

Cooking Demonstration: the Latin American Heritage Diet

Wednesday, Sept. 22, 2021

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Latin American Heritage Diet recipes from Oldways

<https://oldwayspt.org/>

Presenter: Sarah Anderson, Oldways Heritage Diets Curriculum Coordinator



RECIPE ONE: **Chimichurri**

Serves: 1 (1/4) cup

Time: 5 minutes

Ingredients:

- 1 bunch flat-leaf parsley (leaves only)
- 1 large head of garlic, separated into cloves, peeled and finely minced
- 1 tablespoon dried oregano
- 1 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- ½ cup red wine vinegar
- ½ cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 teaspoon salt, or to taste
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Cooking Instructions:

- Mix all the ingredients in a small bowl, or combine in a food processor and pulse to a coarse puree
- (optional) toasted bread for tasting the sauce

This recipe was adapted from Gran Cocina Latina by Maricel E. Presilla

Recipe Chef's Note:

I will be preparing the sauce over plain roasted potatoes and fried egg.

Significance:

- Chimichurri is very popular in Argentina and Uruguay.
- The sauce is used to accompany grilled meats (i.e. sausages, tripe, ribs, and beef) especially churrasco (grilled Argentinian skirt steak) and palomilla (a thin Cuban steak)
- The sauce could be accompanied with many food sides for example, bread, potatoes, pasta, chicken, beans, eggs, etc.
- Parsley has long been the traditional ingredient used for chimichurri sauce, but now chefs sometimes swap it with cilantro
- **Herbs and spices** are a great way to add flavor to food without relying on the salt shaker. With so many regional cuisines to choose from—from Mexico to Chile to Brazil to the Caribbean Islands—you'll meet lots of flavors with Latin heritage as your guide. Fresh herbs like cilantro and oregano, chili peppers, lime juice, and pickled onions are all traditional ways to add fabulous flavor to grains, beans, vegetables, and seafood.



RECIPE TWO: **Menestra**

Serves: 8-10

Time: 20 minutes (canned lentils) - 40 minutes (dried lentils)

Ingredients:

- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 medium red, yellow, or white onion, diced
- 3 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 medium green or red bell pepper, cored, seeded and diced
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 3 tomatoes, diced or (1) 15 oz. cans lentils, drained and rinsed
- 8 cups of water (1 cup if using canned lentils)
- 1 lb dried lentils or (3) 15 oz cans lentils, drained and rinsed
- 3 tablespoons chopped cilantro
- Salt and pepper for taste
- Optional: half avocado
- Optional: pre-cooked rice or leftover plain rice

Prepped Items (do ahead):

1. Chopped garlic cloves
2. Diced onion
3. (optional: diced red pepper in small pieces) I will dice them during live video

Cooking Instructions:

- Heat oil in a large sauce pan over medium heat
- Add the onion, garlic, bell pepper, cumin, and red pepper flakes and cook for 5 minutes until vegetables have softened
- Add tomatoes and water then increase the heat from medium to high
- Once the liquid is boiling, add the lentils and cook covered for about 40 minutes until tender
- If using canned lentils cook until warmed through for at least 20 minutes
- Removed lentils from heat and stir in the chopped cilantro
- Serve as a main dish with rice or as a side dish

Significance:

- Ecuadorian Lentil Stew, but originated from northern Spain of La Rioja region
- Can also find various variations of the stew in Panama and Peru
- For extra flavor some chefs add sofrito to the stew
- The stew can be accompanied with ripe plantains
- Menestra is typically served with grilled/ fried meat ,but along the Ecuadorian coast they'll plate the stew with fish
- For a vegetarian option it's nice to pair with rice, fried egg, avocado slices, ripe fried plantains, and a small salad (i.e. *Curtido* which includes cabbage, carrots, red onion, jalapeno, oregano, salt, vinegar)
- **Beans** are a shelf-stable protein that has nourished our ancestors for centuries. Even today, beans are a staple of healthy Latin American Heritage diets. Try substituting bean-based dishes for meat-based dishes at least one day per week. Black bean stew, pinto bean tostadas, lentil tacos, and cranberry bean salads are all delicious ways to get more protein and fiber in your diet through beans.
- For many indigenous people in the Americas, the three main agricultural crops—**corn (or maize), beans, and squash**—were called the Three Sisters. These high-fiber, nutritious crops

were all interdependent on one another and these are at the heart of a traditional Latin American diet.

Recipe Chefs Note:

- I will be preparing the stew with pre-cooked rice and avocado slices.

About Oldways:

Oldways is a nonprofit dedicated to improving public health by inspiring individuals and organizations to embrace the healthy, sustainable joys of the “old ways” of eating—heritage-based diets high in taste, nourishment, sustainability, and joy.

Programs include:

- Heritages diets: African Heritage / Latin American Heritage / Mediterranean/ Asian/ Vegetarian & Vegan
- Community Cooking Classes (A Taste of African Heritage, A Children’s Taste of African Heritage, A Taste of Latin American Heritage)
- Plate Forward Plates
- Culinary travel
- Oldways Whole Grains Council
- Oldways Cheese Coalition

A Taste of Latin American Heritage is a bilingual (English-Spanish) 6-week cooking and nutrition curriculum based on healthy plant-based foods from across Latin America.

Specifically, the [Latin American Heritage Diet](#) promotes richly flavorful foods, that reflect a great range of culinary traditions, foods, and flavors of Latin American heritage. The Variations have traditionally existed in the parts of Latin America where maize (corn), potatoes, peanuts, and beans are grown, including modern-day Mexico, and other countries in Central and South America. Our Latin American heritage curriculum focuses on four major cultures: the indigenous people (Aztecs, Incas, Mayans, and other Native Americans), the Spanish, Portuguese, and continental Africans which are largely influenced by the Portuguese and Spanish colonialization (i.e., places such as Equatorial Guinea).

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