

Colombia Recipes

Pandebono (Colombian Cheese Bread)

Ingredients:

1 cup yellow cornmeal
½ cup tapioca flour
2 teaspoons sugar
2 cups grated Monterey Jack cheese
2 eggs
Salt to taste



Directions:

Preheat oven to 400° F. Grease a cookie sheet.

Mix the cornmeal, flour, and sugar in a bowl. Stir in the grated cheese and the eggs. Mix well with a wooden spoon. Add salt as needed.

Knead dough until smooth. The dough should be soft and pliable. Let dough rest for about 10 minutes, covered with plastic wrap.

Pull off sections of dough and roll into balls that are slightly larger than golf balls. To shape the dough into rings, first roll a piece of dough into a cylinder, then join the ends together to form a circle.

Place rolls on prepared cookie sheet and bake for about 20 minutes or until golden in color and puffed. Serve warm.

Natilla

Ingredients:

3 cups whole milk
1 cup + 2 tablespoons cornstarch
1 cup coconut milk
½ cup grated coconut
2 cinnamon sticks
1 (14-ounce) can condensed milk
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
⅓ cup sugar
Pinch salt
1 tablespoon butter
Cinnamon powder



Directions:

Place 1 cup milk in a small bowl. Add the cornstarch, stir to dissolve, and set aside.

Place the coconut milk and grated coconut in the blender. Blend until smooth and set aside.

Place the rest of the milk and cinnamon sticks in a medium pot and bring the mixture to boil over medium-low heat. When the milk is a little warm, but not boiling, add the coconut mixture.

When the milk starts boiling, add the condensed milk, sugar, and salt. Stir well with a wooden spoon. Add the milk and cornstarch mixture and continue stirring constantly.

Add the vanilla extract. Reduce the heat to low and continue stirring until the Natilla thickens, about 10 to 20 minutes. Add the butter, stir, and remove from heat. Discard the cinnamon sticks. Ladle into a serving dish or individual custard cups.

Colombian Ajiaco (Chicken and Potato Soup)

Ingredients:

- 2 large chicken breasts, bone-in and skin on
- 1 large yellow onion, roughly chopped
- 5 cloves garlic, roughly chopped
- 1 tablespoon coarse salt
- 1 tablespoon freshly ground pepper
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 4 cups chicken stock
- 1 ½ pounds mixed potatoes, peeled and cut into bite-sized chunks
- 2 to 3 ears fresh corn, cut into quarters, or 1 ½ cups frozen corn kernels
- 1 bunch cilantro with stems, tied with twine
- 1 bunch green onions, tied with twine
- 2 tablespoons dried guascas



Toppings:

- 2 avocados, pitted, peeled, and thinly sliced
- ½ cup crema Mexicana or sour cream
- ½ cup chopped cilantro leaves
- 2 tablespoons drained capers, chopped

Directions:

Place the chicken in a glass or ceramic dish. Top with the onion, garlic, salt, and pepper. Cover and refrigerate for 8 to 24 hours.

Heat the olive oil in a heavy 4-quart lidded pot, over medium-high heat. Add the chicken with its marinating bits and brown each side. Pour in the stock and raise the heat to high. When the mixture boils, lower the heat to medium-low; cover and simmer. Cook until the chicken is tender, about 30 minutes.

Transfer the chicken to a platter, reserving the cooking liquid in the pot. When cool enough to handle, remove the skin from the chicken and discard. Cut or tear the chicken breasts into bite-size strips and discard the bones.

Place the potatoes in the pot with the leftover cooking liquid. Cover and cook over medium heat for about 5 minutes.

Add the corn, the bunch of scallions, the bunch of cilantro, and the guascas. Simmer with the lid on for 20 minutes, or until potatoes are tender but not overcooked. Remove the cilantro and scallions and return the chicken to the pot. Simmer another few minutes until the chicken is warmed through.

Place the soup into individual bowls and top as desired.

Andean Tamales

Ingredients:

3 skinless chicken thighs, cut in half lengthwise

6 pork ribs

3 bunches green onions

6 garlic cloves

1 tablespoon ground cumin

2 teaspoons sazón goya (2 packets)

2 large tomatoes, chopped

¼ cup fresh cilantro, chopped

⅛ cup sugar

½ cup white vinegar

Salt

1 tablespoon olive oil

¼ cup fresh lemon juice

3 cups masa harina, prepared with chicken broth

2 large carrots, peeled and sliced

½ cup frozen green peas

2 large red potatoes, scrubbed and sliced into sticks

3 hard-boiled eggs, sliced

Banana leaf, cut into 12" square pieces, rinsed

Kitchen string

Aluminum foil



Directions:

Chop 1 bunch of green onions. Mince 2 garlic cloves. Add 1 teaspoon ground cumin and 1 packet of sazón. Rub mixture all over both chicken and ribs. Place meat in separate plastic baggies to marinate in the refrigerator overnight.

To make the sofrita, combine chopped tomatoes, 1 bunch of chopped green onions, 2 cloves minced garlic, 1 teaspoon ground cumin, ½ packet of sazón, ⅓ cup chopped cilantro, olive oil, and salt to taste in a skillet. Sauté until everything is soft and tender. Cool and refrigerate until ready to assemble tamales.

To make the "pique" sauce, combine 1 bunch chopped green onions, 3 cloves minced garlic, fresh lemon juice, remaining chopped cilantro, 1 teaspoon ground cumin, sugar, vinegar, and salt to taste.

Prepare masa harina according to package directions, except use chicken broth instead of water.

Place about ¼ cup masa in the center of a banana leaf and spread it out. Put one rib and one chicken thigh piece on top. Place about 3 slices of the carrots, 6 potato sticks, and 3 slices egg on top of the meat. Sprinkle with peas. Spoon 3 tablespoons of the sofrito over all, then top with another ½ cup of spread out masa.

Next, pull up the sides of the banana leaf to form a packet. Tie with kitchen string. Wrap packet in aluminum foil. Repeat 5 times.

They are now ready to steam. Use a large Dutch oven with a steamer insert, so the tamales do not touch the water in the bottom of the Dutch oven. These need to cook about 3 hours. Stack the tamales all the way to the top in the steamer pot and turn up the heat to high. When you hear the water boiling furiously, turn the heat down to medium.

Serve the tamales on a section of banana leaf, with the "pique" sauce on the side to be drizzled on bites of the tamale.

Colombian Empanadas

Ingredients:

Vegetable oil for frying
Lime and ají for serving

Masa:

1 ½ cups precooked yellow cornmeal
2 cups water
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
½ tablespoon sazón goya
½ teaspoon salt

Filling:

2 cups peeled, diced white potatoes
1 chicken or vegetable bouillon tablet
1 tablespoon olive oil
¼ cup chopped white onion
1 cup chopped tomato
½ teaspoon salt
¼ cup chopped green onions
1 chopped garlic clove
2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro
2 tablespoons chopped red bell pepper
¼ teaspoon black pepper
½ pound ground pork and beef



Directions:

To prepare the dough, place the masa in a large bowl. Add the sazón goya and salt and stir to mix well. Add the water and oil and mix to form dough. Pat the dough into a ball and knead for 2 minutes or until smooth. Cover with plastic and set aside for 20 minutes.

Meanwhile, make the filling. Cook the potatoes in a pot with water and the bouillon for 20-25 minutes or until tender. Drain and gently mash the potatoes. Set aside.

Heat 1 tablespoon olive oil in a large, heavy skillet. Add the onion and cook over medium-low heat, stirring frequently, for 5 minutes. Add the tomatoes, green onions, garlic, bell pepper, cilantro, salt, and black pepper. Cook for about 15 minutes.

Add the ground pork and beef. Cook for 10 to 15 minutes, breaking up the meat with a wooden spoon.

Transfer the meat mixture to the mashed potatoes bowl and mix well to combine.

Break small portions of the dough, about 1 ½ tablespoons each, and form each portion into a ball by rolling between the palms of your hands. Place the balls of dough between two pieces of plastic and roll each out very thinly to form a circle. Remove the top plastic and place 1 tablespoon of the filling in the center of each. Using the plastic underneath, fold the dough over to enclose the filling, forming a half circle. Tightly seal the edges by crimping with the tines of a fork.

Fill a large pan with vegetable oil and heat over medium heat to 360° F. Carefully place 3 or 4 empanadas at a time in the heated oil and fry for about 2 minutes, until golden on all sides. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the empanadas to a plate lined with paper towels.