serve at room temperature.



Picante de Pata Arequipeña

Spicy Pig's Feet, Arequipa Style

PERU

Serves 4

pig's feet

sprigs fresh mint

or more fresh hot red or green peppers, seeded and ground

tablespoons lard or vegetable oil

medium onions, finely chopped

cloves garlic, minced

teaspoon oregano

cup roasted peanuts, finely ground

lt, freshly ground pepper

medium potatoes, about 1 pound, cooked and cut into 1-inch cubes

Wash the pig's feet and put them into a saucepan large enough to hold them comfortably, preferably in a single layer. Add the mint and enough water to cover by about 1 inch. Cover and simmer until the pig's feet are tender, about 3 hours. Let them cool in the stock, then lift out, remove the bones, and cut into 1-inch pieces. Set aside. Strain and reserve the stock.

Grind the peppers with a mortar and pestle or in a small blender jar.

Heat the lard or oil in a flameproof casserole and sauté the onions, garlic, oregano, and hot peppers until the onions are soft. Stir in the peanuts and sauté for 1 or 2 minutes longer. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Stir in 1 cup of the reserved stock and simmer for a few minutes to blend the flavors. Add the pig's feet and the potatoes and simmer just long enough to heat them through. The sauce should be thick and highly spiced but one's own taste should determine the number of hot peppers used. If the sauce is too thick, add a little more of the reserved stock. In Peru this would be served with rice. I prefer it with a green vegetable or a salad.

Coração Recheado

Stuffed Beef Heart

BRAZIL

Stuffed beef heart has been a favorite dish of mine since childhood, so I was delighted when a Brazilian friend gave me her recipe, which is quite grand. I was also pleased to be given a Chilean version of this old favorite in a new guise, a simpler recipe than the Brazilian one. I like both. Calf's heart is also good. It usually weighs about 1 pound so use about one-quarter of the stuffing and reduce the cooking time to 1½ hours. It would serve 2 or 3.

Serves 8

beef heart, weighing about 4 pounds

tablespoons butter

medium onion, finely chopped

cup corn kernels

cup freshly made breadcrumbs

hardboiled eggs, chopped

sweet red pepper, peeled (see [this page](#)), seeded and chopped

pimiento-stuffed olives, halved

small fresh hot red or green pepper, seeded and chopped

tablespoons chopped parsley

lt, freshly ground pepper

½ cups dry red wine

½ cups beef stock

clove garlic, chopped

teaspoons cornstarch or arrowroot

Thoroughly wash the heart and remove the membrane inside that divides the two chambers if the butcher has not already done this. Trim away any fat. In a skillet heat 2 tablespoons of the butter and sauté the onion until it is soft. Purée the corn in a food processor or blender and stir into the onion off the heat. Add the breadcrumbs, the eggs, sweet pepper, olives, hot pepper, parsley, and salt and pepper to taste, mixing well. Stuff the heart with the dressing. Sew it up or skewer it and lace with string. In a flameproof casserole large enough to hold the heart comfortably, heat the remaining 2 tablespoons of butter and brown the heart all over. Pour in the wine and stock, add the garlic, and bring the liquid to a boil. Cover the casserole with foil, then with the lid, and cook in a preheated moderate (350° F.) oven for about 3½ hours, or until tender. Lift the heart out onto a serving platter and remove the sewing thread or the skewers and string. Cut the heart into crosswise slices and keep warm. Reduce the cooking liquid over brisk heat to 2 cups. Mix the cornstarch or arrowroot with a little cold water, stir into the sauce, and cook, stirring, for a few minutes until the sauce is thickened. Pour a little sauce over the sliced heart and serve the rest in a

sauceboat. Serve with mashed potatoes and string beans or peas.

Variation: For *Corazon Relleno* (Stuffed Heart) from Chile, prepare the heart in the same way. For the stuffing soak 4 slices firm white bread in milk, then squeeze out and mix with 1 medium onion, finely chopped, 2 tablespoons parsley, finely chopped, 4 slices of bacon, chopped, salt and pepper to taste, and 1 egg, lightly beaten. Stuff the heart with the mixture and sew or skewer it closed. Heat 2 tablespoons vegetable oil in a flameproof casserole and brown the heart all over. Add to the casserole 1 onion, coarsely chopped, 1 carrot, scraped and sliced, ½ teaspoon thyme, 1 sprig parsley, 1 bay leaf, and 1½ cups each beef stock and dry red wine. Cook as for *Coração Recheado*.

 Brains

Brains are popular in Latin America, particularly French Calf’s Brains in Black Butter, which sounds very splendid in Spanish as *Sesos con Salsa de Mantequilla Quemada*. But there are several interesting recipes common to a number of countries that provide us with some new ways to cook this delicacy. A preliminary soaking and peeling are always necessary, followed by a simmering in seasoned liquid, except when the brains are to be stewed as in the first of these recipes.

Sesos Guisados

Stewed Brains

COLOMBIA

This recipe is as appetizing as it is simple.

Serves 6

- ½ pounds brains
- medium onion, finely chopped
- clove garlic, chopped
- medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped
- tablespoon butter
- lt, freshly ground pepper

Soak the brains in several changes of water for about 2 hours. Carefully pull off the thin membrane that covers the brains. This is not difficult but requires patience. Rinse the brains in fresh cold water. Then simmer in enough water to barely cover, with the onion, garlic, tomatoes, butter, and salt and pepper to taste for 30 minutes. Lift out the brains and cut each one into 4 to 6 slices. Arrange in a warmed serving dish. Reduce the liquid in the

saucepan over brisk heat until it is slightly thickened, then pour over the brains. Serve with rice or potatoes or any other starchy vegetable.



Variation: For *Sesos Rebozados* (Sautéed Brains), soak 1½ pounds brains and remove the membranes in the usual way. Then simmer, in enough water to cover, with 1 small chopped onion, 1 clove garlic, and ½ teaspoon salt for 30 minutes. Cool in the cooking liquid, lift out, and pat dry with paper towels. Cut each brain into 4 to 6 slices. Beat 2 egg whites until they stand in peaks. Fold the whites into 2 egg yolks beaten with ½ teaspoon salt. Dip the brain slices in flour, then in the beaten egg, and sauté in 4 tablespoons butter until golden brown on both sides. Serve with rice or potatoes and a fresh Hot Pepper Sauce ([this page](#)), or lemon wedges.

Variation: For *Sesos en Vino* (Brains in Wine Sauce), soak and simmer 1½ pounds brains as for *Sesos Rebozados*. Cut into cubes and put into a buttered casserole. Heat 2 tablespoons butter in a skillet and sauté 1 medium onion, finely chopped, and 1 clove chopped garlic until the onion is soft. Add to the casserole. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Fold 3 cups diced cooked potatoes into the brains and pour 1½ cups dry white wine over the mixture. Simmer very gently for 15 minutes to blend the flavors, sprinkle with 2 tablespoons chopped parsley, and serve surrounded by 12 triangles of white bread fried in butter.

Variation: For *Sesos con Jamón* (Brains with Ham), soak and simmer 1½ pounds brains as for *Sesos Rebozados*. Halve the brains, dip in flour seasoned with salt and pepper, and fry in butter, about 4 tablespoons, until golden on both sides. Sauté 6 thin slices of ham in butter and arrange on a warmed platter. Put the halved brains on top of the ham and mask with 1½ cups *Môlho ao Tomate* ([this page](#)).

Hígado en Salsa de Hongos

Calf's Liver in Mushroom Sauce

CHILE

Chile's excellent wine turns an ordinary dish into a fine one in this simple recipe. Either a dry white or red wine, which I prefer, may be used.

Serves 4

3 tablespoons butter

1 tablespoon oil

1 medium onion, finely chopped

1 teaspoon oregano

1/2 pound mushrooms, sliced

1/2 cups dry red wine

1/2 teaspoon salt, freshly ground pepper

1/2 pound calf's liver, cut into 1/4-inch slices



Heat 3 tablespoons of the butter and 1 tablespoon of the oil in a skillet and sauté the onion and oregano until the onion is soft. Add the mushrooms and cook over fairly high heat, stirring from time to time with a wooden spoon, until the mushrooms are lightly browned, about 5 minutes. Pour in the wine and cook, stirring, until the wine is reduced to half and the sauce is slightly thickened.

In another skillet heat the remaining 3 tablespoons butter and 1 tablespoon oil and sauté the liver over moderate heat for 2 minutes. Turn the pieces and sauté for 1 minute longer. Add the liver and the juices in the pan to the skillet with the mushrooms, stir to mix, and simmer for about 1 minute. Be careful not to overcook the liver — it should be pink inside. Transfer to a warmed serving dish and serve with potatoes or rice and a green vegetable.

Hígado con Vino

Calf's Liver in Red Wine Sauce

COLOMBIA

The red wine marinade gives this calf's liver a special delicate flavor.

Serves 2

1/2 pound calf's liver, cut into 1/2-inch slices

1/2 lb, freshly ground pepper
1 large clove garlic, crushed
1/2 cup dry red wine
2 tablespoons butter

Arrange the liver slices in a large shallow dish, season with salt and pepper and the garlic. Pour the wine over them. Leave at room temperature for 2 hours, turning the slices from time to time. When ready to cook, lift out the liver slices and pat them dry with paper towels. Reserve the marinade. In a large skillet heat the butter and sauté the liver slices over moderate heat for about 2 minutes on the first side and 1 minute on the second side. The liver should remain pink inside. Pour the marinade into a small saucepan and reduce to half its volume. Arrange the liver on a warmed platter. Pour any liquid from the skillet into the wine sauce, stir to mix, and pour over the liver.

Kidneys

Riñones con Vino

Kidneys in Wine Sauce

CHILE

I love to make this simple, quick Chilean kidney dish just for myself with two lamb kidneys or one pork. It is a fine dish for a hurried supper.

Serves 3 to 4

1 lb beef kidney
1/2 lb, freshly ground pepper
2 tablespoons butter
1 medium onion, finely chopped
2 tablespoons parsley, chopped
1/2 cup dry white wine
2 medium potatoes, freshly cooked and cubed

Trim the surplus fat from the kidney, and cut the kidney into thin slices. Season with salt and pepper. Heat the butter in a skillet and sauté the kidney slices for about 5 minutes, turning frequently. Lift out and set aside in a covered dish. In the butter remaining in the pan sauté the onion until it is soft. Add the parsley and sauté for a minute longer. Add the wine and the potatoes. Add the kidney slices and cook just long enough to heat them through without further cooking, which would toughen them. Serve immediately.

If cooking this for one and using lamb or pork kidneys, remove the thin skin and any fat from the kidneys and slice them thinly. Use one-quarter of the remaining ingredients, and

cook as above.

Variation: In Argentina cooks use a similar recipe for *Riñones a la Porteña* (Kidneys, Buenos Aires Style) except that veal kidney, chopped instead of sliced, is used and is sautéed in oil instead of butter.

Variation: For the Brazilian *Rim de Vitela* (Veal Kidney) or *Rims de Carneiro* (Lamb Kidneys), the kidneys are cleaned and sliced, and sautéed in 2 tablespoons olive oil. They are then heated through in the following sauce: Sauté 1 chopped onion and ½ green bell pepper, seeded and chopped, in 2 tablespoons olive oil until the onion is soft. Add 1 chopped tomato, ¼ cup chopped parsley, and salt and pepper. Simmer until well blended. Stir in ⅓ cup dry sherry and the kidneys. Reheat the kidneys without letting the sauce boil. For those who like a fiery touch, 1 small fresh hot pepper may be added with the bell pepper, or a dash of Tabasco with the sherry.

BARBECUES

The great cattle countries of Argentina and Brazil have marvelous outdoor feasts, elaborate and sophisticated barbecues that are superb for informal, warm weather entertaining, and easy to copy in the United States.

The *asado criollo*, the Argentine spit-roasted barbecue, originated with the gauchos — the cowboys of the *pampas*, those wide, rolling plains that stretch like a sea of grass for thousands of miles. The cowboys tended cattle, and later sheep, and when they were hungry killed an animal, spit-roasted it, and had dinner. In comparison, today's barbecue is a very grand affair. In addition to barbecued meats there are salads, sauces, bread, and wine, as well as the cowboy's favorite beverage, *mate*, the green herb tea popular in many parts of South America for its refreshing, slightly bitter flavor. But the essentials are the same — meat, salt, and a fire.

The word “barbecue” comes from the Spanish *barbacoa*, derived from a Haitian word in the Taino Indian language. It meant a rude framework either for sleeping or for drying meat over a fire, and reached the United States with that meaning by 1697. By 1809 its American meaning had changed to an outdoor social entertainment at which animals were roasted whole. Because of the growing popularity of outdoor cooking, grills of various kinds can easily be bought, and it is not difficult to build a do-it-yourself grill in the Argentine or Brazilian style provided there is yard space.

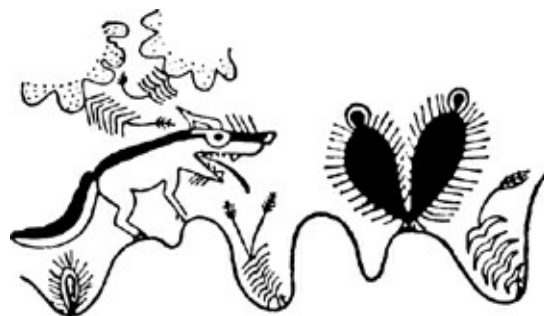
To make a *parrilla* (grill) for an Argentine *asado* (roast), dig a pit about 1 foot deep and about 3 feet long by 2 feet wide. Make sure the fire bed is level and cover it with a layer of sand. Surround it with bricks at ground level or, for a more luxurious grill, extend them to waist level, and cover with an iron grate. Also needed are a long three-pronged fork, a small work table to cut up the cooked meat, canvas work gloves, an asbestos oven mitt for hot jobs, tongs for turning meats and lifting them from the grill, a bowl for the *salmuera* (brine) to baste the meats, a brush or bunch of twigs for basting, and a bottle with a sprinkler top, filled with water, to discipline unruly flames.

It takes about an hour for a fire of wood and charcoal to burn down to embers that are ready to be used, and whoever looks after the grill has to put the meats on in sequence so that they are served hot and crispy brown on the outside, red and juicy inside. It is a considerable art and one that can be mastered only by experience, common sense, and a watchful eye. Meats are not basted with a barbecue sauce. Brine is used, usually a simple solution of salt and water. When the meat is seared on one side it is basted with brine and turned, and the other side seared and basted. After that the meat is turned and basted frequently until done.

Argentine hosts are generous in their estimate of how much meat is enough. They work it out roughly as a pound a person. The *asado* always begins with grilled sausages, either a halved chorizo, or 2 or 3 slices of grilled *longaniza*, nothing else, served with a glass of dry red wine. The sausages are just to hold off starvation, not to destroy appetite, while guests wait for the meats on the grill to cook. For ten people the traditional meats for the *parrillada* (barbecue) would be 2 pounds short ribs, 2 pounds rump or chuck steak, 1½ pounds flank steak, 1 pound blood sausage, 1 or 2 beef kidneys or a whole calf's liver, 1½ pounds sweetbreads, and 1½ pounds tripe, cut into strips about 1 inch wide. Traditionally intestines, udders, and prairie oysters are part of the roast. Intestines are grilled, then sliced. Udders are grilled, then cut into ½-inch slices. And prairie oysters are peeled, halved, grilled, and sliced.

After the sausages, the “innards” are served, and then the meats. Guests go to the grill to be served, then eat informally at simple wooden tables set with baskets of French bread and bottles or carafes of red wine. There are bowls of salad — lettuce, tomatoes, and sliced onions or scallions in a garlic-flavored oil and vinegar dressing, or a more robust one of potatoes, beets, hardboiled eggs, chopped celery, and radishes, also in a vinaigrette dressing. *Crudités* are sometimes served, raw carrot sticks, celery, and radishes. And there is always a bowl of hot pickled peppers as well as the traditional bowls of sauces — *Salsa Criolla* (Creole Sauce), a really fiery one to be taken with discretion, or sauce *Chimichurri*, an untranslatable name, hardly any milder. There is another less lethal sauce, *Salsa para Asados* (Barbecue Sauce) from nearby Uruguay, where barbecues are also popular.

The barbecue pit with a grate over it is really a sophisticated refinement. Whole animals, a lamb, kid, suckling pig, or a side of beef, can be spit-roasted in the true gaucho manner. The animals are split and impaled on iron rods that have a crosspiece to keep them flat. The rods are thrust firmly into the ground at an angle of about 20 degrees, toward a wood fire and about a foot away. They too are basted with brine and with their own fat and turned as they brown so that both sides cook evenly.



It is difficult to give more than approximate times for barbecuing as the heat of the fire

and the thickness of the meats vary, as well as the degree of doneness preferred. Sausages will take about 10 minutes a side. A 2½- to 3-pound chicken, split down the back, will take about 1 hour. A medium-sized suckling pig will take 3 to 3½ hours, and baby lamb and kid about the same time. A 3-pound piece of short ribs should be cooked 10 to 15 minutes, rib side down, then turned, salted, and cooked for about 30 minutes longer. Rump or sirloin takes 20 to 30 minutes according to size. Flank steak, over high heat, starting fat side down, takes about 7 minutes a side.

The Brazilian barbecue, *Churrasco a Gaucha* from the cattle state of Rio Grande do Sul, has its own refinements and sophisticated extras. Originally the meat was spitted on long iron skewers and stuck in the ground at an angle to the fire much as the gauchos of Argentina did. It is still done for a traditional *churrasco*, but more and more people find a barbecue pit with a grate on top much more convenient for backyard barbecues. Short ribs and rump are the preferred meats. Though traditionally beef is the only meat used, many people temporarily tired of beef, like to have a *galeto*, a chicken, instead. This is split down the back and grilled whole. A whole parsley plant is used as a baster to apply the brine, seasoned sometimes with chopped onion and parsley, or crushed garlic cloves.

Slices of grilled *linguiça* (Portuguese sausage) may be served with a *Caipirinha* or a *batida* (Brazilian cocktails), [this page](#), as a first course. The meats are accompanied by *Farofa de Ouro* (Cassava Meal with Hardboiled Eggs) or *Farofa de Manteiga* (Cassava Meal with Butter). A nice variation is to add 4 bananas, cut into ½-inch slices and fried in 2 tablespoons of butter, to the cassava meal and mixed together. There is always a lettuce and tomato salad in an oil and vinegar dressing, and *Môlho de Tomates* (Tomato Sauce). Brazil's excellent beer is the popular drink to serve.

✳️ Sauces for the Barbecues

Salsa Criolla

Barbecue Sauce, Creole Style

ARGENTINA

Makes about 5 cups

1 tablespoon hot paprika or cayenne pepper

1 tablespoon dry mustard

1 cup red wine vinegar

1 cup olive oil

1 lb, freshly ground pepper

1 green bell peppers, seeded and finely chopped

1 medium onion, finely chopped

1 medium tomatoes, chopped

Mix the paprika or cayenne and mustard to a paste with a little of the vinegar, then stir in the rest of the vinegar. Beat in the oil. Season to taste with salt and a generous amount of freshly ground pepper. Add the remaining ingredients and stir to mix. The sauce has a lot of liquid. The solids should float in the bowl, so add a little more oil and vinegar if necessary. This is very hot.

Variation: Brazilian *Môlho ao Tomate* (Tomato Sauce). In a bowl combine 4 medium tomatoes, coarsely chopped, 2 medium onions, chopped, 2 cloves garlic, chopped, ½ cup each chopped parsley and coriander, salt, pepper, 1 cup olive oil, and ½ cup red wine vinegar. Mix lightly and serve at room temperature. Makes 4 to 5 cups.

Chimichurri

Vinegar Sauce

ARGENTINA

This is a popular sauce with barbecued meats or with any broiled or roasted meat or poultry.

Makes about 1½ cups

tablespoons olive oil

cup red wine vinegar

tablespoons hot paprika or cayenne pepper

cloves garlic, crushed

teaspoon black peppercorns

teaspoon oregano

bay leaf, crumbled

teaspoon salt

Combine all the ingredients in a bottle, shake well to mix, and put in a cool place, or refrigerate, for 4 or 5 days for the flavor to develop. Shake a few drops on meat or poultry.



Brine

cups coarse salt

cups water

Mix the salt and water thoroughly and use to baste meats.

Salsa Para Asados

Barbecue Sauce

URUGUAY

Makes about 3 cups

cup olive oil

cup red wine vinegar

cloves garlic, chopped

cup finely chopped parsley

teaspoon oregano

teaspoon thyme

teaspoons hot paprika or cayenne pepper

lt, freshly ground pepper

Combine all the ingredients and mix thoroughly. Allow to stand for 2 or 3 hours before serving. Serve with barbecued meats. This sauce may also be used as a marinade.

POT-AU-FEUS

The pot-au-feu (literally, pot on the fire) is one of the earliest cooking methods and probably goes back to the Bronze Age. Bronze cauldrons from 3500 B.C. are not very much different from the casseroles and kettles in use today, and there is hardly a country on earth that does not have a pot-au-feu in its repertoire. In Latin America this type of stew may be called a *sancocho* (literally parboiled, a dish where foods are added to the pot after some have already been partially cooked), a *pozole* (from an Aztec word meaning beans boiled with other things), a *puchero* (a glazed earthenware pot for cooking meat and vegetables together), a *carbonada* (a meat stew from the New World), a *cocido* (a cooked meat dish), and an *ajiaco* (a dish made of boiled meat and vegetables from South America). Essentially, as elsewhere, it is a whole meal cooked in a single pot on top of the stove.

In Latin America over the years versions of the pot-au-feu have served as plantation meals, useful for feeding large numbers of people. There is often an enormously long list of ingredients including the marvelous root vegetables, the yams, taros, and cassava, that flourish in this region, where many of them originated; they vary in texture and flavor and lend variety to any stew they grace. Plantains are another widely used ingredient, as are the winter squashes and, of course, that greatest of all Inca achievements, the potato. Meats introduced by Spain and Portugal — beef, kid, lamb, chicken, and pork — are all used. So are beans, both the indigenous beans (*Phaseolus vulgaris*, kidney, Navy, pea, lima, turtle, etc.) and such exotics as chickpeas (*garbanzos*, *hummus*), brought by Spain from the Middle East. In addition there are all the green vegetables, and onions, scallions, and garlic — a grand assemblage, needing only a degree of selection, and a knowledge of when to add them to the pot.

These dishes are still very popular in Latin America for parties and family gatherings,

since it is not really possible to cook them for small numbers like two or four. They are usually presented in a grand manner with various meats on one platter, vegetables on another, the soup in a large tureen, sauces on the side, and the table set with generous-sized rimmed soup plates. With a little planning, they are easy and you don't have to spend time at the last minute in the kitchen, since the ingredients can all be prepared ahead of time, the work being mostly the peeling and cutting up of vegetables. What is essential is a large enough pot; I have often solved this problem by using two fairly big casseroles and dividing the ingredients equally between them. Since such a dish comprises the entire meal, the whole stove is available for its cooking. Permutations and combinations of ingredients have resulted in a group of wonderfully diverse dishes.

Carbonada en Zapallo

Veal Stew in Baked Pumpkin

ARGENTINA

West Indian pumpkin (*calabaza*) is available in many Caribbean and Latin American markets and is ideal for this colorful and quite spectacular dish, as it is usually possible to get just the size needed. However, any large winter squash can be used, the Hubbard shape probably being the best. U.S. pumpkins won't do; they are too watery. The stew is served from the squash itself, which plays a dual role as both container and ingredient. The squash will be very soft and mashes into the sauce, thickening it. It has a lovely flavor, which mingles with the stew.

Serves 6 to 8

10- to 12-pound West Indian pumpkin (calabaza) or other large winter squash, such as Hubbard
cup vegetable oil
pounds boneless veal, cut into 1-inch cubes
large onion, finely chopped
green bell pepper, seeded and chopped
or 2 fresh hot peppers, seeded and chopped (optional)
large tomato, peeled and chopped
½ cups chicken stock
½ cups dry white wine
pound potatoes, peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes
pound sweet potatoes, preferably boniatos (white sweet potatoes), peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes
ears corn, cut into 1-inch slices
large pears, peeled and sliced
large peaches, peeled, pitted, and sliced
tablespoon chopped chives

tablespoon sugar

lt, freshly ground pepper

cup long-grain rice, soaked for 1 hour and drained

Scrub the pumpkin. Cut a slice off the top to make a lid, then scrape out the seeds and stringy fibers from the pumpkin and lid. Bake the pumpkin on a baking sheet in a preheated moderate (350° F.) oven for 45 minutes.

Meanwhile, heat the oil in a heavy skillet and sauté the veal pieces until they are golden all over. Lift them out into a flameproof casserole with a slotted spoon. In the fat remaining in the pan sauté the onion, pepper, and hot peppers, if using, until the onion is soft. Add the tomato and cook until the mixture is well blended, about 5 minutes. Add to the casserole with the chicken stock and wine. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat, and simmer, covered, for 40 minutes. Add the potatoes and sweet potatoes and cook 15 minutes. Add the corn and cook 5 minutes longer. Remove from the heat and add the pears, peaches, chives, and sugar. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Add the rice. Transfer the contents of the casserole to the pumpkin. Replace the lid and bake in a preheated moderate (350° F.) oven for 30 minutes or until the rice is cooked. Transfer the pumpkin to a large serving platter and serve directly from it, taking care when scooping out the cooked pumpkin not to break the shell.



Variation: If liked, 2 quinces, peeled and sliced, may be added when the potatoes and sweet potatoes are put into the casserole.

Variation: Lean beef chuck may be used instead of veal.

Variation: Six dried apricots, soaked for 20 minutes in cold water, drained, and quartered, may be used instead of the peaches.

Carbonada Criolla

Beef Stew, Argentine Style

This is a simpler, less spectacular version of *Carbonada en Zapallo* (Veal Stew in Baked Pumpkin). Once more it demonstrates the Argentine flair for combining meat and fruit.

Serves 6

cup olive oil
pounds lean beef, cut into 1-inch cubes
large onion, finely chopped
clove garlic, chopped
medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped
teaspoon oregano
bay leaf
teaspoon sugar
tablespoon tomato paste
lt, freshly ground pepper
cup beef stock, about
cup dry red wine, about
pound sweet potatoes, preferably boniatos (white sweet potatoes), peeled and sliced
pound potatoes, peeled and sliced
pound West Indian pumpkin (calabaza) or any winter squash, peeled and sliced
small peaches, peeled
ears corn, each cut into 3 slices



Heat the oil in a large, heavy casserole and sauté the beef until it is lightly browned all over. Push it to the side and add the onion and garlic. Sauté the onion until it is soft. Add the tomatoes and cook for 5 minutes longer. Add the oregano, bay leaf, sugar, tomato paste, salt and pepper to taste, the stock, and the wine. Cover and simmer for 1½ hours, or until the meat is almost tender. Add the sweet potatoes and potatoes and a little more stock and wine if necessary to cover. Simmer for 10 minutes, then add the pumpkin or squash and peaches, and simmer for a further 10 minutes. Add the corn and cook 5 minutes longer, or until all the ingredients are tender. Some cooks add ½ cup rice or vermicelli during the last 20 minutes of cooking.

Cozido à Brasileira

Stew, Brazilian Style

BRAZIL

This is a dish from São Paulo that was taken by Paulistas to Minas Gerais. I have met it both in the new capital, Belo Horizonte, and the old one, Ouro Preto. This recipe was given me by the mother of a good friend, Gilberto Rizzo, a Paulista.

Serves 12

3 pounds top round of beef, cut into 1-inch cubes

2 pork chops, boned

2 medium onions, grated

2 cloves garlic, crushed

2 scallions, including the green tops

or 3 sprigs each parsley and fresh coriander (cilantro)

2 cups beef broth

1 3-pound chicken, cut into 6 pieces

1 2-pound linguiça sausage, or use a similar sausage such as Spanish longaniza or Polish kielbasa

2 small whole carrots, scraped

1 small bunch celery, with stalks cut into 3- to 4-inch pieces

1 small whole cabbage

2 small whole potatoes, peeled or scraped

2 small sweet potatoes, peeled and halved

1/2 pounds cassava root (manioc, yucca), peeled and cut into 2-inch slices

1 1/2 pounds West Indian pumpkin (calabaza) or any winter squash, peeled and cut into 2-inch cubes

2 ears corn, each cut into 3 slices

1/2 tsp salt, freshly ground pepper

2 medium slightly underripe bananas, or 2 half-ripe plantains

1 cup cassava meal (manioc, mandioca)

In a kettle or saucepan large enough to hold all the ingredients put the beef, pork chops, onions, garlic, scallions, parsley and coriander sprigs, and enough beef broth to cover. Simmer, covered, over low heat for 1 hour. At the end of that time add the chicken, sausage, and more beef broth as necessary to cover, and cook for 30 minutes longer. Add to the kettle the carrots, celery, cabbage, potatoes, sweet potatoes, cassava root, pumpkin or winter squash, corn, salt and pepper to taste, and more beef broth to cover.

In a separate saucepan put the bananas or plantains, cover with cold water, and simmer, covered, for 20 minutes. If using plantains, cook them for 30 minutes. When cool enough to handle, lift out and peel. Halve the bananas, or cut the plantains into thirds, and add to the ingredients in the kettle just long enough to heat through. Have ready two large, deep,

warmed platters. Arrange the meats on one of the platters. Place the cabbage in the center of the second platter and cut it into wedges. Arrange the other vegetables on the platter in decorative groups.

Remove and discard the parsley and coriander sprigs from the broth in the kettle. Moisten the meats and vegetables with some of the broth. Measure 4 cups of the broth and pour it into a saucepan. Stir in the cassava meal, then simmer, stirring constantly, over moderate heat until the cassava has thickened the liquid to a porridgelike consistency. Pour this *pirão* into a bowl and serve it as a sauce with the *cozido*.

Sancocho Especial

Special Boiled Dinner

COLOMBIA

The Spanish verb *sancochar* means to parboil and has come to be applied to a number of South American dishes of the pot-au-feu family in the sense of adding new ingredients to already parboiled ones in the pot. The more ingredients there are in a *sancocho*, the more of a party dish it becomes. This one is very festive. It has to be done ahead of time, as it takes about a week. Simplified by the omission of some of the vegetables and meats, it will still be very good indeed. The salted beef gives a distinctive, though not pronounced, flavor to this special *sancocho*.

Serves 6 to 8

6 pound beef chuck, cut into 1½-inch cubes

6 pound lean pork, cut into 1½-inch cubes

6 pound salted beef, well washed and cut into 1½-inch cubes (see below)

6 large onions, sliced

6 cloves garlic, chopped

6 large tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped

6 pound yucca root (cassava), peeled and sliced

½ quarts beef stock

½ quarts chicken stock

3½-pound chicken, cut into serving pieces

6 pound sweet potatoes, peeled and sliced

6 pound yams, peeled and sliced

6 pound winter squash, peeled and cubed

6 pound potatoes, peeled and sliced

6 green plantains, peeled and cut into 2-inch slices

6 ripe plantains, peeled and cut into 2-inch slices

6 ears corn, each cut into 3 slices

1/2 lb, freshly ground pepper

or 4 limes, quartered

Put the beef, pork, salted beef, onions, garlic, tomatoes, yucca, and the beef and chicken stock into a soup kettle or pot large enough to hold all the ingredients. Bring to a boil over moderate heat, skim off the froth, and reduce the heat so that the liquid barely moves. Cook, covered, for 1¼ hours. Add the chicken pieces, sweet potatoes, yams, winter squash, potatoes, and green and ripe plantains and simmer until the chicken is tender, about 45 minutes longer. Add the corn, season to taste with salt and pepper, and cook for 5 minutes longer.

Arrange the meats on a warm platter, the vegetables on another warm platter, and pour the broth into a soup tureen. Serve in large soup plates with side dishes of quartered limes, and *Salsa de Ají* (Hot Pepper Sauce).

Salted beef, Colombia style. The salted beef, which is a special feature of this dish, is easy to do, and once done keeps indefinitely in the refrigerator. It is well worth the effort.

Cut a 3- to 4-pound piece of bottom round of beef into horizontal slices about ½ inch thick, stopping short of the far side of the meat so that it opens like a book. Pour 1 pound salt over the beef, between the slices, and on the top and bottom. Place on a large platter and cover lightly with cheesecloth. Leave it to stand in a cool place overnight and in the morning pour off the liquid that has accumulated. There will be a lot of it the first day. Check that the meat is still heavily coated with salt, adding more if necessary. Repeat the process, leaving the beef to stand for another 24 hours and again pouring off the liquid. If necessary add more salt. Place on a piece of heavy aluminum foil, or on a platter, cover with cheesecloth, and put in the sun to dry, turning the meat over daily. It will take about a week. Shake out the excess salt, wrap the beef in foil, and store in the refrigerator. Wash well before using. I have found that Brazilian *carne seca* (sun-dried salt beef, or jerked beef) works very well. If plantains are not available, use unripe (green) bananas for green plantains and barely ripe bananas for the ripe plantains. Reduce the cooking time to about 20 minutes for green bananas, 5 minutes for the barely ripe ones.

Pozole Tapatío

Pozole, Guadalajara Style

MEXICO

Tapatío is an affectionate term for the people of Guadalajara, the capital of Jalisco, and is also used for special dishes from the city. It comes from a colonial dance from Guadalajara, the *Jarabe Tapatío* (The Hat Dance), those who danced it being *tapatíos*. In Mexico the hominy used here would not always be bought canned but is very often prepared at home. Whole, large white corn kernels are soaked overnight, then boiled with lime. The skins are then rubbed off and the “cabecita,” little head, at the base removed. The corn is then ready to be cooked. It is a long and time-consuming process and I have found canned whole hominy an excellent substitute.



ancho chilies
 pig's feet
 head garlic, peeled
 quarts chicken stock
 pound boneless pork loin, cut into 1-inch cubes
 3½- to 4-pound chicken, cut into serving pieces
 1 1/2 cups canned whole hominy

FOR THE GARNISH

1 large onion, finely chopped
 1 head iceberg lettuce, shredded
 1 bunch radishes
 1/2 pound Spanish fresh cheese (queso fresco or queso blanco), optional
 1/2 cup oregano
 1/2 pound hot pepper, or hot pepper sauce such as Tabasco
 1/2 dozen fresh hot tortillas, or tortillas cut into triangles and fried in hot lard or vegetable oil
 1 lime or lemons, cut into wedges

Break off the stems and shake the seeds out of the chilies. Rinse the chilies and tear them into pieces. Put them into a bowl with 1 cup hot water and leave to soak for 1 hour, turning them from time to time. Put them into a blender or food processor and reduce to a purée. Set aside.

Put the pig's feet into a large saucepan or kettle with the garlic and chicken stock. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat, cover, and simmer for 3 hours. Add the pork loin and simmer for 1 hour, then add the chicken pieces and the puréed chilies. Add a little salt if necessary. Simmer for 40 minutes, add the hominy, and cook for 5 minutes longer. By this time all the ingredients should be tender. Simmer for a little longer if necessary.

To serve put the meats and broth into a large soup tureen and set the table with large-rimmed soup plates. Put the onion, lettuce, radishes, and crumbled cheese into bowls, and the oregano and ground hot pepper or hot pepper sauce into small bowls. Serve the tortillas, in a straw basket, wrapped in a napkin. To eat, add the garnishes to each serving of meat and broth, with squeezes of lime or lemon juice.

Cocido a la Dominicana

Spanish Stew, Dominican Style

1 pound dried chickpeas, or a 1-pound can
1 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 4-pound chicken, cut into serving pieces
1 pound beef, cut into 1-inch cubes
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ pound slice of smoked ham, such as prosciutto or Spanish Jamon Serrano, cut into 1-inch cubes
1 pound chorizo (hot Spanish) sausages, sliced, or use hot Italian sausages
1 medium onion, chopped
1 cloves garlic, chopped
1 pounds potatoes, peeled and sliced
1 large carrot, scraped and sliced
1 small cabbage, cut into 8 wedges
1 pound West Indian pumpkin (calabaza) or winter squash, peeled and cubed
1 fresh hot red or green pepper, left whole with stem on
1 bay leaf
1 tablespoons white vinegar
1 cups beef stock
1 lb
1 small pitted green olives, sliced
1 tablespoons finely chopped parsley

If using dried chickpeas, soak them overnight in cold water to cover. Drain, cover with fresh water, and simmer, covered, for 1 hour. Drain, measure the liquid, and use it to replace some of the beef stock. Set aside. If using canned chickpeas, drain, rinse in cold water, and set aside.

Heat the oil in a skillet and sauté the chicken pieces until golden on both sides. Transfer to a large saucepan or soup kettle. In the oil remaining in the skillet sauté the beef cubes, ham, and sausages, and add them to the saucepan. In the remaining oil, adding a little more if necessary, though the sausages will give off quite a lot of fat, sauté the onion and garlic until the onion is soft. Add the mixture to the kettle with the potatoes, carrot, cabbage, pumpkin or winter squash, whole hot pepper, bay leaf, vinegar, the chickpeas and liquid or the canned, drained, chickpeas, the stock, and salt to taste. Cover and simmer until all the ingredients are tender, about 1 hour. The pumpkin or squash will have disintegrated, slightly thickening the broth. Remove and discard the bay leaf and hot pepper. Transfer the stew to a warmed tureen or serving dish, add the olives, and sprinkle with the parsley.

Variation: There is an interesting variation, *Sancocho de Longaniza y Tocino* (Sausage and

Bacon Stew), also from the Dominican Republic. Soak 1½ pounds bacon, in a single piece, for 15 minutes in cold water, rinse, drain, and cut into 1-inch cubes. Slice 2 pounds *longaniza* (Spanish garlic) sausages, or *linguiça* or *kielbasa*, into 1-inch slices. Heat 4 tablespoons vegetable oil in a skillet and sauté the bacon cubes and sausage slices until lightly browned. Transfer to a flameproof casserole. In the fat remaining in the skillet sauté 1 large onion, finely chopped, 3 cloves garlic, chopped, and 1 green bell pepper, seeded and chopped, and add to the casserole with 1 tablespoon red wine vinegar and 2 tablespoons Seville (bitter) orange juice, or two-thirds orange juice and one-third lime or lemon juice. Add 3 quarts beef stock, and simmer, covered, for 1½ hours, then add 1 pound cassava (yucca) root, peeled and sliced, 1 pound taro (*yautía*), peeled and sliced, 1 pound yam (*ñame*), not orange sweet potatoes, and 1 pound West Indian pumpkin (*calabaza*) or winter squash, peeled and cubed. Season to taste with salt, freshly ground pepper, 1 teaspoon oregano, and hot pepper sauce (such as Tabasco) to taste. Simmer, covered, until all the ingredients are tender. In a separate saucepan, in water to cover, boil 2 green plantains in their skins for 30 minutes, cool, peel, slice, and add to the casserole just long enough to heat them through. The plantains may be omitted, if preferred, or green (underripe) bananas may be used instead, in which case boil them for 20 minutes. Put the meats and vegetables on a heated serving platter, pour the broth into a tureen, and serve in soup plates. Serves 6 to 8.



Puchero Estilo Mexicano

Mexican Pot-au-Feu

MEXICO

If you want to present everything in this pot-au-feu at the same time, serve the soup in bowls, the meats and vegetables on plates. The green vegetables may be varied to suit the cook. Cabbage and turnips may be added, chayotes may be used instead of zucchini.

Serves 8 to 10

pound dried chickpeas, or a 1-pound can

3 pounds lean boneless beef chuck, cut into 1-inch cubes
3 pounds boneless lamb, cut into 1-inch cubes
3 pounds raw ham, cubed
1 pound chorizo (hot Spanish sausages), sliced
1 large onion, chopped
6 cloves garlic, chopped
2 teaspoons peppercorns
½ quarts chicken stock
½ quarts beef stock
1 lb
3½- to 4-pound chicken, cut into serving pieces
4 carrots, scraped and sliced
1 zucchini, sliced
1 pound green beans, cut into ½-inch pieces
1 pound sweet potatoes, peeled and sliced
3 ears corn, cut into 1-inch slices
6 tablespoons lard or vegetable oil
1 pound potatoes, peeled and sliced
2 green plantains, or 2 large green (underripe) bananas, peeled and cut into 1-inch slices
4 large peaches, peeled, pitted, and quartered
4 large pears, peeled, cored, and quartered
2 tablespoons chopped fresh coriander (cilantro)
8 fresh hot tortillas
¼ cup pacamole (Avocado Sauce), [this page](#)
2 limes or lemons, cut into wedges
Hot pepper sauce (Tabasco or any of the sauces on [this page](#))

Soak the chickpeas overnight, drain, and rinse. Put them into a large soup kettle. If using canned chickpeas, drain, rinse, and set aside until later. Add to the kettle the beef, lamb, ham, chorizo, onion, garlic, peppercorns, chicken and beef stock, and salt to taste, if necessary. Bring to a boil, skim any froth that comes to the surface, reduce the heat, cover, and simmer gently for 45 minutes. Add the chicken pieces and simmer for 30 minutes longer. Add the carrots, zucchini, green beans, sweet potatoes, and canned chickpeas, if using, and cook for 15 minutes longer. Add the corn and cook for 5 minutes.

Heat the lard or vegetable oil in a skillet and sauté the potatoes and plantains or green bananas until tender. Lift out onto a platter and keep warm. Take a cupful of stock from the kettle and gently poach the peaches and pears, between 10 and 15 minutes. Add to the kettle with the stock.

Check that all the ingredients are tender. Arrange the meats in the center of a large platter and surround with the vegetables and fruits. Moisten with a little stock and keep warm. If liked, the chickpeas may be left in the soup, or put on the platter. Pour the soup into a tureen and sprinkle with the chopped coriander. Serve the soup in bowls. Serve the meats, fruits, vegetables, and the fried potatoes and plantains as a second course accompanied by hot tortillas, *Guacamole*, lime or lemon wedges, and hot pepper sauce.

Sancocho de Gallina

Chicken Pot-au-Feu

VENEZUELA

Tropical markets carry an astonishing variety of root vegetables so if *apio* (*arracacha*) is not available, use taro (*yautía*, *dasheen*), or white sweet potato (*boniato*), or more than one type of yam. None of the vegetables has a dominating flavor, and all cook in about the same time so it is easy — and perfectly acceptable — to make substitutions. It is also a good way to get to know more about these delicious vegetables.

Serves 8 to 10

6 to 8 3½-pound chickens, cut into serving pieces

6 quarts chicken stock

1 leek, well washed and halved lengthwise

1 large onion, chopped

1 head garlic, peeled

4 white turnips, peeled and quartered

4 carrots, scraped and cut into 4 slices

1 large tomato, peeled, seeded, and chopped

1 bunch or 3 sprigs fresh coriander (cilantro)

1/2 lb, freshly ground pepper

THE VEGETABLES

2 1/2 pound cassava root (yucca), peeled and cut into 1/2-inch slices

2 1/2 pound West Indian pumpkin (calabaza) or any winter squash, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch slices

2 1/2 pound yam (ñame, not orange sweet potatoes), peeled and cut into 1/2-inch slices

2 1/2 pound apio (arracacha), peeled and cut into 1/2-inch slices

2 1/2 pound potatoes, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch slices

1 small cabbage, blanched and cut into 8 wedges

2 ears corn, each cut into 4 slices

2 green plantains (optional), or 3 large green bananas

Put all the ingredients except those listed under vegetables into a large saucepan or soup kettle. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat to a bare simmer, and cook, covered, for 30 minutes. Add all the vegetables except the corn and plantains, and continue cooking until the chicken and vegetables are tender, 20 to 30 minutes. Add the corn in the last 5 minutes of cooking. In a separate saucepan boil the unpeeled green plantains in water to cover for 30 minutes. When they are cool enough to handle, lift out, peel, and cut into 1-inch slices. Add to the chicken and vegetables just long enough to heat through. If using green bananas, cook for 15 minutes, peel, slice, and add to the kettle. Arrange the chicken pieces on a large, heated serving platter and surround with the vegetables. Strain the soup into a soup tureen. Serve in soup plates with *Guasacaca* (Avocado Sauce) or *Salsa de Ají* (Hot Pepper Sauce), separately.

Traditionally a large stewing hen (*gallina*) is used for this dish, but stewing hens are no longer readily available and require long, slow cooking. I find 3½-pound chickens very satisfactory. The dish can also be made with beef, using 4 pounds lean, boneless beef such as chuck, cut into 1-inch cubes. It is then called *Hervido*.

Ajiaco

Meat and Vegetable Stew

CUBA

Serves 8 to 10

3 pounds lean, boneless pork, cut into 2-inch cubes

3 pounds corned beef, cut into 2-inch cubes

6 quarts beef stock

6 quarts water

1 pound cassava root (yucca), cut into ½-inch slices

1 pound taro (yautía), peeled and cut into ½-inch slices

1 pound yam (ñame, not orange sweet potatoes), peeled and cut into ½-inch slices

1 pound sweet potatoes, preferably white (boniatos), peeled and cut into ½-inch slices

1 pound West Indian pumpkin (calabaza) or winter squash, peeled and cubed

3 ears corn, cut into 1-inch slices

2 chayotes, peeled and sliced, or use zucchini

2 ripe plantains, peeled and cut into 1-inch slices

3 tablespoons olive oil

2 medium onions, finely chopped

2 cloves garlic, minced

1 green bell pepper, seeded and coarsely chopped

or more fresh hot red or green peppers, seeded and finely chopped

2 medium tomatoes, peeled and coarsely chopped

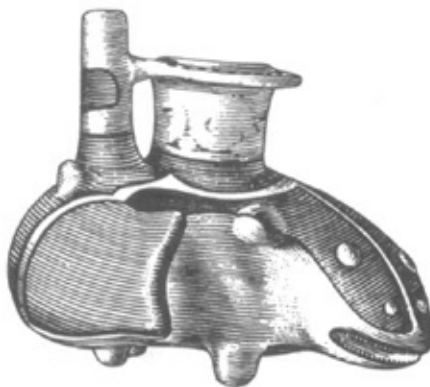
lt, freshly ground pepper

green plantains (optional) Juice of 2 limes

Put the pork and corned beef into a large saucepan or soup kettle with the stock and water. Bring to a boil, boil for a minute or two, and skim the froth that rises to the surface. Reduce the heat to a bare simmer, and cook, covered, for 1 hour. Add the cassava root, taro, and yam, and cook 15 minutes longer. Add the sweet potatoes, pumpkin or winter squash, corn, chayotes, and ripe plantains, and continue to simmer gently. If using zucchini do not add until later.

Heat the oil in a skillet and sauté the onions, garlic, and sweet and hot peppers until the onions are soft. Add the tomatoes, season to taste with pepper and salt, if necessary (the corned beef may have added enough saltiness), and cook until well blended, about 5 minutes longer. Add to the kettle with the zucchini, if using, and continue cooking at a gentle simmer until everything is done, which should be about 2 hours from starting. The pumpkin or winter squash will disintegrate, slightly thickening the broth.

Boil the green plantains in a separate saucepan in water to cover for 30 minutes. Cool, peel, and cut into 1-inch slices. Add to the kettle just long enough to heat through. Add the lime juice, stir, and serve. Arrange the meat and vegetables on a large heated serving platter, or if preferred, on two separate, smaller platters. Pour the broth into a soup tureen. Serve in soup plates with a hot pepper sauce on the side. This is wonderful with crusty rolls and butter.



Poultry

Aves



CHICKEN

There is no doubt that chicken — inexpensive and extremely versatile — is the favorite bird in the kitchens of Latin America. It is impossible to tire of chicken with so many delectable ways to cook it.

Most Latin American recipes are variations on a poaching theme. Chicken is gently simmered with herbs and spices and vegetable flavorings like onion and garlic, and deliciously sauced in a great variety of ways. Also, corn plays a special role in dishes like *Cuscuz de Galinha* (Garnished Steamed Chicken and Cornmeal) and *Pastel de Choclo con Relleno de Pollo* (Chicken Pie with Corn Topping) — see Substantial Dishes.

Out of a vast array of recipes I have chosen dishes that I have enjoyed, not just once, but time and again.

Pollo con Naranja

Chicken in Orange Sauce

ARGENTINA

Serves 4

3- to 3½-pound chicken, quartered

1/2 lb, freshly ground pepper

4 tablespoons butter

1 cup chicken stock

1/2 cup orange juice

1/2 grated rind of 1 orange

1/2 tablespoon flour

2 eggs

1/2 tablespoon heavy cream

Season the chicken pieces with salt and pepper. Heat the butter in a heavy casserole and sauté the chicken pieces, one or two at a time, until golden on both sides. Set aside as they are done. Pour off the fat from the casserole into a small bowl and reserve. Return the

chicken pieces to the casserole, putting the legs in first with the breasts on top, as the breasts cook more quickly. Add the chicken stock, orange juice, and grated orange rind. Cover and simmer for 30 to 45 minutes, or until the chicken is done. Lift out the chicken onto a serving dish and keep warm. Mix the flour with a tablespoon of the reserved fat and stir it into the liquid in the casserole. Bring to a boil and cook, stirring, for a minute or two. Reduce the heat to low. Beat the eggs with the cream. Stir 1 cup of the thickened liquid from the casserole, 1 tablespoon at a time, into the egg mixture, then pour the mixture into the casserole and cook, stirring with a wire whisk, until the sauce is lightly thickened, a minute or two. Do not let the sauce boil, as it will curdle. Pour some of the sauce over the chicken and serve the rest in a sauceboat. Serve with rice or mashed or French fried potatoes.



Frango com Bananas

Chicken with Bananas

BRAZIL

This chicken dish from Brazil's Mato Grosso is simmered with white wine and tomatoes, then topped with lightly fried bananas; a most attractive and unusual combination of flavors, slightly sweet, slightly sour.

Serves 4

3-pound chicken, quartered

cup lemon juice

teaspoons salt

tablespoons butter

medium onion, grated

tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped

teaspoon sugar

cup dry white wine

cup vegetable oil

ripe bananas, peeled and halved lengthwise

cup grated Parmesan cheese

tablespoon butter

Season the chicken with the lemon juice and salt. Heat the butter in a flameproof casserole and stir in the onion, tomatoes, and sugar. Add the chicken pieces and any of their liquid. Simmer for 5 minutes, uncovered, turning the chicken pieces once. Add the wine, cover the casserole, and simmer until the chicken is tender, about 45 minutes.

Heat the oil in a skillet and sauté the bananas until they are lightly browned on both sides. Arrange the bananas, cut side down, on top of the chicken pieces and sprinkle them with the grated cheese. Dot with the butter, cut into little bits. Place the casserole in a preheated hot (400° F.) oven and bake until the cheese is lightly browned, about 10 minutes. Serve with white rice.

Pollo en Piña

Chicken in Pineapple

GUATEMALA

Serves 4 to 6

3½- to 4-pound chicken, cut into serving pieces

ripe pineapple, weighing about 1½ pounds, peeled, cored, and coarsely chopped, or a 1-pound can unsweetened pineapple, in its own juice

medium onions, finely chopped

cloves garlic, chopped

whole cloves

1-inch piece of stick cinnamon

bay leaves

cup olive oil

cup white vinegar

cup dry sherry

medium tomatoes, peeled and coarsely chopped

lt, freshly ground pepper

icken stock, if necessary

Put the chicken pieces into a heavy saucepan or casserole. If using fresh pineapple, be careful to save and use all the juice. If using canned pineapple, use the juice. Add all the rest of the ingredients, including salt and pepper to taste. If using fresh pineapple, it may be necessary to add a little chicken stock to cover the chicken pieces, as the fresh fruit will not have as much juice as the canned. Cover and simmer over low heat until the chicken is tender, about 45 minutes. If the sauce is very abundant, cook partially covered for the last 15 minutes. Serve with rice.



Ají de Gallina

Chicken in Pepper Sauce

PERU

Serves 6

3½- to 4-pound chicken, quartered
cups chicken stock, about
cup vegetable oil
medium onions, finely chopped
cloves garlic, minced
cups fresh breadcrumbs
cups milk
fresh hot red or green peppers, seeded
medium tomatoes, peeled and seeded
ounces walnuts, ground
lt, freshly ground pepper
cup grated Parmesan cheese

Put the chicken pieces into a large saucepan or flameproof casserole with the stock, adding a little more if necessary to cover, and poach until the chicken is tender, about 45 minutes. Let the chicken cool in the stock. Remove the skin and bones and shred the meat into pieces about 1½. inches long and ¼ inch wide. Set the shredded chicken aside and reserve the stock.

Heat the oil in a flameproof casserole and sauté the onions and garlic until the onions are golden. Soak the breadcrumbs in the milk and mash to a paste. Add the breadcrumb mixture to the casserole. In a blender or food processor reduce the peppers and tomatoes to a purée and stir into the casserole. Add the ground walnuts. Season to taste with salt and pepper, and cook, stirring, over moderate heat for about 5 minutes. Add the chicken, 1 cup of the stock, and the cheese, and cook just until heated through. The sauce should be thick. Serve the chicken and sauce on a heated platter surrounded by halved, boiled potatoes, hardboiled eggs, sliced lengthwise, and black olives.

Cecilia Blanco de Mendoza's Ajiaco

Chicken Stew

COLOMBIA

This is a very special *ajiaco* (chicken stew) with subtle seasonings that include *guascas* or *huascas*, a Colombian herb whose botanical name is *Galinsoga parviflora* Lineo. It is sold, dried and ground, in jars in Colombian markets and has a mild flavor vaguely reminiscent, to my palate, of Jerusalem artichokes, to which, I am assured by a Colombian botanist, it

bears no relationship whatsoever. It might one day appear in a specialty food shop and will enhance any soup or stew, as the flavor is delicate and unobtrusive. However, though *guascas* is an attractive extra, it is not essential to the deliciousness of this dish, which depends on a combination of flavors including scallions and coriander.

Also in the stew are three types of potatoes: Idahos or any similar potato, small red potatoes, and *papas criollas*. These last are delicious small Colombian potatoes that are sometimes available in Latin American markets. They have yellow flesh and stay whole through prolonged cooking. Small white new potatoes make a very good substitute, perhaps not as pretty to look at, but equal otherwise.

Serves 6

3½- to 4-pound chicken, left whole

whole scallions

sprigs fresh coriander (cilantro)

teaspoon ground guascas

cups chicken stock or water

lt, freshly ground pepper

small ears corn, cut into 1-inch slices

pounds Idaho or similar potatoes, peeled and cut into ¼-inch slices

pounds small red potatoes, peeled and cut into ¼-inch slices

pound papas criollas or small white new potatoes, unpeeled

cups milk

small can Vienna sausages, sliced

cup cooked baby peas

or 2 tablespoons capers

hardboiled eggs, sliced

tablespoons heavy cream

In a soup kettle or large saucepan combine the chicken, scallions, coriander, *guascas* (if available), chicken stock or water, and salt and pepper to taste. Bring to a boil and skim off any froth that rises to the surface, reduce the heat, cover, and simmer gently until the chicken is tender, about 45 minutes. Let the chicken cool in the broth, lift it out, cut it into 6 serving pieces, and set it aside, covered. Strain the broth and add the corn to it. Bring the broth to a simmer over moderate heat and add all the potatoes. Simmer until the broth thickens. The Idaho potatoes will disintegrate and thicken the broth, the red potatoes will retain some texture, and the *papas criollas* or new potatoes will remain whole. Add the milk and the chicken pieces and cook just long enough to heat them through. To serve, have ready six large, deep soup plates. Put a piece of chicken in each, 2 or 3 slices of Vienna sausage, 1 tablespoon peas, a few capers, a slice of egg, and the broth, making sure each gets a *papa criolla* or new potato. Pour a tablespoon of heavy cream over each serving. Serve with knife, fork, and soup spoon.



Ajiaco de Pollo Bogotano

Bogotá Chicken Stew

COLOMBIA

Serves 6

6 tablespoons (¼ cup) butter

3½-pound chicken, cut into serving pieces

6 large onions, finely chopped

6 small potatoes, peeled and thinly sliced

4 cups chicken stock

1 whole, peeled papas criollas, if available (otherwise 6 new potatoes halved)

Salt, fresh ground pepper

3 ears corn, each cut into 3 slices

2 tablespoons capers

1 cup heavy cream

Heat the butter in a heavy casserole and sauté the chicken pieces with the onions until the chicken is golden on both sides. Add the thinly sliced potatoes and the stock, cover, and cook over very low heat until the chicken is about half done and the potatoes are beginning to disintegrate, about 25 minutes. Add the 6 halved new potatoes and continue cooking until both chicken and potatoes are tender. With a slotted spoon, remove the chicken pieces and potatoes from the casserole and keep warm. Work the stock through a sieve. It will have been thickened by the sliced potatoes. Return the stock to the casserole, season to taste with salt and pepper, add the chicken and potatoes, the corn and capers, and simmer for 5 minutes longer. Add the cream and continue cooking just long enough to heat it through. Serve in deep soup plates with *Ají de Huevo* (Avocado Sauce) on the side.

Carapulcra

Chicken, Pork, and Potatoes in Peanut Sauce

PERU

When I decided to test *carapulcra* in New York, having enjoyed it in Peru, I was told I could regard one of its ingredients, *chuño* or *papaseca* (freeze-dried potato) as optional, to be replaced with fresh potatoes, since I couldn't buy the commercially packaged article here. I decided that what the Inca women could do I could do. When the Inca, who were the first people to cultivate the potato back in 2500 B.C., faced crop storage problems, they invented

freeze-drying, and there is every reason to believe that they were the first people to do so. Raw, unpeeled potatoes were put outside their houses at night in the icy cold of the Andean highlands, where they froze solid. In the morning they thawed in the sun and the water was trampled out of them by Inca women, and the process repeated until they were thoroughly dry.

The sixteenth floor of a New York high-rise is not to be compared with the Andes, whose soaring peaks topple the imagination, so I put my potatoes, 3 large Idahos, in the freezer overnight. In the morning, since I have a small terrace with a southern exposure, I put them in the sun to thaw. One cannot trample the water out of 3 potatoes — it takes a whole crop to make that possible — so I squeezed the water out of my potatoes by hand. At the end of three days they were like stone, strange skinny objects. The flesh had turned quite dark, almost black. I kept one for two years before I used it, just to see, and it was as good as ever. The others I used in this *carapulcra*. I had a lot of fun making *chuño*, but I can honestly say my Peruvian friends were right when they said it was all right to substitute fresh potatoes for it.

Serves 6

freeze-dried Idaho potatoes, or 2 fresh potatoes

2½-pound chicken, cut into serving pieces

1 pound boneless loin of pork, cut into ¾-inch cubes

4 cups chicken stock, about

2 tablespoons lard or vegetable oil

1 large onion, finely chopped

3 cloves garlic, minced

1 teaspoon Spanish (hot) paprika or cayenne

1 teaspoon ground cumin

1½ t, freshly ground pepper

½ cup roasted peanuts, finely ground

1 small potatoes, freshly cooked

4 hardboiled eggs, sliced

1½ medium-sized pitted black or green olives

Put the dried potatoes on to soak in warm water to cover for about 2 hours. If using the fresh potatoes instead of the dried ones, add them to the stew, peeled and diced at the same time the dried potatoes would be added. When the dried potatoes have been soaked, drain them, and chop coarsely. Set aside.

Put the chicken and pork pieces into a saucepan and add enough chicken stock to cover. Cover and simmer until tender. Drain and set the stock aside. Bone the chicken and cut the meat into cubes about the same size as the pork. Set aside with a little stock to moisten the meats.

Rinse out and dry the saucepan or use a flameproof casserole, and heat the lard or oil in it. Add the onion, garlic, hot paprika or cayenne, and cumin, and sauté until the onion is

soft. Add the potato and about a cup of the reserved stock, cover, and simmer gently until the potato has disintegrated, thickening the mixture, about 1 hour. Season to taste with salt and pepper and stir in the ground peanuts. Cook for a minute or two, then add the chicken and pork pieces. The sauce should be thick, but add a little more stock if necessary. Simmer just long enough to heat through and blend the flavors.

Arrange the chicken and pork mixture on a heated serving platter and garnish it with the fresh, hot potatoes, the hardboiled egg slices, and olives.

Pollo Borracho

Drunken Chicken

ARGENTINA

This is a typical *criollo* dish and with slight variations occurs all over Latin America.

Serves 4

1/2 tablespoon butter

1 pound boiled ham, cut into strips about 2 inches by $\frac{1}{4}$ inch

3 $\frac{1}{2}$ -pound chicken, cut into 4 serving pieces

1 lb, freshly ground pepper

1 teaspoon ground cumin

1 teaspoon ground coriander

1 cup white wine vinegar

1 cups dry white wine

1 cup chicken stock, about

2 cloves garlic, minced

1/2 medium pimiento-stuffed olives

1 tablespoons capers

Melt the butter in a flameproof casserole. Make a layer of one-third of the ham. Season the chicken pieces with the salt, pepper, cumin, and coriander, and add the chicken legs to the casserole with another third of the ham on top. Arrange the chicken breasts over the ham and sprinkle with the remaining ham strips. Pour in the vinegar, wine, and enough chicken stock to cover. Add the garlic, cover, and simmer over low heat for 45 minutes, or until the chicken is tender. Rinse the olives and soak them for 15 minutes in cold water. Drain. Rinse and drain the capers. Place the chicken pieces and ham strips in a serving dish and keep warm. Measure the liquid in the casserole and reduce it, over brisk heat, to 2 cups. Moisten the chicken with a little of the liquid and serve the rest in a gravy boat. Garnish the chicken with the olives and capers.

If liked, the sauce may be lightly thickened. Mix 1 tablespoon flour with 1 tablespoon butter, stir into the liquid, and simmer over low heat, stirring constantly, until the sauce is thickened. Serve with plain boiled potatoes or white rice and a green vegetable or salad.

Pollo en Pepián Dulce

Mayan Chicken Fricassee

GUATEMALA

Because Guatemala was the heart of the Mayan empire, with its capital city of Tikal, the kitchen of post-Columbian Guatemala is close to that of Yucatán in Mexico. This dish unites a medley of flavors, which the chicken absorbs during cooking. They blend harmoniously in the sauce, which is as thick as heavy cream and delicious with plain rice.

Serves 6

3½- to 4-pound chicken, cut into serving pieces

cups chicken stock, about

tablespoon sesame seeds

cup pepitas (Mexican pumpkin seeds)

red bell peppers, seeded and coarsely chopped, or 5 canned pimientos, chopped

medium tomatoes, peeled and coarsely chopped

medium onion, chopped

cloves garlic, chopped

tablespoons lard or vegetable oil

cup Seville (bitter) orange juice, or use two-thirds orange juice and one-third lime juice

teaspoon ground allspice

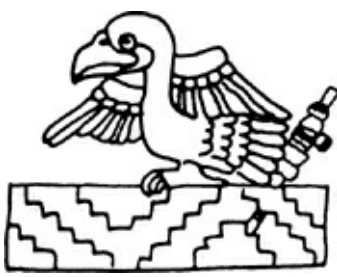
lt, freshly ground pepper

cup seedless raisins

butter

cup chopped almonds

Put the chicken pieces into a heavy casserole, pour in the stock, adding a little more to cover, if necessary. Cover and simmer until almost tender, about 30 minutes. In a blender or food processor grind the sesame and pumpkin seeds as fine as possible and shake through a sieve. Set aside. Put the peppers, tomatoes, onion, and garlic into a blender or food processor and reduce to a coarse purée. Mix the purée with the ground sesame and pumpkin seeds. Heat the lard or vegetable oil in a skillet, add the purée, and cook, over moderate heat, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, for 5 minutes. Drain the chicken, reserve the stock, and return the chicken to the casserole. Add to the purée 1 cup of the stock, the Seville (bitter) orange juice, allspice, and salt and pepper to taste. Stir to mix, and pour over the chicken. Cover and simmer gently until the chicken is tender, about 15 minutes. Add a little more stock if necessary. The sauce should be thick. Soak the raisins in cold water to cover for 15 minutes. Drain thoroughly. Heat a little butter in a skillet and sauté the almonds until they are golden. Drain. Transfer the chicken and sauce to a warmed serving dish and sprinkle with the raisins and almonds. Serve with rice.



Pollo Verde Almendrado

Chicken in Green Almond Sauce

MEXICO

I find all the Mexican green chicken dishes delicious; this one is enchanting, not only for its very subtle flavor but because the green sauce is downright pretty to look at.

Serves 6

3½-pound chicken, cut into serving pieces

cups chicken stock

medium onion, chopped

clove garlic, chopped

cup parsley sprigs, coarsely chopped

cup coriander (cilantro) sprigs, coarsely chopped

heart of romaine lettuce, coarsely chopped

or 2 fresh hot green peppers, seeded and chopped, or 2 canned jalapeño or 3 canned serrano chilies, seeded and chopped

ounces ground almonds, about ¾ cup

tablespoons vegetable oil or lard Salt

Put the chicken pieces into a heavy casserole with the stock, bring to a boil, reduce the heat, and simmer gently, covered, for 45 minutes, or until tender. Lift the chicken out onto a platter and set aside. Pour the stock into a jug. Rinse out and dry the casserole.

In a blender or food processor combine the onion, garlic, parsley, coriander, lettuce, hot peppers, and almonds, and reduce to a coarse purée. Do not overblend as the finished sauce should have some texture, not be entirely smooth. Heat the oil or lard in a large, heavy skillet and pour in the purée, which will be almost pastelike because of the almonds. Cook the mixture, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, for 3 to 4 minutes over moderate heat. Transfer it to a casserole. Stir in 2 cups of the stock, season to taste with salt. Add the chicken pieces, cover, and simmer just long enough to heat the chicken through.

Arroz Blanco (White Rice) is good with this. For a completely Mexican meal, serve the chicken with the rice and with tortillas, *Frijoles* (Beans), and *Guacamole* (Avocado Sauce).

Pollo en Pipián de Almendra

Chicken Stew with Almonds

Pipián is one of the best dishes in the Mexican kitchen and one of the hardest to define. The dictionary of the Spanish Royal Academy says it is an American stew made of meat, chicken, turkey, or other fowl with salt pork and ground almonds. Other dictionaries describe it as a kind of Indian fricassee. The *Nuevo Cocinero Méjicano*, a dictionary published in Paris in 1888, gives a more complete description. It says that *pipián* is a Mexican stew made with red or green peppers, pumpkin seeds, almonds, or oily seeds such as sesame or peanuts. The stew may be made with turkey, chicken, duck, or indeed any bird, as well as with meats or fish and shellfish. There are even vegetarian versions using fruits and vegetables. It should not be salted until the moment of serving, as salt is said to make the sauce separate.

Serves 4

3-pound chicken, cut into serving pieces

or 3 scallions

or 3 large sprigs fresh coriander (cilantro)

carrot, scraped and halved

cups chicken stock, about

ancho chilies

cup (4 ounces) almonds, blanched

tablespoons lard or vegetable oil

teaspoon ground cloves

teaspoon ground cinnamon

teaspoon oregano

It

Put the chicken pieces into a large, heavy casserole or saucepan with the scallions, coriander, and carrot. Pour in the chicken stock, adding a little more if necessary to cover. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat, and simmer, covered, for 45 minutes, or until the chicken is tender. Lift the chicken pieces out of the stock. Strain and reserve the stock, discarding the solids. Rinse out the casserole and put the chicken pieces back in it. Shake the seeds out of the chilies and rinse them. Tear them in pieces and put them to soak for 1 hour in about ½ cup hot water, turning them from time to time. If they absorb all the water, add a little more. Reduce the chilies to a paste in a blender or food processor, using a little of the soaking water. Put them into a bowl. Toast the almonds in a skillet and pulverize them in a nut grinder, blender, or food processor, shake them through a sieve, and add to the chilies, mixing thoroughly. Heat the lard or oil in a skillet, add the chili and almond mixture, and sauté, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, for 4 or 5 minutes over moderate heat. Thin with about 2 cups of the reserved chicken stock to make a medium-thick sauce. Stir in the cloves, cinnamon, and oregano, and pour over the chicken pieces in the casserole. Cook at a bare simmer over very low heat for 15 minutes, or until the chicken is heated through and the flavors have blended. Season to taste with salt. Serve with rice, beans, tortillas,

guacamole or other salad, and a green vegetable, if liked.

Despite the solemn warnings in ancient cookbooks and from experienced Mexican cooks, I must confess I have never found that salting the sauce earlier makes it separate, so I leave this question open.

Some cooks reserve the seeds of the *ancho* chilies, toast them, and grind them with the almonds. I have not found this a good idea. The seeds seem to coarsen the sauce and blur the delicate flavor of the almonds. Also more stock has to be added, making too much sauce.

Pollo en Salsa de Almendra

Chicken in Almond Sauce

MEXICO

Serves 4

tablespoons ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup) butter

3- to 3½-pound chicken, cut into serving pieces

cups chicken stock, about

medium onion, finely chopped

fresh hot red or green pepper, seeded and finely chopped, or 1 canned serrano or jalapeño chili, rinsed

cup toasted almonds, finely ground

hardboiled eggs, chopped

cup freshly made breadcrumbs

lt, freshly ground pepper

Heat the butter in a large skillet and sauté the chicken pieces until lightly golden all over. Transfer the chicken to a heatproof casserole, add enough chicken stock to cover, bring to a boil, lower the heat, cover, and simmer gently until the chicken is tender, about 45 minutes. Lift out the chicken pieces and keep warm. Pour the stock into a container and set it aside. Rinse out and dry the casserole.

In the fat remaining in the skillet sauté the onion with the hot pepper until the onion is soft. Add the almonds, eggs, breadcrumbs, and salt and pepper to taste, and sauté for a minute or two longer. Stir in 2 cups of the reserved chicken stock, pour the mixture into a blender or food processor, and reduce it to a purée. Do not overblend. The sauce should have some texture. Return the chicken pieces to the casserole and pour the sauce over them. Simmer just long enough to heat the chicken through. Serve with rice.



Pollo Pibil

Chicken, Yucatán Style

MEXICO

This is an old dish from the distant past. It would have been wrapped in banana leaves and cooked in a *pib*, an earth oven, one of the earliest methods of cooking. A modern oven does well but not as well as the *pib*. Sometimes one still gets a chance to have *pollo pibil* cooked in the traditional way and it is a grand experience.

Serves 4

1/2 cup peppercorns

1 teaspoon oregano

1 teaspoon cumin seeds

1/2 teaspoon achiote (annatto) seeds

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/2 large cloves garlic

1/2 cup Seville (bitter) orange juice, or use two-thirds orange juice and one-third lime juice

3 1/2- to 4-pound chicken, quartered

1 banana leaves (or kitchen parchment or aluminum foil)

Using mortar and pestle, a blender, or a food processor, grind together the peppercorns, oregano, cumin, achiote seeds, salt, and garlic. Transfer the mixture to a large bowl and mix thoroughly with the orange juice. Add the chicken pieces, mixing well to coat them with the marinade. Cover and refrigerate for 24 hours, turning two or three times.

Wrap each piece of chicken in a square of banana leaf, kitchen parchment, or aluminum foil, about 12 inches by 12 inches, dividing the marinade equally among the pieces. Arrange the packages in a casserole, cover, and bake in a preheated moderate (325° F.) oven for about 2 hours, or until the chicken is very tender. Serve with hot tortillas.

Pollo Ticuleño

Chicken, Ticul Style

MEXICO

This is a favorite Mayan dish from Yucatán. The delicate chicken breast makes a fine contrast to the robust flavor of black beans and tortilla, all enhanced by the very pure flavor of the tomato sauce. Put the beans on to cook about 3 hours ahead of time, so they will be ready when needed. The dish really needs no accompaniment other than the garnishes and, for lovers of the *picante*, *Ixni-Pec*, the hot pepper sauce from Yucatán ([this page](#)).

Serves 4

FOR THE TOMATO SAUCE

medium tomatoes
small onion
lt, freshly ground pepper

FOR THE CHICKEN

tablespoons (½ cup) butter
whole chicken breasts, boned and halved
our
egg, lightly beaten
cups breadcrumbs, about
tortillas, fried crisp in vegetable oil
cup black beans cooked as for Panuchos (see [this page](#))
tablespoons freshly grated Parmesan cheese, about

FOR THE GARNISH

onion prepared as for Panuchos (see [this page](#)), but thinly sliced instead of chopped
cup cooked green peas
ripe plantains, halved crosswise, then lengthwise, and fried until golden brown in vegetable oil
to 12 radish flowers
or 2 medium tomatoes, sliced (optional)

To make the tomato sauce, peel and chop 3 medium tomatoes and add to a blender or food processor with 1 small onion, chopped. Reduce to a purée. Pour the mixture into a small saucepan and simmer, uncovered, over very low heat for 15 minutes, or until thick and well blended. Season with salt and freshly ground pepper to taste.

Chop the butter coarsely and put it into a small, heavy saucepan. Melt the butter over very low heat. Skim off the foam that rises to the top and carefully pour the butter into a heavy skillet, discarding the milky sediment. Roll the chicken breasts in flour, dip in the egg, then in breadcrumbs. Heat the clarified butter and sauté the breasts for about 4 minutes on each side, taking care not to overcook them. Spread the tortillas with the beans, place the chicken breasts on top of the tortillas, pour a little tomato sauce over them, and sprinkle with the grated cheese. Place 1 tortilla on each of four warmed serving plates and garnish with the onion, peas, plantains, radishes, and, if liked, sliced tomatoes.

Xinxim de Galinha

Chicken with Shrimp and Peanut Sauce

BRAZIL

This is a Bahian dish, as the use of *dendê* (palm) oil indicates. The mixture of flavors is unusual and exciting, but not difficult for the unaccustomed palate to accept.

Serves 6

3-pound chicken, cut into serving pieces

tablespoons lime or lemon juice

cloves garlic, crushed

lt

tablespoons olive oil

medium onion, grated

cup dried shrimp, finely ground

cup dry roasted peanuts, ground

fresh hot red pepper, seeded and chopped (optional)

cup chicken stock, about

cup dendê (palm) oil

Season the chicken with the lime or lemon juice, the garlic, and salt to taste. Set aside.

In a heavy saucepan heat the oil and sauté the onion, dried shrimp, peanuts, and hot pepper for 5 minutes, stirring from time to time. Add the chicken pieces and their liquid, and cook for a few minutes, turning the pieces once. Add the chicken stock, cover, and simmer gently until the chicken is tender, about 30 minutes, turning once during the cooking and adding a little more stock if necessary. When the chicken is tender, taste for seasoning, pour in the *dendê* (palm) oil, and cook for a minute or two longer. The sauce should be thick and not very abundant. Serve with white rice and *Farofa de Azeite de Dendê* (Cassava Meal with Palm Oil).

Vatapá de Galinha

Chicken in Shrimp and Almond Sauce

BRAZIL

Vatapá is one of the great dishes of the Bahian kitchen of Brazil, but it does take quite a lot of work. It is an exciting dish for guests and I find their pleasure in this truly exotic food makes it well worth the effort. The coconut milk can be made ahead of time and tedious jobs like grinding the dried shrimp are made easy with the help of a food processor. I so well remember the first time I had *vatapá* in Salvador, Bahia. It was a revelation, with so many unfamiliar and delicious flavors to beguile the palate.

Serves 6 to 8

tablespoons olive oil

medium onions, finely chopped
 scallions, chopped, using white and green parts
 large cloves garlic, chopped
 medium tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped
 or 2 fresh hot peppers, seeded and chopped
 1/2 lb, freshly ground pepper
 2 tablespoons lime or lemon juice
 2 tablespoons fresh coriander (cilantro), or use flat-leaved Italian parsley
 4 or 2 1/2-pound chickens, quartered
 chicken stock, if necessary
 1/4 cups finely ground almonds
 1/2 cups dried shrimp, finely ground
 1/2 cups thin coconut milk (see [this page](#))
 1/2 cup thick coconut milk (see [this page](#))
 1/4 tablespoon rice flour
 2 tablespoons dendê (palm) oil

In a large skillet heat the oil and sauté the onions, scallions, garlic, tomatoes, and hot peppers for 5 minutes. Season the mixture to taste with salt and pepper and stir in the lime or lemon juice and the coriander or parsley. Add the quartered chickens, cover, and cook until the chickens are tender, 30 to 35 minutes. Add a little chicken stock to the skillet if the mixture seems too dry. With a slotted spoon, transfer the chickens to a dish and let them cool. Skin and bone the chickens and chop the meat coarsely. Put the vegetable mixture through a sieve, pressing down hard on the vegetables to extract all the liquid. Discard the solids and reserve the liquid.

In a saucepan combine the almonds, ground shrimp, the thin coconut milk, and the reserved liquid from cooking the chicken. Bring to a boil and simmer for 15 minutes. Add the thick coconut milk and the rice flour mixed with a little water, and cook, uncovered, stirring frequently, until the mixture has the consistency of a thick béchamel. Add the chicken pieces and the dendê (palm) oil. Cook just long enough to heat through, about 5 minutes. Serve with *Pirão de Arroz* (Rice Flour Pudding).

Variation: To make *Vatapá de Camarão* (Shrimp and Fish in a Shrimp and Almond Sauce), in place of the chicken, substitute 1 pound raw shrimp, shelled and deveined, and 3 pounds fillets of any firm white fish, cut into 2-inch pieces. Add 1 tablespoon of finely chopped fresh ginger to the onion and tomato mixture, and cook the fish for 10 minutes, the shrimp only until they turn pink and lose their translucent look, about 3 minutes.

Pollo en Salsa de Huevos

Ecuador was once part of the great Inca empire, which had its center in Cuzco, Peru, and dominated the whole Andean region, stretching as far as northern Chile. Even today the dominant language of the Inca empire, Quechua, is still spoken in both countries. Coastal Ecuador was not gathered into the Inca fold, and with its vastly different climate and vegetation has a distinct regional kitchen, whose notable feature is the use of plantains, especially the *verde* (green, or unripe) plantain. The secret of the cooking lies in combining foods not usually put together, pork stuffed with shrimps, for example, or Seville (bitter) orange used for the *seviches* (marinated fish). Dry mustard is used interestingly in the chicken dishes — sautéed with chopped onion first so that it adds an elusive flavor to the finished dish. Elsewhere ground walnuts make a wonderfully rich sauce for chicken, with that hint of bitterness and sweetness peculiar to walnuts. Wine, vinegar, both orange and lemon juice, eggs, sweet red peppers, and nuts are all used one way or another with chicken, making for a very versatile yet simple cuisine, requiring no elaborate techniques.

Serves 4 to 6

tablespoons ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup) butter or vegetable oil

3½- to 4-pound chicken, cut into serving pieces

large onion, finely chopped

clove garlic, minced

tablespoon dry mustard

lt, freshly ground pepper

cups chicken stock, about

hardboiled eggs, finely chopped

Heat the butter in a skillet and sauté the chicken pieces until golden on both sides. Transfer them to a casserole. In the butter remaining in the skillet sauté the onion and garlic with the mustard, stirring to mix. When the onion is soft, transfer the contents of the skillet to a flameproof casserole. Season with salt and pepper to taste and pour in the stock, adding a little more barely to cover the chicken, if necessary. Cover and simmer until the chicken is tender, about 45 minutes. Transfer the chicken to a warmed serving platter and keep warm. Over brisk heat reduce the sauce until it is of medium thickness. Taste the sauce for seasoning and add a little salt and pepper if necessary. Stir in the eggs and cook just long enough to heat through. Pour the sauce over the chicken and serve, or serve the sauce separately in a sauceboat. Accompany with rice or potatoes, mixed vegetable salad, or a green vegetable.

Variation: For *Pollo en Salsa de Nuez* (Chicken in Nut Sauce), omit the hardboiled eggs and add 1½ cups ground walnuts to the sauce.

Variation: For *Pollo con Aceitunas* (Chicken with Olives), use 1 cup red wine in place of 1 cup of the stock, and omit the mustard. Instead of the hardboiled eggs, add 1½ cups sliced, green, pimiento-stuffed olives to the sauce. Rinse the olives in warm water before slicing.

Variation: For *Pollo a la Criolla* (Chicken, Creole Style), omit the mustard and the hardboiled eggs, adding with the stock, ½ cup oil, 2 tablespoons vinegar, and 1 bay leaf. Serve with fried potatoes.

Variation: For *Pollo con Pimientos* (Chicken with Sweet Red Peppers), omit the hardboiled eggs. Use 1 cup stock and 1 cup dry red wine. Increase the dry mustard to 2 tablespoons and add to the sauce one 8-ounce can of pimientos, drained and puréed in a blender. Simmer the sauce for a few minutes longer, and if necessary add enough fresh breadcrumbs to make it of medium consistency. It should not be thin.

Variation: For *Pollo al Limón* (Chicken with Lemon), omit the hardboiled eggs. Reduce the chicken stock to 1½ cups and add ½ cup fresh lemon juice. Traditionally the sauce is thickened by adding 1 cup fresh breadcrumbs and stirring over moderate heat until the sauce is smooth and thick. I prefer to reduce the sauce over brisk heat, or to thicken it with 1 tablespoon flour mixed with 1 tablespoon of butter. The flavor is not changed, it is simply a matter of texture.

Variation: For *Pollo en Salsa de Almendras* (Chicken in Almond Sauce), omit the mustard and reduce the hardboiled eggs to 3. When the chicken is cooked, transfer it to a platter and keep it warm. Reduce the stock to 1½ cups over brisk heat. Pulverize ¾ cup blanched almonds in a blender, add the eggs and stock, and reduce to a smooth purée. Heat the sauce, spoon a little over the chicken, and serve the rest separately. A deceptively simple dish. The eggs and almonds give the sauce a very subtle flavor.

Variation: For *Pollo en Jugo de Naranja* (Chicken in Orange Juice), omit the hardboiled eggs. Omit the mustard and use 1 tablespoon sweet paprika instead. In place of 2 cups chicken stock, use 1 cup stock and 1 cup orange juice. Add 6 ounces coarsely chopped boiled ham to the chicken in the casserole. Before serving, reduce the sauce over brisk heat to medium thick.

Variation: For *Pollo al Jerez* (Chicken with Sherry), omit the hardboiled eggs. Reduce the amount of dry mustard to 1 teaspoon, and instead of 2 cups chicken stock, use 1 cup stock, 1 cup dry sherry. Thicken the sauce with 1 cup of breadcrumbs, or reduce it over brisk heat.

Variation: For *Pollo con Queso* (Chicken with Cheese), omit the hardboiled eggs. When adding the stock to the casserole, add 1 bay leaf and ½ teaspoon each thyme and oregano.

When the chicken is done, lift it out onto an ovenproof serving dish and sprinkle it generously with grated Parmesan cheese, about ½ cup, and dot with 2 tablespoons butter. Put it into a preheated moderate (350° F.) oven until the cheese is golden brown. Strain the sauce and reduce it to half over brisk heat. Serve in a gravy boat.

In Ecuador a fresh, or bottled, hot pepper sauce would be on the table to be taken with any of these dishes according to individual taste.

Pollo con Arroz

Chicken with Rice

PARAGUAY

It would be impossible to have a book of Latin American food without including recipes for *Arroz con Pollo*, a perennial favorite, almost always translated as Chicken with Rice though literally it is Rice with Chicken. This simplest of dishes is also somewhat of a paradox. Its ingredients are not, for the most part, native to Spain, and the dish there is sometimes called *Arroz a la Valenciana* (Rice, Valencia Style). It is also often thought of as a cousin of *paella*, Spain's famous rice, chicken, and shellfish dish. The dish is quintessentially international, for the chickens originally came from India, the saffron arrived with Phoenician traders, the Arabs brought the rice from Asia, and the tomatoes and peppers are the gift of Mexico. It is tremendously popular in the Spanish-speaking Caribbean and in Mexico, as well as in South America, and differs a little from country to country not only in ingredients and technique but in the name as well. One of my favorites, in which the name is reversed to *Pollo con Arroz* (Chicken with Rice), is perhaps the simplest of all the versions I've encountered.

Serves 4 to 6

tablespoons oil, preferably olive oil

3- to 3½-pound chicken, cut into serving pieces

medium onion, finely chopped

green or red bell pepper, seeded and chopped

tomatoes, peeled and chopped

lt, freshly ground pepper

cups chicken stock or water

teaspoon saffron

cups long-grain rice

Heat the oil in a heavy skillet and sauté the chicken pieces until they are golden on both sides. Transfer the chicken to an earthenware or enameled iron casserole. In the oil remaining in the skillet sauté the onion and pepper until they are soft. Add to the casserole with the tomatoes, salt and pepper to taste, 2 cups of the chicken stock or water, and the saffron, crumbled. Simmer, covered, over low heat for 30 minutes.

Lift out the chicken pieces onto a dish or plate and set aside. Pour the liquid through a

sieve, reserving the solids. Measure the liquid and make the quantity up to 4 cups with the rest of the chicken stock. Pour it into the casserole, add the rice and the reserved solids, stir to mix, and bring to a boil over fairly brisk heat. Arrange the chicken pieces on top of the rice, cover, and cook over very low heat until the rice is tender and all the liquid absorbed, about 20 minutes. Serve directly from the casserole. If liked, artichoke hearts, about 12, may be scattered through the chicken.

Variation: Venezuela has an interesting version of this dish. It is a little more elaborate and has raisins, olives, and capers mixed with the rice. In a blender purée 4 medium tomatoes, skinned and chopped, 2 medium onions, chopped, 1 green and 1 red bell pepper, seeded and chopped, 2 leeks, well washed and chopped, and 1 clove garlic. Season the mixture with salt and freshly ground pepper and pour it over a 3- to 3½-pound chicken, cut into serving pieces, in a flameproof casserole. Add ½ cup dry white wine and a little chicken stock to cover, if necessary, and simmer, covered, for 30 minutes. Lift out the chicken pieces onto a plate or dish, and measure the liquid. Make up the quantity to 4 cups, if more liquid is needed, with chicken stock. Rinse out and dry the casserole. Heat 4 tablespoons (¼ cup) butter in the casserole and stir in the rice. Stir constantly with a wooden spoon over moderate heat, taking care not to let the rice burn. Pour the chicken stock mixture over the rice. Add ½ cup seedless raisins, 12 pimiento-stuffed green olives, halved, and 2 tablespoons capers, and stir to mix. Bring to a simmer. Arrange the chicken pieces on top of the rice, cover, and cook over low heat until the rice is tender and the liquid absorbed, about 20 minutes. Serves 4 to 6.

Variation: Coastal Colombia uses annatto (achiote) in its version of *Arroz con Pollo*; interesting, since this was a favorite seasoning of the Maya, the Caribs, and the Arawaks as well as the Colombian coastal people of pre-Conquest times. It is still popular in Yucatán, coastal Colombia, and the Caribbean today. Put 2 tablespoons of *aceite de achiote* (annatto oil), see [this page](#), in a heavy casserole, and add a 3- to 3½-pound chicken, cut into serving pieces, 4 medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped, 2 medium onions, finely chopped, 1 large carrot, scraped and chopped, 2 stalks celery, chopped, 3 or 4 scallions, trimmed, 1 fresh hot pepper, seeded and chopped (optional), 1 bay leaf, ⅛ teaspoon ground cumin, 2 cloves, 1 tablespoon vinegar, and salt and pepper to taste. Cover and simmer over low heat for about 30 minutes, or until the chicken is barely tender. If more liquid is needed, add a little chicken stock. Lift out the chicken pieces onto a plate or dish. Remove and discard the scallions, bay leaf, and cloves. Strain the liquid and reserve the solids. Make up the quantity of liquid to 4 cups. Pour the liquid into the casserole, add 2 cups long-grain rice and the reserved vegetables, stir to mix, and bring to a boil. Arrange the chicken pieces on top of the rice, cover, and cook over low heat until the rice is tender and all the liquid absorbed, about 20 minutes. Serves 4 to 6.

Variation: The Dominican Republic has its own, very attractive *Arroz con Pollo*. In this version the chicken is marinated in a mixture containing hot pepper, and the marinade

later mixed with the rice. Put a 2- to 2½-pound chicken, cut into serving pieces, into a bowl with 2 cloves garlic, crushed, 1 medium onion, finely chopped, 1 tablespoon parsley, chopped, 1 bay leaf, crumbled, 1 fresh hot red or green pepper, seeded and finely chopped, salt and freshly ground pepper to taste, and 2 tablespoons vinegar, and let it stand for about an hour. Some cooks like to add 2 ounces cubed boiled ham to the chicken. Lift the chicken pieces out of the marinade and pat them dry with paper towels. Reserve the marinade. Heat 4 tablespoons vegetable oil or lard in a heavy casserole and fry the chicken pieces until they are golden on both sides. Add the reserved marinade and cook for a minute or two. Add 2 cups rice and stir into the oil and vegetable mixture. Cook for 2 or 3 minutes. Pour in 4 cups chicken stock or water mixed with 2 tablespoons tomato purée and bring to a boil over fairly high heat. Cover and cook over low heat until the chicken and rice are both tender and all the liquid absorbed, about 30 minutes. Add ½ cup pimiento-stuffed green olives, sliced, 1 tablespoon capers, ½ cup cooked green peas or cut green beans, and 1 or 2 pimientos, cut into strips. Cook just long enough to heat through and serve from the casserole. Serves 4.

Variation: From Mexico I have a family recipe for *Arroz con Pollo* given me by my husband's maternal grandmother, Doña Carmen Sarabia de Tinoco. She was a fabulous cook and when she made *tamales del norte* (tamales, northern style) for a party, all the world scrambled for an invitation. I think it is a dreadful pity that grandmothers are usually so much older than their granddaughters-in-law. I could have learned so much more from a very wonderful teacher. Her recipe is interesting for having both saffron and hot peppers.

For Mexican chicken with rice, season a 3- to 3½-pound chicken, cut into serving pieces, with salt and pepper. Heat 3 tablespoons olive oil in a skillet and sauté the chicken pieces until they are golden on both sides. Put the chicken pieces into an earthenware casserole heavy enough to go on direct heat, or any heavy casserole. In the oil remaining in the skillet sauté 1 medium onion, finely chopped, and 2 cloves garlic, chopped, until the onion is soft. Add to the chicken. Add 4 medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped, 1 or 2 canned *jalapeño* chilies, seeded and chopped, ¼ teaspoon ground cumin, and ⅛ teaspoon saffron, crumbled. Pour in 3 cups chicken stock or water, or enough to cover the chicken. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat to low, cover, and simmer gently for 30 minutes. Lift out and set aside the chicken pieces and measure the stock. Make up the quantity to 4 cups. In the oil remaining in the skillet sauté 2 cups rice until the rice grains are well coated. Do not let the rice brown. Add the rice to the casserole, pour in the stock, and stir to mix. Bring to a boil, add the chicken pieces, reduce the heat, cover, and cook over very low heat until the rice is tender and all the liquid absorbed. Garnish with 2 pimientos, cut into strips. Serve directly from the casserole.

Two ounces of dry sherry may, with advantage, be poured over the chicken and rice at the end of the cooking and the dish cooked for a minute or two longer. *The jalapeño* chilies may be left out, if preferred. Serves 4 to 6.



Pollo Escabechado

Pickled Chicken

CHILE

In this recipe the chicken literally stews in the oil, which is poured or spooned off the sauce at the end of the cooking time. It makes for a very delicate, moist, and tender bird. Though the name of the dish translates as pickled chicken, the small amount of vinegar used leaves just a pleasant echo on the palate. Since the chicken is served cold, it is done ahead of time, which makes it perfect for a family meal in summer. It is an attractive dish in its pale, translucent jelly, lovely for a cold buffet accompanied by salads such as *Ensalada de Aguacate* (Avocado Salad), *Ensalada de Habas* (Fresh Broad Bean Salad), or *Ensalada de Verduras* (Vegetable Salad).

Serves 6 to 8

4-pound roasting chicken, cut into serving pieces

cup vegetable oil

cup white wine vinegar

teaspoon salt

peppercorns

bay leaf

medium onions, thinly sliced

carrots, scraped and thinly sliced

Place all the ingredients in a large kettle or heavy casserole, cover, and cook over very low heat until the chicken is tender, about 1½ hours. Allow to cool. Place the chicken pieces on a serving platter with the vegetables arranged around them. Remove and discard the peppercorns and bay leaf. Pour the liquid in the casserole into a bowl, then spoon off all the oil (it is easier to do it this way). Save the oil, incidentally, for sautéing other meats and poultry. Pour the stock over the chicken pieces and refrigerate. The liquid will set into an aspic. If a firmer jelly is preferred, add to the stock ½ tablespoon unflavored gelatin softened in water and stir to dissolve, over low heat, before pouring it over the chicken. In very hot weather I find this is sometimes necessary. If any oil escapes being spooned off, it will separate out when the jelly sets. Just tip the dish and pour it off, or remove it with a piece of blotting paper or paper towel.

To serve, decorate a platter with lettuce leaves, sliced tomatoes, cooked green peas and beans, and sliced pimiento or other suitable vegetables such as artichoke hearts.

Variation: *Pollo a la Paisana* (Country Chicken), also from Chile, can, I suppose, be

considered a variation of *Pollo Escabechado* (Pickled Chicken) though it is served hot not cold and is a much simpler dish. It is in fact simplicity itself and is most useful when one is both busy and hungry for delectable food. The chicken emerges from the pot wonderfully moist and tender and with a subtle flavor that the cook can vary by the use of different vinegars. Tarragon vinegar and Japanese rice vinegar both spring to mind and I have used them with great success, though I doubt whether Japanese rice vinegar is a commonplace in Chile. I claim cook's privileges for this departure from strict tradition.

For *Pollo a la Paisana* (Country Chicken), cut a 3½- to 4-pound chicken into serving pieces and put it into a heavy earthenware or enameled cast iron casserole with 4 scallions, cut into 1-inch pieces and using both white and green parts, 4 cloves garlic, left whole, salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste, 1 or 2 sprigs parsley, 6 tablespoons olive oil, and 2 tablespoons vinegar. Cover and cook over very low heat until the chicken is tender, 45 minutes to 1 hour. Serve with either shoestring potatoes or French fries and a lettuce or watercress salad or a green vegetable. Serves 4 to 6.

TURKEY

Pavo Relleno

Stuffed Turkey

MEXICO

Until recently when industrialization brought gas and electric stoves into the kitchens of Mexico to replace the charcoal stoves of the past, there was very little oven cooking done, except for the baking of breads and cakes. This roast turkey with its hearty meat stuffing is an exception. I was a little taken aback the first time I encountered it; it seemed such a double richness, meat and bird. But I very soon adopted it with enthusiasm, for it is delicious. In Mexico the bird would be served with a garnish of chopped lettuce, sliced tomatoes, and avocado, in oil and vinegar dressing, and olives and radish roses, but I prefer these garnishes served separately as a salad.

Serves 6 to 8

recipe Picadillo (Seasoned Chopped Beef), [this page](#)

6- to 8-pound turkey, ready to cook

utter

cup dry white wine

tablespoons flour

lt, freshly ground pepper

Make the *Picadillo* stuffing and allow it to cool. Fill the cavities of the bird with the stuffing and close them with skewers. Truss the bird and place it breast side up on a rack in a roasting pan. Have ready a double thickness of cheesecloth large enough to cover the bird. Soak it in melted butter and drape it over the bird. Roast in a preheated moderately slow

(325° F.) oven for 2 to 2½ hours, or until the bird is done, basting through the cheesecloth several times with pan drippings or melted butter. While the bird is roasting, make a stock by covering the neck, giblets, and liver with water and 1 cup white wine and simmer 45 minutes to 1 hour. Remove the cheesecloth 30 minutes before the bird is done so that it will brown, basting twice during this period. Lift the bird onto a platter and remove the trussing strings and skewers. Let it rest 15 minutes before carving. Skim all but 3 tablespoons of fat from the roasting pan and stir in the flour, blending thoroughly over moderate heat. Stir in 1 cup of the stock and blend well, adding a little more if the gravy is too thick. Season to taste with salt and pepper and serve separately in a sauceboat.

Variation: For another popular stuffing, substitute 2 pounds ground pork for the beef. Omit the oregano and thyme and add ⅛ teaspoon of cloves and half that amount of ground cinnamon. Ground cumin (⅛ teaspoon) may be added to either stuffing. This spice is very popular in Mexican cooking and I find it makes a pleasant change.



Pavita Rellena a la Criolla

Hen Turkey with Creole Stuffing

ARGENTINA

Quinces, when they are available, may be used instead of peaches in this delicious turkey stuffing.

Serves 10 to 12

slices firm white bread

ilk

tablespoons butter

medium onion, finely chopped

pounds sausage meat

bay leaf, crumbled

teaspoon oregano

tablespoon parsley, finely chopped

hardboiled eggs, finely chopped

tablespoons pitted green olives, chopped

cups pitted, peeled, and chopped peaches

lt, freshly ground pepper

eggs, lightly beaten

10- to 12-pound turkey, preferably a hen turkey

ive oil

butter for basting

Soak the bread in milk, squeeze out, and fluff. In a saucepan heat the butter and sauté the onion until it is golden. Add the sausage meat and cook until it has lost all its color, mashing with a fork to break it up. Remove the saucepan from the heat. Add the bread, herbs, hardboiled eggs, olives, and peaches. Season to taste with salt and a generous amount of pepper. Stir in the lightly beaten eggs. Stuff the bird with the mixture and truss it in the usual way. Rub the bird all over with olive oil and bake in a preheated moderate (325° F.) oven for 3 to 3½ hours, or until it is done. Baste every 30 minutes with ½ cup melted butter and when this is used up, the drippings in the pan. If necessary, use a little more butter. If any dressing is left over, bake it separately in a foil-covered container. If liked, make a gravy by simmering the giblets and neck in water to make 3 cups of stock, stir 4 tablespoons flour into 4 tablespoons fat from the roasting pan, add the stock, and cook, stirring, until the gravy is thickened.

Pavo Guisado

Turkey Stew, Dominican Style

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Perhaps because it remained out of the mainstream, the cooking of the Dominican Republic has preserved some of the best dishes of the Spanish colonial period, when indigenous and introduced foods combined very happily in the stewpot.

Serves 8 to 10

1 8- to 8½-pound turkey, cut into serving pieces

cloves garlic, crushed

lt, freshly ground pepper

tablespoons red wine vinegar

cup vegetable oil

cup tomato purée

green bell pepper, seeded and chopped

! small pitted green olives

tablespoons capers

pounds potatoes, peeled and sliced

pound fresh peas, shelled, or a 10-ounce package frozen peas, thawed

Season the turkey pieces with the garlic, salt and pepper to taste, and the vinegar. Leave for 1 hour at room temperature. Heat the oil in a heavy casserole or Dutch oven large enough to hold the turkey pieces comfortably. Pat the turkey dry with paper towels, and

reserve any marinade that remains. Sauté the turkey pieces, two or three at a time, until lightly browned on both sides. Arrange the turkey in the casserole and add the marinade. Add the tomato purée, the bell pepper, and enough water to cover. Cover and simmer over moderate heat for 1 hour. Add the olives, capers, and potatoes, and cook for 20 minutes longer. Add the peas, and cook for about 10 minutes longer, or until both the turkey and vegetables are tender. If using frozen peas, add only for the last 5 minutes of cooking. To serve arrange the turkey pieces on a warmed serving platter and surround with the potatoes. If the liquid is very abundant, reduce it over brisk heat and pour over the turkey.

MOLE DISHES

Turkey or Chicken

Mole Poblano de Guajalote

Turkey in Chili and Chocolate Sauce

MEXICO

This is Mexico's most famous dish and though it is native to the state of Puebla, it is served all over the republic on truly festive occasions. It can be absolutely sensational for a party when served with tortillas, Mexican rice and beans, and *Guacamole* (Avocado Sauce). I always put a small bowl of canned *serrano* or *jalapeño* chilies on the table for the bold souls who claim no dish is hot enough for them. Actually *Mole Poblano* is not hot though I have come across versions of it where a *chipotle* chili or two had been added, introducing both heat and this chili's very exotic flavor. For a more everyday dish, chicken or pork may be used instead of turkey.

There is a charming but apocryphal legend, that a group of nuns at the convent of Santa Rosa in Puebla invented the dish in early colonial times to honor a visiting viceroy and archbishop. But, in fact, it had long been a royal dish of the Aztec court; since it contained chocolate, it was forbidden to women, and among men it was reserved for royalty, the military nobility, and the higher ranks of the priesthood. It is on record that the Spanish conquistador Hernán Cortés was served a version of the dish at the court of Aztec Emperor Moctezuma. All the same I do think we owe the sisters a debt. They recorded the recipe, which might otherwise have been lost, and they substituted familiar ingredients for some of the more exotic herbs and spices used in the emperor's day. I'd be prepared to swear that in the past allspice (a native spice) was used instead of cloves and cinnamon brought by Spain from the East, but since the flavor is much the same, why fuss?

Since *mole*, which comes from the Nahuatl word *molli*, means a sauce made from any of the chilies, hot, pungent, or sweet, there are more *moles* in Mexico than one can count. Out of the innumerable array, I have chosen this one and some of the *moles* from the state of Oaxaca, where I am always aware of the mysteries of the past and where the cooking of today brings the past very much to life.

Serves 10

1 8-pound turkey, cut into serving pieces

medium onion, chopped
cloves garlic, chopped
lt
tablespoons lard

FOR THE SAUCE

ancho chilies
mulato chilies
pasilla chilies
medium onions, chopped
cloves garlic, chopped
medium tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped
tortillas, or 2 slices toast, cut up
cup blanch ed almonds
cup peanuts
cup raisins
tablespoons sesame seeds
teaspoon ground coriander seed
teaspoon ground anise
whole cloves
½-inch piece of stick cinnamon
½ cup lard, about
½ squares (1½ ounces) unsweetened chocolate
lt, freshly ground pepper
tablespoon sugar (optional)

Put the turkey pieces into a large heavy saucepan or casserole with the onion, garlic, and water to cover. Season with salt, bring to a boil, lower the heat, and simmer, covered, for 1 hour, or until the turkey is barely tender. Drain off and reserve the turkey stock. Lift out the turkey pieces and pat them dry with paper towels. Heat the lard in a large skillet and sauté the turkey pieces until they are lightly browned on both sides. Set them aside.

To make the sauce, remove the stems and seeds from the *ancho*, *mulato*, and *pasilla* chilies. Tear them into pieces, put them in a bowl, and pour hot water over them barely to cover, about 2 cups. Let them stand for 30 minutes, turning the pieces from time to time. In a blender or food processor combine the chilies and the water in which they have soaked with the onions, garlic, tomatoes, and tortillas or toast, and blend the mixture until it forms a paste. Do this in two lots if necessary. Transfer the paste to a bowl. Rinse out and dry the container of the blender or food processor and add the almonds, peanuts, raisins, 2

tablespoons of the sesame seeds, the coriander seed, the anise, the cloves, and the cinnamon stick, broken up, and blend the mixture well. Mix thoroughly with the chili paste. Measure the lard left in the skillet from sautéing the turkey and add enough to bring the quantity up to 4 tablespoons. Add the chili paste and sauté over moderate heat, stirring, for 5 minutes. Transfer the mixture to the saucepan or casserole in which the turkey was cooked. Stir in 2 cups of the reserved turkey stock and the chocolate, cut into pieces. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Cook the mixture over low heat, stirring until the chocolate is melted and adding more turkey stock if necessary to make the sauce the consistency of heavy cream. Stir in the sugar, if liked. Add the turkey and simmer it, covered, for 30 minutes. Arrange the turkey and sauce in a serving dish. In a small skillet toast the remaining sesame seeds and sprinkle them over the turkey. Serve with Tortillas, *Arroz Blanco*, *Frijoles*, and *Guacamole*.

For an authentic Mexican fiesta meal, start with *Seviche de Sierra* (Mackerel Marinated in Lime Juice) and finish with *Chongos Zamoranos* (Custard Squares in Syrup).

Mole Negro Oaxaqueño

Chicken in Chili Sauce, Oaxaca Style

MEXICO

Though *Mole Poblano de Guajalote* (Turkey in Chili and Chocolate Sauce) is probably the most famous of all Mexican dishes, *mole* Oaxaca style is not far behind. Traditionally made with a hen turkey (*pípila*) weighing about 8 pounds, it is equally good with chicken, which I have used here. These are both very old dishes, served at pre-Conquest courts to emperors and kings. They are essentially royal dishes because of the chocolate, and they have obviously been modified since colonial times, using some ingredients not available before the Conquest — peppercorns, cinnamon, cloves, and almonds, for example. The chilies used in the Oaxacan *mole* include *chilhuacle*, a rather bitter pepper that gives the dish a very dark color. This is not available here and I have found *guajillo* chili, which is available, a very good substitute from the point of view of flavor, though the color is lighter. This is a very good party dish especially as the sauce is improved by being made a day ahead.

Serves 8

4 3½-pound chickens, cut into serving pieces

2 cups chicken stock

1½ cups guajillo chilies (about 2 ounces)

1 cup ancho chilies

1 cup pasilla chilies

1 medium onion, chopped

2 cloves garlic, chopped

1 medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped

1 cup dried apricots, soaked and chopped

1 cup almonds, ground

cup peanuts, ground
tablespoons sesame seeds
slices French bread or firm white bread, fried in lard or vegetable oil
teaspoon ground cloves, or 2 whole cloves
peppercorns
teaspoon thyme
teaspoon oregano
teaspoon ground cinnamon, or a small piece of stick cinnamon
tablespoons lard or vegetable oil
squares (2 ounces) unsweetened chocolate
or 2 avocado leaves (optional)
lt

Put the chicken pieces in a large flameproof casserole or saucepan and pour in enough chicken stock to cover. Bring the stock to a simmer, cover, and cook over low heat for 30 minutes. Set aside.

Shake the seeds out of the chilies, rinse them, and tear them into pieces. Put them in a bowl with 1 cup warm water, using a little more water if necessary. Let them soak for 1 hour, turning them from time to time. Combine the chilies, onion, garlic, tomatoes, apricots, almonds, peanuts, 1 tablespoon of the sesame seeds, the bread, broken into pieces, the cloves, peppercorns, thyme, oregano, and cinnamon, and reduce to a purée, bit by bit, in a blender or food processor. Heat the lard or oil in a large skillet and add the purée, which should be quite thick. Fry the mixture, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon as it tends to splatter, for 5 minutes.

Lift the chicken pieces out of the casserole or saucepan and set them aside in a dish. Pour out and measure the stock. Rinse out the saucepan or casserole and pour in the chili mixture. Stir in 3 cups of the chicken stock and the chocolate. Drop the avocado leaves briefly into boiling water and add to the saucepan. Season to taste with salt. Stir over low heat until the chocolate has melted. The sauce should be rather thicker than heavy cream; if it is too thick, add a little more chicken stock. Add the chicken pieces, cover, and simmer over very low heat for 30 minutes, or until the chicken is tender. Remove the avocado leaves. Put the chicken pieces and the sauce in a large serving dish. Toast the remaining sesame seeds in a skillet over moderate heat until they begin to pop, a minute or two, and sprinkle them over the *mole*. Serve with *Arroz Blanco* (White Rice), *Frijoles* (Beans), *Guacamole*, and Tortillas.

Variation: If using a turkey, cut an 8-pound bird into serving pieces and put into a large saucepan or kettle with water to cover. Season with salt, bring to a boil, reduce the heat, and simmer gently, covered, for 1 hour. Drain and pat dry with paper towels. Use the turkey broth to thin the chili mixture. Heat 4 tablespoons lard or vegetable oil in a skillet and sauté the turkey pieces until they are browned on both sides. Add them to the chili

sauce and simmer over very low heat, covered, until the turkey is tender, about 30 minutes.

Variation: Cut 3 pounds lean, boneless pork into 2-inch pieces and put into a saucepan with water barely to cover. Season with salt and simmer gently, covered, for 1 hour. Drain. Use the pork broth to thin the chili mixture. Add the pork to the sauce and simmer gently, covered, until the pork is tender, about 30 minutes.

Mole Amarillo

Chicken in Yellow Sauce

MEXICO

Serves 6

3½- to 4-pound chicken, cut into serving pieces

cloves garlic

canned large chilies, or use any fresh hot light green pepper, seeded

tablespoons lard or vegetable oil

medium onion, chopped

medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped

teaspoon oregano

teaspoon ground cumin

lt, freshly ground pepper

ound zucchini, sliced

ound green beans, cut into 1-inch pieces

asa harina

Put the chicken into a saucepan with 2 of the cloves of garlic, crushed, and water barely to cover. Bring to a boil, lower the heat, cover, and simmer until the pork is tender, about 2 hours. Put the chilies into a blender or food processor and reduce them to a purée. If necessary add a tablespoon of the chicken stock. Heat the lard or oil in a skillet and sauté the chili purée, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, for 3 or 4 minutes. Put the remaining 2 cloves garlic, the onion, and tomatoes in a blender or food processor and reduce them to a purée. Pour the mixture into the skillet with the chili and cook, stirring from time to time, until the mixture is thick and well blended, 3 or 4 minutes. Drain the pork but leave the meat in the saucepan. Pour 2 cups of the stock into the skillet, stir to mix, season with the oregano, cumin, salt and pepper, and pour the mixture over the pork. Cook the zucchini (about 8 minutes) and the beans (about 10 to 15 minutes) separately in boiling salted water, drain them, and add to the saucepan. Simmer over very low heat for 10 to 15 minutes to blend the flavors. I like to thicken the sauce with a little *masa harina* (tortilla flour) if it seems too thin; mix a tablespoon of the flour with a little of the stock and stir it into the saucepan and cook for a minute or so longer. Serve with rice.

Variation: Instead of the large chilies use 6 *guajillo* chilies. Shake out the seeds and soak the chilies in ½ cup warm water for 30 minutes, then purée in the blender or food processor in the soaking water. Sauté the chili purée in the lard or oil. Instead of the tomatoes, use two 10-ounce cans Mexican green tomatoes, drained and puréed in a blender with 2 medium romaine lettuce leaves. The red tomatoes and green peppers give a yellow sauce, and here the green tomatoes and red peppers give the same color result though with a subtly different flavor. If liked, chayotes may be used instead of zucchini.

Variation: 3 pounds boneless pork, loin or shoulder, cut into 1-inch pieces may be used instead of chicken.

Variation: Traditionally *chochoyotes* are added to the stew in the last few minutes of cooking. These are small balls made by mixing 1½ cups *masa harina* (tortilla flour) with a little salt and 4 tablespoons lard with just enough water to hold them together. A little dent is made in each of the balls, which are about 1 inch in diameter. But I do not think these can be made successfully with the dried, packaged flour. The fresh, moist dough sold in local markets is what is needed. Oaxaca in Mexico is known as the land of the seven *moles*. The dishes are distinguished by color. There is *mole negro* (black sauce), perhaps the most famous, as well as yellow, red, light red, green, and two others, *mancha manteles* (tablecloth stainer) and *chichilo*, made with the distinctive local chili, *chilhuacle*, which is also used in the *mole negro*. Versions of *mancha manteles* turn up all over the republic, but the others are exclusively Oaxacan. Not all of them can be reproduced faithfully outside Oaxaca, but some can and I have included them here: *negro*, *verde*, *amarillo*, and *coloradito*.



Mole Verde de Oaxaca

Chicken in Green Sauce, Oaxaca Style

MEXICO

Serves 6

cup Great Northern, Navy, pea beans, or lima beans

lt

medium onion, finely chopped

cloves garlic, chopped

10-ounce can Mexican green tomatoes, drained

canned jalapeño chili, or 2 canned serrano chilies, rinsed and chopped
tablespoons lard or vegetable oil
pound boneless pork loin, cut into 1-inch cubes
cups chicken stock or water, about
3- to 3½-pound chicken, cut into serving pieces
cup parsley sprigs, fairly tightly packed
cup fresh coriander leaves, fairly tightly packed
tablespoons masa harina

Pick over and rinse the beans. Put them into a saucepan with cold water to cover, put the lid on, and bring to a boil over moderate heat. Let stand 35 to 40 minutes off the heat, covered. Drain, rinse, and put on to cook with cold water to cover. Simmer the beans, covered, until they are tender, about 1 hour. Season with salt to taste in the last 30 minutes of cooking. Drain, reserve the cooking liquid, and set the beans aside.

In a blender or food processor combine the onion, garlic, Mexican green tomatoes, and chilies, and reduce to a purée. In a skillet heat the lard or vegetable oil and sauté the tomato mixture for 3 or 4 minutes. Pour the mixture into a saucepan and add the reserved cooking liquid from the beans. Add the pork loin and a little chicken stock or water, if necessary, to cover. Cover and simmer for 1 hour. At the end of this time, add the chicken, and a little more stock, if necessary. Continue cooking until both chicken and pork are tender, about 1 hour. Add the cooked beans and simmer just long enough to heat them through.

Put the parsley and coriander into a blender or food processor with a little stock if necessary and reduce to a purée. Stir into the saucepan and cook without letting the mixture return to a boil for a minute or so. If the mixture boils, the sauce will lose its fresh green color. If the sauce is too thin, thicken with the *masa harina* mixed with a little stock. Serve with rice and *guacamole*.



Variation: Sometimes when Mexican green tomatoes are hard to find I have used a 7-ounce can of *Salsa Verde Mexicana* (Green Mexican Sauce) put up by Herdez. In this case, I omit the onion, garlic, green tomatoes, and chilies. The sauce does contain coriander (cilantro) but I do not find I need to alter the amount of fresh coriander. If liked, ½ pound cooked green beans and/or cooked, sliced zucchini may be added to the finished *mole*. I have a trick I sometimes use to make sure of the bright green color of the green dishes. Purée 2 or 3 leaves of romaine lettuce with the parsley and coriander if the color seems at all pallid. The lettuce also slightly thickens the sauce but does not alter the flavor to any perceptible extent.

Mole Coloradito de Oaxaca

Chicken in Red Sauce, Oaxaca Style

MEXICO

Serves 4 to 6

3½- to 4-pound chicken, cut into serving pieces
cups chicken stock, about
ancho chilies
medium onion, chopped
clove garlic, chopped
medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped
teaspoon cinnamon
teaspoon oregano
tablespoons sesame seeds, toasted and ground
tablespoons lard or vegetable oil
lt, freshly ground pepper

Put the chicken pieces into a large saucepan or heatproof casserole and pour in enough chicken stock to cover. Bring to a boil, lower the heat, cover, and simmer gently until the chicken is tender, about 45 minutes. Lift out the chicken pieces and set aside. Pour the stock into a container and set aside. Rinse out and dry the saucepan or casserole.

Pull off the stems and shake out the seeds of the *ancho* chilies. Tear the chilies into pieces, put them into a bowl with ½ cup warm water, and soak, turning them from time to time, for about 1 hour. Transfer the soaked chilies and any liquid to a blender or food processor. Add the onion, garlic, tomatoes, cinnamon, oregano, and sesame seeds and reduce to a coarse purée. Heat the lard or oil in a skillet and add the purée. Sauté, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, until the mixture is thick and heavy, about 5 minutes. Turn the chili mixture into the casserole and stir in 2 cups of the reserved stock. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Add the chicken pieces and simmer, uncovered, until the chicken is heated through and the sauce slightly thickened. Serve with rice, tortillas, *guacamole*, and beans.

Variation: Pork may also be used for this *mole*. Instead of the chicken, use 3 pounds boneless pork loin, cut into 1-inch cubes, and cook, with 2 or 3 large cloves garlic, in water barely to cover until tender, about 2 hours. Strain the stock before using it for the sauce.

Many cooks in Oaxaca like to add an avocado leaf or two to the sauce in its final simmering. The leaves may be toasted lightly before they are added. They are discarded, like a bouquet garni, before the dish is served.

Variation: There is a pleasant vegetarian version of this *mole*. Instead of chicken or pork, add to the sauce ½ pound each cooked, cut-up potatoes, green beans, and peas. Any other

vegetables such as zucchini, chayote, or cauliflower may be added. I particularly like cooked green bananas with this *mole* instead of rice. Choose very green (unripe) bananas and cut through the skin lengthwise in 2 or 3 places to peel off the skin. Boil the bananas in salted water for 10 to 15 minutes, or until tender, drain and add them to the vegetarian *mole*, or serve as a side dish.

DUCK

Arroz con Pato

Duckling with Rice

PERU

It is not surprising that this is Peru's favorite duckling dish. The coriander and cumin unite in a most subtle way with the dark beer in which the rice is cooked, and the rich flavor of the duckling permeates the whole.

Serves 6

4½- to 5-pound duckling, cut into 6 serving pieces

vegetable oil

large onion, finely chopped

fresh hot red or green peppers, seeded, coarsely chopped, and puréed in a blender or food processor

large cloves garlic, crushed

GARNISH

sliced tomatoes and fresh hot peppers, seeded and cut into flower shapes

tablespoons fresh coriander (cilantro), chopped

teaspoon ground cumin

lt, freshly ground pepper

cups chicken stock, about

cups long-grain rice

cups dark beer

cup cooked green peas

Prick the skin of the duckling all over with the tines of a fork. Film the bottom of a heavy skillet with a small amount of oil and sauté the duckling pieces — about 10 to 15 minutes — until they are lightly browned all over in their own fat, which will run out during the cooking. Transfer the duckling pieces to a heavy casserole. Pour off all but 3 tablespoons of fat from the skillet in which the duckling was browned, and in the remaining fat sauté the

onion, peppers, and garlic until the onion is golden. Add the vegetables to the casserole with the coriander, cumin, salt and pepper to taste, and the chicken stock, which should just cover the duckling pieces. Add a little more if necessary. Cover and simmer over low heat until the duckling is almost done, about 45 minutes. Drain off the stock and measure it. Add the rice to the casserole with 2 cups of the stock and the dark beer. Cover, bring to a boil, reduce the heat to low, and cook until the rice is tender and quite dry. Fold in the peas. Serve hot on a large platter garnished with tomato slices and fresh hot peppers.

Pato al Vino

Duckling in Wine

COLOMBIA

Spices from the New and Old Worlds — allspice, cinnamon, and cloves — combine to give this duckling a full, rich flavor. It may be cooked on top of the stove, but I find it much more satisfactory to use the oven as do many modern Latin Americans.

Serves 3 to 4

4½ to 5-pound duckling

1/2 lb, freshly ground pepper

4 tablespoons butter

2 large onions, finely chopped

1 bay leaf

4 whole cloves

1-inch piece of stick cinnamon

1/2 cup allspice berries

1/2 cup whole fresh hot red or green pepper

1/2 cup dry red wine

1/2 cup duck stock, made by simmering giblets, neck, and liver for 1 hour

Pull the loose fat from inside the duckling and prick the bird all over with a fork to help release the excess fat. Season inside and out with salt and pepper. Heat the butter in a heavy casserole and sauté the duckling until it is golden brown all over. Lift out and set aside. Spoon off all but 4 tablespoons fat from the casserole. Add the onions and sauté until soft. Return the duckling to the casserole. Tie the bay leaf, cloves, cinnamon, allspice berries, and hot pepper in a square of cheesecloth and add to the casserole with the red wine and duck stock. Season to taste with more salt and pepper if necessary and bring to a boil on top of the stove. Cover with aluminum foil, then with the casserole lid, and cook in a preheated moderate (350° F.) oven for 1½ hours, or until the duckling is tender. Lift out onto a serving platter and keep warm. Remove and discard the cheesecloth bag. Spoon excess fat from the sauce, and if it is very abundant reduce it over brisk heat for a few minutes. Spoon a little sauce over the duckling and serve the rest separately. Serve with *Arroz con Coco y Pasas* (Rice with Coconut and Raisins) and a green salad.

Variation: *Pato Borracho* (Drunken Duckling) is a popular duck dish all over Latin America. Cook as for *Pato al Vino* but use white wine instead of red. Omit the cloves, cinnamon, allspice, and hot pepper, and use instead a bouquet garni of parsley and thyme tied in a cheesecloth square with the bay leaf. Add 3 cloves of chopped garlic to the onions, and when they are soft, add 4 tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped.

Variation: *Pato com Ameixas* (Duckling with Prunes), from Brazil, is a full-flavored, robust dish. Cook as for *Pato al Vino* but omit the cloves, cinnamon, allspice berries, and hot pepper. When sautéing the onions, add 2 cloves garlic, chopped. When the onions are soft, add 3 large tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped, and ½ teaspoon thyme. Instead of 1 cup dry red wine, add 2 cups dry white wine and the cup of duck stock, and 1½ cups pitted prunes, quartered. Just before serving stir in ¼ cup dry Madeira.

Pato en Jugo de Naranja

Duck in Orange Juice

MEXICO

This is a very old colonial dish that has remained popular, with slight variations, throughout Latin America, though it seems to have originated in Mexico. I have chosen a modern version where the duck is braised in the oven, instead of on top of the stove.

Serves 4

duckling weighing about 4 pounds

tablespoons butter

medium onion, finely chopped

cloves garlic, chopped

medium tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped, about 1 cup pulp

teaspoon thyme

teaspoon marjoram

bay leaf

cup raisins

tablespoon white wine vinegar

cup orange juice

cup toasted, slivered almonds

Pull out the loose fat from inside the duckling and prick the bird all over with a fork to help release the excess fat. Heat the butter in a large skillet and brown the duckling lightly all over. Transfer the duckling to a flameproof casserole large enough to hold it comfortably. Spoon off all but 2 tablespoons of fat from the skillet and sauté the onion and garlic until the onion is soft. Add to the casserole with all the remaining ingredients except the almonds. Add the duck giblets to enrich the sauce. Bring the liquid in the casserole to a boil

on top of the stove. Cover the casserole with foil, then with the lid, and cook in a preheated moderate (325° F.) oven for 1½ hours, or until the duckling is tender. Lift the bird out and carve it. Put it onto a serving platter and keep warm. Spoon off the fat from the sauce, take out and discard the giblets and bay leaf. If the sauce is very abundant, reduce it over brisk heat for a few minutes. Spoon a little of the sauce over the duckling and sprinkle with the almonds. Pour the rest of the sauce into a sauceboat and serve separately with rice and green peas or green beans.

SQUAB

Latin America has a marvelous way with pigeons (or what we call squab), which everyone loves. They range from the beautifully simple Mexican favorite *Pichones al Vino* (Squab with Wine) to the exotic *Pichones con Salsa de Camarones* (Squab in Shrimp Sauce) of Peru. They make an ideal dinner party dish, with each guest served a plumply elegant, full-flavored bird. You may also substitute fresh Rock Cornish game hens.

Pichones con Salsa de Camarones

Squab in Shrimp Sauce

PERU

The shrimp sauce turns this into an excitingly different dish, the apparently contradictory flavors deliciously complementing each other.

Serves 6

tablespoons clarified butter ([this page](#))

squab, each weighing about 8 ounces

medium onion, finely chopped

clove garlic, chopped

tablespoons flour

½ cups dry white wine

½ cups chicken stock

ch of nutmeg

lt, freshly ground pepper

pound raw shrimp, peeled and coarsely chopped

eggs, lightly beaten

tablespoons finely chopped fresh coriander

Heat the butter in a skillet and sauté the squab until they are golden on both sides. Transfer to a heavy casserole. In the butter remaining in the skillet sauté the onion and garlic until the onion is soft. Add the flour and cook, stirring, for a minute or two. Add the wine, stir, add the stock and the nutmeg, and simmer, stirring, until the mixture is smooth. Season to

taste with salt and pepper and pour over the squab. Cover the casserole with foil, then with the lid, and simmer over moderate heat until the squab are tender, about 1½ hours. Lift out the squab and arrange on a serving dish. Keep warm. Add the shrimp to the liquid in the casserole and cook for about 2 minutes. Then stir in the eggs and the coriander and cook, stirring, over low heat until the sauce is lightly thickened. Do not let the sauce boil once the eggs are added, as it will curdle. Spoon a little of the sauce over the squab and serve the rest separately in a sauceboat. Serve with white rice or boiled potatoes and a green vegetable or a salad.

Pichones al Vino

Squab with Wine

MEXICO

Dry sherry is sometimes used in this recipe and though it is pleasant I prefer the equally traditional dry red wine. Baked *boniato* (white sweet potato) is a splendid accompaniment.

Serves 4

squab, each weighing about 8 ounces

cloves garlic, chopped

scallions, trimmed and cut into 1¼-inch pieces, using both green and white parts

medium-sized carrots, scraped and thinly sliced

teaspoon thyme

teaspoon marjoram

teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

teaspoon ground allspice

whole clove

It

small fresh hot pepper, seeded and chopped

cup olive oil

tablespoons red wine vinegar

cup dry red wine or dry sherry

cup chicken stock, about

Arrange the squab in a flameproof casserole just large enough to hold them comfortably. Add all the ingredients except the chicken stock and mix well. Marinate in the refrigerator overnight, turning once or twice. When ready to cook, add the stock, using a little more if necessary barely to cover. Bring to a simmer on top of the stove, then cook, covered, in a preheated moderate (350° F.) oven until tender, about 1½ hours. Arrange the squab on a warmed serving dish, spoon a little of the sauce over them. Serve the rest of the sauce separately.

Pichones Saltados

Squab Stew

PERU

This is a deceptively simple dish, very easy to cook yet with a fine, rich flavor.

Serves 4

squab, each weighing about 8 ounces

lt, freshly ground pepper

cup olive oil

large onion, finely chopped

fresh hot red or green pepper, seeded and chopped

tablespoons flour

teaspoons sweet paprika

cup dry white wine

cup chicken stock

Season the squab inside and out with salt and pepper. Heat the oil in a flameproof casserole and sauté the squab over moderate heat until they are golden brown all over, about 15 minutes. Lift out and set aside. Add the onion and the hot pepper to the oil remaining in the casserole and sauté until the onion is soft. Stir in the flour and the paprika and cook, stirring, for a minute longer. Add the wine, stir to mix, then stir in the stock. Return the squab to the sauce, cover the casserole with a piece of foil, then with the lid, and simmer over low heat until the squab are tender, about 1½ hours. Lift out the squab onto a serving dish. Taste the sauce and add more salt and pepper if necessary. Pour a little sauce over the squab and serve the rest in a sauceboat. Serve with rice, mashed potatoes, or a purée of any starchy root vegetable such as sweet potato or yams, or with a purée of winter squash, and a green vegetable.



Pichones en Jugo de Naranja

Squab in Orange Juice

COLOMBIA

Orange juice and white wine combine to make a delicate sauce for the richness of the squab, a balancing of flavors that is typical of Colombian cooking.

Serves 6

tablespoons butter
squab, each weighing about 8 ounces
medium onion, finely chopped
cup dry white wine
cup orange juice
lt, freshly ground pepper
ch of cinnamon
teaspoons cornstarch

Heat the butter in a skillet and sauté the squab until golden brown all over. Transfer them to a heavy casserole. In the butter remaining in the skillet sauté the onion until it is soft. Pour in the wine and the orange juice, bring to a boil, and stir, scraping up all the brown bits. Season to taste with salt and pepper and add the cinnamon. Pour the mixture over the squab, cover, and simmer over low heat until the squab are tender, about 1½ hours. Transfer the squab to a serving dish and keep warm. Mix the cornstarch with a little cold water and stir into the casserole. Simmer, stirring, until the sauce is lightly thickened. If the sauce seems very abundant, reduce briskly over fairly high heat for a few minutes before adding the cornstarch. Serve with any root vegetable or rice and a green vegetable.



Substantial Dishes

Platillos Fuertes

Including Beans and Rice



There are a number of hearty dishes in the Latin American cuisine that combine fish, meat, or poultry with beans, rice, corn, potatoes, or other root vegetables. These once served as a course in a meal as soup or appetizers do now. To our modern appetites they are main dishes, so I have put them into a category of their own. I have included the festive dish *Feijoada Completa* (Black Beans with Mixed Meats) here because beans are such an important part of it. This is not a very sharply defined category but I think it is a useful one.

Feijoada Completa

Black Beans with Mixed Meats

BRAZIL

This exuberant mixture of black beans, meats, vegetables, and garnishes is Brazil's national dish. It was created in Rio de Janeiro but has now spread all over the country. It is magnificent for parties and well worth the work involved. And it is versatile as one can eliminate or substitute many of the meats if some are not available. Polish or Spanish sausage (*kielbasa* or *longaniza*) can substitute for *linguiça*, fresh pork hocks can be used instead of pig's feet, ears, and tail. Kale can be used for collard greens, and any fresh hot peppers can be used in the hot pepper sauce. To serve the *Feijoada*, the meats are sliced and arranged on one or more platters, the beans, which should be quite soupy with an almost saucelike consistency, are served in a tureen or large serving bowl with a soup ladle or generously sized serving spoon, and accompanied by *Arroz Brasileiro* (Brazilian Rice), *Couve a Mineira* (Kale or Collard Greens, Minas Gerais Style), *Farofa de Manteiga* (Cassava Meal with Butter) or *Farofa de Ouro* (Cassava Meal with Hardboiled Eggs), as well as 6 peeled and sliced oranges arranged in a serving dish, *Môlho de Pimenta e Limão* (Hot Pepper and Lime Sauce) and *Salada de Palmito* (Hearts of Palm Salad).

The table looks very splendid with this array of food. Guests put a serving of everything onto a single plate, then sprinkle *farofa* over the lot. The flavors blend delightfully, an orchestra of taste and texture. *Cachaça*, Brazilian rum, is traditionally served with *Feijoada* but to the uninitiated this can be traumatic. Ideally either *batidas* or *Caipirinhas*, two *cachaça* drinks made with lime or lemon juice, are served before the meal, and chilled beer

with it.

Brazilian friends say *Feijoada* should be eaten for Saturday lunch so that one may sleep it off. I've done that but I find I prefer *Feijoada* for dinner, or for a festive Sunday luncheon party. It is a truly international dish since the beans and hot peppers come originally from Mexico, the cassava (manioc) meal from pre-Portuguese Brazil, the meats and sausages from Europe by way of Portugal, and the cooking genius that put it all together from Africa.

An admirable dessert to accompany this feast is *Quindins de Yáyá* (Coconut Cupcake Dessert), which is deliciously rich and sweet.



Serves 10 to 12

pig's ears

pig's tail

lt

pig's feet, split

1-pound piece *carne seca* (sun-dried salted beef or jerked beef), see [this page](#)

3-pound smoked beef tongue

½-pound piece of lean bacon

cups black (turtle) beans

1-pound piece of lean beef chuck or bottom round

ound linguíça sausage (see [this page](#)), or use longaniza or kielbasa sausage

ound fresh pork sausages

tablespoons lard or vegetable oil

onions, finely chopped

cloves garlic, minced

tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped

fresh hot pepper, seeded and minced, or ⅓ teaspoon Tabasco (optional)

lt, freshly ground pepper

Two days ahead of time put the pig's ears and tail into a mixing bowl and sprinkle thoroughly with salt. Cover and refrigerate for 2 days. Lift out of the bowl, discard the liquid, and rinse the meats thoroughly in cold water. Put into a large saucepan with water to cover, bring to a boil, lower the heat, and simmer for 10 minutes. Drain. Set aside until ready to cook.

The night before put the pig's feet on to cook in cold water to cover and simmer, covered, for 1½ hours. Cool and refrigerate in a covered container in the cooking liquid until ready to use.

Also on the night before cut the jerked beef in half lengthwise. Put the jerked beef, the

beef tongue, and the bacon to soak overnight in cold water to cover. Start soaking early in the evening and change the water 2 or 3 times if possible. Thoroughly wash and pick over the beans and put them to soak in cold water to cover.

When ready to cook, allowing 4 hours for the actual cooking time, put the beans and their soaking liquid into a kettle or casserole large enough to hold all the ingredients. Drain and add the pig's feet. Reserve the jellied liquid from the pig's feet for some other time to make stock. Add enough cold water to cover by 2 inches. Bring to a boil, then simmer over low heat, covered, for 1½ hours.

While the beans are cooking, put the tongue, jerked beef, and bacon into a large saucepan with fresh cold water to cover, bring to a boil over moderate heat, then simmer, covered, over low heat for 1 hour. When the beans have cooked for 1½ hours, add the bacon and jerked beef to the bean pot but continue to simmer the tongue separately. At the same time add the fresh beef, pig's ears and tail to the beans. Add hot water as necessary to cover and simmer, covered, for 2 hours longer. By this time the tongue will be tender. Remove from the heat and allow to cool. As soon as it is cool enough to handle, peel it and remove any gristle and bones. Add the tongue to the beans with hot water if necessary to keep the beans covered. Stir the pot with a wooden spoon from time to time to prevent the beans from sticking.

Fill the pot in which the tongue was cooked with fresh water, bring to a boil, and add the *linguiça* (or its substitute) and the fresh pork sausages. Bring back to a boil and simmer for 1 minute. Drain and add the sausages to the beans, which by now will have been cooking for 3½ hours.*

Heat the lard or oil in a skillet and sauté the onions and garlic until the onions are soft. Add the tomatoes and the hot pepper or Tabasco, if liked, and simmer until the mixture is well blended. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Remove 1 cup of the cooked beans and add, smashing them into the sauce. Stir the mixture back into the beans and simmer for 15 minutes longer, or until the beans have been cooking for 4 hours. The beans should be very soft, almost falling apart. Lift out the meats and continue to simmer the beans, uncovered, over low heat. Remove any bones from the meats. Slice the pig's ears and tail into 4 or 5 pieces. Slice all the meats and arrange on a platter with the tongue in the center, its traditional position. Use two platters if necessary. Moisten the meats with a little bean liquid and keep warm. Pour the beans into a tureen or large serving bowl.



Tutú a Mineira

Black Beans. Minas Gerais Style

This is a sort of junior *Feijoada*, much simpler than that grand feast but nonetheless a hearty dish. It is really a dish of mashed beans and cassava (manioc) meal generously garnished with meat and eggs. It is a very old dish going back to the days of slavery and was a great favorite with small children. Somehow the infants, lisping the word *purée*, converted the sound into *tutú* and that is what it has been called ever since.

Serves 6

recipe Feijão Preto (Black Beans), [this page](#)

large eggs

$\frac{3}{4}$ -pound linguica, or similar sausage such as longaniza or kielbasa

tablespoon lard

slices bacon, chopped

medium onions, finely sliced

cup cassava (manioc) meal (farinha de mandioca)

Have ready the black beans, freshly cooked. Put the eggs into a large saucepan and boil them for 8 minutes. Shell under cold running water. Halve the eggs and set them aside. Put the sausage in a saucepan with cold water to cover and simmer for 30 minutes. Drain and cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch slices. Heat the lard in a skillet and sauté the sausage slices and bacon until the bacon is crisp. Transfer the sausage and bacon to a dish lined with paper towels and keep them warm. In the fat remaining in the skillet sauté the onions and keep them warm.

Put the beans into a large saucepan and mash over low heat. Stir in the cassava meal and cook, stirring, until the mixture has the consistency of rather heavy mashed potatoes, adding a little more cassava meal if necessary. Transfer the mashed beans to a deep, hot serving dish and pat them down lightly to an even layer. Pour the onion and bacon fat mixture over the beans. Arrange the sausage and bacon at opposite ends of the dish and put the hardboiled eggs in a row down the middle. Serve with *Couve a Mineira* (Kale, Minas Gerais Style) and, if liked, a hot pepper sauce.

Variation: Some cooks serve the *Tutú* with eggs fried in butter instead of hardboiled eggs. Roast pork, cut into small slices, may be substituted for the chopped bacon or the *Tutú* may be served with *Roupa Velha* (Old Clothes), a traditional Brazilian shredded beef dish.

Ocopa Arequipeña

Potatoes with Cheese, Walnut, and Hot Pepper Sauce

Having “invented” the potato, the Incas developed splendid recipes using this most versatile of all root vegetables. I am sure dishes like the *ocopas* and the *causas* are pre-Columbian, slightly changed, I think for the better, by food introduced by the Conquest —

walnuts, for example. In colonial times (and still today for a really traditional Peruvian meal), these were considered dishes to have before the main course. As far as I am concerned, they make a complete meal with the addition of a light dessert. They are very useful when one wants a vegetarian meal or something a little different made with fish or shrimp. In Peru *mirasol* pepper would be used. Hot dried red peppers are an excellent substitute.

Serves 6

hot red dried peppers, about 1½ to 2 inches long
cup peanut oil
medium onion, thickly sliced
cloves garlic, finely chopped
cup walnut meats, ground
pound Spanish fresh cheese (queso blanco or queso fresco), crumbled, or use grated Münster cheese
cup milk
teaspoon salt, or to taste
lettuce leaves
warm, freshly cooked medium potatoes, peeled and halved lengthwise
hardboiled eggs, halved lengthwise
black olives
strips of pimiento for garnish

Shake the seeds out of the peppers and put them to soak in ¼ cup hot water for 30 minutes. Drain and set aside. Heat the oil in a small skillet and sauté the onion and garlic over very low heat until the onion is golden. Put the oil, onion, garlic, hot peppers, walnut meats, and fresh cheese in a blender or food processor. Add the milk and salt and blend to a smooth sauce, about the consistency of a heavy mayonnaise. Add milk and oil in equal quantities to thin the sauce if necessary.

Arrange a bed of lettuce leaves on a large, warmed platter. Arrange the potatoes, cut side down, on top of the lettuce. Mask the potatoes with the sauce, then garnish the dish with the eggs, cut side up, the black olives, and the strips of pimiento.

Variation: For *Ocopa de Camarones* (Shrimp and Potatoes with Cheese, Walnut, and Hot Pepper Sauce), reduce the walnut meats to ½ cup and add to the blender or food processor ½ pound cooked, chopped shrimp. In addition garnish the platter with ¼ pound cooked, peeled shrimp, preferably medium-sized.

Papas a la Huancaína

Potatoes with Cheese and Hot Pepper Sauce

This is from Huancayo, in the Peruvian highlands at 11,000 feet. It is a typical highlands dish, very Indian, especially in the use of the local herb *palillo*, which colors food a bright yellow. Turmeric, used sparingly, is an admirable substitute.

Serves 8 as a first course, 4 as a light luncheon dish

cup lemon juice
teaspoon cayenne pepper
lt, freshly ground pepper
medium onion, thinly sliced
medium potatoes
cups coarsely chopped Spanish fresh cheese (queso blanco or queso fresco), or use Münster cheese
or more fresh hot yellow peppers, seeded and chopped, or use red or green peppers
teaspoon palillo, or ½ teaspoon turmeric
½ cups heavy cream
cup olive oil
lettuce leaves
hardboiled eggs, halved
or 3 ears of corn, cooked and cut into 8 slices
black olives

In a bowl combine the lemon juice, cayenne pepper, and salt and pepper to taste. Add the onion, separated into rings, and set it aside to pickle at room temperature.

Boil the potatoes in their skins until tender. Drain, peel, and keep warm. In a blender or food processor combine the cheese, hot peppers, *palillo* or turmeric, and the cream. Blend until smooth. Heat the oil in a skillet, pour in the cheese mixture, reduce the heat to low, and cook, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, until the sauce is smooth and creamy.

Garnish a platter with the lettuce leaves. Arrange the potatoes on the platter and pour the sauce over them. Arrange the eggs, corn slices, *and* olives around and in between the potatoes. Drain the onion rings and arrange them over the potatoes.

Causa a la Chiclayana

Potatoes with Fish and Vegetables

This is a very decorative dish and looks lovely on a buffet with lettuce leaves framing the serving platter and the mound of mashed potatoes garnished with strips of hot red pepper, onion rings, wedges of cheese, and black olives, in the center surrounded by the fried fish, sliced green bananas, corn, and slices of tropical root vegetables. The potatoes are transformed into something quite exciting with the vinaigrette dressing. It makes a hearty

and satisfying one-dish meal.

Serves 6

cup finely chopped onion

cup lemon juice

teaspoon cayenne pepper

lt, freshly ground pepper

pounds boiling potatoes, peeled and halved

½ cups olive oil plus 4 tablespoons

pound sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into 6 slices

pound cassava (yucca) root, peeled and cut into 6 slices

green plantains or green bananas

ears corn

our

pounds striped bass fillets, cut into 2-inch pieces, or any firm white fish

fresh hot red peppers, about 4 inches long, or use hot green peppers

medium onions, cut into ⅛-inch slices

cup white vinegar

ttuce leaves

pound Spanish fresh cheese (queso blanco or queso fresco) or Münster cheese, cut into 6 wedges

ttuce leaves

ack olives



In a small bowl combine the finely chopped onion, lemon juice, cayenne pepper, and salt and pepper to taste. Set aside. Cook the potatoes in salted water until they are tender, but not mushy. Drain well and mash. Add 1 cup of the olive oil to the onion and lemon juice. Pour this dressing over the potatoes, mixing thoroughly. Make a mound of the potatoes in the center of a large round platter and keep warm, not hot.

Boil the sweet potatoes and cassava in salted water for 20 minutes, or until they are tender. Drain and keep warm. It does not matter if the cassava slices have broken up. In a separate saucepan boil the plantains, unpeeled but cut in half if necessary to fit the pan, until tender, about 30 minutes. Green bananas will take less time, about 15 minutes. Peel and cut into 12 slices. Keep warm with the sweet potatoes and cassava. Drop the corn into a large saucepan of boiling salted water and boil for 5 minutes. Cut each ear into 3 slices and put with the other vegetables.

Season the flour with salt and pepper. Dredge the fish pieces in the seasoned flour, shaking to remove the excess. In a skillet heat the 4 tablespoons of olive oil and fry the

pieces of fish until they are golden brown on both sides, about 3 or 4 minutes. Drain on paper towels and keep warm.

Cut the peppers into ⅛-inch strips and put, with the sliced onions, into a saucepan of boiling water. Blanch for a few minutes then drain well. Add the remaining ½ cup olive oil, the vinegar, and salt and pepper to taste. Bring to a boil over low heat and cook, covered, for 2 or 3 minutes.

To serve, garnish the platter round the edge with lettuce leaves. Arrange the fish fillets, corn, sweet potato, cassava, and plantains or bananas on the lettuce leaves. Pour the onion and pepper mixture over the potatoes and garnish the mound with the wedges of cheese and black olives.

Variation: For *Causa a la Limeña* (Potatoes with Shrimp and Vegetables), add a seeded and finely chopped fresh hot red or green pepper to the chopped onion pickle. Omit the plantains and fish. Instead drop 6 jumbo shrimp (or more if using smaller shrimp) into boiling salted water and cook until just tender, 3 to 5 minutes. Hardboil 3 eggs and cut them in halves lengthwise. To serve arrange lettuce leaves round the edge of the mound of potatoes and arrange the cassava and sweet potato slices on the lettuce leaves. Make a circle on the edge of the mound of potatoes with the corn, then another circle on the potatoes with the cheese and shrimp alternately, and finally place the eggs and black olives on top of the potatoes. Serves 6.

Ocopa de Pichones

Potatoes and Eggs in Pigeon and Walnut Sauce

PERU

This is a most exotic and delectable dish, ideal for a summer lunch or dinner when hot food is unappetizing and the palate longs for something light yet substantial. The flavor of the pigeon is subtly enhanced by the walnuts, cheese, and oil-stewed onion, to make a most sumptuous sauce for the potato and hardboiled egg. Start with a corn or sweet red pepper soup and follow the *Ocopa* with *Mazamorra Morada* (Peruvian Fruit Compote) for dessert. A dry white wine or a rosé makes extremely pleasant drinking.

Serves 6

pigeons, each weighing about 8 ounces

lb, freshly ground pepper

medium onions

medium tomatoes

large hot dried red pepper, or 2 small

tablespoons olive oil

cup walnut meats, about 8 ounces

lettuce leaves

black and green olives

fresh hot red peppers (optional)

8 ounces fresh cheese, or Spanish queso fresco or queso blanco, or use Münster or a similar cheese

milk

2 eggs

4 medium potatoes



Split the pigeons in half and season on both sides with salt and pepper. Thinly slice 4 of the onions and put them in the bottom of a heavy casserole. Arrange the pigeons on top of the onions. Peel the tomatoes and cut them into thin slices, about $\frac{1}{8}$ inch. Make a layer of the tomatoes over the pigeons. Cover the casserole with foil and then with the casserole lid. Cook over very low heat, using an asbestos mat if necessary to keep the contents from burning. Cook until the pigeons are tender, about 3 hours, shaking the casserole from time to time. Let the pigeons cool thoroughly in the casserole. Lift the birds out and bone them. Chop the meat coarsely and set aside. Reserve the pan juices. Rinse out and dry the casserole. Shake the seeds out of the hot dried pepper and put it to soak in warm water.

Cut the remaining 2 onions into thick slices, about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch. Heat the oil in the casserole and add the onion slices. Cook over low heat, turning once, until they are golden brown on both sides. Allow to cool slightly, then put into a blender or food processor fitted with a steel blade, with the oil, the pigeon meat, and the pan juices. Drain the pepper, chop, and add. Add the walnuts and cheese and reduce to a purée, adding milk as necessary to make the sauce the consistency of a thick mayonnaise. Purée in batches if necessary.

Hardboil the eggs, shell them, and halve them lengthwise. Boil the potatoes and drain them. Arrange the eggs, yolk side up, and the potatoes while still warm on a large warmed serving platter. Pour the sauce over them. Decorate the edge of the platter with lettuce leaves and arrange the olives on top of the potatoes and eggs. Slice the peppers from the tip to the stem and into 4 or 5 sections, which will then curl back, forming flowers. Place them round the edge of the dish. This is optional but I like to do it, as there is always someone who really enjoys nibbling on hot peppers.

If serving this as an appetizer, halve the potatoes lengthwise and serve half a potato and half a hardboiled egg per person. Serves 12.

Cuscuz de Galinha

Garnished Steamed Chicken and Cornmeal

This Cuscuz from São Paulo is made of cornmeal. The original *couscous* — the national dish of the Maghreb, the North African countries of Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria — is made of wheat. There are other differences, which help to illustrate the Brazilian cook's ability to absorb foreign influences and to transform what is borrowed. This is a delicious dish, easy to make and wonderfully festive looking.

Serves 6 to 8

3½-pound chicken, cut into serving pieces

6 tablespoons lemon juice

6 tablespoons (¼ cup) butter

6 scallions, chopped, using white and green parts

4 medium tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped

1½ tsp salt, freshly ground pepper

1½ cup dry white wine

1½ cup chicken stock

2 tablespoons olive oil

1½ pound chorizo or other spiced smoked pork sausage, cut into ¼-inch slices

½ cup chopped parsley

or 2 fresh hot red peppers, seeded and chopped

Put the chicken pieces in a bowl with the lemon juice. Mix well and let stand 15 minutes. Lift out the chicken pieces, pat dry, and reserve the liquid. Heat the butter in a flameproof casserole and sauté the chicken pieces lightly. Add the scallions and tomatoes and season to taste with salt and pepper. Pour in the wine and chicken stock. Bring to a simmer, cover, and cook over low heat until the chicken pieces are tender. Let them stand, off the heat, until they are cool enough to handle. Lift them out of the stock, skin and bone them, and shred the meat into pieces about 1 inch by ¼ inch. Strain the stock and discard the solids. There should be 1½ cups. Make up the quantity if necessary with chicken stock. Return the chicken to the stock.

Heat the olive oil in a skillet and sauté the sausage until browned on both sides. Drain on paper towels and add to the chicken with the parsley and hot peppers. Set aside.

FOR THE CORNMEAL MIXTURE

2 cups white cornmeal

1½ pound (1 cup) butter

4 medium tomatoes, thinly sliced

1 10-ounce can hearts of palm, drained and thinly sliced

4 hardboiled eggs, sliced

1½ cup pitted black olives, halved

cup cooked fresh green peas or cooked frozen peas

oranges, preferably Seville (bitter) oranges, peeled and thinly sliced



Toast the cornmeal in a heavy skillet over moderate heat, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, until it is golden, about 5 minutes. Sprinkle 1 cup boiling water over the cornmeal and stir to mix. Cook, stirring, for 2 minutes. Melt the butter in a small saucepan and pour it over the cornmeal, mixing well. Stir the cornmeal, little by little, into the reserved chicken, sausage, and stock mixture, combining it gently but thoroughly. Test the mixture to see if it holds its shape when pressed into a ball. If it is too crumbly, add a little warmed chicken stock and mix, testing again to see that the mixture keeps its shape.

If using a *cuscuzeiro* (*couscoussière*) butter the upper part. Otherwise, butter the inside of a fine-holed colander. Place a tomato slice in the center of the colander or *couscoussière*. Divide the remaining tomato, the hearts of palm, eggs, and olives into 3 equal parts. Divide the peas into 2 parts. Arrange one-third of the tomatoes, palm hearts, eggs, and olives in a decorative pattern around the bottom and sides of the colander. They will stay in place because of the butter. Put one-third of the cornmeal mixture into the colander and pat it down lightly. Sprinkle with half of the peas and another third of the garnish. Cover with another third of the cornmeal. Add the remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of peas and the remaining garnish and top with the remaining cornmeal. Cover with a cloth napkin, then cover the colander tightly with foil, tucking the foil firmly under the rim. Pour boiling water into a deep pot large enough to hold the colander comfortably (or into the bottom half of the *couscoussière*), taking care that the water is not deep enough to reach the bottom of the colander. Cover and steam over low heat for 1 hour, adding a little boiling water during the cooking period if necessary. Turn off the heat and let the colander stand for a few minutes. Remove the napkin and unmold the *Cuscuz* onto a serving dish. It will look like a steamed pudding decorated with the tomato, hearts of palm, and so on. Garnish the dish with the sliced oranges.

Pastel de Choclo con Relleno de Pollo

Chicken Pie with Corn Topping

BOLIVIA

This is simply delicious, with a combination of flavors that is new to our palates though none of the ingredients is hard to find. As it can be prepared ahead of time, it makes an ideal party dish.

Serves 6

3½-pound chicken, cut into serving pieces

cups chicken stock, about

cup seedless raisins

6 tablespoons olive or vegetable oil
2 medium onions, finely chopped
2 medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped
1 lb
or 2 pinches ground cinnamon
4 hardboiled eggs, coarsely chopped
1/2 small pimiento-stuffed olives, rinsed and halved

FOR THE TOPPING

1/2 cup butter or lard, or a mixture of both
1 cup corn kernels
1/2 tablespoon sugar, or less to taste
1/2 teaspoons salt, or to taste
2 eggs
1/2 sweet paprika



Put the chicken pieces into a large saucepan or casserole, pour in the stock, adding a little more if necessary to barely cover. Bring to a boil, cover, and simmer over low heat until the chicken is tender, about 45 minutes. Let it cool in the stock. When it is cool enough to handle, lift it out of the stock, remove the skin and bones, and cut the meat into 1-inch pieces. Set aside. Reserve the stock for another use. Put the raisins to soak in cold water to cover for 10 minutes. In a skillet heat the oil and sauté the onions until they are soft. Add the tomatoes and cook for about 5 minutes longer, or until the mixture is well blended. Season with salt, drain, and add the raisins, cinnamon, chopped eggs, olives, and chicken. Set aside.

To make the topping, melt the butter or lard in a small saucepan. Put the corn kernels in a blender or food processor and reduce to a purée. Pour into a saucepan and stir in the melted butter or lard. Stir in the sugar and salt. Cook over very low heat, beating the eggs in one by one. Cook, stirring with a wooden spoon, until the mixture has thickened. Allow to cool slightly.

Butter a 2-quart soufflé dish and spoon in about one-third of the corn mixture, patting it up to cover the sides of the dish. Carefully spoon in the chicken mixture, then cover with the rest of the corn. Sprinkle with sweet paprika. Bake in a preheated moderate (350° F.) oven for 1 hour, or until the topping is set and lightly browned. Serve hot.

The pie may be prepared ahead and refrigerated until ready to bake, in which case let it come to room temperature before baking.

Variation: There is a slightly simpler Chilean version of this dish in which cooked, boned chicken, either in small or large pieces, is put into a buttered earthenware casserole or soufflé dish and topped with slices of hardboiled egg, a few raisins, and pitted green olives. The corn topping is then spooned over the chicken. The topping is sprinkled with 1 tablespoon sweet paprika and 1 tablespoon of either superfine or confectioners' sugar, and the pie is baked as for *Pastel de Choclo con Relleno de Pollo*.

Variation: Another, and very popular, filling is *Pino de Carne* (Beef Hash), reminiscent of Mexican *Picadillo*. Sauté 1 pound lean beef, chopped by hand, with 4 finely chopped medium onions in 2 tablespoons oil until the beef and onions are both tender — 2 or 3 minutes. Season with salt, pepper, 1 tablespoon sweet paprika, $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon cayenne, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground cumin, and $\frac{1}{8}$ cup seedless raisins, soaked 15 minutes in warm water. Sauté for a few minutes, then put in an earthenware casserole or soufflé dish and top with 2 sliced hardboiled eggs. Cover with the corn topping and bake as for the *Pastel de Choclo con Relleno de Pollo*. If the meat mixture seems a little dry, it may be moistened with beef stock before adding it to the casserole.

Variation: Latin America is not only corn country, it is very much potato country, and the *Pino de Carne* turns up in a potato pie, *Pastel de Papas*. For this make the *Pino* as described above and set it aside. Peel and slice 3 pounds of potatoes and boil them in salted water until soft. Mash them with enough light cream, about 1 cup, to make a purée, then, over low heat, beat in 1 well-beaten egg. In a buttered earthenware casserole or soufflé dish make alternate layers of potato and beef hash, beginning and ending with potato. Bake in a preheated moderate (350° F.) oven until the potato pie is heated through and the top lightly browned. Serves 6. If liked, the amount of *Pino de Carne* may be doubled.

Pudín de Choclo

Corn Soufflé

ECUADOR

This is less like a French soufflé than like an American corn pudding. It is a rich-tasting dish, but not heavy, nice for a light meal, or as the first course of a grand one.

Serves 6

cups kernels of young corn, or 2 cups frozen corn, thawed

pound Münster cheese, cubed

tablespoons ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup) butter, cut into small pieces

lt, white pepper 5 eggs, well beaten Butter

Combine the corn, cheese, and butter in a blender or food processor. Season to taste with salt and pepper and pour in the eggs. Blend on high speed until the mixture is smooth. Pour into a buttered $1\frac{1}{2}$ -quart soufflé dish and set the dish in a pan of hot water in a preheated

moderate (350° F.) oven. Bake for 1 hour, or until a knife inserted in the soufflé comes out clean.

Chouriço, Brócolos, y Creme de Milho

Sausage and Broccoli with Puréed Corn

BRAZIL

This dish from the state of Minas Gerais is a fine one-dish family meal. The corn purée makes a lovely sauce for the broccoli.

Serves 4

1½-pound bunch of broccoli

4 tablespoons (¼ cup) butter plus 1 tablespoon

salt, freshly ground pepper

1

pound chorizo or other spiced smoked pork sausage

2 cups raw corn kernels

Rinse the broccoli in cold water and cut off and discard the tough stems. Chop the broccoli. In a saucepan heat the 4 tablespoons butter, add the broccoli, stir, and cook for 2 minutes. Add 1 tablespoon water, cover, and cook until the vegetable is tender, about 8 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Put in a serving dish and keep warm.

Firm the bottom of a skillet with oil and sauté the chorizos until browned all over, about 5 minutes. They will cook in their own fat. Drain on paper towels and slice, or halve crosswise. Arrange the sausage around the broccoli and keep warm.

Purée the corn in a blender or food processor. In a saucepan melt the tablespoon of butter, add the corn, and cook stirring constantly with a wooden spoon for about 5 minutes over low heat. Season with salt and pepper. Pour the corn purée over the broccoli.

Chilaquiles de Estudiante

Student's Tortilla Casserole

MEXICO

My husband says this dish reminds him of his days at the university in Mexico, when he was perpetually hungry but often lacked the time to get home for the main meal at midday and found no one very interested in feeding him at night, when only *merienda*, a light supper, was served. *Chilaquiles* is essentially a leftover dish using anything the kitchen has to offer, usually leftover chicken, or turkey *mole*, or any pork. This one is very special indeed, quite approaching elegance. I suspect that only a very warm-hearted family cook, who understood that acquiring knowledge provokes appetite, would have gone to the trouble of preparing it for the evening meal of a hungry student and three of his friends, equally hungry, since it serves 4. I also suspect the cook must have overbought the pork for

the midday meal to have had a pound left over. Made on purpose with no students around, it makes a fine lunch or supper dish.

Serves 4

FOR THE TORTILLAS

recipe tortillas ([this page](#))

tablespoons vegetable oil or lard, about

Make the tortillas the previous day, if possible, as they should have time to dry out a little. Simply wrap them in a cloth and leave them in the kitchen. If they are freshly made, dry them in the oven with the pilot light on for an hour or two. When ready to use, cut the tortillas with kitchen shears into strips about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch wide. Heat the oil or lard in a skillet and fry the tortilla strips in batches, but do not let them brown. Drain on paper towels and set aside. Reserve the oil in the skillet.

FOR THE FILLING

pound of any leftover cooked pork, cut into 1-inch pieces

medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped

medium onion, chopped

cloves garlic, chopped

tablespoons seedless raisins

small pimiento-stuffed olives, halved

tablespoon red wine vinegar

teaspoon sugar

salt and pepper to taste

Put the pork into a heavy saucepan with water just to cover and simmer, covered, over low heat until the pork is tender, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours. Allow the pork to cool in the stock. Lift out and shred the meat. Reserve the stock. Put the tomatoes, onion, and garlic in a blender or food processor and reduce to a purée. Measure the oil remaining in the skillet and if necessary make up the quantity to 2 tablespoons. Add the tomato mixture and cook, stirring, for 2 or 3 minutes. Add the pork, raisins, olives, vinegar, sugar, and salt and pepper to taste, and simmer over low heat until the mixture is quite thick, about 5 minutes. Make a layer of half the tortilla strips in a greased ovenproof casserole, preferably earthenware, and spread the pork mixture on top. Cover with the remaining tortilla strips. Set aside.

FOR THE SAUCE

ancho chilies
medium onion
clove garlic
teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 inch of ground cloves
teaspoon sugar
1/2 tsp, freshly ground pepper
4 tablespoons vegetable oil or lard
2 medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped

Pull the stems from the *ancho* chilies, shake out the seeds, rinse in cold water, and tear into pieces. Put into a bowl with 1/2 cup warm water and soak, turning from time to time, for about 1 hour. Put the chilies and any soaking water into a blender or food processor with the onion and garlic and reduce to a purée. It should be quite thick and heavy. Do not overblend, as it should have some texture. Add the cinnamon, cloves, sugar, salt, and pepper. Heat the oil or lard in a skillet and add the *ancho* mixture. Cook, stirring, for about 5 minutes. Purée the tomatoes in the blender and add to the skillet and simmer for 2 or 3 minutes longer. Add 2 cups of the reserved pork stock. If there is not enough stock, add a little chicken stock or water. Stir to mix, heat through, and pour over the contents of the casserole. Bake the casserole in a preheated moderate (350° F.) oven until heated through, about 30 minutes. Serve directly from the casserole. Accompany with a green salad.

Mucbi-Pollo

Chicken and Pork Tamal Pie

MEXICO

This is a very old, traditional Mayan dish from Yucatán, a sort of corn pie wrapped in banana or plantain leaves and baked in a *pib* or earth oven, though nowadays it is usually cooked in an ordinary gas or electric oven. As banana or plantain leaves are fairly difficult to come by, kitchen parchment or aluminum foil may be used as substitutes. If the herb *epazote* is not available, its absence from the dish is no great matter since it is the achiote (annatto) that gives the *tamal* pie its characteristic flavor and appearance. Traditionally a whole chicken, cut into serving pieces, is used but there seems to be no logical reason why the chicken should not be boned for ease in assembling and serving the dish. I have had it both ways and there is no difference in flavor, which is what matters.

Serves 4 to 6

FOR THE FILLING

1 large onion, chopped
2 medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped

cloves garlic, chopped

teaspoon oregano

teaspoon cumin

tablespoons ground achiote (annatto)

It

2½-pound chicken, quartered

pound lean, boneless pork, cut into 1-inch cubes

½ cups chicken stock, about

cup masa harina



Put the onion, tomatoes, garlic, oregano, cumin, achiote, and salt to taste in a blender or food processor and reduce them to a purée. Put the chicken and pork into a saucepan or casserole and pour the purée over them. Add enough chicken stock to cover, about 1½ cups. Cover and simmer until the chicken is tender, about 45 minutes. Lift out the chicken pieces and set aside. Continue to cook the pork until it is tender, about 30 minutes longer. Bone the chicken and cut it into large pieces. Set it aside with the pork. Strain the stock. Put the *masa harina* in a small saucepan and add enough of the stock to make a very thick sauce, stirring over low heat for a minute or two. Pour the sauce over the chicken and pork.

FOR THE DOUGH

cups masa harina

cup (½ pound) annatto oil or lard, [this page](#)

¼ tablespoons achiote (annatto) seeds

icken stock

It



Put the *masa harina* in a bowl, stir in the annatto oil or lard and the achiote seeds, and when thoroughly mixed add just enough hot chicken stock and a pinch of salt to make a thick, smooth dough. Cut a 12- by 24-inch strip of kitchen parchment or aluminum foil, or use a banana leaf, if available. Spread half of the *masa harina* dough on the parchment or foil, leaving room at the sides. Arrange the chicken, pork, and sauce on top of the dough. Cover with the rest of the dough. Fold up the parchment into a parcel and put it into a greased baking pan, fold side down. Bake in a preheated hot (400° F.) oven for 30 minutes. Unwrap to serve. The outside will be crisp, the inside, with the chicken and pork filling, moist. Serve with *Ixni-Pec* (Hot Pepper Sauce), [this page](#).

Queso Relleno

Stuffed Cheese

MEXICO

This dish, though popular for a long time in its birthplace, the Caribbean island of Curaçao (where it is called *Keshy Yena* in the patois of the island), was introduced to Yucatán by Dutch and German coffee men sometime in the last century. Its foreign origins are obvious in that a Dutch Edam cheese is the main ingredient, hollowed out and stuffed with a rich pork mixture. For some reason Yucatecans almost invariably use saffron rather than achiote, which is more characteristic of their kitchen, and they usually steam rather than bake the cheese; the sauce, too, is a further Mayan enhancement. The dish looks quite spectacular when brought to the table as the cheese expands during the cooking and, when cut into wedges and served, the soft cheese shell combines deliciously with the pork filling. All that is needed as an accompaniment is a salad.

Serves 6 to 8

4-pound Edam cheese

eggs

pounds lean pork, ground

lt

tablespoons lard or vegetable oil

medium onion, finely chopped

red bell pepper, seeded and chopped, or use 2 canned pimientos

cloves garlic, chopped

tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped

teaspoon oregano

teaspoon ground cloves

2shly ground pepper

cup small, pitted green olives

cup seedless raisins

cup capers

cup dry sherry

FOR THE SAUCE

tablespoons butter

tablespoons all-purpose flour

1/2 cup reserved pork stock

teaspoon powdered saffron, or thread saffron ground in a mortar with a pestle

1/2 red bell pepper, seeded and chopped, or use 2 canned pimientos, chopped

1/2 tsp salt, freshly ground pepper

1/2 cup small, pitted green olives, halved

Peel the red wax covering off the cheese. Cut an inch-thick slice from the top and hollow it out slightly. Scoop out the cheese, leaving a shell $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch thick. Reserve the scooped-out cheese for another use. Put the shell and lid in a large bowl of cold water to cover, and soak for 1 hour. Hardboil the eggs and drop them into cold water. When they are cool enough to handle, shell them. Carefully remove the whites, leaving the yolks whole. The best way to do this is with the fingers. Finely chop the whites and set both whites and yolks aside.

Put the pork into a saucepan with enough water to cover and salt to taste. Cover and simmer until the meat is tender, about 30 minutes. Heat the lard or vegetable oil in a skillet and sauté the onion, bell pepper, and garlic until the onion is soft. If using the pimientos, add with the tomatoes. Add the tomatoes and cook until the mixture is quite thick, about 5 minutes. Drain the pork and reserve the stock. Add the onion and tomato mixture to the pork with the oregano, cloves, salt and pepper to taste, the chopped egg whites, olives, raisins, capers, and sherry, mixing well. Remove the cheese shell and lid from the water, drain, and pat dry. Divide the meat mixture into three parts. Put one-third of it into the cheese, patting it down firmly. Halve the egg yolks. Make a layer of 6 halved yolks on top of the meat. Spoon in another third of the meat mixture and pat down lightly. Make a layer of the remaining 6 halved egg yolks, and top with the rest of the meat mixture. Place the lid on the cheese and rub the cheese all over with lard or oil. Wrap it in a double layer of cheesecloth, then place on a rack in a steamer, and steam over boiling water for 40 minutes.

Meanwhile prepare the sauce: Heat the butter in a saucepan. Add the flour and cook,

stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, for a minute. Do not let the flour brown. Add the reserved pork stock, making up the quantity with water to 2 cups, if necessary. Add the saffron, the bell pepper or pimientos, salt and pepper to taste, and the olives. Cook, stirring frequently, for 15 minutes. Pour over the cheese just before serving.

Lift the cheese out of the steamer and remove the cheesecloth. Place the cheese on a warmed serving platter and pour the sauce over it. To serve, cut the cheese in wedges.

Arroz com Porco

Rice with Pork

BRAZIL

This dish is typical of São Paulo and the regions the Paulistas developed.

Serves 6

FOR THE MARINADE

cup dry white wine

cup white vinegar

large clove garlic, crushed

medium onion, grated

lt, freshly ground pepper

tablespoon chopped fresh coriander (cilantro)

fresh hot red pepper, chopped, or ½ teaspoon hot pepper sauce (such as Tabasco or Môlho de Pimenta e Limão, [this page](#))

pounds lean boneless pork, loin or shoulder, cut into 1-inch cubes

FOR THE STEW

tablespoons vegetable oil

medium onion, chopped

green bell pepper, seeded and chopped

clove garlic, chopped

tablespoon chopped fresh coriander (cilantro)

cups long-grain rice

lt, freshly ground pepper

pound boiled ham, diced

cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese plus 2 tablespoons

tablespoon butter

In a large bowl combine the wine, vinegar, garlic, grated onion, salt and pepper to taste, coriander, and hot pepper or hot pepper sauce. Add the pork and mix lightly. Cover the bowl and refrigerate for about 8 hours, stirring once or twice. Lift out the pork pieces and pat them dry with paper towels. Strain and reserve the marinade. Discard the solids.

Now begin the stew: Heat the oil in a casserole and sauté the pork pieces until they are lightly browned. Add the onion, green pepper, garlic, and fresh coriander, and sauté for 3 or 4 minutes longer. Add the strained marinade, cover, and simmer until the pork is tender, about 1 hour.

About 20 minutes before the pork is done, wash the rice, drain, and put it into a heavy saucepan with 4 cups cold water. Bring to a boil over high heat, stir in $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt, cover, and cook over low heat until the rice is tender and all the liquid absorbed, about 20 minutes.

Taste the pork for seasoning, adding a little more salt and pepper if needed. Add the ham and stir in the $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of cheese.

Arrange half the rice on an ovenproof serving platter. Spread the pork mixture over the rice, which should be quite dry. Arrange the rest of the rice over the pork. Sprinkle the rice with the 2 tablespoons of Parmesan cheese and the butter, cut into small bits. Put the platter into a preheated moderately hot (375° F.) oven until the top is lightly browned, about 10 minutes. Serve with a freshly made tomato sauce (*Môlho ao Tomate*, see [this page](#)).

Arroz con Chanco

Pork and Rice

PERU

This Peruvian pork and rice dish is much simpler than the Brazilian version, but the annatto used in the cooking liquid for both pork and rice gives the finished dish a pleasantly distinctive flavor and an attractive yellow color.

Serves 6

6 tablespoons lard or vegetable oil

3 pounds boneless pork loin or shoulder, cut into 1-inch cubes

4 teaspoons finely chopped garlic

1 teaspoon ground annatto

1 tablespoon sweet paprika

1 fresh hot red pepper, seeded and chopped, or $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon cayenne

1 lb

2 cups long-grain rice

$\frac{1}{2}$ cups fresh green peas, shelled

Heat the lard or oil in a flameproof casserole and sauté the pork pieces until they are lightly browned all over. Add the garlic, annatto, paprika, fresh hot pepper or cayenne, and salt to the casserole and sauté for a minute or two longer. Add enough water barely to

cover and simmer, covered, over low heat until the pork is tender, about 1½ hours. Drain the liquid from the casserole and measure it. Add enough water to make the quantity up to 4 cups. Return the liquid to the casserole, stir in the rice and the peas, cover, and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat as low as possible and cook until the rice and peas are tender and all the liquid absorbed. Serve with a green vegetable or a salad.

Carne Rellena

Stuffed Steak

VENEZUELA

This is an unusual dish and looks quite spectacular, as the egg and vegetables show attractively in each slice. The flavor matches the looks. The stuffed omelet makes a rich accompaniment to the tender, juicy steak.

Serves 6

3-pound flank steak, or two 1½-pound steaks

large cloves garlic, crushed

It

cup olive oil

eggs

vegetable oil

10-ounce can green asparagus tips

whole pimientos, cut into strips

tablespoons butter

¼ cups dry red wine

Trim the steak of any fat and place in a baking dish or any shallow dish large enough to hold it comfortably. Mix the garlic with 2 teaspoons salt and the olive oil and rub the mixture into both sides of the steak. Let it stand at room temperature for about 2 hours.

Break the eggs into a bowl and beat them lightly with 1 teaspoon salt and 2 tablespoons water. Heat a 7-inch omelet pan and pour in just enough vegetable oil to film the surface. The pan should be about the same width as the steak. A rectangular Japanese omelet pan is ideal for this; if using a round pan, trim the omelet later to fit the steak. Pour the eggs into the pan and make an omelet in the usual way, stirring vigorously with the flat of a fork over moderate heat until the eggs begin to set, then cook until the eggs have set. Slide the omelet out of the pan and place it on top of the steak. If using 2 smaller steaks, make 2 omelets. Trim the omelet to fit. On top of the omelet lay alternate horizontal rows of asparagus tips and pimiento strips, starting and ending about ½ inch from the edge. Roll up the steak and tie it securely with string. Put the steak into a baking tin and dot it with the butter. Bake in a preheated moderate (350° F.) oven for 45 minutes for rare steak, basting it several times with the wine. Cook for 15 minutes longer if a well-done steak is preferred.

Lift the steak out onto a warmed serving platter and remove the string. Reduce the wine and pan juices quickly over brisk heat and pour into a sauceboat. Cut the steak into 1-inch slices, and serve with plain white rice, *Caraotas Negras* (Black Beans), and fried plantains or bananas.

Molondrones con Camarones

Okra with Shrimp

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

This is a lovely dish from the Dominican Republic with okra, bananas, shrimp, and coriander making an unusual combination of flavors.

Serves 3 to 4

cup vegetable oil
medium onion, finely chopped
cups small, fresh okra pods, cut into ¼-inch slices
underripe bananas, peeled and cut into ½-inch slices
medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped
cup lemon juice
small fresh hot red or green pepper, seeded and chopped
tablespoon fresh green coriander (cilantro), chopped
lt, freshly ground pepper
pound medium-sized shrimp, shelled and deveined

Heat the oil in a skillet and sauté the onion until it is soft. Add the okra and sauté for 2 to 3 minutes longer. Add the bananas, tomatoes, lemon juice, hot pepper, coriander, and salt and pepper to taste. Simmer the mixture for about 5 minutes, or until the okra is tender. Add the shrimp and cook for about 3 minutes longer, or until the shrimp turn pink. Serve with rice.

Repollo Relleno

Stuffed Whole Cabbage

BOLIVIA

A whole stuffed cabbage with a highly seasoned meat stuffing makes a most delectable luncheon or family supper dish. I've come across it with variations in the filling in the Andean countries of Bolivia, Peru, Venezuela, and Colombia. Its obvious ancestor is *sou-fassum*, the stuffed cabbage of Provence. When I cook it, I borrow a trick from Richard Olney, who wraps his *sou-fassum* in cheesecloth, making it a lot easier to handle than when it is merely tied round with a piece of string. I save the leftover stock for making soup.

large Savoy cabbage, weighing about 3 pounds

recipe Picadillo (Seasoned Chopped Beef), [this page](#), using pork instead of beef and omitting the apples and almonds

ef or chicken stock

recipe Salsa de Jitomate (Tomato Sauce), [this page](#)



Trim the cabbage, removing any wilted outer leaves. Drop the cabbage into a large saucepan full of briskly boiling water and let it simmer for 10 minutes. Lift out the cabbage into a colander and let it drain thoroughly. When it is cool enough to handle, place it on a large square of cheesecloth and carefully open the outer leaves, spreading as flat as possible without breaking them off. Cut out the heart of the cabbage, discard the core, chop fine, and add it to the seasoned chopped pork, mixing thoroughly. Cut away as much of the core as possible while leaving the cabbage intact. Form the meat into a ball and pack it into the center of the cabbage. Press the outer leaves back into shape, re-forming the cabbage. Gather up the cheesecloth and tie it up with string. Put the cabbage into a large saucepan into which it fits comfortably and pour in enough stock to cover. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat, and simmer the cabbage for 3 to 3½ hours. Lift out into a round serving dish or soup tureen, untie, and slide out the cheesecloth, lifting the cabbage with a spatula to do so. Spoon a little tomato sauce over the cabbage and serve the rest in a sauceboat. To serve cut the cabbage into wedges. Accompany with rice.

Variation: Reduce the amount of pork to 1 pound and add 1 pound potatoes, peeled and cut into ¼-inch cubes. Serve with crusty bread instead of rice.

Variation: In Venezuela, cooks add 1 teaspoon *Aliño Criollo* (Creole Style Seasoning Powder), [this page](#), to the meat mixture, which gives it a very interesting flavor.

Variation: In Brazil, where stuffed cabbage is also popular, a mixture of pork and beef, seasoned with ½ teaspoon nutmeg, is used. Two slices of chopped bacon may be added as well as ¼ cup well-washed raw rice.

Flan de Legumbres

Vegetable Soufflé

Vegetables are handled imaginatively by Ecuadorian cooks. This mixture of eggs and

vegetables makes a satisfying meal when served with soup and dessert.

Serves 4 to 6

slices bacon, cut into julienne

cup fresh breadcrumbs

cup milk

tablespoons tomato sauce

cup chicken stock

tablespoons melted butter

tablespoon chopped parsley

lt, freshly ground pepper

cups cooked mixed vegetables such as corn, peas, carrots, cauliflower, green beans, and green pepper, all chopped

eggs, well beaten

tablespoon butter

Cook the bacon in a skillet over moderate heat until crisp, and drain on paper towels. Combine the bacon with the breadcrumbs, milk, tomato sauce, chicken stock, melted butter, parsley, and salt and pepper to taste. Fold in the mixed vegetables. Fold in the eggs and pour the mixture into a buttered 1½-quart soufflé dish. Stand the dish in a baking tin, half-filled with hot water, in a preheated moderate (350° F.) oven, and cook for 1 hour, or until a knife inserted into the soufflé comes out clean.



Torta de Plátano

Savory Green Banana Cake

MEXICO

There is a hint of sweetness in this very original old colonial dish from Oaxaca in Mexico:

the bananas go well with the robust flavor of the beans, a combination that is both unusual and good with meat and poultry when served instead of rice or potatoes.

Serves 6 to 8

1 1/2 cups cooked kidney beans
1 medium onion, finely chopped
1 bay leaf
1/4 cup lard or vegetable oil
1/2 tsp salt, freshly ground pepper
2 green (unripe) bananas, or 4 green plantains
1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
1/4 cup butter
2 eggs, lightly beaten

If dried beans are used, simmer 1 cup well-washed and picked-over kidney beans in water to cover with 1/2 medium onion, chopped, and a bay leaf, until the beans are tender, about 2 hours. If the beans dry out during the cooking, add a little hot water. Drain, reserve 1/2 cup of the cooking liquid, remove and discard the bay leaf, and purée the beans with the reserved liquid in a blender. Black beans may also be used.

Put the beans with about 1/2 cup of the cooking liquid in a blender or food processor and reduce them to a purée. Heat the lard or oil in a heavy skillet and sauté the onion until it is very soft. Add the beans and cook, stirring with a wooden spoon, until they form a soft paste. They should not be dry. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Set aside.

Cut through the skins of the bananas lengthwise and peel them. Put them into a saucepan with salted water to cover, bring to a boil over moderate heat, reduce the heat, and simmer, uncovered, until they are tender, 10 to 15 minutes. Plantains will take about 30 minutes. Drain and mash with a fork while they are still warm. Mash in the grated cheese and 3 tablespoons of the butter. Stir in the eggs, mixing well. Butter a soufflé dish and make a layer of half the banana mixture, cover with the bean mixture, and top with the remaining banana mixture. Dot with the remaining tablespoon of butter, and bake in a preheated moderate (375° F.) oven for 30 minutes. Serve directly from the dish.

Variation: Some cooks add 4 tablespoons of flour to the banana mixture with the cheese but I find this makes the topping very dense and heavy. However, for another Mexican version of the dish, *Frijoles con Plátanos* (Beans with Bananas), which is made with ripe bananas, flour is necessary (1 tablespoon flour for each banana), as the ripe fruit has more sugar and less starch. For this the banana mixture is fried in oil, 1 tablespoon at a time as a fritter, until browned on both sides, about 5 minutes. To serve put 1 teaspoon hot mashed black beans in the center and fold the fritter over. These can be eaten with cream cheese as a dessert but are delicious with plainly cooked meats or poultry as a side dish.

Variation: In Oaxaca the *torta* is sometimes made into *Empanadas* (Turnovers). Pat the cooked green banana mixture plus 4 tablespoons flour into flat cakes 2 to 3 inches in

diameter, stuff with a little of the bean mixture, fold over, pressing the edges together to seal in the filling, and fry in lard or vegetable oil until golden on both sides.

Variation: I came across a similar dish in Guatemala, *Empanadas de Plátano* (Banana Turnovers), also called, more picturesquely, *Niños Envueltos* (Babies in a Blanket). Green plantains were preferred to green bananas though both were used, and flour was added, but the beans used were black beans, never any other kind. Sometimes the turnovers were stuffed with fresh cream cheese instead of, or as well as, the mashed beans, and the turnovers were deep fried. I once had them sprinkled with sugar and served with cream as a dessert. They were remarkably pleasant.

BEANS

Beans are important in Latin America not only because so many of the world's varieties of this useful vegetable originated there but because they supplied valuable protein in a region where there were none of the sources of high protein that Europe had, such as cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, and so on. Fortunately beans were not pushed out of the kitchen by the Conquest. They are just as popular today as they ever were. They are an essential part of Mexico's main meal, served after the main course and before dessert, in small bowls. They are quite soupy and are eaten with a spoon, accompanied by tortillas, which can also be used to scoop up the beans. I like to serve them, as do many modern Mexicans, with the meal. So essential are beans to the Latin American kitchen that there is a saying when unexpected guests arrive: "*Pónle más agua a los frijoles*," meaning "Add more water to the beans." They are immensely popular as *frijoles refritos*, refried beans. It took me some time to understand why they are called "refried" when clearly they are fried only once. It is partly a matter of euphony since *frijoles fritos* sounds awful whereas *frijoles refritos* makes a pretty sound. It is also a nice economy of language as the beans are first boiled then fried, with the "re" standing for twice and pointing out the double cooking.

Venezuelans make a charming joke about their black beans, *Caraotas Negras*. They call them "*caviar criollo*," creole caviar, and serve them mashed, usually with *Arepas* (Corn Bread) as an hors d'oeuvre. They are also an essential part of the national dish, *Pabellón Caraqueño*. They are the heart of Brazil's national dish, *Feijoada Completa* (Black Beans with Mixed Meats).

Because they were so important, cooks evolved their own special ways of seasoning the slowly simmered beans. I cook my beans according to the rules laid down by my husband's grandmother. I think of her recipe as Seven Precious Beans because seven ingredients are added to the beans, which she, along with lots of other cooks in Mexico, insist must never be presoaked. There are exceptions, notably black beans for *Feijoada*. Soaking instructions are given for the exceptions in the recipes in which they occur. Added are onion, garlic, hot pepper, oil or lard, salt, *epazote* or bay leaf, and tomato. Beans themselves have a good, full flavor and when well seasoned and slowly cooked over the most gentle heat are quite irresistible.

Lentils, which like beans are members of the legume family and also a very ancient food, are very popular all over Latin America though not to the point of rivaling beans.

Frijoles

Beans

MEXICO

Serves 6 to 8

1 cup red kidney, black, pinto, or pink beans

2 medium onions, finely chopped

3 cloves garlic, chopped

1/2 cup canned serrano chilies, or 1 jalapeño chili, chopped, or 1 teaspoon dried hot red peppers, crumbled

1 sprig epazote (see [this page](#)), or 1 bay leaf

1/4 cup tablespoons lard or vegetable oil

1 lb

1 medium tomato, peeled and chopped

Wash and pick over the beans but do not soak. Put the beans into a large saucepan with cold water to cover by about 1 inch. Add half the chopped onions and garlic, the chilies, and the *epazote* or bay leaf. Cover, bring to a boil, and simmer gently, adding hot water as needed. When the beans begin to wrinkle, after about 15 to 20 minutes of cooking, add 1/4 cup of the lard or vegetable oil. When the beans are tender (cooking may take 1½ to 3 hours), add salt to taste and continue to simmer for 30 minutes longer but without adding any more water. There should not be a great deal of liquid when the beans are done.

In a skillet heat the remaining tablespoon of lard and sauté the remaining onions and garlic until soft. Add the tomato and sauté for 2 or 3 minutes longer. Take about ½ cup of beans and any liquid from the saucepan and add them, by the tablespoon, to the skillet, mashing the beans into the tomato mixture over moderate heat to form a fairly heavy paste. Stir this back into the beans in the saucepan, and simmer over low heat for a few minutes to thicken the remaining liquid.

Variation: For *Frijoles Refritos* (Refried Beans), cook the beans as above but use a large skillet to sauté the onions, garlic, and tomato. Over moderate heat, gradually mash in all the beans, tablespoon by tablespoon, together with any liquid. Add a tablespoon of lard from time to time until the beans form a heavy, creamy paste. The amount of lard or vegetable oil used is a matter of taste.

For *antojitos* the beans are used as a spread. If the beans are served as a side dish, they are formed into a roll, sprinkled with grated cheese, and stuck with *tostaditas*, triangles of crisply fried tortilla.

Frijoles Estilo Mexicano

Beans, Mexican Style

MEXICO

This does not mean beans as cooked all over the republic of Mexico. It means as cooked in the state of Mexico and the federal district, where the capital, Mexico City, is located.

Serves 8

cups pinto, pink, or red kidney beans

onion, chopped

sprig epazote (optional; see [this page](#)), or 1 bay leaf

tablespoons lard or vegetable oil Salt

Wash and pick over the beans and put them into a heavy saucepan with the onion and *epazote*, if available, or the bay leaf. Add enough water to cover the beans by 1 inch. Simmer the beans, covered, until they begin to wrinkle, after about 15 to 20 minutes of cooking. Add 1 tablespoon of the lard or oil and continue to cook the beans, covered, adding hot water as necessary until they are tender (1½ to 3 hours). Add salt to taste. Discard the *epazote* or bay leaf. Remove the beans with a slotted spoon to a bowl. Measure ¼ cup beans and mash them until smooth. Stir the mashed beans into the liquid in the saucepan. In a skillet heat the remaining 2 tablespoons of lard or oil and sauté the remaining beans until they are dry, about 5 minutes. Add them to the liquid in the saucepan and simmer the mixture, stirring frequently, until the liquid is thickened.

Caraotas Negras

Black Beans

VENEZUELA

cups black (turtle) beans

tablespoons olive oil

medium onion, finely chopped

red bell pepper, seeded and chopped, or 2 pimientos, chopped

cloves garlic

teaspoon ground cumin

tablespoon sugar

lt



Wash and pick over the beans. Put the beans to soak for 2 to 4 hours in a saucepan in enough cold water to cover by 2 inches. Add enough water to cover the beans by 1 inch as they will have absorbed much of the soaking water, bring to a boil, cover, and cook until the beans are tender, about 2 hours. In a skillet heat the oil and sauté the onion and bell pepper until both are soft. Add the garlic, cumin, sugar, and the pimientos, if using instead of bell pepper. Sauté for a minute or two, then stir into the beans. Season with salt to taste, and cook, partially covered, over low heat for ½ hour longer. The beans will be quite dry. Serve as a side dish or with *Pabellón Caraqueño* (Steak with Rice, Black Beans, and Plantains).

Feijão Preto

Black Beans

BRAZIL

Serves 6 to 8

4 cups black (turtle) beans

4 tablespoons bacon fat

1 medium onion, grated

2 clove garlic, crushed

1/2 tsp, freshly ground pepper

Thoroughly wash the beans and put them into a heavy saucepan. Cover with cold water and soak them for about 4 hours. Add enough water to cover the beans by about 1 inch, bring to a boil, lower the heat, and simmer the beans, covered, until they are tender, about 2 hours. Heat the bacon fat in a skillet and add the onion and garlic. Sauté until the onion is soft, then scoop out a cupful of the beans with their cooking liquid and add to the skillet. Continue cooking, at the same time mashing the beans over low heat until the mixture is smooth and thick. Stir the mixture into the pot with the beans, season to taste with salt and pepper, and cook, uncovered, over very low heat for 30 minutes longer.

Porotos Granados

Cranberry Beans with Corn and Squash

CHILE

This very popular Chilean dish is also very Indian since its main ingredients are all indigenous foods — beans, tomatoes, corn, and squash. In Chile fresh *porotos* (cranberry beans, sometimes called shell beans) are available almost all year round. If they are not available, dried cranberry or Navy beans can be used. *Calabaza*, the West Indian pumpkin, is best to use if available — otherwise use any winter squash.

Serves 4 to 6

1 1/2 cups fresh cranberry beans, or 1 cup dried cranberry or Navy beans

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 tablespoon sweet paprika

1 large onion, finely chopped

2 medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped

1 teaspoon oregano

1/2 teaspoon salt, freshly ground pepper

1 1/2 pounds (about 2 cups) winter squash, peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes

1 cup corn kernels

Wash the fresh beans and put them into a saucepan with cold water to cover, bring to a boil, lower the heat, and simmer, covered, until the beans are tender, about 45 minutes. If using dried beans, rinse them and put them to soak in cold water for 3 or 4 hours. Simmer the beans in unsalted water to cover until they are barely tender, 1½ to 2 hours. Drain the fresh or dried beans and set aside. Reserve the cooking liquid.

Meanwhile heat the oil in a skillet and stir in the paprika over moderate heat with a wooden spoon, taking care not to let it burn. As soon as the paprika and oil are thoroughly mixed, stir in the onion and sauté until the onion is tender. Add the tomatoes, oregano, salt, and freshly ground pepper, and simmer the mixture, stirring from time to time, until it is thick and well blended. Add this mixture and the squash to the saucepan with the beans, stir to mix, and add enough of the reserved cooking liquid barely to cover. Cover and simmer gently for 15 minutes. The squash will disintegrate and thicken the sauce. Stir in the corn and simmer for 5 minutes longer. Serve in soup plates with a little *Pebre* (Chilean Hot Pepper Sauce), if liked.

Frijoles con Puerco Estilo Yucateco

Beans with Pork, Yucatán Style

MEXICO

Serves 6

8 cups black (turtle) beans
2 pounds lean, boneless pork, cut into 1½-inch cubes
2 large onions, finely chopped
1 whole fresh hot pepper, or 1 canned hot pepper
1 teaspoon chopped epazote, if available
or 3 sprigs fresh coriander (cilantro)
Salt and pepper to taste, freshly ground pepper

FOR THE GARNISH

1 large onion, finely chopped
½ cup fresh coriander (cilantro), chopped
2 small radishes, chopped
Lemon wedges

FOR THE TOMATO SAUCE

4 medium tomatoes
2 fresh or canned hot green peppers
Salt and pepper to taste



Thoroughly wash and pick over the beans. Put the beans into a large saucepan or flameproof casserole with water to cover by about 2 inches. Bring the beans to a boil, cover, reduce the heat, and simmer for 1 hour. Strain the beans, measure the liquid, and make it up to 8 cups. Return the beans and liquid to the saucepan. Add the pork, onions, hot pepper, *epazote*, if available, coriander sprigs, and salt and pepper to taste. Simmer, covered, until the meat and beans are both tender, about 1½ hours. Discard the hot pepper and coriander sprigs. Lift out the pork pieces with a slotted spoon and place them in the center of a warmed platter. Strain the beans and arrange them round the pork. Pour the bean liquid into a soup tureen. Serve the soup in bowls and the beans and pork on plates at the same time. Serve the garnishes in bowls at the table to be eaten with both the soup and the beans.

To make the tomato sauce: Peel and chop 4 medium tomatoes and simmer them for 15 minutes with 2 fresh or canned hot green peppers and salt to taste. Pour the mixture into a

blender or food processor and reduce to a purée. Pour back into the saucepan and heat through. Pour into a bowl and serve over the meat.

Lentejas

Lentils

COLOMBIA

Serves 6

- 1 pound lentils*
- 2 tablespoons olive oil*
- 2 medium onions, finely chopped*
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped*
- 2 large tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped*
- 1/2 tsp salt, freshly ground pepper*
- 1/2 tsp each of sugar*
- 1/2 teaspoon chopped fresh coriander (cilantro)*

Put the lentils in a large saucepan with water to cover by about 1 inch and cook until they are almost tender, about 1 hour. The quick-cooking variety (noted on package) will be done in about 25 minutes. Drain and set aside.

In a skillet heat the oil and sauté the onions and garlic until the onions are softened. Add the tomatoes, salt, pepper, sugar, and coriander, and simmer gently until the mixture is thick, about 10 minutes. Stir the sauce into the lentils and cook over very low heat for 10 minutes longer to blend the flavors. Serve instead of potatoes or rice.

Angú de Farinha de Milho

Molded Cornmeal

BRAZIL

Brazilians are fond of this simple corn pudding. Traditionally it is served with *Picadinho de Porco* (Pork Hash), and *Couve à Mineira* (Kale or Collard Greens, Minas Gerais Style), accompanied by *linguiça* sausages. It may also accompany any meat or poultry dish, or fish and shellfish.

Serves 6

- 2 cups water*
- 1/2 teaspoon salt*
- 1 cup cornmeal*
- 2 tablespoons butter plus butter for the mold*

In a heavy saucepan bring the water and salt to a boil and pour in the cornmeal in a thin, steady stream, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon. Cook over moderate heat until the mixture is smooth and thick. Stir in the 3 tablespoons of butter. Butter a 1½-quart mold and turn the cornmeal mixture into it. Pat it down, then unmold onto a serving dish.

Bacon fat may be used instead of butter.

RICE

Rice is enormously popular in Latin America and cooks pride themselves on their ability to cook rice to perfection, as this is often considered the measure of their skill in the kitchen. There are many ways to cook plain white rice and all of them produce rice that emerges tender, and with every grain separate. In Peru, Colombia, and Ecuador, cooked rice is drier than ours and is called *Arroz Graneado*. *Graneado* has a dual meaning in Peruvian Spanish — choice or select, and grainy. It is an attractive texture. There are also more elaborate rice dishes like *Arroz a la Mexicana* (Rice, Mexican Style), which is served as a separate course, *sopa seca*, or dry soup, at *comida*, the big midday meal. It comes after soup and before the main course. I serve it with the main course as our meals are not as elaborate as they are traditionally in Mexico. In coastal Colombia rice is cooked in coconut milk and garnished with raisins, giving it a tantalizing hint of sweetness. In addition to plain white rice and more elaborate rice dishes, Brazil makes rice into molded puddings that are served with the traditional dishes of Bahia. It is important always to use a heavy saucepan with a tightly fitting lid. If the rice is not to be used immediately, cover the saucepan with a folded dish towel, then the lid to prevent condensed moisture from making the rice mushy. The rice will stay hot for about 15 minutes.



Arroz Blanco

White Rice

½ cups long-grain rice
 cup vegetable oil
 small onion, finely chopped
 cloves garlic, finely chopped
 cups cold water
 lt
 fresh hot green pepper (optional)

Wash the rice thoroughly in several changes of water, drain, and put into a saucepan with hot water to cover. Let stand 15 minutes. Drain in a sieve, letting it stand for about 10 minutes. Heat the oil in a saucepan, add the rice, onion, and garlic, and sauté over low heat, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, until the rice begins to take on a pale gold color and the oil is absorbed, 3 or 4 minutes. Add the water and salt to taste. Bring to a boil over high heat, reduce the heat to as low as possible, and cook, covered, until the rice is tender and all the liquid absorbed, about 20 minutes. I sometimes like to add a whole fresh hot green pepper when adding the water. It is discarded when the rice is cooked. This gives just a hint of peppery flavor.

Variation: For *Arroz Graneado* (Peruvian Style Rice), pour 2 tablespoons vegetable oil into a saucepan and add 1 clove crushed garlic. Sauté over low heat for 1 or 2 minutes, being careful not to let the garlic burn. Add 4 cups water, 1 teaspoon lemon juice, and salt to taste, and bring to a boil. Stir in 2 cups long-grain rice, washed and drained, bring back to a boil, cover, and cook on the lowest possible heat until the rice is tender and all the liquid absorbed, about 25 minutes. Serves 4 to 6.

Variation: *Arroz Blanco* (White Rice) from Venezuela is traditionally served with *Pabellón Caraqueño* (Steak with Rice, Black Beans, and Plantains) but may accompany any fish, meat, or poultry dish. Thoroughly wash and drain 1½ cups long-grain rice. Heat 3 tablespoons butter in a saucepan and stir in the rice, 1 medium onion, finely chopped, ½ red or green bell pepper, seeded and chopped, and 1 clove garlic, chopped. Sauté, stirring, over low heat for 3 or 4 minutes, or until the butter is absorbed. Do not let the rice brown. Add 3 cups water and salt to taste, bring to a boil, and cook, covered, over very low heat for about 20 minutes, or until all the liquid is absorbed and the rice tender. Serves 6.

Variation: *Arroz de Amendoim* (Peanut-Colored Rice) is not only the color of roasted peanuts, but has a fine, nutty flavor. Thoroughly wash the rice and let it drain in a sieve for 30 minutes. Pour 2 tablespoons peanut oil into a saucepan, add the rice, and sauté, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, over low heat until the rice is the color of roasted peanuts, a light brown, about 10 minutes. Be careful not to let the rice get too dark in color as it will have a bitter taste. Add 2 tablespoons lemon juice, 1 teaspoon salt, and 3 cups

water. Bring to a boil over high heat, then simmer, covered, over very low heat, 15 to 20 minutes, or until the rice is tender and all the liquid absorbed. Serves 6.

Variation: For *Arroz Brasileiro* (Brazilian Style Rice), thoroughly wash and drain 2 cups long-grain rice. Heat 3 tablespoons vegetable oil or lard in a saucepan and sauté 1 onion, finely chopped, and 1 clove garlic, chopped, until the onion is soft. Add the rice and cook, stirring, until the fat has been absorbed. Add 3½ cups water and salt to taste, bring to a boil, cover, and simmer over very low heat until the rice is tender and all the liquid absorbed, about 20 minutes. An attractive variation is to add 1 peeled, seeded, and chopped tomato to the rice just before adding the water, or add ⅓ cup tomato purée. Serves 6, but should be enough for 8 to 10 when served with a *Feijoada Completa* (Black Beans with Mixed Meats).

Arroz a la Mexicana

Rice, Mexican Style

MEXICO

Serves 6 to 8

2 cups long-grain rice

2 tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped

1 medium onion, chopped

1 clove garlic, chopped

2 tablespoons lard or vegetable oil

½ cups chicken stock

2 carrots, scraped and thinly sliced

1 cup fresh raw peas or frozen peas, thawed

1 green pepper, seeded and chopped, or 2 serrano (hot, green) chilies, seeded and chopped

1 tablespoon chopped fresh coriander (cilantro) or parsley, preferably flat Italian parsley

Thoroughly wash the rice in several changes of water and let it soak for 15 minutes. Drain thoroughly in a sieve. Put the tomatoes, onion, and garlic in a blender or food processor and reduce to a purée. Heat the lard or vegetable oil in a flameproof casserole and sauté the rice, stirring constantly, until it is golden. Be careful not to let it brown. Add the tomato mixture and cook it, stirring occasionally, until all the moisture has evaporated. Stir in the chicken stock, carrots, peas, and green pepper. Bring the mixture to a boil, cover it, and simmer over very low heat until the rice is tender and all the liquid absorbed, about 20 minutes. Serve the rice garnished with the chopped coriander or parsley.

Variation: Slice 2 chorizo sausages, fry in a little oil, drain, and garnish the rice with the sausages, 1 large avocado, sliced, and 2 hardboiled eggs, sliced.

Variation: *Arroz Guatemalteco* (Rice, Guatemalan Style) is traditionally served with *Carne en Jocón* (Beef in Tomato and Pepper Sauce), but it may also be served with any dish that would be accompanied by plain rice, such as a meat or poultry stew. Heat 2 tablespoons peanut oil or butter in a heavy saucepan, add 2 cups long-grain rice, and sauté lightly, stirring with a wooden spoon, until the rice has absorbed all the fat, being careful not to let it color. Add 1 cup mixed vegetables (carrots, celery, sweet red peppers, chopped finely, and green peas), salt and pepper, and 4 cups chicken or beef stock. Bring to a boil, cover, and reduce the heat to low. Cook until the rice is tender and all the liquid absorbed, about 20 minutes. Serves 6 to 8.

Arroz con Coco y Pasas

Rice with Coconut and Raisins

COLOMBIA

There are two versions of this dish, *Arroz con Coco y Pasas* (Rice with Coconut and Raisins) and *Arroz con Coco Frito y Pasas* (Rice with Fried Coconut and Raisins). Either makes an excellent and unusual accompaniment to meat dishes. They are typical of the cooking of coastal Colombia, where coconut is very much used.

Serves 6

pound raisins

cups coconut milk (see [this page](#))

cups long-grain rice

teaspoons sugar

tablespoon butter

It

Put the raisins into a heavy saucepan with a tightly fitting lid, pour in the coconut milk, and let the raisins soak for 30 minutes. Add the rice, sugar, butter, and salt to taste. Cover, bring to a boil, stir once, reduce the heat to very low, and cook the rice, covered, until it is tender and dry (20 to 25 minutes).

Variation: For *Arroz con Coco Frito y Pasas* (Rice with Fried Coconut and Raisins), heat the thick milk made from 1 coconut, about 1 cup or less, in a saucepan over moderate heat, stirring from time to time until the oil separates from the grainy golden residue. In Colombia this is called *titoté*. Add 1 tablespoon brown sugar and cook, stirring, for a few minutes longer. Add 4 cups thin coconut milk and ½ pound raisins and simmer over low heat for 10 minutes. Add 2 cups long-grain rice and salt to taste and cook, stirring frequently, for 10 minutes longer. Stir in 4 tablespoons (¼ cup) butter, or omit this step if preferred. Cover the rice and cook over very low heat until all the liquid is absorbed and the rice is dry and grainy, 20 to 25 minutes.



Angú de Arroz

Molded Rice

BRAZIL

Brazilians like to make molded puddings of rice or rice flour, which are served at room temperature as an accompaniment to dishes like *Vatapá* or with Bahian fish, shellfish, or meat dishes. They make a pleasant change from plain white rice and look very attractive when unmolded.

Serves 6 to 8

4 cups short-grain rice

1 teaspoon salt

1 cup thin coconut milk (see [this page](#))

butter



Thoroughly rinse the rice until the water runs clear. Put the rice into a saucepan with 4 cups water and leave it to soak overnight. Stir in the salt, cover, bring to a boil, and cook over low heat for 20 minutes, or until the liquid has been absorbed and the rice is mushy. Stir in the coconut milk and cook, mashing the rice with a wooden spoon, for 2 minutes. Turn the rice into a buttered 1½-quart mold and allow to cool. Unmold the rice by covering with a platter and turning over quickly. If it doesn't unmold readily, hit the bottom of the mold with the flat of your hand. Serve at room temperature.

Variation: For *Pirão de Arroz* (Rice Flour Pudding), which goes with the same dishes as does *Angú de Arroz*, combine 1 cup rice flour, 1 teaspoon salt, and 2½ cups coconut milk made by combining both thick and thin coconut milk (see [this page](#)) in a saucepan. Cook over low heat, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, until the mixture is smooth and thick, about 5 minutes. Pour the mixture into a buttered bowl and let it stand for a few minutes. Turn

out onto a serving dish and serve at room temperature. Serves 6 to 8.

Arroz de Haussá

Haussá Rice

BRAZIL

This is an Afro-Brazilian specialty named for the Hausa tribe of Nigeria, who are great rice eaters. The jerked beef used is Brazilian sun-dried salt beef, *carne seca*, often available in specialty stores. It makes a fine main course for rice lovers.

Serves 4

1 pound carne seca (jerked beef), see [this page](#)

4 tablespoons butter

2 medium onions, thinly sliced

recipe Arroz Brasileiro (Brazilian Style Rice), [this page](#)

recipe Mólho de Acarajé (Black-Eyed Pea Fritter Sauce), [this page](#)



Soak the beef overnight in cold water to cover. Drain, put into a saucepan with fresh cold water to cover, bring to a boil over moderate heat, and drain. When the beef is cool enough to handle, chop it coarsely, or shred it with the fingers. Heat the butter in a skillet and sauté the onions until they are lightly browned. Add the beef and cook, stirring, until it is lightly browned and heated through. Arrange the rice in the center of a serving dish and surround it with the beef and onion mixture. Serve with *Mólho de Acarajé* (Black-Eyed Pea Fritter Sauce), a hot sauce.

* The *Feijoada* can be cooked ahead to this point and kept overnight in a cool place, or refrigerated, until half an hour before it is

to be served. Bring it to room temperature before adding the onion, tomato, and mashed bean mixture.

Vegetables and Salads

Verduras y Ensaladas

One of the great excitements of Latin American markets is the vegetable stalls with great heaps of orange carrots, little tender green zucchini, bright red tomatoes, bursting with ripeness, green beans, crisply tender, corn, young onions looking like giant scallions, great, green pumpkins cut to show the vivid yellow flesh inside, bright green okra pods, new potatoes so clean and unblemished they look as though they had sprung from some celestial soil, avocados, black- and green-skinned, green globes of cabbage, peas ready shelled for the buyer, deep red beets, and peppers — vivid green, red, yellow, and orange, in more shapes and sizes than seems possible — spinach, Swiss chard, and a bewildering array of root vegetables — the sweet potatoes, the yams, the taros and malangas, dark brown and light brown, enormous or tiny, smooth-skinned and rough-skinned, knobbly or nicely symmetrical in shape — and the dried beans, black, red, creamy yellow, pink, and speckled, in lavish heaps.

It is no wonder that vegetables play such an important role in the Latin American kitchen — so much so that they are often served as a separate course. What I have learned from South America has changed my own cooking habits considerably. Now I love to serve whole platters of cooked vegetables, lightly dressed with oil and vinegar, at room temperature, either as an accompaniment or as a first course, and I have picked up so many new uses for our more familiar produce that vegetables are never uninspired.

AVOCADOS

Aguacates Rellenos

Stuffed Avocados

ECUADOR

Avocados are much more widely used in soups and sauces than in the States but they're most popular as a first course, stuffed. For a grand occasion, especially a meal in the Latin American tradition, this is fine. I also find that, accompanied by a glass or two of dry white wine and a dessert of cheese, stuffed avocados make a delicious lunch or light supper.

Serves 6

large avocados

cup chopped, cooked ham

hardboiled eggs, chopped

lt, freshly ground pepper

cup mayonnaise, about

maine or iceberg lettuce, shredded

Carefully peel the avocados, cut into halves lengthwise, and remove and discard the pits. In a bowl combine the ham and hardboiled eggs, season to taste with salt and pepper, and fold in enough mayonnaise to bind the mixture, about 1 cup. Fill the hollows of the avocados with the mixture. Make a bed of lettuce on six salad plates and put half an avocado on each. Serve as a first course or light luncheon dish. A vinaigrette sauce may be used instead of mayonnaise.

Avocados discolor quickly, so if it is necessary to prepare this ahead of time, dip the avocados in lemon juice, or leave them unpeeled, though they will look less elegant. Chopped cold roast pork or chicken may be used instead of the ham mixed with 1 cup cooked mixed vegetables instead of the hardboiled eggs. This is a dish that welcomes the improviser. Ecuadorian cooks sometimes substitute tomato sauce or béchamel for mayonnaise, though I find this less attractive.

Variation: For *Paltas Rellenas con Mariscos* (Avocados Stuffed with Shrimp) from Chile, peel and halve 3 avocados and arrange them on a bed of lettuce on six salad plates. Make 1 recipe *Salsa Golf* (Tomato- and Cognac-Flavored Mayonnaise), [this page](#), and mix half of it with 1 pound cooked shrimp, quartered if large, left whole if small. Pile the shrimp mixture into the avocados and serve the rest of the mayonnaise in a sauceboat.

Variation: Venezuela varies the Chilean shrimp-stuffed avocado slightly and calls it *Aguacates Rellenos con Camarones*. The avocados are not peeled, just halved, with the pits removed. The flesh is mashed lightly with a fork and a little vinaigrette dressing is mixed in. They are then stuffed with shrimp in vinaigrette. If small avocados are used, this does make a very nice first course.

Variation: For *Paltas Rellenas* (Stuffed Avocados) from Peru, halve and remove the pits from 3 avocados. Mash a fourth avocado with 1 fresh hot pepper, seeded and chopped, and about $\frac{3}{4}$ cup vinaigrette dressing made with mustard. Toss the dressing with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup each cooked diced green beans and carrots, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked green peas, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup finely chopped celery, 6 small pimiento-stuffed olives, chopped, and 2 hardboiled eggs, finely chopped. Fill the avocados with the mixture and mask them with mayonnaise. Garnish with slices of hardboiled egg and a little finely chopped parsley. If liked, garnish also with a fresh hot red pepper, cut into a flower shape by slicing it into thin strips almost its full length, stopping short of the stem end. Put the peppers into ice water for several hours, or until the cut ends curl back.

Variation: A simpler version of the Peruvian dish, which is very rich, comes from Cuba. For *Aguacates Rellenos* (Stuffed Avocados), peel the avocados and dip them in lemon juice to prevent discoloring. Cut them in half lengthwise and discard the pits. Arrange each half on a bed of lettuce and fill with a mixture of diced cooked vegetables, using any of the

following: potatoes, carrots, beets, green peas, green beans, asparagus tips, finely chopped green or red bell peppers, or chopped cucumbers. Toss the vegetables in a vinaigrette dressing before putting into the avocados, and mask with mayonnaise.

Variation: For *Paltas Rellenas con Salsa Cruda* (Avocados with Uncooked Tomato Sauce) from Bolivia, peel and halve the avocados lengthwise, or simply halve them and remove and discard the pits. Fill them with a sauce made by combining 2 medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped, 1 medium onion, finely chopped, ½ green bell pepper, seeded and chopped, salt and freshly ground pepper to taste, 1 teaspoon vinegar, and 1 tablespoon vegetable oil. This should be made at the last minute if possible, as the sauce loses its fresh flavor if it stands for long.

Variation: For *Paltas Rellenas con Pollo* (Avocados Stuffed with Chicken) from Chile, peel 3 large avocados, dip them in lemon juice, halve them lengthwise, and remove and discard the pits, or simply halve them without peeling. Peel and mash a fourth large avocado and mix it with 1 whole cooked chicken breast, finely chopped. Season to taste with salt, pepper, and lemon juice and fill the avocados with the mixture.

Variation: In Chile leftover cooked rice is also used as a filling. The avocados are prepared as above. Season the mashed avocado with salt, pepper, and ½ cup vinaigrette dressing made with lemon juice. Mix with the rice, about 1 cup, and 12 pimiento-stuffed green olives, sliced. Fill the avocados with the mixture.

ZUCCHINI

Calabacitas Picadas

Chopped Zucchini

MEXICO

Zucchini are surely Mexico's favorite green vegetable, perhaps because they have so long a history in the country, going back to 7000 B.C. They are available all year round and are picked when they are only 3 to 4 inches long, young and tender. Though vegetables in Mexico are traditionally served as a separate course before the main dish, I find they go admirably with meat, poultry, or fish, and in today's Mexico more and more people are serving them in this way.

Serves 4 to 6

tablespoons vegetable oil

medium onion, finely chopped

clove garlic, chopped

medium tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped
sprig coriander (cilantro) or epazote
small fresh hot green peppers, seeded and chopped, or canned serrano or jalapeño chilies
lt, freshly ground pepper
pound small, young zucchini, cut into ½-inch cubes
cup corn kernels (optional)

Heat the oil in a saucepan and sauté the onion and garlic until the onion is soft. Add the tomatoes, coriander or *epazote*, the hot peppers, salt and pepper to taste, the zucchini, and the corn, if using. Cover and simmer over very low heat until the zucchini is tender, 30 to 40 minutes, which may seem excessively long. It is because the acid in the tomatoes slows up the cooking of the zucchini.

The corn makes the dish more robust. I add it when the main dish is a light one and leave it out when I want a more purely green vegetable dish to go with a hearty meat.



Calabacitas Poblanas

Zucchini, Puebla Style

MEXICO

The state of Puebla in Mexico, home of the country's most famous dish, the *mole poblano*, is noted for its cooking and for the wonderfully rich flavor of the *poblano* chili, a large, deep green pepper that can be mild or quite hot. Since I cannot get *poblanos*, I use green bell peppers, with very good results, for this unusual vegetable dish.

Serves 4 to 6

green bell peppers, toasted, peeled (see [this page](#)), and seeded
medium onion, chopped
clove garlic, chopped
tablespoons vegetable oil
pound small, young zucchini, cut into ½-inch cubes
lt, freshly ground pepper
cup heavy cream

Chop the peppers coarsely and purée them in a blender or food processor with the onion and garlic. Heat the oil in a saucepan and sauté the purée, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, for 3 or 4 minutes. Add the zucchini, and season to taste with salt and pepper. Add a little water, about ½ cup is all that should be needed, cover, and simmer until the zucchini is tender, about 30 minutes. Check to see if more water is needed — there

should be only just enough liquid to cook the zucchini. Stir in the heavy cream and simmer, uncovered, just long enough to heat it through. Serve as a green vegetable with any plainly cooked meat, poultry, or fish.

Variation: Topped with slices of fresh cheese (Spanish *queso blanco* or *queso fresco*, or if not available Münster), about 2 ounces per person, this makes an attractive vegetarian luncheon dish. Serves 2 as a main course.

SPINACH

Espinacas con Anchoas

Spinach with Anchovies

VENEZUELA

Here anchovies add a flavorful salty accent to the blandness of the spinach. I borrow a Japanese trick of squeezing the excess moisture out of the spinach by rolling the drained spinach in a *sudare* (a matchstick bamboo mat like a place mat), and squeezing gently. Swiss chard can be used in any of the spinach recipes.

Serves 6

6 pounds spinach or Swiss chard

6 tablespoons olive or vegetable oil

1/2 cup freshly ground pepper

1 small can anchovy fillets, drained and mashed

Wash and drain the spinach or Swiss chard and trim any coarse stems. Drop the spinach into a large saucepan of briskly boiling water. Bring back to a boil over high heat and boil for 5 minutes. Drain the spinach, rinse quickly under cold water, and drain again. Squeeze out the excess moisture by hand or by rolling the spinach in a bamboo mat and squeezing gently. Chop the spinach coarsely. Heat the oil in a large skillet, add the spinach, and sauté, stirring frequently, for about 3 minutes. Season generously with freshly ground pepper. Add the mashed anchovies, tossing to mix well. Serve as a vegetable with any plainly cooked meat or poultry, or topped with fried or poached eggs as a dish by itself.

Espinacas Saltadas

Spinach with Tomatoes

PERU

Serves 6

6 pounds spinach or Swiss chard

2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 medium onion, finely chopped
2 cloves garlic, chopped
2 medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped
1 fresh hot red or green pepper, seeded and chopped
1/2 lb, freshly ground pepper
1/4 cup grated rind of 1/2 lemon

Cook the spinach or Swiss chard as for *Espinacas con Anchoas* (Spinach with Anchovies) and set aside. Heat the oil in a skillet and sauté the onion and garlic until the onion is soft. Add the tomatoes and hot pepper, season with salt and pepper, and cook until the mixture is well blended, about 5 minutes. Add the grated lemon rind. Stir the spinach into the tomato mixture and cook just long enough to heat through. Serve as a vegetable with any plainly cooked meat, poultry, or fish. For a more robust dish add 6 medium potatoes, boiled and tossed in butter.

Variation: For this version from the Dominican Republic, cook the spinach as above and set aside. Heat 2 tablespoons butter in a skillet and sauté 1 medium onion, finely chopped, until it is soft. Add 2 cups tomatoes, peeled and chopped, salt, pepper, a pinch of sugar, a pinch of ground cloves, and a bay leaf, and simmer until the mixture is thick and well blended. Add the spinach and cook until heated through.

Variation: For *Espinacas con Crema* (Spinach with Cream) from Mexico, cook the spinach as above and set aside. Peel, seed, and chop 2 green bell peppers ([this page](#)) and purée in a blender or food processor with 1 medium onion, chopped. Heat 3 tablespoons oil in a skillet, add the purée, and sauté for 3 or 4 minutes, stirring with a wooden spoon. Add the spinach and season with salt and pepper. Stir in 2/3 cup heavy cream and simmer just long enough to heat through. Serve as a vegetable dish or as a dish by itself garnished with 6 halved hardboiled eggs.

Acelgas en Crema

Swiss Chard in Cream Sauce

ARGENTINA

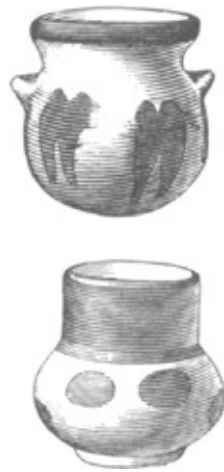
Both the white and green parts of the chard are used here. When only the green part is called for, I use the white part the next day, cut into 1-inch pieces, boiled in salted water until tender (about 10 minutes), and served either with a plain béchamel sauce or with a cup of grated cheddar stirred into the sauce. Not Latin American, but it avoids wasting this attractive vegetable.

Serves 6

2 tablespoons butter
1 medium onion, finely chopped

medium carrot, cut into julienne strips
medium-sized potato, cut into ½-inch cubes
½ pounds Swiss chard
lt, freshly ground pepper
tablespoons heavy cream

Heat the butter in a saucepan and sauté the onion, carrot, and potato until the vegetables are tender. Wash and drain the Swiss chard and cut both white and green parts into thin strips crosswise. Add to the saucepan, stir to mix, and season to taste with salt and pepper. Cover and simmer over very low heat until the chard is tender, about 10 minutes. Stir in the heavy cream and simmer, uncovered, for a few minutes longer.



KALE OR COLLARD GREENS

Couve a Mineira

Kale or Collard Greens, Minas Gerais Style

BRAZIL

Collard greens, or simply collards, are a variant of kale. Both vegetables are members of the enormous crucifer family and can best be described as a sort of nonheaded cabbage. They can be used interchangeably in this recipe.

Serves 6

pounds kale or collard greens
lt
cup bacon fat
clove garlic (optional)

Wash the kale or collard greens under cold running water. Trim the leaves from the stems and shred the leaves finely. Put the leaves in a large bowl and pour boiling salted water over them. Allow to stand for 5 minutes, then drain thoroughly. Heat the bacon fat in a

large skillet with the clove of garlic, if liked. Add the kale and sauté for a minute or two. Season to taste with salt, cover the skillet, and cook until the kale is tender, about 15 minutes. Discard the garlic and serve.

Variation: For a slightly different, but equally traditional, dish cut enough salt pork into ¼-inch cubes to make 1 cup and sauté them in a skillet until they have given up all their fat and are crispy and brown. Lift them out and reserve. Cook the kale as above in the fat and just before serving fold in the pork fat cubes.

CABBAGE

Guiso de Repollo

Cabbage in Sauce

BOLIVIA

Cabbage, that universal vegetable, is found all over Latin America often cooked in borrowed ways. Green, white, and red varieties are all available. Cole slaw turns up everywhere, usually as *ensalada de repollo crudo* (raw cabbage salad) and I have found *choucroute* (sauerkraut), another popular borrowed dish, as *chuckrut*. But there are also attractive and original recipes for cabbage that are worth our borrowing. The Bolivian *Guiso de Repollo* (Cabbage in Sauce) is a hearty dish that needs only a broiled lamb chop, a small steak, or a piece of fried chicken to make a complete main course since it combines cabbage with potatoes in a pleasantly spicy tomato sauce.

Serves 4

small white or green cabbage, weighing about 1 pound

It

tablespoons vegetable oil

medium onion, finely chopped

medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped

fresh hot red or green pepper, seeded and chopped

It, freshly ground pepper

tablespoon tomato purée

tablespoons fresh coriander (cilantro) or parsley, chopped

medium potatoes, freshly cooked and halved

Wash the cabbage and shred it finely. Drop it into a large saucepan of boiling salted water, bring back to a boil, and simmer for 5 minutes. Drain thoroughly and set aside. In a skillet heat the oil and sauté the onion until it is soft. Add the tomatoes and hot pepper and cook until the mixture is well blended, about 5 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Stir in the

tomato purée and the coriander or parsley. Fold in the cabbage, add the potatoes, and cook until the mixture is heated through.

Variation: For the Brazilian version of the dish, *Repêlho com Vinho* (Cabbage with Wine), omit the potatoes. Sauté 1 green bell pepper, seeded and chopped, with the onion in olive oil. When adding the tomato purée, stir in ½ cup chopped parsley, and when adding the cabbage, stir in ½ cup dry white wine.

CAULIFLOWER

Cauliflower is a popular vegetable in all of Latin America and most ways of cooking it are common to a number of countries, but here are some new twists.

Coliflor en Salsa de Almendra

Cauliflower in Almond Sauce

CHILE

This is an exquisitely delicate dish that makes cauliflower into something special.

Serves 6

medium-sized cauliflower, about 8 inches across

It

recipe Béchamel (White Sauce), [this page](#)

cup finely ground almonds

Trim the cauliflower and cut a cross in the bottom of the stem end. This speeds up the cooking of the stalk so that it is tender at the same time as the flowerets. Drop, stem end down, into a large saucepan of boiling salted water, cover, and simmer for 15 to 20 minutes, or until just tender. Lift out and place in a serving dish, preferably round, to show off the cauliflower.

Meantime make the Béchamel. Stir in the ground almonds, and cook, stirring, over low heat for about 2 minutes to blend the flavors. Mask the cauliflower with the sauce and serve as an accompaniment to any plainly cooked meat, poultry, fish, or shellfish.

Variation: Use ground walnuts instead of the almonds — less delicate but very rich tasting.

Variation: Mask the cauliflower with 1 recipe *Salsa de Choclos* (Sweetcorn Sauce), [this page](#), for a marvelous combination of flavors, the delicate taste of the cauliflower enhanced by the rich taste of the corn.

Variation: Heat 4 tablespoons olive or vegetable oil in a skillet and add 2 large cloves garlic, crushed in a garlic press, and ¼ cup finely chopped parsley. Sauté for a minute or two, then stir in 1 tablespoon red wine vinegar, salt, and freshly ground pepper, and pour, hot, over the cooked cauliflower. This pleasant, simple dish is from Bolivia.

Variation: Put the freshly cooked cauliflower into a flameproof serving dish and mask with 1 recipe *Môlho ao Tomate* (Tomato Sauce), [this page](#). Sprinkle with ¼ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese and run under a broiler just long enough to brown the cheese. I have found it makes a pleasant change to leave out the cheese and instead sprinkle the cauliflower with 2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh coriander or parsley.

Variation: This dish from the Dominican Republic is robust enough to serve 4 as a main course at lunch. Heat 4 tablespoons butter in a large skillet and sauté 1 finely chopped onion until it is soft. Stir in 1 clove garlic, crushed in a garlic press. Add 4 medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped, 1 tablespoon tomato purée, 1 tablespoon lemon juice, a pinch of sugar, salt and pepper to taste, and 1 bay leaf. Simmer for about 10 minutes to blend the flavors. Remove and discard the bay leaf and fold in 1 large freshly cooked potato, cubed, 1 medium-sized cauliflower, cooked and separated into flowerets, and 1 cup cooked cut green beans. Cook the mixture just long enough to heat through. Serve with freshly grated Parmesan cheese separately.

CHAYOTE

Chayotes Rellenos

Stuffed Chayotes

COSTA RICA

Chayotes, with their crisp texture and delicate flavor, are a favorite vegetable from the Caribbean to Brazil. Often they are just peeled, sliced, and simmered until tender in salted water, drained, and served with butter and perhaps a few grinds of black pepper. This is a more elaborate recipe and is served as a separate course before the main dish. It makes a good lunch or light supper dish if the servings are doubled. In Brazil almost identical ingredients are made into a pudding, *Pudim de Chuchu*.

Serves 3 to 6

chayotes, peeled and halved

It

½ cups freshly made breadcrumbs

cups grated Münster or mild cheddar cheese

eshly ground pepper

eggs, lightly beaten

tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese

butter

Parboil the chayotes in salted water for 10 minutes. Drain thoroughly, then scoop out the flesh, leaving a ½-inch shell and taking care not to break the vegetables. Chop the flesh coarsely and mix with 3 cups of the breadcrumbs, the grated Münster or cheddar cheese, salt and pepper, and the eggs. Pile the mixture back into the shells. Mix the remaining ½ cup breadcrumbs with the Parmesan cheese and sprinkle over the chayotes. Dot with butter and bake in a preheated hot (450° F.) oven for 15 to 20 minutes, or until the dish is heated through and the top nicely browned.

Variation: *Pudim de Chuchu* is an interesting example of how very similar ingredients can result in a very different dish. This is closer to a soufflé than anything else. Peel and halve 2 large chayotes, each weighing about ¾ pound. Simmer in salted water to cover until tender, about 15 minutes. Drain and allow to cool. Remove the edible seed. Chop the vegetable coarsely and set aside. In a bowl mix together 1 cup freshly made breadcrumbs, 1 cup grated cheese such as Münster, Gruyère, or cheddar, salt and freshly ground pepper, 2 tablespoons melted and cooled butter, and 3 lightly beaten egg yolks. Beat 3 egg whites until they stand in stiff peaks. Fold into the chayote mixture. Pour into a buttered 1-quart mold and bake in a preheated moderate (375° F.) oven for about 30 minutes, or until a knife inserted in the pudding comes out clean. Serve with *Môlho ao Tomate* (Tomato Sauce), [this page](#), as a light lunch or supper dish, or as a separate course, or to accompany any plainly cooked meat, poultry, or fish. Serves 3 to 4.



Tayotes Revueltos con Huevos

Chayotes Scrambled with Eggs

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Chayotes are called tayotes in the Dominican Republic, where the cuisine is remarkably rich and varied. This dish is most versatile since it could serve for a late breakfast, light lunch, or supper, or accompany plainly cooked meat, poultry, or fish. The cooked seed of the chayote is delicious. I always claim it as cook's perks.

Serves 2

1 large chayote, weighing about ¾ pound

It

tablespoons vegetable oil

medium onion, finely chopped
clove garlic, finely chopped
medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped
small fresh hot red or green pepper, seeded and chopped
freshly ground pepper
tablespoon tomato purée
eggs, lightly beaten

Peel and halve the chayote and cook in salted water to cover until tender, about 15 minutes. Remove the seed and eat it. Drain thoroughly and cut into ½-inch cubes. Set aside. Heat the oil in an 8-inch skillet and sauté the onion over medium heat until it is soft. Add the garlic, tomatoes, and the hot pepper and simmer until the mixture is well blended and most of the liquid evaporated. Season with salt and pepper and stir in the tomato purée. Add the chayote and cook until heated through. Add the eggs and cook, stirring with the flat of a fork to reach all the surfaces of the pan until the eggs are set. Serve immediately.

Variation: For a more robust dish, add 4 ounces chopped ham to the skillet with the cubed chayotes.



EGGPLANT

Eggplant is a much-loved vegetable throughout Latin America. It may be simply sliced and fried in oil, or dipped in beaten egg and breadcrumbs, or in batter, before frying. It is served stuffed with a cheese and ham mixture, or with a *picadillo* (hash) made of pork or beef, or cooked with shrimp. Recipes do not differ a great deal from country to country. Stuffed eggplant may be served as a separate course or as a main dish for lunch or supper. A perennial favorite is *Caviar de Berengena* (Eggplant Caviar), sometimes called *berengena Rusa* (Russian eggplant), served as a cold hors d'oeuvre or salad. It is amusing to note that this dish, an international favorite, is known in both the Caucasus and the Middle East as poor man's caviar. The type of eggplant found in Latin America is the beautiful shiny deep purple kind.

Berenjena Rellena con Picadillo

Eggplant Stuffed with Hash

medium eggplant, weighing about 1 pound

It

tablespoons vegetable oil

pound chopped pork or beef

medium onion, finely chopped

clove garlic, chopped

medium tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped

tablespoon tomato purée

tablespoon red wine vinegar

tablespoons parsley or fresh coriander, chopped

It, freshly ground pepper

tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese

Cut the eggplant in half lengthwise and score with a small sharp knife in both directions at ½-inch intervals. Sprinkle with salt and leave for 30 minutes. Squeeze the eggplant gently to remove the bitter juice, rinse quickly in cold water, squeeze again, and pat dry. With a grapefruit knife cut round the eggplant, leaving a ½-inch shell. Pull out the flesh and cut away any bits left in the shells. Chop the eggplant coarsely and set aside. Heat the oil in a skillet and sauté the pork or beef with the onion and garlic until the onion is soft and the meat lightly browned. Add the eggplant and sauté, stirring, for 2 or 3 minutes longer. Add the tomatoes, the tomato purée, vinegar, parsley or coriander, and salt and pepper. Stir to mix and simmer for 5 minutes longer. Spoon the mixture into the eggplant shells, sprinkle with the cheese, and arrange on a baking sheet or in a baking pan. Bake in a preheated moderate (350° F.) oven for 30 minutes.

Variation: For *Berenjena Rellena con Queso* (Eggplant Stuffed with Cheese), sauté 1 medium onion, finely chopped, in 3 tablespoons butter. Add the chopped eggplant and sauté for a few minutes longer. Stir in 1 cup freshly made breadcrumbs, 1 cup grated Münster or cheddar cheese, 2 ounces ham, coarsely chopped, salt, pepper, ⅛ teaspoon cayenne, and 1 egg, lightly beaten. Pile the mixture into the eggplant shells, sprinkle with 2 tablespoons Parmesan cheese, dot with butter, and bake in a preheated moderate (375° F.) oven for 30 minutes. Serve with *Môlho ao Tomate* (Tomato Sauce), [this page](#).

Variation: For *Berinjela com Camarão* (Eggplant with Shrimp) from Brazil, sauté 1 medium onion, finely chopped, 1 clove garlic, chopped, 1 small fresh red or green pepper, seeded and finely chopped, and the eggplant in 3 tablespoons olive or vegetable oil until the onion is soft. Stir in ½ pound raw, coarsely chopped shrimp and sauté for 1 minute longer. Add 1 cup freshly made breadcrumbs, ½ cup chopped parsley or fresh coriander, 1 cup tomatoes,

peeled, seeded, and chopped, 1 tablespoon tomato purée, and salt and pepper. Mix thoroughly, then pile into the eggplant shells. Sprinkle with 2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese, dot with butter, and bake in a preheated moderate (350° F.) oven for 30 minutes.

Berenjenas con Vainitas

Eggplant with Green Beans

VENEZUELA

A very pretty dish, it is also the sort of combination of vegetables that is popular in Latin America. Excellent with broiled meats, poultry, or fish, it also makes a fine salad, tossed with vinaigrette instead of butter, and served slightly chilled or at room temperature.

Serves 6

2 pounds eggplant

1 lb

4 tablespoons vegetable oil

1 medium onion, finely chopped

2 medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped

1/2 tsp each of sugar

1/2 tsp freshly ground pepper

1/2 lb small pimienta-stuffed olives, about 2 ounces

1/2 lb green beans, cut into 1-inch pieces

2 tablespoons butter, or 4 tablespoons Vinaigrette ([this page](#))

2 tablespoons finely chopped parsley

Cut the eggplant into 1/2-inch slices, then cut each slice into fingers crosswise. Put into a colander, sprinkle with salt, and leave for about 1/2 hour to drain the bitter juice. Rinse in cold water, squeeze lightly, and pat dry with paper towels. Heat the oil in a skillet, add the onion and eggplant. Sauté, turning the eggplant pieces once or twice, until the onion and eggplant are both soft. Add the tomatoes, salt to taste, sugar, and pepper. Stir in the olives and cook for about 5 minutes longer, or until the mixture is fairly dry. Cook the beans in boiling salted water until they are tender, 10 to 15 minutes. Drain thoroughly, return to the saucepan with the butter, and toss over moderate heat until the butter is melted. Arrange the eggplant mixture in the center of a serving dish, surround it with the beans, and sprinkle with the parsley.

Caviar de Berenjena

Eggplant Caviar

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

large eggplant, weighing about 2 pounds, or two 1-pound eggplants
medium onion, finely chopped
sweet red pepper, peeled ([this page](#)), seeded, and chopped
medium tomatoes, chopped
tablespoons fresh coriander, chopped
lt, freshly ground pepper
tablespoons olive oil
tablespoon red wine vinegar or lime or lemon juice
lettuce leaves and black olives

Bake the eggplant on the middle rack of a preheated moderate (375° F.) oven for about 45 minutes, or until tender. Cool, peel, and chop coarsely. Add the onion, sweet pepper, tomatoes, coriander, salt and pepper, and mix well. Beat the oil and vinegar together and stir into the eggplant mixture. Serve garnished with lettuce leaves and black olives as an hors d'oeuvre with crackers, or as a salad.



STUFFED PEPPERS

Chiles Rellenos

Stuffed peppers are eaten all over Latin America but it is in Mexico, where they use the lovely dark green *poblano* pepper, that they are most famous (I substitute bell peppers instead with fine results). The best known of all the stuffed peppers is *Chiles en Nogada* (Peppers in Walnut Sauce) from Puebla. They are traditionally served on St. Augustine's Day, August 28, and also on September 15, Mexican Independence Day, the colors of the dish — red, white, and green — being the colors of the Mexican flag. Fresh walnuts, which are in season in late August and early September, are used in the sauce, but packaged walnut meats will do.

Chiles en Nogada

Peppers in Walnut Sauce

poblano or large green bell peppers, peeled ([this page](#))

recipe Picadillo (Seasoned Chopped Beef), made with pork and 1 of the apples replaced by a peach ([this page](#))

eggs, separated

teaspoon salt

our

vegetable oil for frying

FOR THE SAUCE

cup walnuts, finely ground

1 8-ounce package cream cheese

cup light cream, about

tablespoon sugar (optional)

inch of ground cinnamon (optional)

lt

FOR THE GARNISH

eds from 1 pomegranate



Slit the peppers down one side and remove the seeds, taking care not to break the peppers. Stuff with the *Picadillo*. Beat the egg whites until they stand in firm peaks. Beat the egg yolks lightly with the salt and fold into the whites. Pat the peppers dry with paper towels and dip them in the flour, then in the egg. Heat enough oil in a heavy skillet to come to a depth of at least $\frac{1}{2}$ inch. Fry the peppers, in more than one batch so as not to crowd the pan, until they are lightly golden all over. The egg will seal in the filling. Drain on paper towels. Arrange them on a shallow platter.

In a blender or food processor fitted with a steel blade, combine the walnuts, cream cheese, cut into bits, and half the cream. Traditionally sugar and cinnamon are added but this is not to everyone's taste so it may be left out. (I personally prefer the sauce without.) Add a little salt and blend the mixture until it is smooth with the consistency of heavy mayonnaise, adding as much of the cream as necessary. Mask the peppers with the sauce, and garnish with the pomegranate seeds.

Variation: Of all the stuffed peppers, the one simply known as *Chiles Rellenos* (Stuffed Peppers) is most often served. Taste and texture combine to make this a splendid dish. Prepare the peppers and stuff them with *Picadillo* (Seasoned Chopped Beef), [this page](#), or *Picadillo de la Costa* (Seasoned Meat, Coastal Style), [this page](#). Coat with the egg mixture and fry in oil until golden brown. Drain on paper towels. Make 1 recipe *Salsa de Jitomate* (Tomato Sauce), [this page](#), and thin it to the consistency of a heavy broth with chicken stock, about 1 cup, and pour it into a large saucepan. Add the stuffed peppers. The broth

will come about halfway up them. Simmer just long enough to heat through and serve with the broth. The peppers can be prepared ahead of time and added to the tomato broth to heat through just before serving.

Variation: For *Chiles Rellenos con Frijoles* (Peppers Stuffed with Beans), prepare the peppers and stuff them with about 3 cups of *Frijoles Refritos* (Refried Beans), [this page](#). Coat in the egg mixture in the usual way and fry in oil. Drain on paper towels. Arrange in an ovenproof dish, pour ½ cup heavy cream over them, and sprinkle with 4 ounces shredded Münster, Monterey Jack, or mild cheddar cheese. Heat the dish in a preheated moderate (350° F.) oven for 30 minutes, or until it is heated through and the top lightly browned.

Variation: Make the peppers in the usual way but stuff with slices of Münster or mild cheddar cheese, and serve with *Salsa de Jitomate* (Tomato Sauce), [this page](#).

Variation: The Chileans have a good way of using up leftover cooked beef or pork. Prepare the peppers for stuffing in the usual way. To make the filling sauté 1 finely chopped medium onion in 2 tablespoons butter, add 2 cups cooked meat, chopped or shredded, 2 cups cooked corn kernels, 1 cup freshly made breadcrumbs, ½ cup chopped parsley, 1 fresh hot red or green pepper, seeded and finely chopped, ½ teaspoon oregano, and salt and pepper to taste. Stir to mix and sauté for a minute or two. Stuff the peppers and fry in the egg batter in the usual way. Serve with *Pebre* (Chilean Hot Pepper Sauce), or with *Salsa Chilena* (Chilean Sauce), or with *Salsa de Jitomate* (Tomato Sauce).

POTATOES

Papas Chorreadas

Potatoes with Cheese, Tomato, and Onion Sauce

COLOMBIA

This is a marvelously rich, beautifully flavored potato dish.

Serves 6

large potatoes, scrubbed

tablespoon lard and 1 tablespoon butter, or 2 tablespoons butter

medium onion, finely chopped

large tomatoes, peeled and chopped

lt, freshly ground pepper

cup heavy cream

cup grated Münster cheese

In a large saucepan boil the potatoes until they are tender. Drain the potatoes, peel, and keep them warm. In a skillet heat the lard and butter, or the butter, and sauté the onion until it is softened. Add the tomatoes and salt and pepper to taste, and cook, stirring, for about 5 minutes. Stir in the cream and cheese and cook, stirring, until the cheese is partially melted. Pour the sauce over the potatoes.

Llapingachos

Potato Cakes

ECUADOR

This is a typical *sierra* (mountain) dish with a number of variations. It may be served as a first course, 2 cakes to a serving, accompanied by lettuce, avocado slices, and tomato. The potato cakes may be topped with fried eggs, and on the coast it is usual to add slices of fried, ripe plantains and *Salsa de Maní* (Peanut Sauce). Often served with slices of fried bass as a main course, the *Llapingachos* are then accompanied by hot white rice and tomato, lettuce, avocado, cauliflower, green beans, and green peas, all at room temperature, as a salad.

Serves 6

6 pounds potatoes, peeled and sliced

1 lb

4 tablespoons (¼ cup) butter

2 medium onions, finely chopped

2 cups Münster cheese, shredded

lard, butter, or oil, or annatto lard or oil ([this page](#)) for frying

Boil the potatoes in salted water until soft. Drain and mash. Heat the butter in a skillet and sauté the onions until they are very soft. Add the onions to the mashed potatoes, mixing well. Shape the potatoes into 12 balls. Divide the cheese into 12 parts and stuff each of the potato balls with the cheese, flattening them as you do so into cakes or patties about 1 inch thick. Chill in the refrigerator for about 15 minutes. In enough lard, butter, or oil (with or without annatto as you please) to cover the bottom of a skillet, sauté the potato cakes until they are golden brown on both sides. The onions may be omitted, or the potato may be mixed with the cheese instead of the cheese being used as a stuffing.



Tropical root vegetables like the taros, malangas, cassava (yucca), yams, sweet potatoes (including the white sweet potato better known as *boniato*), *arracacha*, *apio*, and Jerusalem artichokes add a new dimension to any meal whether it is a Latin American one or not. Generally speaking they can be cooked as potatoes are, peeled and boiled, then dressed with butter, salt, and freshly ground pepper, or mashed to a purée with butter and a little milk or cream, or baked in the oven, unpeeled like potatoes in their jackets. It is not possible to give exact cooking times for all the root vegetables as they vary so much in size, shape, and texture. However, as a guide, a *boniato* weighing 1 pound takes about 1½ hours in a preheated moderate (350° F.) oven. There is one yam called a *mapuey* that has a marvelously dry texture and positively thirsts for butter. I like to bake or boil it and serve the butter with a lavish hand. Other root vegetables have a moist texture and are nice just with sauce or gravy from the main course. West Indian pumpkin, also called *calabaza*, and other winter squash, though they're not root vegetables, are also marvelous baked or boiled and mashed with butter, or with sauce or gravy. Many of the tropical root vegetables discolor quickly when exposed to the air, so it is wise to peel them under running water and drop them into cold water as soon as they are peeled.

The best way to get to know these enchanting vegetables is to buy and cook them. Markets specializing in tropical foods carry them and the men and women in the markets are usually a mine of information. The various types are discussed in the ingredients section.

✱ Jerusalem Artichokes

Jerusalem artichokes, despite their name, are a root vegetable native to North America. There are not many recipes for them in Latin America.

Topinambur al Horno

Baked Jerusalem Artichokes

CHILE

I found these in Chile. They make a nice change as an accompaniment to steaks or chops.

Serves 6

1 pound Jerusalem artichokes

It

utter

recipe Béchamel (White Sauce), [this page](#)

cup grated Parmesan cheese

Wash and scrape the artichokes and cook in salted water until tender, about 10 to 15

minutes. Drain and slice. Butter a shallow Pyrex or similar dish and arrange the sliced vegetables in it. Pour the Béchamel over the artichokes, sprinkle with the cheese, dot with butter, and bake in a preheated moderate (375° F.) oven for 20 minutes, or until the dish is heated through and lightly browned on top. Serve with steak, chops, or any plainly cooked meat or poultry.

Variation: There is an interesting interplay of textures in this recipe, which is also from Chile. Instead of all Jerusalem artichokes, use 1 pound Jerusalem artichokes and 1 pound potatoes, arrange roughly in layers in the baking dish, and cook as above.



* Cassava

Cassava root, whether eaten as a root vegetable or made into cassava meal as the Brazilians do, is much appreciated throughout Latin America.



Farofa de Azeite de Dendê

Cassava Meal with Palm Oil

BRAZIL

A Brazilian meal would not be complete without some form of *farinha de mandioca* (cassava, or manioc, meal). It may be toasted in a skillet on top of the stove or in a shallow pan in the oven until it is a very light brown. It is then put into a *farinheira*, a sort of shaker, and sprinkled on meat, poultry, and vegetables at the table. As I don't have the traditional shaker, I serve it from a small bowl, and spoon it over foods. It has a light, nutty flavor, quite subtle. The *farofas* are more elaborate and are served with any main course.

Serves 6 to 8

cups cassava (manioc) meal

tablespoons dendê (palm) oil

In a skillet, over low heat, toast the cassava meal until it begins to turn a very pale brown. Stir frequently so that it does not burn. Stir in the *dendê* (palm) oil and cook until it is well blended and the mixture is bright yellow. Transfer to a serving bowl. Serve with *Xinxim de Galinha* (Chicken with Shrimp and Peanut Sauce), or with any meat or poultry.

Variation: For *Farofa de Manteiga* (Cassava Meal with Butter), use butter instead of *dendê* (palm) oil. If liked 1 small onion, finely chopped, may be sautéed in the butter, then scrambled with 1 egg, lightly beaten. The cassava meal is then added, seasoned with salt, and garnished, when ready to serve, with a little finely chopped parsley.

Farofa de Ouro

Cassava Meal with Hardboiled Eggs

BRAZIL

1 cup cassava (manioc) meal

1/2 pound (1/2 cup) butter

1 lb

4 hardboiled eggs, peeled and chopped

In a heavy skillet, preferably iron, toast the cassava meal until it turns a pale beige, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon so that it colors evenly. Put the butter into a small saucepan and melt it over low heat. Pour the butter over the cassava meal, stirring to mix evenly. Season to taste with salt and stir in the eggs. Serve in a bowl as an accompaniment to meats or poultry, or with *Feijoada Completa* (Black Beans with Mixed Meats).

Variation: Garnish the *Farofa* with 1 cup small pitted black or green olives. If liked, chop 6 slices bacon and fry until crisp. Drain and discard the fat. Fold the bacon bits into the cassava meal after the butter has been added.



Picante de Yuca

Cassava Root with Cheese Sauce

PERU

One of the most original cassava dishes is this Peruvian one where the vegetable is masked

by a lively cheese sauce made hot with fresh peppers. The peppers used should be quite large ones, 3 or 4 inches in length, not the tiny very hot ones, as they lend flavor as well as heat. The number of peppers can, of course, be reduced according to individual taste but Peruvians like their food hot and this is how they would have it. They would also use an herb called *huacatay*, of the marigold family, in the sauce, but it is not available here and there is no substitute. The flavor is unusual, a little rank, and it is certainly an acquired taste. I find the sauce good without it. The dish makes an attractive accompaniment to plainly cooked meats or poultry and is also good by itself. The recipe makes about 2½ cups of sauce, which is lovely with corn on the cob or over green vegetables such as green beans or cauliflower to make a vegetarian luncheon dish.

Serves 6

1 pound Spanish fresh cheese (queso fresco or queso blanco), crumbled, or use grated Münster cheese

1½ fresh hot red or green peppers, seeded and chopped

½ cup olive or vegetable oil

1½ t, freshly ground pepper

2 pounds cassava (yucca) root, peeled and sliced

4 hardboiled eggs, sliced

12 black olives

1 lettuce leaves

Put the cheese into a blender or food processor with the peppers and the oil and reduce it to a heavy cream. Season to taste with salt and pepper and set aside. Boil the cassava (yucca) root in salted water until it is tender, about 30 minutes. Drain and arrange the slices on a serving platter and pour the sauce over them while they are still hot. Garnish the platter with the eggs, olives, and lettuce leaves.

Budín de Yuca

Cassava Root Soufflé

GUATEMALA

Guatemala has an interesting way of making cassava root into a soufflé, which can be served instead of rice or other starchy vegetables with meat and poultry dishes, or with *Môlho ao Tomate* (Tomato Sauce), [this page](#), or *Salsa de Jitomate* (Tomato Sauce), [this page](#), and grated Parmesan cheese as a first course or light luncheon dish.

Serves 4

1½ pound cassava (yucca) root

1½ t, freshly ground pepper

4 tablespoons butter

1 cup milk, about

egg yolks
egg whites

Peel the cassava (yucca) root under cold running water, as it discolors quickly. Slice it and drop it into a saucepan of salted water. Bring to a boil, lower the heat, cover, and simmer until tender, about 30 minutes. Drain the cassava, mash, season to taste with salt and pepper, and beat in the butter. Heat the milk and stir it gradually into the mashed vegetable until it has the consistency of mashed potatoes. Use a little more hot milk if necessary. Beat in the egg yolks one by one. Beat the egg whites with a pinch of salt until they stand in firm peaks. Fold them into the vegetable mixture lightly but thoroughly and pour into a 2-quart soufflé dish. Bake in a preheated moderate (350° F.) oven for 35 minutes or until well puffed and lightly browned.

SALADS

Ensalada Mixta

Mixed Salad

ECUADOR

Of all the countries in Latin America, Ecuador has the most imaginative and original approach to vegetables. Cooks there never cease to astonish me with the variety of their salads, many of which I find pleasant for a simple lunch if served in double portions. Because it is only 15 miles from the equator, Quito, Ecuador's capital, has equal day and night so that all year round 12 hours of sunshine encourage fruits and vegetables to grow. This part of the country also has a fantastically deep subsoil and good rainfall so that the raw materials for making salads are of superb quality. At 9,500 feet above sea level, water boils at a lower temperature and vegetables do not get overcooked, and since at this altitude it is always cool in the shade, salads are served at room temperature rather than chilled. I find this enhances flavor, though at sea level in hot summer an unchilled salad will be a wilted and drooping one.

Serves 4

cups chopped lettuce
hardboiled eggs, chopped
cups cooked, cubed potatoes
cups cooked green beans, cut into ½-inch pieces
cup Vinaigrette dressing ([this page](#))

Combine all the ingredients in a salad bowl and toss lightly to mix.

Variation: For *Ensalada de Hongos* (Mushroom Salad), combine equal amounts of cooked corn kernels, cooked chopped carrots, cooked green beans, cut into ½-inch pieces, cooked

green peas, and sliced mushrooms, and toss in vinaigrette dressing.

Variation: For *Ensalada de Garbanzos* (Chickpea Salad), combine cooked chickpeas with half the amount of cooked, coarsely chopped Brussels sprouts and toss in Vinaigrette dressing made with mustard ([this page](#)). Chopped lettuce and cubed boiled potatoes may be added and the Brussels sprouts omitted.

Variation: For *Ensalada de Alcachofas* (Artichoke Heart Salad), mix together equal amounts of cooked, sliced artichoke hearts and sliced apples with Mayonnaise ([this page](#)) to taste.

Variation: For *Ensalada de Papas* (Potato Salad), omit the lettuce, add 2 cups chopped celery and 1 medium tomato, peeled and chopped.

Variation: For *Ensalada de Tomate* (Tomato Salad), combine 4 medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped, with 4 hardboiled eggs, chopped, and 1 cup chopped lettuce. Toss with vinaigrette dressing made with lemon juice.

Variation: For *Ensalada de Pepinos* (Cucumber Salad), peel 2 cucumbers if they are waxed, if not leave them unpeeled and slice very thinly. Put them in a bowl with 1 teaspoon salt, mixing well, and let stand for 30 minutes. Rinse and drain thoroughly. Peel and chop 2 medium tomatoes and combine with the cucumbers. Toss with a vinaigrette dressing.

Variation: For *Ensalada de Papas y Pimientos* (Potato and Sweet Red Pepper Salad), combine 2 cups cooked sliced potatoes, 2 sweet red bell peppers, peeled and sliced, 2 medium-sized mild onions, sliced, or 1 large, halved and sliced, and 2 cucumbers, peeled, seeded, and sliced with $\frac{3}{4}$ cup Vinaigrette dressing ([this page](#)), made with lemon juice and seasoned with 2 pinches nutmeg. Let the salad stand for 1 hour before serving. Mix lightly just before serving.

Ensalada de Habas

Fresh Broad Bean Salad

ECUADOR

Fresh young broad beans are often hard to get. If the beans are older, shell them, drop them into boiling water, let them stand a few minutes, then peel off the tough outer skin. I find English canned broad beans or Italian canned broad beans labeled fava beans a good substitute. These need no cooking and should just be rinsed and drained. I sometimes use baby lima beans. The 12-ounce package of frozen baby limas serves 4.

Serves 4

cups young broad beans, shelled

tablespoons butter

lt, freshly ground pepper

tablespoon white vinegar or lemon juice

Cook the beans in water to cover until they are tender, about 15 minutes. Drain and cool. Melt the butter in a saucepan, add the beans, season to taste with salt and pepper, and cook for about 1 minute, turning the beans with a rubber spatula so that all are coated with the butter. Remove from the heat and pour the vinegar or lemon juice over them, stirring to mix. Serve at room temperature as an accompaniment to meats or poultry.

Salada de Palmito

Hearts of Palm Salad

BRAZIL

Serves 6 to 8

two 1-pound cans hearts of palm

FOR THE MÔLHO PARA PALMITO (Hearts of Palm Dressing)

tablespoon lime or lemon juice

tablespoon Dijon mustard

lt, freshly ground pepper

tablespoons vegetable oil

Thoroughly drain the hearts of palm and cut them into ½-inch slices. Set aside.

In a bowl beat together the lime or lemon juice with the mustard and salt and pepper to taste. Gradually beat in the oil. Pour the dressing over the palm heart slices and toss lightly.



Ensalada de Aguacate

Avocado Salad

This salad is simplicity itself as well as being surprisingly good. The true flavor of the avocado comes through in all its buttery richness.

Serves 6 to 8

tablespoons olive oil

tablespoons white wine vinegar

lt, freshly ground pepper

large, ripe avocados

In a salad bowl beat together the oil and vinegar. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Peel the avocados and remove the pits. Cut the flesh into cubes and toss lightly with the dressing. If liked, serve in a bowl lined with lettuce leaves.

Chojín

Radish and Fried Pork Rind Salad

GUATEMALA

Serves 6 to 8

1 small red radishes, ½ pound about, finely chopped

1 fresh mint leaves, finely chopped

1 cup chicharrones (fried pork rinds), finely chopped

lt to taste

1 cup Seville (bitter) orange juice, or use two-thirds orange juice to one-third lemon juice

Combine all the ingredients in a bowl and serve as a salad first course. If possible, use a Latin American type of *chicharrón*, as it is more flavorful.

Variation: For *Picado de Rábano* (Radish Salad), omit the *chicharrones* (fried pork rinds) and serve as a salad.

Ensalada de Coliflor

Cauliflower Salad

MEXICO

This cauliflower salad looks quite grand on a buffet, the white of the vegetable just visible beneath the pale green of the masking avocado sauce, very summery and pretty especially when garnished with radish roses.

Serves 4 to 6

medium-sized cauliflower, cooked and placed in a serving dish ([this page](#))

recipe for Guacamole (Avocado Sauce), [this page](#), or Guacamole del Norte (Avocado Sauce, Northern Style), [this page](#)

Allow the cooked cauliflower to cool, then mask it with the avocado sauce. Serve immediately as avocado tends to darken. Garnish with radish roses.

Variation: Dominican Republic cooks have their own way of doing this. Mash 1 large avocado with salt, pepper, 1 tablespoon white wine vinegar, 3 tablespoons vegetable oil, and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup finely ground almonds. Mask the cauliflower with the mixture. The oil and vinegar used in this recipe help to keep the avocado sauce from darkening. Garnish with radish roses.

Ensalada de Topinambur

Jerusalem Artichoke Salad

A good change from potato salad. Choose the largest artichokes available to give the finished salad a more attractive look, and be careful not to overcook them as they should be crisp not mushy.

Serves 6

pounds Jerusalem artichokes

lb

recipe Vinaigrette (Oil and Vinegar Dressing), [this page](#)

Wash and scrape the artichokes and cook in salted water until tender, about 10 to 15 minutes. Drain and slice. Allow to cool, then toss with the Vinaigrette.

For a richer salad, mix the artichokes with 1 cup Mayonnaise ([this page](#)), or *Salsa Golf* (Tomato- and Cognac-Flavored Mayonnaise), [this page](#).



Ensalada de Verduras

Vegetable Salad

This is a favorite way of serving vegetables in Ecuador and is often presented as a separate course, before the main course. The vegetables are arranged in rows on a large platter and are served freshly cooked at room temperature. I have had them without any dressing, simply seasoned with salt during the cooking, with a dressing only of oil, salt, and pepper, and with a vinaigrette made with 3 parts oil to 1 part vinegar or lemon juice, and seasoned with salt and pepper. The platter may be decorated with shredded lettuce or garnished with slices of hardboiled egg, or with olives, green or black. The vegetables should be cooked and tossed with the dressing separately. The dressing should not be abundant. The vegetables may be arranged as the cook sees fit: in rows, in heaps, or in circles. The vegetables listed below are the ones most frequently used. I like to serve the platter of mixed vegetables to accompany a main course, especially an Ecuadorian one.

reen peas

ced beets

uliflower, separated in flowerets

reen beans, cut into ½-inch slices

corn kernels

ced carrots

ced potatoes

ced celery

paragus, cut into 1-inch pieces

tichoke hearts, halved or quartered

ny sliced raw zucchini, or larger zucchini, cooked and diced

ced raw tomatoes

ced avocados

Ensalada de Nopalitos

Cactus Salad

MEXICO

This is Mexico's most traditional salad. It is lovely for summer as the juicy yet crisp young cactus pieces are very refreshing.

Serves 6

vo 10-ounce cans nopalitos (cactus pieces)

medium tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped

medium white onion, finely chopped

tablespoons fresh coriander, chopped

cup Vinaigrette dressing ([this page](#))

Rinse the cactus pieces gently in cold water and drain them thoroughly. Combine all the

ingredients in a salad bowl and mix lightly. Chill before serving.

Variation: For a more elaborate salad, line the bowl with lettuce leaves, add the salad, and garnish it with canned *jalapeño* chili rinsed, patted dry, and cut into strips, about $\frac{1}{4}$ pound crumbled fresh cheese (*queso fresco* or *queso blanco* or cottage cheese), or 3 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese, with $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon oregano sprinkled on top of the salad.

Pico de Gallo

Rooster's Beak

MEXICO

The root vegetable used in this salad, *jicama*, comes originally from Mexico but is now grown in the States and can be found in tropical markets. This is the traditional recipe from Jalisco, where the salad is most often served as an hors d'oeuvre with drinks. I like it served as a salad in lieu of dessert.

Serves 6

small jicamas, weighing about 1 pound, peeled and coarsely chopped

navel oranges, peeled, sectioned, and coarsely chopped

It

cayenne pepper

Combine the *jicama*, oranges, and salt to taste in a bowl. Sprinkle with cayenne and chill thoroughly before serving.



Breads and Desserts

Panes y Postres

The people of pre-Columbian America had no breads as we know them but they had their own special flat breads made from corn, *Arepas* and *Tortillas* (already discussed as appetizers). In the colonial period other breads like *Sopa Paraguaya* were invented. Modern Latin American bakeries produce commercial breads like our own as well as *pan dulce*, the sweet breakfast breads of Spain. They are truly international. I have chosen breads that are either indigenous or colonial, like a delicious banana bread from Guatemala, *Pan de Banano*; Mexico's bread rolls, *Bolillos*; Venezuela's corn pancakes, *Cachapas de Jojoto*; and Paraguay's rich and splendid corn bread, *Sopa Paraguaya*. They are not hard to make and add an authentic and different touch to a Latin American meal.

There were few indigenous desserts; people mostly finished a meal with fresh fruits. Some, like pineapple, papaya, the *zapotes* and *anonas*, and *tuna* (fruit of the *nopal* cactus), were unknown to Europe at the time. The Aztecs stuffed tamales with strawberries, that universal fruit; honey was used as a sweetening by both Mayas and Aztecs; and the Incas made desserts from squash and sweet potatoes, but they lacked wheat flour, butter, cream, and sugar to make the pies, puddings, and rich desserts of Europe. It was not until the colonial period and the introduction of sugar cane that desserts began to flourish. Spanish nuns in Peru and Mexico, especially in Puebla, made colonial desserts famous. In Brazil, primarily in Bahia, cooks in the great houses of the sugar plantations created a whole new world of cakes and sweet things for desserts. They drew on the Portuguese tradition of using lots of egg yolks and sugar. Out of this huge array I have chosen a small selection of favorites which I think are suited to the modern palate.

BREADS

Sopa Paraguaya

Paraguayan Corn Bread

PARAGUAY

This is a wonderfully hearty well-flavored corn bread with two kinds of cheese to enrich it and onions sautéed in butter to add to the flavor. It is traditionally served with *So'O-Yosopy* (Beef Soup) and with grilled steaks, but is fine with any meat or poultry dish, or by itself.

tablespoons (½ cup) butter

medium onions, finely chopped

pound farmer or cottage cheese

pound Münster cheese, grated

cups cornmeal

cups grated corn kernels, or a 1-pound can cream-style sweet corn

teaspoon salt, preferably coarse

cup milk

eggs, separated

Grease a baking tin, about 10 by 13 inches, and sprinkle with 1 tablespoon flour. Shake to remove the excess.

In a skillet heat 4 tablespoons of the butter and sauté the onions until they are softened. Set aside. Cream the remaining 4 tablespoons of butter and add to the farmer or cottage cheese, blending thoroughly. Add the Münster cheese and the onions. In another bowl combine the cornmeal, corn, salt, and milk, and mix thoroughly. Combine the corn mixture with the cheese mixture, blending thoroughly.

Beat the egg whites until they form soft peaks and beat the yolks separately. Combine the two and stir them into the cornmeal and cheese mixture. Pour the batter into the baking tin. Bake in a preheated hot (400° F.) oven for 45 minutes, or until a cake tester comes out clean.

A pinch of ground aniseed may be added to the mixture, if liked. Another pleasant variation is to cut enough of the Münster into tiny cubes to measure $\frac{1}{2}$ cup and stir this into the batter at the last moment, if liked. This gives a slightly different texture to the finished bread.

Pan de Banano

Banana Bread

GUATEMALA

This easy-to-make banana bread is lovely for a snack. Spread with honey or topped with fresh fruit, it can be dressed up with cream or ice cream to make an attractive dessert.

Makes one 9-inch loaf

pound ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup) butter

cup sugar

pound ripe bananas (2 or 3 large)

teaspoon salt

teaspoon ground cinnamon

tablespoon lemon juice

egg, well beaten

$\frac{1}{2}$ cups all-purpose flour

teaspoons baking powder

Soften the butter at room temperature and cream it with the sugar in a mixing bowl until light and fluffy. Mash the bananas and add to the butter and sugar mixture. Add the salt,

cinnamon, lemon juice, and egg. Sift the flour with the baking powder and fold it into the liquid mixture. Pour the batter into a greased (9- by 5-inch) loaf pan. Bake in a preheated moderate (350° F.) oven for 1 hour, or until a cake tester comes out clean. Serve with honey as a cake bread, or as a pudding with cream or ice cream.

Tortillas

MEXICO

Makes about eighteen 4-inch tortillas

To make tortillas, see [this page](#).

Tortillas that are served instead of bread with Mexican meals may be made slightly larger, 5 or 6 inches across, though the 4-inch ones are perfectly acceptable. When they are eaten in this way, or made into soft tacos (stuffed, rolled tortillas), they should be brought to the table wrapped in a napkin, then placed in a small woven reed or straw basket. The napkin is always folded back over the tortillas when one is taken so as to keep them warm and soft. In Mexico no one ever takes the top tortilla of the stack, always the second or third to be sure of getting a good hot one. Leftover tortillas are never wasted, as they are the prime ingredient of *chilaquiles*, fried strips of day-old tortilla baked in a chili sauce. They are also used as a garnish in certain soups.

Arepas

Corn Bread

VENEZUELA AND COLOMBIA

The *Arepas* of Venezuela and Colombia are made from corn processed into flour in the same way as the flour for Mexican corn tortillas, but the *arepa* is not a flexible pancake like the tortilla. It looks rather like a pure white round bread roll. The outside is crisp, the inside doughy. In Caracas I have had *Arepas* served with cream cheese as an unusual first course. The doughy inside is pulled out of the *arepa* and it is then filled with the delicious local runny cream cheese. French *crème fraîche* ([this page](#)) is a good substitute, as it is very like the Caracas cream cheese. I've found that cream cheese softened at room temperature and mashed with a little heavy cream also serves nicely as a substitute for the Venezuelan original. Easy to make and taking little time, *Arepas* make a pleasant change from everyday bread and are especially good with Venezuelan dishes. When eaten as bread, the doughy inside is split open, pulled out with the fingers, and the remaining shell is buttered, or the *Arepas* are simply split and buttered. I often top the butter with a little cream cheese as I find the combination irresistible.

Makes 8 to 10

cups corn flour for Arepas (see [this page](#))

teaspoon salt

cups water, about

In a bowl mix the *arepa* flour with the salt. Stir in the water to make a stiffish dough. Add a little more if necessary. Let the dough stand for 5 minutes, then form into balls flattened slightly to 3 inches across and about ½ inch thick. Cook on a heavy, lightly greased griddle over moderate heat for 5 minutes a side, then bake in a preheated moderate (350° F.) oven for 20 to 30 minutes, turning them two or three times during cooking. They are done when they sound hollow when tapped. Serve hot. Traditionally they are wrapped in a napkin and served in a straw basket.

Variation: For *Arepas de Queso* (Corn Bread with Cheese), add 1 cup finely chopped or crumbled *queso fresco* or *queso blanco* (Spanish fresh cheese), or grated Münster cheese.

Variation: For *Arepas de Chicharrones* (Corn Bread with Pork Rinds), add 1 cup *chicharrones* (fried pork rinds), crumbled.

Variation: For *Arepas Santanderinas* (Corn Bread, Santander Style), mix 2 tablespoons lard into the flour before adding the water, working it in thoroughly with your fingers, then make as usual.

Variation: For *Arepas Fritas* (Fried Corn Bread), mix 1 cup grated cheese with the flour. Beat an egg yolk with the water and salt, and mix it with the flour and cheese, kneading the dough thoroughly (about 5 minutes). Roll out into thin circles about 4 inches in diameter and fry in lard or oil until lightly browned on both sides. These may be made smaller, about 1½ inches in diameter, and served as an accompaniment to drinks.

Variation: For *Arepas Fritas Infladas* (Puffed Fried Corn Bread), add to the dough 1 cup grated cheese, ½ cup all-purpose flour, ¼ teaspoon ground anise, and 1 tablespoon sugar, preferably brown. Knead the dough until it is very smooth, about 5 minutes. Form it into small balls and roll them out on a lightly floured board to make thin 3-inch pancakes. Deep fry in hot oil. They should puff up. Serve immediately. I find it easier to lift them with a slotted spoon as they are very soft.

Cachapas de Jojoto

Corn Pancakes

VENEZUELA

These are pleasant eaten instead of bread with a meal. Miniaturized (about 1½ inches across) and wrapped round a piece of Spanish fresh cheese, (*queso fresco* or *queso blanco*), or Münster, they make an attractive cocktail nibble.

Makes about 12

½ cups corn kernels, if frozen thoroughly defrosted

cup heavy cream
2 egg
tablespoons all-purpose flour
teaspoon sugar
teaspoon salt
tablespoons butter, melted
butter for frying

Put all the ingredients into a blender or food processor and mix until smooth. Grease a skillet or omelet pan by rubbing a piece of crumbled wax paper over a stick of butter, then rubbing the pan with the paper. Repeat this process for each pancake. Drop the mixture, 2 tablespoons at a time, into the skillet and fry until lightly browned on both sides, turning once. Serve hot.

Variation: For *Cachapas de Hojas* (Corn Mixture Steamed in Leaves), put 2 tablespoons of the corn mixture into the center of a dry corn husk and fold it up into a package. Arrange the corn husks in a steamer, and steam, covered, over boiling water until firm, about 30 minutes. *Cachapas de Budare* (Corn Mixture in Banana Leaves) are made by stuffing a piece of banana leaf with the corn mixture, folding the leaf into a package, and cooking it over moderate heat on a griddle, turning it twice, then standing it at the side of the griddle to finish cooking. Ideally the *Cachapas* should be baked on a *budare*, a special Venezuelan griddle, and finished at the back of a wood-burning stove. It is possible to improvise using aluminum foil and a heavy griddle, setting both over very low heat on top of two asbestos mats. Faced with the difficulty of getting fresh banana leaves, I have contented myself with *Cachapas de Jojoto*, which are extremely good and present no difficulties at all.

Bolillos

Mexican Bread Rolls

MEXICO

These are the marvelous *petits pains* of Mexico, acquired during the short, unhappy reign of Maximilian and Carlota, wished on the Mexicans by Napoleon III and vigorously resisted by the infant republic. Mexico preferred to remain independent but was in no way reluctant to accept the world's best bread — French bread. To this day I find that *Bolillos*, the spindle-shaped rolls that are sold fresh twice a day in the bakeries of Mexico, are equaled only by bread in France. I find I can make a good approximation of them with little trouble if I get a good, hard wheat flour.

Makes 18

package (¼ ounce) active dry yeast, or ½ ounce fresh yeast
½ teaspoons salt

*cups sifted bread flour**

butter for the bowl

Put the yeast into a large bowl and soften it in $\frac{1}{4}$ cup lukewarm water. When it has liquefied completely, stir in $1\frac{3}{4}$ cups lukewarm water and the salt, and stir to mix. Gradually mix in the flour to make a dough that comes away from the sides of the bowl with a little stickiness. Knead the dough on a lightly floured board for 10 minutes, or until it is smooth and elastic and has lost all its stickiness. Put the dough in a buttered bowl, cover it with a clean cloth, and leave it to rise in a warm place until it has doubled in bulk, about 2 hours.

The oven with just the pilot light lit is a good place to put the dough to rise in cold weather. This is a slow-rising dough and it is important to allow it enough time.

At the end of this time punch the dough down, cover it, and let it rise a second time until again doubled in bulk, about 1 hour. Turn it out onto a lightly floured board and knead it for about 5 minutes. Divide the dough in half. Roll each piece out into an oblong, about 18 inches by 6 inches. Roll each piece up like a jelly roll. Cut each roll into 9 slices, making 18 in all. Pinch the ends of each slice to form a spindle shape and arrange on a buttered baking sheet. Cover and let the rolls rise until they have doubled in bulk, about 1 hour. Brush them lightly with water and bake in a preheated hot (400° F.) oven for about 30 minutes, or until they are golden brown.

DESSERTS

Creme de Abacate

Avocado Cream

BRAZIL

Apart from avocado ice cream, which I confess I do not care for, this is the only dessert using avocados that I have come across. It was part of our kitchen repertoire during the years we lived in Jamaica, and later on I was puzzled by this as it was so clearly not a Jamaican dish. The mystery was solved by my mother, who told me it had been given her by the Brazilian lady who was the previous tenant of the house we rented — a sort of parting gift.

Serves 6

large, ripe avocados, chilled

tablespoons fresh lime juice

tablespoons superfine sugar

Halve the avocados, remove the pits, and mash them in their shells with a fork. Turn them out into a bowl and mash until smooth with the lime juice and sugar. Pile the mixture into glass serving dishes and garnish, if liked, with a little grated lime peel or a slice of lime.

Mazamorra Morada

Peruvian Fruit Compote

PERU

Mazamorra is a dish made with cornstarch and sugar or honey. This *Mazamorra* is made with *maíz morado*, the purple corn of Peru that gives off a most beautiful deep purple color when it is simmered in water. It has a delicate, flowery, lemony taste. Purple corn is not readily available outside Peru but fortunately the Hopi Indians grow it in Arizona and it can be ordered by mail. However, I have found I can get the same lovely color by using blackberries, and, by orchestrating the flavors a little differently, the same flavor may be obtained as well. This is a luscious and refreshing dessert, lovely for a summer buffet.

Serves 8 to 10

1 1/2 pound purple corn kernels

6 cups water

1/2 cups sugar

4 cloves

1 3-inch piece of stick cinnamon

1 small pineapple, peeled, cored, and cubed

1/2 quinces, peeled and sliced

1/2 pears, peeled and sliced

1/2 peaches, pitted, peeled, and sliced

1/2 pound cherries, pitted

1/2 pound dried apricots, halved

1/2 pound dried peaches, quartered

4 tablespoons cornstarch

juice of 2 lemons, about 6 tablespoons

1/2 pound cinnamon (optional)

Put the purple corn kernels into a saucepan with the water, bring to a boil, and simmer until the corn is cooked, about 30 minutes, and the water is a deep purple. Strain and discard the corn. Measure the liquid and add more water to make 6 cups, if necessary. Return the purple water to the saucepan and add the sugar, cloves, cinnamon stick, pineapple, quinces, pears, peaches, cherries, dried apricots, and dried peaches. Bring the liquid to a simmer, cover the saucepan, and cook gently over low heat until the fruit is tender, about 15 minutes. Remove and discard the cloves and cinnamon. Dissolve the cornstarch in 1/4 cup water and stir it into the fruit mixture. Cook until the liquid is thickened, then stir in the lemon juice. Chill the compote and serve it sprinkled with a little cinnamon, if liked.

Variation: Cook the fruit in plain water. Add 2 apples, peeled and sliced, and 1/2 pound

blackberries to the other fruit, otherwise make the dish in the same way.

Flan de Piña

Pineapple Custard

COLOMBIA

This is a very old family recipe given to me by my friend Cecilia Blanco de Mendoza, an authority on traditional Colombian cooking.

Serves 6

cup sugar

cup unsweetened pineapple juice

cup sugar

eggs

In the top of a double boiler (6½-cup size) over boiling water melt the ¼ cup sugar over moderate heat, stirring constantly, until it has melted and is a rich caramel color. Dip the bottom of the container into cold water for a second or two, then turn the mold so that the caramel coats sides as well as bottom. Set aside.

In a saucepan combine the pineapple juice and 1 cup sugar and cook, stirring, until the liquid is reduced to half and is quite thick. Cool the syrup. Beat the eggs until they are thick and lemon-colored. Pour the syrup into the eggs in a thin, slow stream, beating all the time. Pour the mixture into the prepared caramelized container. On the top of the stove cook the custard, covered, over barely simmering water for about 2 hours, or until it is set. Cool and refrigerate until ready to serve. Before serving unmold by running a knife between the custard and the container, then place a serving dish over the mold and invert quickly.

Dulce de Piña con Arracacha

Arracacha and Pineapple Dessert

COLOMBIA

This is an unusual use of a root vegetable. The leggy vegetable ([this page](#)) can be found in tropical markets and is well worth looking for. It has a taste reminiscent of celery, which marries well with the pineapple juice it is simmered with. The sweet has a fresh, invigorating flavor.

Serves 4 to 6

½ pounds apio

cups unsweetened pineapple juice

cup sugar, or more to taste

Peel and slice the *apio* and put it on to cook in a saucepan with cold water to cover.

Simmer, covered, until it is tender, about 30 minutes. Drain and mash. Add the pineapple juice and the sugar and cook the mixture, uncovered, over low heat, stirring frequently, until it forms a thick paste and the bottom of the saucepan can be seen when the spoon is drawn across it. Transfer to a dessert dish and chill. Serve by itself, or with whipped cream or ice cream.

Mousse de Castanhas de Caju e Chocolate

Cashew Nut and Chocolate Mousse

BRAZIL

Serves 6 to 8

ounces (2 squares) unsweetened chocolate

cup sugar

egg yolks

cup roasted cashew nuts, finely ground

cup heavy cream

egg whites



Break the chocolate into small pieces and put with 2 to 3 tablespoons of water into the top of a double boiler over boiling water. Add the sugar and stir until the chocolate is melted and the sugar dissolved. Remove the pan from the heat and beat in the egg yolks, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Stir in the ground cashew nuts. Beat the cream until it stands in firm peaks and fold it into the chocolate mixture. Beat the egg whites until they stand in firm peaks and fold into the chocolate mixture, lightly but thoroughly. Pour into a 1-quart soufflé dish and refrigerate overnight or for several hours. Serve, if liked, with sweetened whipped cream.

Capirotada

Bread Pudding

MEXICO

This is a very special bread pudding, a great favorite in Mexico during Lent and a marvelous dessert at any time, especially for a holiday buffet. I make my *Capirotada* from a recipe given me by my husband's grandmother, and I use brown sugar flavored with

cinnamon and cloves for the syrup in which it is drenched before baking. A good friend, the writer Elizabeth Borton de Treviño, sent me a grandly extravagant recipe for the syrup, which she was given by a friend, Señora Estela Santos Coy de Cobo, who had it from her grandmother. It is a blend of disparate flavors — orange rind, tomato, onion, cloves, green or red pepper — which one would never expect to work, yet work it does, lusciously.

Serves 6 to 8

FOR THE SYRUP

cups piloncillo or brown sugar, firmly packed

2-inch piece of stick cinnamon

small onion, stuck with 3 cloves

medium red or green bell pepper, seeded and halved

el from 1 medium orange, shredded

cup fresh coriander (cilantro), chopped

small tomato, peeled, seeded, and chopped

cups water

Combine all the ingredients in a saucepan, bring to a boil, reduce the heat, and simmer, partially covered, for 30 minutes. Allow to cool a little. Strain, discard the solids, and set the syrup aside.

FOR THE PUDDING

butter

cups of ½-inch cubes toasted French or firm white bread

apples, peeled, cored, and thinly sliced

cup raisins

cup chopped blanched almonds

pound Münster, Monterey Jack, cheddar, or similar cheese, coarsely chopped

Butter a 2-quart ovenproof casserole or soufflé dish and make a layer of cubes of toast. Add a layer of apple slices, raisins, almonds, and cheese. Repeat until all the ingredients are used up. Pour the syrup over the dish. Bake in a preheated moderate (350° F.) oven for 45 minutes, or until heated through. Serve hot.

Variation: For a slightly richer dish sauté the bread cubes in ½ cup vegetable oil or butter.

Variation: For a simpler syrup simmer 2 cups brown sugar with a 2-inch piece of stick

cinnamon, 2 cloves, and 4 cups water to make a light syrup. Remove the cinnamon and cloves before using.

Dulce de Queso

Cheese Sweet

COLOMBIA

Serves 4 to 6

1 pound mozzarella cheese, about

1 cup dark brown sugar

1 cup water

2-inch piece of stick cinnamon

Let the cheese come to room temperature. Using a very sharp knife, cut the cheese horizontally into ¼-inch slices and arrange them in a shallow Pyrex dish. In a small saucepan combine the sugar, water, and cinnamon, and bring to a boil, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Boil for 5 minutes without stirring. Pour the syrup over the cheese and serve immediately. For a softer cheese, put the prepared dish in a preheated 350° F. oven for 5 minutes.

✳ Coconut Desserts

Coconut is used a great deal in Latin American desserts. Since fresh coconuts are available in tropical markets and supermarkets all year, I prefer to use them rather than packaged coconut. Brazilian cooks have worked out an excellent method of getting the coconut out of the shell, and a food processor makes the rest of the work easy (see [this page](#)).

Cocada

Coconut Custard

MEXICO

Serves 6

½ cups sugar

2-inch piece of stick cinnamon

Juice from a medium-sized coconut, ½ cup, about

1 cup grated coconut ([this page](#))

1 cup milk

whole eggs, lightly beaten

tablespoons butter, or ½ cup toasted slivered almonds

In a saucepan combine the sugar, cinnamon stick, and coconut water. Stir the mixture over low heat until the sugar is dissolved. Add the coconut and continue to cook the mixture, stirring, until the coconut is transparent, about 5 minutes. Remove and discard the cinnamon stick. Stir in the milk, mixing thoroughly. Simmer, over moderate heat, stirring from time to time, until the mixture has thickened and a spoon drawn across the bottom leaves a clean path. Pour ½ cup of the mixture into the eggs, beating constantly with a whisk. Pour the egg mixture back into the saucepan and cook, stirring constantly, over low heat until it has thickened. Do not let it boil. Remove from the heat and pour into a flameproof serving dish (a 1-quart soufflé dish is fine), cool, then refrigerate for several hours. Just before serving, dot the pudding with the butter, and put it under the broiler until the top is lightly browned; or garnish with the slivered almonds.

Variation: For *Dulce de Coco* (Coconut Sweet) from Colombia, soak ¾ cup raisins in hot water for 15 minutes, drain, and put into a heavy saucepan with 4 cups grated coconut, the coconut water made up to 1 cup with water, 4 tablespoons lemon juice, 1½ cups sugar, and a 3-inch piece of stick cinnamon. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat, and simmer until the syrup forms a thread when tested in cold water. Remove and discard the cinnamon stick. Beat 3 egg yolks in a bowl until they are thick and lemon-colored. Beat in 3 tablespoons of the coconut syrup, a tablespoon at a time. Gradually pour the yolk mixture into the coconut mixture and cook over low heat, stirring constantly, for 5 minutes without letting it boil. Cool and refrigerate several hours before serving. Serves 6.

Variation: *Doce de Leite Baiana* (Bahian Style Coconut and Milk Pudding) is a simpler, but still delicious, version of coconut custard. Combine 4 cups finely grated fresh coconut with 4 cups milk and 2¼ cups firmly packed light brown sugar in a heavy saucepan and cook over moderate heat until the mixture is thick and has the consistency of custard. Stir the mixture from time to time with a wooden spoon until it begins to thicken, then stir constantly. Transfer the pudding to a serving dish and serve at room temperature. Serves 6 to 8.

Variation: Writer and friend Elizabeth Borton de Treviño gave me this recipe, given her by the Acapulco cook of the Limantour family at their *quinta* Los Bichitos. It needs less watching than top-of-the-stove versions and has a rather denser texture. For this *Cocada*, simmer 3 cups milk with 1½ cups sugar in an uncovered saucepan for 20 minutes, or until the mixture is slightly thickened. Let it cool. Lightly beat 6 eggs, then beat them into the milk mixture. Stir in ½ teaspoon almond extract and 3 cups freshly grated coconut. Pour into a buttered Pyrex dish. Set in a pan of water so that the water comes 2 inches up the side and bake in a preheated moderate (350° F.) oven for 1½ hours, or until a cake tester comes out clean. Cool and chill before serving. Serves 6 to 8.

Variation: *Pudim de Côco* (Coconut Pudding) from Brazil is a rather richer version of coconut custard. Combine 1 cup sugar with $\frac{1}{3}$ cup water in a small saucepan and simmer until it spins a thread (234° F. on a candy thermometer). Remove from the heat and stir in 4 tablespoons ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup) butter. Cool. Stir in 2 cups grated coconut. Thoroughly beat 5 egg yolks until they are very light, and fold into the coconut mixture. Pour into a buttered 3-cup baking dish or soufflé dish, set in a pan of water so that the water extends 2 inches up the side, and bake in a preheated moderate (350° F.) oven for 1 to 1½ hours, or until a cake tester comes out clean. Serve at room temperature. Traditionally the pudding is served with cheese. Use Spanish fresh cheese (*queso fresco* or *queso blanco*), Münster, or similar cheese. Serves 6.

Manjar de Coco com Môlho de Ameixas

Coconut Blancmange with Prune Sauce

BRAZIL

Serves 6

FOR THE BLANCMANGE

cups finely grated fresh coconut

cups milk

gar to taste

tablespoons cornstarch

In a saucepan combine the coconut and milk and bring to a simmer. Remove from the heat and steep for 30 minutes. Strain the liquid through a cheesecloth-lined sieve into a bowl, squeezing the cloth to extract all the liquid. There should be 4 cups. If necessary add a little milk to make up the quantity. Season with sugar to taste. Rinse out and dry the saucepan. Mix a little of the coconut milk with the cornstarch and stir it into the rest of the milk. Pour the mixture into the saucepan and cook, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, over moderate heat until it is smooth and thick, about 5 minutes. Pour it into a 1-quart mold rinsed out with cold water and refrigerate until set. Unmold onto a serving plate and surround with the prune sauce.

FOR THE SAUCE

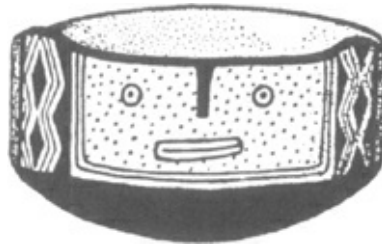
pound, about 24, pitted prunes

cup tawny port

½ cups sugar

cup water

Put the prunes into a bowl with the port and let them macerate for 30 minutes. In a medium saucepan combine the sugar and water. Simmer for 5 minutes to make a fairly heavy syrup. Add the prunes and port and simmer for 5 minutes longer. Cool, chill, and use to garnish the *Manjar de Coco*.



Quindins de Yáya

Coconut Cupcake Dessert

BRAZIL

Makes 24

cups freshly grated coconut

tablespoons softened butter

½ cups light brown sugar

large egg yolks

egg white, well beaten

butter

cup sifted all-purpose flour (optional)

In a large bowl mix together the coconut, butter, and sugar, beating to mix thoroughly. One by one beat in the egg yolks, beating thoroughly after each addition. Fold in the egg white beaten until stiff peaks form. Some cooks add a little flour, in which case beat in the flour after all the other ingredients have been combined. The addition of flour gives a lighter, more cakelike texture. Butter 24 muffin tins. Pour the mixture into the tins and stand them in a baking pan with hot water to reach about halfway up the sides of the tins. Bake in a preheated moderate (350° F.) oven for about 45 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the cakes comes out clean.

Some modern cooks use a 9- or 10-inch pie plate instead of individual muffin tins. The cooking time should be increased to 1½ or 2 hours, or until a toothpick inserted into the cake comes out clean.

✳ Pumpkin and Squash Desserts

Torta de Zapallo

Pumpkin Cake

ECUADOR

Calabaza (West Indian pumpkin), which is used so much all over Latin America as a vegetable and in soups and stews, is also used in some delectable puddings, cakes, and fritters.

Serves 8

½ pounds peeled and cubed West Indian pumpkin (calabaza) or any winter squash, or use two 12-ounce packages cooked, frozen squash

teaspoon cinnamon

cup sugar

cup heavy cream

tablespoons butter

ounces dark rum

cup seedless raisins

cup grated Münster cheese

large eggs, well beaten

Cook the squash in water to cover until tender, about 15 minutes. Drain thoroughly. If using frozen squash, simply thaw it. Put the squash in a saucepan and stir in the cinnamon, sugar, heavy cream, and 1 tablespoon of the butter. Mash the squash and cook it over low heat until the sugar has dissolved and the mixture is fairly firm, not watery. Remove from the heat and allow to cool. Add all the remaining ingredients, except the reserved butter. Using the butter, grease a 2-quart soufflé dish and pour in the squash mixture. Bake in a preheated moderate (350° F.) oven until the cake is firm to the touch, about 1 hour. An ounce of rum may be poured over the cake while it is still hot, if liked. Serve as a pudding from the soufflé dish plain, or with whipped or sour cream.

Pudim de Abóbora

Pumpkin Pudding

BRAZIL

Serves 6

large eggs

teaspoon salt

cup light brown sugar

teaspoon ground ginger

teaspoon ground cinnamon

teaspoon ground cloves

teaspoon ground nutmeg

½ cups cooked mashed winter squash or, preferably, West Indian pumpkin (calabaza)
cup evaporated milk or light cream
butter for the mold

Break the eggs into a large bowl and beat them lightly. Beat in the salt, brown sugar, ginger, cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, squash, and evaporated milk or cream. Butter a 1-quart mold or pudding basin and pour in the custard. Set it in a pan of hot water so that the water extends 2 inches up the side and bake in a preheated moderate (350° F.) oven until a toothpick inserted into the custard comes out clean, about 1½ hours.

Picarones

Sweet Fritters

PERU

Serves 8 to 12

1 pound West Indian pumpkin (calabaza) or any winter squash, peeled and sliced
1 pound sweet potato, preferably white sweet potato (boniato), peeled and sliced
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon ground aniseed
2 cups all-purpose flour, sifted
1 envelope (¼ ounce) yeast
vegetable oil for deep frying

Cook the pumpkin or squash and sweet potato in water to cover until they are tender. Drain the vegetables, mash them, and force them through a sieve. Mix in the salt, aniseed, and flour. Soften the yeast in ¼ cup of lukewarm water and mix it into the flour to make a fairly firm dough, adding a little more water if necessary, though the pumpkin and sweet potato will probably supply enough moisture. Knead the dough until it is smooth and satiny, about 5 minutes. Place it in a bowl, cover with a cloth, and allow to stand in a warm, draft-free place for 2 or 3 hours, or until it has doubled in bulk. Pull off pieces of dough by tablespoons and shape them into rings. Deep fry them in hot oil (370° F.) until they are browned on both sides. Drain on paper towels and serve with *Miel de Chancaca* (Sugar Syrup).

MIEL DE CHANCACA (Sugar Syrup)

1 cup dark brown sugar
1 cup sugar
1 cup water
1 piece lemon peel

piece orange peel

Combine all the ingredients in a saucepan and simmer until the syrup is quite thick. Remove and discard the orange and lemon peel. Serve as a dipping sauce with the *Picarones*.

Pristiños

Pumpkin Fritters

ECUADOR

Serves 6

cups all-purpose flour

teaspoon baking powder

teaspoon salt

tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese

pound (½ cup) butter, softened at room temperature

cup cooked, mashed West Indian pumpkin (calabaza)

l or lard for deep frying

Sift the flour, baking powder, and salt into a bowl. Add the cheese. Work the butter into the mixture with your fingers, then the pumpkin with a fork. The pumpkin should supply enough moisture to make a soft but not sticky dough. Turn the dough onto a floured board and roll out to a ½-inch thickness. Cut it into strips 1 inch wide and 6 inches long. Form each strip into a ring, pinching the ends lightly together. Deep fry in hot oil or lard (350° F. to 365° F.) until golden brown on all sides. Drain on paper towels and serve with cinnamon syrup.

CINNAMON SYRUP

cups dark brown sugar, firmly packed

1-inch piece of stick cinnamon

In a saucepan combine the sugar with 1 cup water and the cinnamon stick. Stir the mixture to dissolve the sugar and simmer over moderate heat for 5 minutes. Discard the cinnamon stick.

*** Milk Pudding**

There is a dessert made from milk simmered with sugar until it is thick that is popular throughout Latin America. It has a variety of names — *Manjar Blanco*, *Natillas Piuranas*, *Arequipe*, *Dulce de Leche*, *Cajeta de Celaya* — and the cooking technique varies slightly from country to country. I think milk pudding is about the most practical translation. Making this can be time-consuming, about 1½ hours, if one stands at the stove and conscientiously stirs the mixture with a wooden spoon, but I have found that if the heat is kept low one can make the pudding, stirring from time to time, while doing other things in the kitchen. Once the mixture begins to thicken, however, it does need constant stirring or the texture suffers and is grainy instead of smooth. But this is only in the last 5 minutes or so. Everyone in Latin America knows the *truco*, or trick, of boiling an unopened can of sweetened condensed milk until it caramelizes, but most cooks prefer the results of the longer method. However, there is a very quick Colombian version using sweetened condensed milk and evaporated milk that is delicious, and a nice compromise. It is amazing how great a difference in taste and texture is produced by small differences in proportions and cooking methods for this most delicate of desserts.



Natillas Piuranas

Brown Sugar Pudding

PERU

Ideally this should be made with goat's milk but I have found that using a mixture of milk and cream or evaporated milk gives a very good result.

Serves 4 to 6

cups dark brown sugar

cup water

cups milk

cup light cream or evaporated milk

teaspoon baking soda

cup finely ground walnuts

In a large, heavy saucepan combine the brown sugar and the water and cook over low heat, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, until the sugar is dissolved. In another

saucepan combine the milk, light cream or evaporated milk, and the baking soda. Stir to mix and bring almost to a boil over fairly high heat. Pour into the dissolved sugar, stirring to mix thoroughly, and cook, stirring frequently, until the mixture is thick and caramel-colored and the bottom of the pan can be seen when the spoon is drawn across it. Stir in the walnuts, mixing well. It will take about 1 hour. Serve either chilled or at room temperature.

Manjar Blanco

Milk Pudding

CHILE

Serves 6

cups milk

½ cups sugar

2-inch piece of vanilla bean

In a heavy saucepan combine all the ingredients and bring to a simmer. Cook, stirring from time to time, over low heat until the mixture begins to thicken. Remove the piece of vanilla bean. Simmer, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, until the mixture is thick enough so the bottom of the pan can be seen when the spoon is drawn across it. It will take about an hour. Do not overcook or the pudding will turn into candy. Turn into a serving bowl and serve either slightly chilled or at room temperature.

Variation: For *Dulce de Leche* (Milk Sweet or Dessert) from Paraguay, combine 10 cups milk, 1 teaspoon vanilla essence, ½ teaspoon baking soda, and 2 cups sugar in a saucepan and stir from time to time, off the heat, until the sugar is dissolved. Bring to a simmer and cook over very low heat, to prevent the milk from boiling over, stirring occasionally with a wooden spoon until the mixture is thick and caramel-colored. When the mixture begins to thicken, stir constantly. The pudding is ready when the bottom of the saucepan can be seen when the spoon is drawn across it, or when a spoonful on a plate no longer runs but retains its shape. The pudding may be varied by increasing the amount of sugar to 3 cups or by increasing the amount of milk to 12 cups. Serves 6 to 8.

Variation: For *Arequipe* (Milk Pudding) from Colombia, there is a recipe almost identical to the one above from Paraguay but using 12 cups milk to 4 cups sugar.

Variation: There is another *Arequipe* that is very successful and a splendid shortcut. Put 2 cups evaporated milk and 2 cups sweetened condensed milk into a heavy saucepan, stir to mix thoroughly, bring to a simmer, and cook, stirring constantly, until the mixture is thick and golden and the bottom of the pan can be seen when the spoon is drawn across it. Serve with wedges of cheese, preferably Spanish fresh cheese (*queso fresco* or *queso blanco*), or

with Münster, Edam, or Gouda.

Variation: For *Dulce de Leche Con Huevos* (Milk Sweet with Eggs), simmer 8 cups of milk with 2 cups sugar, a vanilla bean, and a 2-inch piece of stick cinnamon until the mixture begins to thicken. Remove the vanilla bean and cinnamon stick. When the pudding is thick, remove from the heat and stir in 4 well-beaten egg yolks. Return the pudding to the heat and cook, stirring, for 2 minutes. Remove from the heat. Beat 4 egg whites until they stand in peaks and add to the pudding, off the heat. Return the pudding to the heat and cook, stirring constantly, until it is again thick. Off the heat beat the pudding until it is cool. Turn into a dessert dish and chill until ready to serve. Serves 6 to 8.

Variation: The best milk puddings of Mexico come from the rich mining and farming state of Guanajuato. The most famous of them is *Cajeta de Celaya*, which means literally box from the town of Celaya and refers to the small wooden boxes in which the sweet is packaged. Put 3 cups each cow's and goat's milk, mixed with $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon baking soda and 2 teaspoons cornstarch, in a heavy saucepan with 2 cups sugar and a fig leaf, if available, and simmer the mixture in the usual way until thick. Discard the fig leaf and pour the pudding into a serving bowl. Serve chilled or at room temperature. Goat's milk is sometimes available in health or specialty stores.

For *Cajeta Envinada* (Milk Pudding with Wine), stir $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sherry, muscatel, or Madeira into the finished sweet. For *Cajeta de Leche Quemada* (Pudding of Burned Milk), the sugar is caramelized before the milk is added. To do this the sugar is put into a heavy saucepan over low heat and stirred constantly with a wooden spoon until it melts and turns coffee color. The milk should be added little by little, off the heat, and stirred well to mix. The pudding is then cooked in the usual way. It is a deep, rich amber color. There is a little *truco* here that some cooks use — they substitute light brown sugar for white sugar. For *Cajeta de Almendra Envinada* (Milk Pudding with Almonds and Wine), add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup ground almonds and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sherry, muscatel, or Madeira. Serve the pudding by itself, or with ice cream or slices of pound cake or cookies. Serves 6.

Chongos Zamoranos

Custard Squares in Syrup

MEXICO

This is a different kind of milk pudding, and as great a favorite in Mexican households today as it was in colonial times. There are many versions. This one from Zamora in Michoacán is the one I like best. *Chongo* means a tuft of hair tied on top of the head — a very fanciful way to describe this dessert.

Serves 8

quarts (8 cups) milk

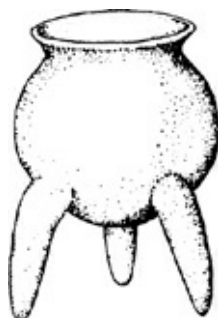
egg yolks, lightly beaten

rennet tablets

½ cups sugar

2-inch piece of stick cinnamon

Heat the milk to lukewarm. Off the heat, beat in the egg yolks. Pour the mixture into a deep, straight-sided flameproof dish about 8 inches by 10 inches. Dissolve the rennet tablets in ¼ cup cold water and add to the milk mixture. Let the mixture stand in a warm place until it is set, about 1 hour. Using a sharp knife cut it into 2-inch squares disturbing it as little as possible. Sprinkle with the sugar. Break up the cinnamon stick and sprinkle the bits over the junket. Place over the lowest possible heat, using an asbestos mat if necessary to keep the liquid below simmering point, for about 2 hours. The sugar and the whey from the junket will form a thick syrup. Chills before serving.



Quimbolitos

Steamed Puddings

ECUADOR

Serves 6

tablespoons (¼ cup) butter

tablespoons sugar

eggs, well beaten

cup milk

cup all-purpose flour

cup cornstarch

teaspoons baking powder

cup grated Parmesan cheese

cup seedless raisins

tablespoons cognac or light rum

Soften the butter at room temperature. In a bowl cream together the butter and sugar until the mixture is light and fluffy. Add the eggs mixed with the milk. Sift together the flour, cornstarch, and baking powder, and stir into the batter mixture. Stir in the cheese, raisins, and cognac or rum.

Cut either kitchen parchment or aluminum foil into six 8- by 12-inch rectangles. Drop a scant 3 tablespoons of the mixture into the center of each, and fold up into an envelope. Arrange in a steamer and cook over boiling water for 45 minutes. Serve hot, with or without cream.

In Ecuador the *Quimbolitos* are cooked in *achira* leaves, the leaf of the taro plant, perhaps better known as *dasheen* or *yautía*. Nothing seems to be lost by cooking them in parchment or foil, however.

✳ Cakes

Torta del Cielo

Heavenly Cake

MEXICO

This cake is served on all kinds of special occasions in Yucatán: engagement parties, weddings, baptisms, first communions, birthdays, and so on. There are many versions, some using no flour at all, just ground almonds. This is the version I prefer and I find it aptly named.

Serves 12

1 1/2 pounds blanched almonds

1 1/2 cups cake flour

1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder

4 eggs, separated

1 1/4 cups sugar

1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract

1/4 pinch of salt

Cut a piece of wax paper to fit a 10-inch springform pan and oil it lightly. Fit it into the bottom of the pan. Do not oil the sides.

Grind the nuts, 1/2 cup at a time, in a blender, food processor, or nut grinder, and shake them through a sieve. Sift the flour with the baking powder into a bowl and mix thoroughly with the nuts. In another bowl beat the egg yolks, adding the sugar gradually until they are light, thick, and lemon-colored and form a ribbon when lifted from the bowl. Stir in the vanilla. Beat the egg whites with the pinch of salt until they stand in firm peaks. Sprinkle the flour and nut mixture onto the egg yolks, add the whites, and, using a rubber spatula, lightly fold them all together. Do not overmix, fold only until the last patches of white disappear. Pour the mixture into the prepared pan and bake in a preheated moderate (375° F.) oven for 50 minutes, or until a cake tester comes out clean. Invert on a wire rack and allow to cool thoroughly for 1 to 2 hours. Remove from the pan and peel off the wax paper.

Turn right side up and dust with confectioners' sugar. The cake may be served with whipped cream, ice cream, fruit salad, or by itself. It may be frosted with a butter cream frosting, if liked.

Variation: Use 1 pound ground almonds and omit the flour and baking powder. Beat the egg whites until they stand in firm peaks, then beat in the yolks, two at a time, adding 2 extra yolks. Then beat in the almonds, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup at a time, and 1 pound confectioners' sugar, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup at a time. Stir in the vanilla.

Torta de Castanhas-Do-Pará

Brazil Nut Cake

BRAZIL

This rich yet light cake from Brazil makes a splendid dessert. I like it as a change from *Quindins de Yáyá* (Coconut Cupcake Dessert) to follow *Feijoada Completa* (Black Beans with Mixed Meats). Brazil nuts take the place of flour in the cake itself, an airy thing of egg whites. The egg yolks make a luscious filling, while the chocolate frosting adds the final luxurious touch.

Serves 12 to 14

FOR THE CAKE

egg whites

cup sugar

ounces Brazil nuts, finely ground

butter

Beat the egg whites until they stand in firm, unwavering peaks. Gradually beat in the sugar. Fold in the nuts, gently but thoroughly. Have ready two 8-inch cake tins lined with buttered wax paper or kitchen parchment. Pour in the cake batter and bake in a preheated moderate (350° F.) oven for 40 minutes. The cakes will puff up but will fall as they cool. When they are cool, spread generously with the filling and sandwich the cakes together. Cover with chocolate frosting.

FOR THE FILLING

cup sugar

cup water

egg yolks

Combine the sugar and water in a small saucepan and cook over moderate heat until the

syrup reaches the soft ball stage, when a little of the syrup dropped on a saucer holds its shape but flattens out, 234° F. on a candy thermometer. Beat the egg yolks until they are thick and lemon-colored, then beat in the cooled syrup. Pour into the top of a double boiler and cook, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, over low heat until the mixture is thick. Cool before using to fill the cake.

FOR THE FROSTING

ounces semisweet chocolate, broken into bits

cup sugar

cup coffee or water

egg white, beaten until stiff

In the top of a double boiler over moderate heat, combine the chocolate, sugar, and coffee or water, and cook, stirring, until the sugar is dissolved and the mixture smooth. Cool. Beat in the egg white. Spread over the cake. Refrigerate the cake until the frosting is firm.

For a simpler frosting melt 2 ounces semisweet chocolate in 2 tablespoons coffee or water in the top of a double boiler over moderate heat. Off the heat, beat 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into bits, into the chocolate mixture. Continue to beat the mixture until it is cool. Spread over the cake.



* Bread flour is one with a higher mixture of hard wheat. All-purpose flour may be substituted.

Sauces

Salsas



Because the sauce is incorporated into so many Latin American dishes, there is not a large body of separate sauces. At the same time it could be said with justification that Mexican cuisine is one of sauces with infinite variations played on a theme. The same is true of Peruvian cooking. No one has ever codified these sauces and it might, if it could be done, complicate rather than simplify matters. Every country has some form of hot pepper sauce, always present on family tables, so that the amount of fire in one's food is discretionary, though Peruvian dishes tend to be pretty hot in their own right. French sauces, sometimes with names that startle a little, have migrated to Latin America, and so has the technique of the *sofrito*, that useful mixture of sautéed onion and garlic, which began in Spain and Portugal and was expanded during the colonial period from its simple original form to include peppers and tomatoes, gifts of the New World. The avocado-based sauces are well represented, as are sauces with tomato.

Pebre

Chilean Hot Pepper Sauce

CHILE

The number of hot peppers used in this sauce is purely discretionary. Some people like it very hot, and it is then just called *Salsa Picante* (Hot Sauce). As many as 8 hot peppers might be used. Others prefer it mild. Hot red peppers may be used instead of green.

Makes about 1 cup

medium onion, finely chopped

clove garlic, minced

tablespoons finely chopped fresh coriander (cilantro)

tablespoon finely chopped parsley

or more fresh hot green peppers, seeded and finely chopped
tablespoons olive oil
tablespoon lemon juice
lt to taste

Combine all the ingredients in a bowl and let stand for about 1 hour before serving for the flavor to develop. Serve with any meat and with *Porotos Granados* (Cranberry Beans with Corn and Squash).

Salsa de Ají

Hot Pepper Sauce

COLOMBIA

Makes about 1 cup

pound fresh hot red or green peppers
teaspoon salt, or to taste
medium onion, finely chopped

Remove the seeds from the peppers and chop them coarsely. In a blender or food processor grind them to a pulp with the salt. Add the chopped onion and mix well.

Salsa de Ají Picante

Hot Pepper Sauce

ECUADOR

There are many versions of hot pepper sauce. This one is from the coast.

esh hot red or green peppers
d onion
mon juice
lt

Seed the peppers and cut them into small strips. Combine the peppers with an equal amount of finely chopped red onion in a wide-mouthed glass jar. Cover the vegetables with lemon juice, add salt to taste, and let the sauce stand for 3 to 4 hours before using. The lemon juice may be diluted by adding a little hot water.

Ixni-Pec

Hot Pepper Sauce

MEXICO

Pronounced roughly schnee-peck, this is the fresh, hot pepper sauce that always appears on Yucatecan dining tables in a small bowl or sauceboat. It should be taken with discretion for, though it has a lovely flavor, it is very hot. The pepper used is the yellow *habanero*. I have found that pickled hot peppers from the Caribbean, usually from Trinidad or Jamaica, have an almost identical flavor and make a splendid substitute.

Makes about 1 cup

*cup each finely chopped onion, tomato, and hot chili pepper, rinsed if pickled
ville (bitter) orange juice, or use two-thirds orange juice to one-third lime juice
It*

In a bowl combine the onion, tomato, and hot pepper and add enough orange juice to make it soupy, about $\frac{1}{4}$ cup. Season to taste with salt. Serve with Yucatecan dishes or whenever a hot pepper sauce is called for. The sauce should be eaten the same day or the next.

Variation: Though *Ixni-Pec* is very hot indeed, I have encountered an even hotter sauce called simply *Salsa Picante* (Hot Sauce). It consisted of green *habaneros* peeled by toasting over a flame, seeded and chopped and diluted with a little Seville (bitter) orange juice.



Môlho de Pimenta e Limão

Hot Pepper and Lime Sauce

BRAZIL

The peppers used in Brazil are the small, very, very hot *malagueta* peppers not usually available here. Any very hot pepper can be substituted but I have found pickled Caribbean peppers, usually from Jamaica or Trinidad, a good substitute.

Makes about $\frac{3}{4}$ cup

*or 4 hot red or green peppers, seeded
onion, chopped
clove garlic, chopped
It*

cup lime or lemon juice

Crush the peppers, onion, and garlic with salt to taste in a mortar with a pestle, adding the lime or lemon juice little by little, or purée in a blender or food processor. Serve in a bowl to accompany meat, poultry, or fish dishes and with *Feijoada Completa* (Black Beans with

Mixed Meats).

Môlho de Pimenta e Azeite de Dendê

Hot Peppers in Dendê (Palm) Oil

BRAZIL

This is a common sauce on Bahian tables. The pepper used is the tiny, ferociously hot *malagueta* pepper.

Makes about ½ cup

or more small fresh hot red or green peppers

dendê (palm) oil, to cover

Put the peppers in a small bowl and pour in enough oil to cover them. Let them stand for several hours before using. The oil will be quite hot and flavored by the peppers, while the heat of the peppers themselves will be slightly reduced.

Variation: For *Môlho de Pimenta e Azeite de Oliva* (Hot Peppers in Olive Oil), use olive oil instead of palm oil. This is a more usual hot sauce in other parts of Brazil, where palm oil is not used.

Salsa de Ají Colorado

Red Pepper Sauce

CHILE

Makes about 2½ cups

1½ fresh hot red peppers, seeded and cut into strips

¼ cup wine vinegar

1 clove garlic, chopped

½ teaspoon salt

¼ cup vegetable oil

Put the pepper strips into a bowl and add the vinegar. Leave overnight, stirring with a wooden spoon once or twice. Drain, reserving the vinegar. Put the peppers into a blender or food processor with the garlic, the salt, and enough of the vinegar to reduce them to a purée. Beat in the oil, adding about ¼ cup of the vinegar to give the sauce the consistency of mayonnaise. For a milder sauce discard the vinegar in which the peppers were soaked and use fresh vinegar. A lot of the heat of the peppers will have soaked out into the vinegar.

Serve with *Chanchito a la Chilena* (Pork Loin, Chilean Style) or with any plainly cooked meat, poultry, or fish, or with cold meats.

Ajíes en Leche

Hot Peppers in Milk

VENEZUELA

The hot peppers used in Venezuela are medium-sized round or lantern-shaped ones, extremely hot and very well flavored. Any hot peppers may, of course, be used.

Makes about 1¼ cups

cup milk

teaspoon salt

fresh hot red or green peppers, stemmed and halved lengthwise

slice onion

clove garlic

or 4 fresh mint leaves (optional)

Pour the milk into a saucepan, add the salt, bring to a boil and immediately remove from the heat. Allow to cool. Put the hot peppers, onion, garlic, and mint leaves in a glass jar and pour the milk over them. Let stand overnight. To serve, pour into a bowl and eat the peppers as a sauce with any meat, poultry, or fish dish.

Salsa de Chile Ancho y Almendra

Mild Red Chili and Almond Sauce

MEXICO

The Mexican kitchen is extraordinarily rich in sauces, *mollis* in Nahuatl, the language of the Aztec empire, modified to *moles* in Spanish. This mild and gentle sauce was probably made originally with peanuts, which were indigenous, having found their way north from Brazil, instead of almonds. Certainly almonds make a subtler sauce than do peanuts, though both are good.

The sauce is used with salt cod, another import, in *Bacalao en Salsa de Chile Ancho y Almendra* (Salt Cod in Mild Red Chili and Almond Sauce). It is also excellent with poultry, pork, or veal (chicken stock is fine for all three). The meat is poached in stock or water until it is almost tender. The sauce is then thinned with a little of the stock and the meat is simmered in the sauce until it is tender and the flavors are blended, about 5 minutes.

Makes about 5 cups

ancho chilies

medium onion, chopped

pound (¾ cup, about) toasted almonds, ground

teaspoon ground cinnamon

teaspoon ground cloves

teaspoon oregano

teaspoon sugar

lb

tablespoons vegetable oil

cups chicken, beef, or fish stock

Pull the stems off the chilies, shake out and discard the seeds, rinse in cold water, tear into pieces, and put into a bowl with 1 cup hot water. Let soak for about 1 hour, longer if the chilies are very dry, turning them from time to time. Put the chilies, any soaking water, and the onion into a blender or food processor and reduce to a purée. Add the almonds to the chili mixture with the cinnamon, cloves, oregano, sugar, and salt to taste. The mixture will be quite heavy, almost a paste. Heat the oil in a heavy skillet and sauté the chili mixture, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, for 5 minutes over moderate heat. Add 2 cups of the appropriate stock, stir to mix, and simmer for a few minutes longer. Clam juice may be used instead of fish stock.

The sauce, which should be of medium consistency, is now ready to use with salt cod, poultry, pork, or veal. It may also be used with fresh fish, preferably fillets, in which case the uncooked fish may be simmered in the sauce until done, or put into a greased, shallow flameproof casserole with the sauce poured over it and baked in a preheated moderate (350° F.) oven until tender, about 20 minutes.

Guacamole

Avocado Sauce

MEXICO

In Mexico *Guacamole* is eaten with everything — meat, poultry, fish, shellfish, beans, cheese, and by itself with *tostaditas*, triangles of fried tortilla. *Antojitos* are unthinkable without it. Very old recipes give *guacamole* simply as avocado with chili and I have had it simply mashed with a little salt, very elegant. However, recipes from the seventeenth century on give it as a mixture of tomatoes, fresh green coriander (cilantro), onion, and chopped *serrano* chilies, the small hot green mountain peppers very much used in the Mexican kitchen. I find the canned *serranos* are a better choice than fresh hot peppers of another variety, since it is their flavor as well as their heat that is needed. Fresh *serranos* are sometimes available in Latin American markets.

There is a lot of superstition about preventing *Guacamole* from darkening when exposed to air. One is that putting the avocado pit in the center of the finished sauce will do this. Long and careful research has convinced me of the falseness of this claim but I must confess I like the look of the brown pit sitting in the bowl of creamy green sauce. Next to making the sauce at the last minute the best solution is to cover the bowl tightly with plastic wrap and refrigerate it.

There are two basic versions of *Guacamole*, one with tomatoes, the other *Guacamole del Norte* (Avocado Sauce, Northern Style) made with Mexican green husk tomatoes, which does not discolor quite so quickly, perhaps because the green tomato is more acid than ordinary tomatoes. Certainly sprinkling lime or lemon juice on a cut avocado does help prevent

darkening. Also a very ripe avocado will darken more quickly than one that is just at its moment of ripe perfection but not a minute over it.

I find that the best way to mash an avocado is to cut it in half, unpeeled, remove the pit, and holding the pear in the left hand mash the flesh with a fork, scoop it out with a spoon and mash any solid bits that have escaped. This gives the finished purée a good texture.

Makes about 4 cups

large ripe avocados, pitted and mashed

medium tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped

tablespoon onion, finely chopped

canned serrano chilies, or 1 teaspoon seeded and finely chopped fresh hot green pepper

tablespoon fresh green coriander (cilantro), chopped

lt to taste

Mix all the ingredients thoroughly and place in a serving dish with the pit of one of the avocados in the center, if liked. Serve as a dip with triangles of fried tortilla, or as a sauce.

Variation: For *Guacamole del Norte* (Avocado Sauce, Northern Style), substitute half of a 10-ounce can of Mexican green tomatoes (about 6), drained and mashed, for the tomatoes. If fresh green husk tomatoes are available, peel off the papery husk and drop them into boiling salt. Cook for 2 minutes, drain, and allow to cool. Chop finely. Then proceed as for *Guacamole*.



Guasacaca

Avocado Sauce

VENEZUELA

There was a great deal of trade between Mexico and South America in pre-Conquest times and it is entirely possible that this is a migrant version of an original *guacamole* somewhat modified in later colonial days.

Serves 4

tablespoons olive oil

tablespoon red wine vinegar

lt to taste

teaspoon finely chopped, seeded, fresh hot red pepper, or ½ teaspoon ground hot red pepper

large avocado, peeled and diced

medium tomato, peeled and chopped

medium ripe red bell pepper, or use a green pepper, finely chopped

small onion, finely chopped

In a bowl combine the oil, vinegar, salt, and hot pepper, and beat with a fork to mix thoroughly. Add the rest of the ingredients, tossing to mix. Serve with grilled meats.

Variation: Add 1 tablespoon of finely chopped fresh green coriander (cilantro) or parsley.

Variation: Add 1 hardboiled egg, finely chopped.

Ají de Huevo

Avocado Sauce

COLOMBIA

This is another migrant recipe that evolved when the Chibcha of Colombia used to export their exquisite gold work to Mexico. I suspect the reverse trade included more than recipes. It is interesting to see how this one differs from the original Mexican recipe and from the next-door Venezuelan one. The name of the sauce really defies translation. *Ají* is the South American word for hot pepper. *Huevo* is egg. Literally one gets “hot pepper of egg.” Avocado is a better way of describing it.

Makes about 1½ cups

large avocado, pitted and mashed

hardboiled egg yolk, mashed

tablespoon finely chopped fresh green coriander (cilantro)

fresh hot green pepper, seeded and chopped

finely chopped scallion, using white and green parts

hardboiled egg white, finely chopped

tablespoon white wine vinegar

lt, freshly ground pepper

Mix the avocado and egg yolk thoroughly. Add all the rest of the ingredients and mix well. Serve as a sauce with *Sobrebarriga Bogotana* (Flank Steak, Bogotá Style) or *Ajiaco de Pollo Bogotano* (Bogotá Chicken Stew).

Môlho ao Tomate

Tomato Sauce

*Makes about 2 cups**6 tablespoons olive oil**2 large, ripe tomatoes, coarsely chopped**2 clove garlic, minced**or 4 fresh basil leaves, chopped, or 1 teaspoon dried basil**1/2 teaspoon salt, freshly ground pepper*

Heat the oil in a saucepan and add the tomatoes, garlic, and basil. Simmer over low heat for 3 or 4 minutes, stirring occasionally. Season to taste with salt and pepper and stir in 1/2 cup warm water. Simmer over low heat, stirring from time to time, until the mixture is quite thick. Work the mixture through a sieve.

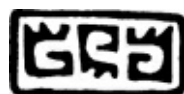
Salsa de Jitomate

Tomato Sauce

MEXICO

*Makes about 2½ cups**1 medium onion, chopped**2 clove garlic, chopped**2 large tomatoes, peeled and chopped**1/2 cup canned serrano chilies, chopped**1/2 teaspoon sugar**Salt to taste**2 tablespoons vegetable oil**1/2 tablespoon chopped fresh green coriander (cilantro)*

Combine the onion, garlic, tomatoes, and chilies in a blender or food processor and purée briefly. The purée should retain some texture and not be too smooth. Season with the sugar and salt. Heat the oil in a skillet, pour in the tomato mixture, and cook, stirring, over moderate heat until it is thick and well blended, about 5 minutes. Stir in the coriander.



Salsa Chilena

Chilean Sauce

CHILE

Serve this with plainly cooked meat or any cold dish.

Makes about 2½ cups

cups beef stock

medium onion, finely chopped

medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped

tablespoons lemon juice

lt, freshly ground pepper

cup olive or vegetable oil

Put the stock and onion into a saucepan and simmer, uncovered, over moderate heat until the onion is tender. Pour into a blender or food processor and reduce to a purée. Set aside.

Put the tomatoes into the blender or food processor and reduce them to a purée. Pour the purée into a small saucepan and cook, stirring, until it is thick. Stir the tomato into the stock and onion mixture. Add the lemon juice and salt and pepper to taste. Allow to cool, then gradually beat in the oil. The sauce should be thick. If necessary, beat in more oil.

Salsa Cruda

Uncooked Tomato Sauce

MEXICO

This sauce appears on Mexican tables as often as salt and pepper. It is served with cooked meats, poultry, fish, eggs, and beans and is added to tacos (stuffed tortillas) and other *antojitos* (appetizers). The beautifully ripe, red tomatoes of Mexico have very thin skins and though these can simply be peeled off by hand, they are usually left on for *Salsa Cruda*. I peel the tomatoes for this sauce only if they have thick skins.

Makes about 2½ cups

large ripe tomatoes, finely chopped

small onion, finely chopped

or more fresh hot green peppers, seeded and chopped, or use canned serrano chilies, seeded and chopped

tablespoon chopped fresh green coriander (cilantro)

ch of sugar

lt to taste

Mix all the ingredients together. Serve in a bowl or gravy boat. It is best made at the last minute and served at room temperature.

Salsa Criolla

Creole Sauce

ARGENTINA

Serve this with roasted or grilled meats.

Makes about 3 cups

medium onions, finely chopped
medium tomatoes, finely chopped
fresh hot green pepper, seeded and finely chopped
clove garlic, chopped
tablespoons finely chopped parsley
lt, freshly ground pepper
cup olive oil
tablespoons red wine vinegar

In a bowl combine the onions, tomatoes, pepper, garlic, and parsley, mixing lightly. Season with salt and pepper. In a small bowl beat together the oil and vinegar with a fork, then pour the mixture over the vegetables. Stir to mix.

Salsa de Tomatillo

Mexican Green Tomato Sauce

MEXICO

This is, I think, the most distinctive of all the Mexican sauces and the most delicious. It is made with the green husk tomato available fresh in markets in the Southwest and canned from stores specializing in Mexican foods. Green husk tomatoes must not be confused with green (unripe) ordinary tomatoes. They are in the same family but a different species altogether (see [this page](#)).

Makes about 1 cup

10-ounce can Mexican green tomatoes, drained
tablespoon finely chopped white onion
clove garlic, chopped
or more canned serrano chilies, chopped
tablespoon fresh green coriander (cilantro), chopped
lt to taste

Thoroughly mix all the ingredients, mashing the green tomatoes, or whirl very briefly in a blender or food processor. Serve in a bowl or gravy boat.

Variation: Some cooks omit the onion and garlic and increase the amount of coriander to taste. Whirl very briefly in a blender or food processor.

Salsa de Tomate Verde

Another Green Tomato Sauce

GUATEMALA

This sauce, which can be used with any plainly cooked meat, poultry, fish, or shellfish, will keep for some time.

Makes about 2½ cups

two 10-ounce cans Mexican green tomatoes, drained, about 2 cups

two cloves garlic, crushed

one fresh hot red or green peppers, seeded and finely chopped

one cup white vinegar

one teaspoon ground allspice

one teaspoon oregano

one salt, freshly ground pepper

Put the tomatoes, garlic, and hot peppers into a small saucepan and cook together for a few minutes until the tomatoes have disintegrated, stirring two or three times. Add the rest of the ingredients and cook for a few minutes longer, or until the mixture is well blended. Bottle and refrigerate.

Salsa de Perejil

Parsley Sauce

CHILE

Makes about 1¾ cups

one cup olive or vegetable oil

two tablespoons red or white wine vinegar or lemon juice

one teaspoon prepared mustard

one cup finely chopped parsley

one salt, freshly ground pepper

Mix all the ingredients together. Serve with fish or shellfish or as a dressing with tomatoes.

For *erizos* (sea urchins), make the dressing with lemon juice, omit the mustard, and add ½ cup finely chopped onion.



Ají de Queso

Cheese Sauce

ECUADOR

Makes about 2 cups

1 large tomato, peeled, seeded, and coarsely chopped
1 fresh hot red or green pepper
1/2 pound Spanish fresh cheese (queso blanco or queso fresco) or ricotta
1/2 lt, freshly ground pepper
1 medium onion, finely chopped
1 hardboiled egg, chopped

In a blender or food processor combine the tomato, pepper, and cheese and reduce to a purée. Be careful not to overblend. Season to taste with salt and pepper and put into a bowl. Sprinkle with the onion and egg. Serve as a sauce with potatoes and cooked green vegetables.

Salsa de Maní

Peanut Sauce

ECUADOR

Serve this with *Llapingachos* (Potato Cakes).

Makes about 1½ cups

2 tablespoons annatto (achiote) oil or lard (see [this page](#))
1 onion, finely chopped
1 clove garlic, chopped
1 medium tomato, peeled, seeded, and chopped
1/2 cup finely ground peanuts, or 2 tablespoons peanut butter
1/2 lt, freshly ground pepper

Heat the annatto oil or lard in a skillet and stir in the onion, garlic, and tomato. Cook over moderate heat until the onion is tender and the mixture well blended. Stir in the peanuts, season to taste with salt and pepper, and cook for a few minutes longer. The sauce should be thin enough to pour. If necessary, add a little tomato juice or water and cook just long enough to blend.

Salsa de Choclos

Sweetcorn Sauce

CHILE

This is a colonial sauce developed at a time when corn was a make-do vegetable, not yet

esteemed in its own right, as it was later on. The sauce is light and delicious, the flavor of the fresh sweetcorn coming through beautifully. It can be used as a sauce with meats or poultry, but I prefer it over green vegetables and especially with cauliflower.

Makes about 3 cups

cups sweetcorn kernels; if using frozen corn, thaw thoroughly

cup milk

teaspoon sweet paprika

lt, freshly ground white pepper

or 2 eggs, lightly beaten (optional)

In a blender or food processor combine the corn, milk, sweet paprika, salt, and pepper and reduce to a smooth purée. Pour into a saucepan and cook, stirring constantly, over low heat for 5 minutes, or until the mixture is well blended. If necessary, thicken the sauce by stirring in 1 or 2 eggs, lightly beaten, and cooking over low heat, stirring, until the sauce is thickened. I find corn varies considerably, so I use my judgment about thickening the sauce, using no eggs, or 1 or 2 as required.

Color Chilena

Paprika Oil

CHILE

This oil is used a great deal in Chilean cooking, and since it keeps indefinitely can be made in quantity. However, if you want to make less, paprika can simply be added to oil in the ratio of 1 teaspoon paprika to every 2 tablespoons oil, with garlic used proportionately.

Makes 2 cups

cups vegetable oil or lard

cloves garlic

tablespoons sweet paprika

Heat the oil or lard in a saucepan and add the garlic cloves. Sauté the garlic until it is brown, then lift out and discard. Off the heat, stir in the paprika until it is well mixed with the oil. Cool and bottle.

Aceite o Manteca de Achiote

Annatto Oil or Lard

COLOMBIA

This is used a good deal as both a coloring and a flavoring in the Caribbean, Colombia, Ecuador, and Venezuela (see [this page](#)).

Makes ½ cup

tablespoons annatto seeds (achiote)

tablespoons vegetable oil or lard

Combine the annatto seeds and oil in a small, heavy saucepan and place over moderate heat until the seeds begin to give up their color, a deep orangey-red. If the seeds are fresh, the color will be abundant and deep and will be given off very quickly, within about 1 minute. Watch for the moment when the color starts to change to golden and remove immediately from the heat. Strain and bottle. The oil or lard will keep indefinitely.

Aliño Criollo

Seasoning Powder, Creole Style

VENEZUELA

This mixture of ground herbs and spices, which varies slightly from cook to cook, is used as a seasoning in many Venezuelan dishes, and I have found it a pleasant addition to stews and casseroles even outside the Venezuelan or Latin American kitchen. It can be bought ready-made from spice shelves in Venezuelan supermarkets as *Aliño Preparado* (Prepared Seasoning). I make it without garlic so that it keeps, but I add a large clove of crushed garlic to 2 tablespoons of the powder when I use it in cooking.

Makes about ½ cup

tablespoon garlic salt

½ teaspoons ground cumin

tablespoon ground annatto (achiote) seeds

teaspoon ground black pepper

tablespoon oregano

tablespoons sweet paprika

Thoroughly mix all the ingredients and put into a small glass jar. Store in a cool, dark place. Keeps indefinitely.

BASIC SAUCES

Béchamel

White Sauce

Makes about 2 cups

tablespoons butter

tablespoons flour

cups milk

lt, white pepper

ch of nutmeg

In a small, heavy saucepan melt the butter. Stir in the flour with a wooden spoon and cook, stirring, over low heat for 2 minutes. Gradually pour in the milk, stirring constantly to mix, and bring to a boil. Simmer, stirring frequently, for 5 minutes. Season to taste with salt, white pepper, and nutmeg.

For a thick béchamel, use only 1 cup of milk. For a medium sauce, use 1½ cups, and for the more usual, creamy sauce, use 2 cups.

If the sauce should be lumpy, which is unlikely if it is properly made, simply whirl it in a blender or food processor.

Vinaigrette

Oil and Vinegar, or French, Dressing

Makes about ½ cup

tablespoons wine vinegar or other mild vinegar

lt, freshly ground pepper

teaspoon Dijon mustard

tablespoons peanut, corn, or olive oil

Put the vinegar in a bowl with the salt and pepper to taste and the mustard and beat with a fork to mix well. Then beat in the oil, little by little, until the sauce is well blended. Taste for seasoning, adding more vinegar, or salt, and pepper.

Lemon juice may be used instead of vinegar. For a mustard-flavored vinaigrette, increase the amount of Dijon mustard to 2 tablespoons.

Mayonnaise

This is my preferred recipe for mayonnaise. Any standard recipe may be used, and blender mayonnaise is perfectly acceptable. However, I find this is richer with a better texture, and since it takes only minutes to make I will give it in detail.

Makes about 1½ cups

large egg yolks

teaspoon Dijon mustard

lt, freshly ground pepper

cup corn, peanut, or olive oil, about

teaspoons vinegar or lemon juice, or 2 teaspoons each vinegar and lemon juice

Put the egg yolks into a rimmed soup plate. I find this makes beating easier than using a bowl, though a bowl, of course, will do. Beat the egg yolks lightly with a fork, and beat in

the mustard, and salt and pepper to taste. Drop by drop beat in the oil until the yolks thicken. When about half the oil is beaten in and the mixture is very thick, beat in the vinegar or lemon juice, or a mixture of the two. Beat in the remaining oil, pouring it in a thin, steady stream. Taste the mayonnaise and add more vinegar or lemon, or salt and pepper, if liked. If the mayonnaise is too thick for personal taste, thin with a teaspoon or so of hot water.

If the mayonnaise fails to thicken, or separates, place an egg yolk in a bowl and beat in the failed mayonnaise, tablespoon by tablespoon, to restore the sauce.

The type of vinegar used is a matter of choice, but it should never be a coarse vinegar. Wine vinegar is the most commonly used, but I do find that a Japanese rice vinegar gives a delicious result, as of course do the herb-flavored tarragon or basil vinegars.

Salsa Golf

Tomato- and Cognac-Flavored Mayonnaise

CHILE

This is a delicious mayonnaise. I have come across it served in Colombia as a dressing for avocado and described as an international recipe; it may also be used with any cold fish or shellfish. It is generally credited to Chile, where perversely it is sometimes called *Salsa Americana*. I can find no explanation whatever for its being called *Salsa Golf* and my imagination fails me.

Makes about 1½ cups

egg yolks

teaspoon Dijon mustard

dash of cayenne pepper, or dash of Tabasco

salt to taste

teaspoons lemon juice

tablespoon white wine vinegar

cup vegetable oil

cup olive oil

tablespoons tomato ketchup or thick tomato purée

tablespoon cognac



Put the egg yolks, mustard, cayenne or Tabasco, salt, lemon juice, and vinegar in a bowl, and beat until thick and well blended. Beat in the vegetable and olive oil, drop by drop, until the mayonnaise begins to thicken, then beat in the remaining oil in a thin, steady stream. Add the tomato ketchup or purée and the cognac. The finished mayonnaise will be a delicate pink.

For *Palta Rellena* (Stuffed Avocado), peel and halve an avocado and remove the pit. Fill the center of each half with *Salsa Golf*. Serves 2 as an appetizer, 1 as a luncheon.

BASIC PROCEDURES

Beurre Manié to Thicken a Sauce

Thoroughly mix 1 tablespoon butter, softened at room temperature, with 1 tablespoon flour. The most convenient way to do this is to put the flour and butter in a cup and mix with a fork. Stir bit by bit into the liquid to be thickened, over moderate heat. This is enough to lightly thicken the average stew. Quantities can be adjusted as required.

To Clarify Butter

Cut the butter into chunks and put into a heavy saucepan over moderate heat. Skim the foam off the surface as it rises. When the butter has melted and looks quite clear let it stand for a few minutes for all the solids to sink to the bottom. Strain the butter through a sieve lined with damp cheesecloth. The residue need not be thrown away but can be poured over green vegetables or stirred into a stew.

To Peel and Seed Tomatoes

Ripe tomatoes picked off the vine in one's own garden can often be peeled simply by pulling off the skin with the fingers. I've often peeled market-bought tomatoes in Latin America this way and hothouse tomatoes are sometimes peelable in this manner. Otherwise, choose ripe, red tomatoes and drop them into boiling water, one at a time, for 10 seconds. Lift out, rinse quickly under cold water, and peel with a paring knife from the stem end. To remove the seeds, cut the tomato in half crosswise and squeeze out the seeds gently.



Drinks

Bebidas

Latin America does very well with drinks from tea, coffee, wine, and beer, which were introduced there, to native chocolate, *mate*, tequila, *pisco*, rum, and the beerlike drinks, *pulque*, *chicha*, and *tepache*. There is lots of Scotch whisky, gin, and vodka as well as the soft drinks of both the antique and colonial past, and modern soft drinks.

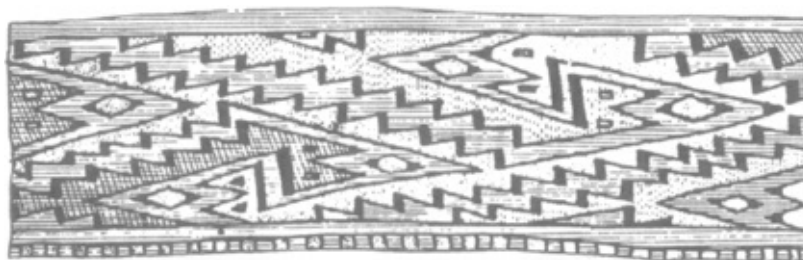
Thanks to Germans, who missed the beer of their homeland, all of Latin America has very good beer indeed. And thanks to French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italians, Germans, and Swiss, who missed their native wines, Chile and Argentina, and to a lesser extent Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay, and Mexico, have either good or acceptable wines.

Brazil's coffee is notable and one drinks it as *cafezinho*, very strong demitasse with a lot of sugar, often as not with *bôlos* (cakes), while in Colombia, whose coffee is also notable, what one takes in a demitasse is called a *tinto*. Other fine coffees are produced in smaller quantities in Guatemala, El Salvador, Costa Rica, and Mexico. For breakfast Brazil takes its coffee as *café com leite*, the same strong coffee of the demitasse diluted with hot milk, the *café con leche* of the rest of the continent. Mexico adds brown sugar, cinnamon stick, and cloves to make its *Café de Olla* (Pot Coffee).

Tea is not as popular as coffee, though it is esteemed for afternoon tea. Also popular are the herbal teas, the *tisanas* like mint and chamomile, and, of course, *mate*. Chocolate is a popular drink especially in Mexico, where it is packaged already sweetened, flavored with cinnamon and cloves, and mixed with ground almonds. It can be bought in specialty food shops here.

Many of the local soft drinks or beerlike drinks are either not available here, or are impractical to make at home, but I have sometimes come across a concentrated bottled form of *guaraná* in shops selling Brazilian foods. This is made from a Brazilian shrub and is delicious as a soft drink as well as being a good mix for gin, vodka, or rum.

Many of the mixed drinks of Latin America are as international as Scotch and soda, or gin and tonic. I have chosen local drinks I have enjoyed in their home countries and which I have been able to make in the States.



Pisco Sour

Peruvian Brandy Sour

Pisco, Peruvian brandy, is used in this sour, which is also popular in Chile, where they use the very similar Chilean *pisco*. *Pisco* is also popular in Bolivia. The small tropical lemon-limes used in the drink have a very subtle flavor. They are sometimes available in California. Our limes and lemons are rather more strongly flavored, and a little more sugar may be needed.

Serves 1

teaspoon egg white
teaspoon superfine sugar
teaspoons lime or lemon juice
ounces pisco (Peruvian brandy)
or 3 ice cubes
Angostura bitters

Combine all the ingredients except the Angostura bitters in a cocktail shaker and shake vigorously. Strain into a sour glass and shake a few drops of Angostura bitters on top.

Biblia con Pisco

Peruvian Brandy Eggnog

BOLIVIA

Serves 1

whole egg
tablespoon superfine sugar
½ ounces pisco (Peruvian brandy)
teaspoon ground cinnamon or nutmeg

Beat the egg with the sugar, either by hand or with an electric beater, until the sugar is dissolved. Beat in the *pisco*. Pour into a 6-ounce goblet or punch cup, chill thoroughly, sprinkle with cinnamon or nutmeg, and serve. If preferred, 1 or 2 ice cubes may be added to the drink instead of chilling it.

Yungueño

Peruvian Brandy with Orange Juice

BOLIVIA

Serves 1

½ ounces pisco (Peruvian brandy)
½ ounces orange juice
teaspoon superfine sugar

cup cracked ice

Combine all the ingredients in a cocktail shaker and shake vigorously. Pour, unstrained, into an 8-ounce wine glass or a tumbler.

Gin Fizz

URUGUAY

It was said to me once that the greatest glory of Uruguay was the gin fizz (pronounced jeen feez) made in the capital city of Montevideo. This may well be true, and I think the secret lies in the delicate flavor of the tropical lemon-limes of the region. I find using a little more sugar with our lemons balances the flavor and gives, almost the same result.

Serves 1

teaspoons superfine sugar

tablespoons lemon juice

ounces gin

cup crushed ice

Combine the sugar and lemon juice in a cocktail shaker and stir until the sugar is dissolved. Add the gin and crushed ice and shake very thoroughly. Strain into a narrow straight-sided glass about 4 inches high, or into a small tumbler.



Coco Fizz

MEXICO

Serves 4

cups coconut water

tablespoons superfine sugar

cup gin

cup crushed ice

cup lime juice

ub soda

In a cocktail shaker combine the coconut water and the sugar and stir until the sugar is dissolved. Add all the remaining ingredients, except the club soda, and shake vigorously. Pour into four 9-ounce glasses and add a splash of soda to each.

Coconut water is the liquid in the green coconut, sometimes available in tropical markets. There is some coconut water in mature coconuts, about 1 cup usually, enough for 2 drinks.

Cola de Lagarto

Lizard's Tail

MEXICO

Serves 1

1/2 cup dry white wine
1/2 cup vodka or gin
1/2 tablespoon lime juice
1/2 teaspoon superfine sugar
1/2 teaspoon crème de menthe
or 4 ice cubes

Combine all the ingredients in a cocktail shaker and shake vigorously. Strain into a chilled tumbler.

Caipirinha

Rum Sour

BRAZIL

The name of this drink means literally “country bumpkin,” perhaps because the lime is coarsely chopped and the drink served unstrained, unlike the *Batida de Limão* (Lime Batida), where only juice is used and the drink is strained, refined. Or perhaps because it is a splendid drink for that country feast, *Churrasco à Gaucha*, the Brazilian barbecue.

Serves 1

1 lime
1/2 teaspoon superfine sugar
2 ounces Cachaça (Brazilian rum) or white rum
1/2 cup crushed ice

Coarsely chop the lime and transfer it to the mixing glass of a cocktail shaker with the sugar, adding more if liked. Muddle thoroughly to extract all the juice and oil from the lime peel. Add the rum and ice. Shake vigorously and pour, unstrained, into a cocktail glass.

Batida de Limão

Lime Batida

Serves 1

2 tablespoons lime or lemon juice
 1 teaspoon sugar
 2 ounces Cachaça (Brazilian rum) or white rum
 1 cup crushed ice

Combine all the ingredients in a cocktail shaker and shake vigorously. Strain into a cocktail glass.

Variation: For *Batida de Coco* (Coconut Milk Batida), substitute 2 tablespoons thick coconut milk (see [this page](#)) for the lime juice.

Variation: For *Batida de Maracujá* (*Granadilla* or Passion Fruit Batida), substitute 2 tablespoons of *granadilla* or passion fruit juice for the lime juice and increase the sugar to 1½ teaspoons. *Granadilla* or passion fruit juice is often available in specialty food shops.

Variation: For *Batida de Abacaxi* (Pineapple Batida), substitute 2 ounces pineapple juice for the lime juice.

Margarita

MEXICO

Serves 1

1/2 shell of lime or lemon
 1/2 oz
 1 1/2 ounces white tequila
 1 ounce Triple Sec or Curaçao
 1 ounce lime or lemon juice
 or 3 ice cubes

Rub the rim of a cocktail glass with the rind of the lime or lemon. Pour salt into a saucer and spin the rim of the glass in it. Combine the remaining ingredients in a bar glass and stir until thoroughly chilled. Strain into the prepared cocktail glass.

Tequila Sunrise

MEXICO

This and its variation, Tequila Cocktail, are very popular tequila drinks.

lime
 ounces white tequila
 teaspoon crème de cassis
 teaspoon grenadine syrup
 club soda
 2 cubes



Squeeze the lime, pour the juice into an 8-ounce highball glass together with the shell of the lime. Add the tequila, *crème de cassis*, and grenadine syrup. Add enough club soda to fill the glass three-quarters full, stir to mix, then drop in 2 or 3 ice cubes.

Variation: For Tequila Cocktail, combine 1½ ounces tequila with the juice of 1 lime, about 3 tablespoons, and ½ ounce grenadine syrup or to taste. Stir to mix and pour over crushed ice in a cocktail or saucer champagne glass. Serve with two short straws. Serves 1.

Vampiros

Tequila Bloody Marys

MEXICO

Serves 4

¼ cups tomato juice
 cup orange juice
 tablespoons lime juice
 tablespoons chopped onion
 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
 salt, cayenne pepper to taste

ounces white tequila

Combine all the ingredients, except the tequila, in a blender and blend until smooth. Pour into a jug and chill for at least 4 hours. To serve pour 1½ ounces white tequila into each of four Old-Fashioned glasses and pour in ½ cup of the tomato mixture. Stir to mix. If liked, the drink may be served over ice cubes.

Aperitivo Chapala

MEXICO

There is a lot of controversy over this drink, a chaser for tequila, created by the widow Sanchez at her restaurant at Lake Chapala. Her original was made without tomato juice and had Seville (bitter) orange juice and grenadine syrup. I find ordinary orange juice just as good. The hot pepper gives it a nice lift. I was served it as *Aperitivo Chapala* when I stayed at the lake so I have kept that name here.

Makes about 6 servings

cup orange juice

tablespoons grenadine syrup

teaspoon salt

teaspoon cayenne pepper or any ground hot red pepper

Mix all the ingredients thoroughly and chill. Serve in small, straight-sided 1½- to 2-ounce tequila glasses with another glass of tequila served separately. Drink alternately sip by sip. Traditionally the drink is accompanied by small, dried, fried fish, available packaged in many specialty food shops.

Sangrita

MEXICO

Sangrita made with tomato juice is also a splendid accompaniment to tequila. I like the modern way of serving it, combining the Sangrita and the tequila over ice cubes in an Old-Fashioned glass.

Makes 18 to 24 servings

cups tomato juice

cup orange juice

cup lime juice

small white onion, chopped

teaspoon sugar

teaspoon salt, or to taste

teaspoons seeded and chopped fresh hot green or red pepper, or 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper

hite tequila
lved limes
lt

Combine the tomato juice, orange juice, lime juice, onion, sugar, salt, and hot pepper or cayenne in a blender or food processor and blend until smooth. Strain into a jug and chill thoroughly. Serve in small, straight-sided 1½ - to 2-ounce tequila glasses with another glass of tequila served separately. Squeeze a little lime juice into either the Sangrita or the tequila and drink sip by sip, or put a little salt on the lime and take a little suck of it as liked.

Sangría

MEXICO

This is the Spanish wine drink that Mexico has both adopted and adapted to its own use. It is light and pleasant, especially in hot weather.

Makes about 10 servings

cup orange juice
cup lime or lemon juice
cup superfine sugar, or to taste
bottle dry red wine, preferably Spanish
2 cubes

In a jug combine the orange juice, lime or lemon juice, and the sugar and stir until the sugar is dissolved. Taste and add a little more sugar if liked. Pour in the wine, stir to mix, and chill thoroughly in the refrigerator. To serve, put 2 or 3 ice cubes in a 6-ounce goblet or tumbler and fill with Sangría.

Agua de Jamaica

Sorrel or Rosella Drink

MEXICO

This is a popular soft drink and is made from the sepals of a tropical flower known in Mexico as *flor de Jamaica* and in Jamaica as sorrel, elsewhere as rosella or roselle. It can be bought dried in tropical markets usually as rosella or sorrel.

Makes about 10 servings

cups rosella sepals
quarts water
gar to taste

Rinse the rosella sepals and put them into a large saucepan with the water. Bring to a boil over moderate heat, remove from the heat, and allow to cool. Strain into a jug. Sweeten to taste and chill thoroughly. Serve in tumblers with ice cubes.



Mate

PARAGUAY

Mate, from the Quechua word, is a mildly stimulating, nonalcoholic drink made from the powdered dried leaves of the South American evergreen *Ilex paraguayensis*. It can be bought in many health or specialty food shops and made according to package directions. It is not necessary to have the special silver-trimmed gourd and the *bombilla*, a special silver straw, to sip it through. A teapot and a cup do just as well, and it may be drunk either hot or cold. The *mate*, the name for the gourd in which the tea is made, is called a *chimarrao* in southern Brazil, where the drink is as popular as it is in Paraguay, Uruguay, and Argentina. In South America, especially in Argentina, the rules for making *mate* can be quite complicated, and many lovers of the tea insist that the water must be just under a boil.

To make the tea, heat a teapot by rinsing it out in boiling water, add 1 tablespoon *mate* per cup, pour in boiling water, let the tea steep for 5 minutes, strain, and serve either plain, or with sugar and/or milk, if liked. To drink cold, make the *mate* double strength and pour it over ice cubes. Serve plain or with sugar and lemon.

Café de Olla

Pot Coffee

MEXICO

In Mexico, which is coffee country, this is served in small pottery mugs each holding 4 ounces ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup) as an after-dinner coffee. In Mexico *piloncillo*, the local brown sugar, would be used. Our dark brown sugar is about the same. Coffee for breakfast, *Café con Leche* (Coffee with Milk), is very strong, served in large cups, and diluted half and half with hot milk.

Serves 6

cups water

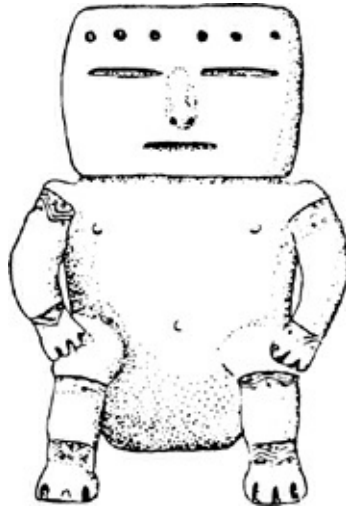
cup dark brown sugar

inch piece of stick cinnamon

whole cloves

cups coffee

Combine the water, sugar, cinnamon, and cloves in an earthenware or any heatproof coffee pot and bring the water to a boil over moderate heat. Add the coffee, bring again to a boil, simmer for 1 minute, stir, cover, and leave in a warm place for a few minutes for the grounds to settle. Pour through a strainer into earthenware mugs, or use any demitasse cups.



Sources of Latin American Foods

New York

Casa Moneo

210 West 14th Street

New York, N.Y. 10011

Casa Moneo carries a very wide range of Mexican and South American specialties. Mail order.

La Marqueta is an enclosed market that extends from 112th to 116th streets on Park Avenue.

Mara's West Indies Market

718 Nostrand Avenue

Brooklyn, New York 11216

H. Roth & Son

1577 First Avenue

New York, New York 10028

Roth's has a lot of Brazilian foods including *carne seca* and cassava (manioc) meal.

Trinacria Importing Company

415 Third Avenue

New York, New York 10016

Perello, Inc.

2585 Broadway

New York, New York 10025

I've been able to get Seville (bitter) oranges here.

Ninth Avenue from about 38th Street to the fifties is a marvelous source for root vegetables, seafood, special cuts of pork, and so on.

Washington, D.C.

La Sevillana, Inc.

2469 18th Street, N.W.

Washington, D.C.

Safeway International

1110 F Street, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20004

Casa Peña
1638 17th Street
Washington, D.C. 20009

Chicago
La Preferida, Inc.
117-181 W. South Water Market
Chicago, Illinois 60608

La Casa del Pueblo
1810 Blue Island
Chicago, Illinois 60608

Casa Esteiro
2719 West Division
Chicago, Illinois 60622

Los Angeles
El Mercado
First Avenue and Lorena
East Los Angeles, California 90063

San Francisco
Mi Rancho Market
3365 20th Street
San Francisco, California 94110

Casa Lucas Market
2934 24th Street
San Francisco, California 94110

La Palma
2884 24th Street
San Francisco, California 94110

San Antonio, Texas
Frank Pizzini
202 Produce Row
San Antonio, Texas 78207

Dallas
J. A. Mako Horticultural Enterprises
P.O. Box 34082
Dallas, Texas 75234

J. A. Mako has authentic Mexican chili pepper seeds, for those who want to grow their

own. Mail order.

Boston

Garcia Superette
367 Center Avenue
Jamaica Plain
Boston, Massachusetts 02130

Cambridge

Star Market
625 Mt. Auburn Street
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02238

Cardullo's Gourmet Shop
6 Brattle Street
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138

Miami

The Delicatessen Burdine's
Dadeland Shopping Center
Miami, Florida 33156

Albuquerque

Hopi Indians
Bucks General Store
P.O. Box 13561
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87112

Blue corn can be ordered from the Hopi.

A Note About the Author

Elisabeth Lambert Ortiz has written three cookbooks on Mexican, Caribbean, and Japanese cuisines, and has edited and contributed to several others. A principal consultant to the Time-Life Foods of the World book on Latin America and the Caribbean, she is also a regular writer for *Gourmet* magazine. She and her husband — a Mexican diplomat — have lived all over the world, including many of those countries represented in this book. For a long time they made their home in New York City; they now live in London.



THE BOOK OF LATIN AMERICAN COOKING

ELISABETH LAMBERT
ORTIZ

A K N O P F  B O O K

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