Recipes, Cuisine and Customs of Ecuador
November 2012

Cuisine
Ecuador has a wide range of traditional cooking; hence cookware varies from region to region. In the coast the main source of food is fish, seafood, and plantain. In the highlands it is pork and potatoes, and in the Amazon fish and mammals. Certain beetle larva is eaten.

Cookware includes the famous piala, clay pottery, wooden spoons and forks, wooden chopping boards, baskets, and trays. Also some articles made of stone like mortars and meat pressers. In some communities meals are cooked inside banana leaves in hot coal. Ecuadorian cooking is famous for enhancing the natural taste of food - spices are widely used, especially pepper, cumin, coriander, parsley, garlic, “achiote”, and more. Most seasoning is done with salt and lemon.

One of the main sauces used is chili sauce, “picante” or “aji”, always served in a small clay container. The aji is eaten with most food; Ecuadorians have a taste for hot and spicy cuisine.

There are over 10 varieties of corn and 12 varieties of bean in Ecuador. All are used in traditional cooking and accompanied by potatoes or plantain and meat, chicken, or fish. There is a tremendous variety of vegetables and tropical fruit juices available.

Dining Etiquette
• Never arrive on time when invited to a home. Although it may sound strange you should arrive a little later than invited (30 -45 minutes late).
• Dress well, as this affords the host respect.
• Don’t discuss business at social events unless prompted to.
• It is considered good manners to reciprocate any social invitation.
• Table manners are Continental -- the fork is held in the left hand and the knife in the right while eating.
• Guests are served first.
• The host says "buen provecho" ("enjoy" or "have a good meal") as an invitation to start eating.
• Food is always eaten with utensils. Even fruit is eaten with a knife and fork.
• It is considered polite to leave a small amount of food on your plate when you have finished eating.
• Meals are social occasions and can be quite lengthy.
• Expect lively conversation during the meal.
• Wait for a toast to be made before taking the first sip of your drink.
• The host makes the first toast. The most common toast is "Salud!"
• When you lift your glass, look at the person being toasted.
• If you do not want to drink more, leave your glass one-quarter full.


http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/ecuador.html
Recipes

Locro de Papas

Makes a gallon (4 quarts)

If you’ve never had locro de papas, you’re in for a surprise. The fine people of Ecuador love this comforting and healthy soup, especially on a chilly day. And, why not? Tinged orange from ground annato, most of the flavors remain familiar – potato, cheese, avocado, and cilantro. Feel free to substitute parsley if you hate cilantro. Just so long as you try this soup. You’ll love it.

Ingredients:
1 onion, chopped
3 garlic cloves, crushed
1/2 tsp cumin
1 tsp ground annato/achiote
3 giant baking potatoes, peeled and cubed (each about 6” long)
2 cups of milk
enough water to cover the potatoes
1-3 cups extra milk for thinning to desired consistency
salt & pepper
1 cup shredded cheese – cheddar or Monterey jack
a palmful of chopped cilantro

For the Garnish: chopped cilantro, crumbled queso blanco, 1-2 avocados, cubed, green onion, sliced

Method:
Prepare yourself for an assault of deliciousness.
First, cook the chopped onions in a large pot until softened. While they’re cooking, add the crushed garlic, cumin and ground anatto. Next, cube up the potatoes and add to the pot. Size doesn’t matter because they’ll be pureed. Just remember, the larger you cut them, the longer they’ll take to cook. Add 2 cups of milk and cover with water. Simmer until the potatoes are cooked through. Then puree with extra milk, salt and pepper. I used my handy, dandy immersion blender. You could also use a plain old blender, but you’ll probably have to do it in a few batches.
Add enough milk to thin out the soup – it should pour out of the ladle – no plopping soup allowed. You’re almost done! Stir in chopped cilantro and shredded cheese. Top with the most wonderful combination of queso blanco, avocado, green onion, and cilantro.

http://globaltableadventure.com/category/countries/ecuador/
Ecuadorian Open Faced Egg and Corn Meal Omelet with Cheese

Serves 1

For the omelet:
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1/8 c green onion
- 2 eggs
- 1/2 c cooked corn meal
- 1 Tbsp chopped cilantro
- 1/4 cup shredded cheese (monterey jack and cheddar blend)

Garnishes:
- Shredded cheese
- Cilantro
- Green onion

Method:
Whisk eggs together with cooked cornmeal. Add in the cheese, cilantro, green onions, salt, and pepper. Melt butter in a non-stick pan over medium heat. Trust me on the non-stick part. I tried to make this in a regular pan and it stuck like crazy. When the butter is sizzling, pour in the egg mixture. Cover and cook gently. The goal is for the top to be cooked before the bottom burns. Gentle heat is your answer. Sprinkle with cheese and let melt. Cover again if you need to. Serve with green onions and cilantro.

http://globaltableadventure.com/category/countries/ecuador/
Fritada de Gallina

Fritada de gallina is a delicious and tender chicken dish prepared by cooking chicken in a sauce made with chicha or fermented corn drink, garlic, onion and cumin until the liquid is gone and the chicken is golden brown. Adapted from Michelle O. Fried’s *Comidas del Ecuador: Recetas Tradicionales para Gente de Hoy*

**Ingredients**

- 5 lbs chicken, assorted pieces
- 2 ½ cups of chichi (substitute 1 cup white wine or beer, 2 cups orange juice, ½ tsp ground cinnamon, pinch of ground cloves)
- 1 ½ heads of garlic, 1 head peeled and crushed, the other ½ head peeled and whole
- 1 white onion, cut in large chunks
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- Salt to taste

**Instructions**

Mix the crushed garlic (1 head) and cumin with the chicha or wine/orange juice spice mix. Marinate the chicken pieces in the liquid marinade mix for at least 1-2 hours, overnight is ideal. Put the chicken and the marinade in a wok or a large deep sauté pan. Add the whole garlic cloves and the chunks of white onion. Cook over medium heat (should be boiling most of the time) for about 1 ½ hours or until the liquid starts to reduce, stirring occasionally.

Continue cooking for another 30 minutes, but keep a close eye on it from this point, stirring more frequently. Reduce the heat to low until the liquid is gone and a small amount of grease (from the chicken) replaces the liquid. Stir frequently to keep the chicken from burning and cook for about 20-25 minutes or until the chicken pieces are browned.

Serve with fried or baked ripe plantains, llapingachos or potato patties, tomato and red onion curtido salsa, avocado slices, and aji or hot sauce. The chicken fritada can also be served with mote or hominy, boiled yuca or rice instead of the potato patties.

[http://laylita.com/recipes/2012/06/03/fritada-de-gallina/](http://laylita.com/recipes/2012/06/03/fritada-de-gallina/)
Fried Ripe Plantains

Ingredients:

- 2 ripe plantains
- 1 tbs canola oil or sunflower oil

Optional – Cheese – Feta if you want to experience the saltiness contrast with the sweetness of the plantain or grated mozzarella, Monterey jack or fontina if you prefer the yummy gooiness of melted cheese

Preparation:

Wash and peel the plantains, then slice them. The best way to slice them is either diagonally or else cut the plantain in half and slice lengthwise. (The plantain can also be sliced lengthwise full size, but the smaller diagonal or half slices are easier to manage.)

Heat the oil over medium heat in a large frying pan and add the plantains. The plantains will cook very quickly, make sure to turn them before they burn and cook until golden on each side.

You can use a spatula or a fork to turn them. If the plantain flesh is still pink or white it means that it is not yet fully cooked.

Place the cooked plantains on a paper towel to drain any excess oil.

Serve warm

If adding cheese, sprinkle the feta over the plantains and serve. If you using a grated cheese then it is best to leave the plantains in the frying pan and add the grated cheese on top (remove from the heat to avoid burning them) and let the cheese melt.

http://laylita.com/recipes/2008/01/06/platanos-maduros-fritos-fried-plantains/
Llappingachos de mote or hominy corn patties

Llappingachos de mote are hominy patties stuffed with pork or cheese, cooked on a hot griddle, and served garnish with peanut sauce, pickled red onions and aji criollo hot sauce. This is a great way to use pork fritada or pork carnitas leftovers. This will make about 12-15 medium-sized llappingachos, or 20-25 bite-sized patties.

Ingredients
5 cups cooked hominy corn (cook at home or buy canned)
2 Tbs light olive oil
½ white onion, diced
2 tsp achiote powder
2 eggs
½ cup corn meal (more if needed)
1 cup of shredded pork fritada or pork carnitas
1 cup grated cheese (quesillo, queso Oaxaca, mozzarella, fontina, jack)
Salt to taste
Garnishes: Peanut sauce, pickled red onions, aji criollo and avocado slices.

Instructions
Prepare a refrito (flavor base) by heating the oil over medium heat, add the diced onions and achiote powder. Cook until the onions are soft and translucent, about 5-8 minutes. Place the hominy corn in a food processor and pulse until you have coarse dough. Add the onion and refrito to the hominy dough, pulse until blended. Add the eggs to the dough, then stir in the corn meal. The dough should be slightly coarse and mealy but with a consistency that is thick enough to mold a ball of dough and have it keep its shape. Let the dough rest for 30 minutes in the refrigerator.

Form the dough into small balls, and make a hole in the middle of each ball. This will need to be done gently as this dough is more fragile than traditional potato dough. Fill each hole with the fritada meat or the cheese and close it while shaping it into a thick pattie. Let the patties rest in the fridge for at least 30 minutes. Cook the hominy patties on a hot grill until browned on each side - the time will vary depending on your grill. Mine took about 8-10 minutes per side. Be very careful when turning them the first time as they are very delicate.

Serve garnished with peanut sauce, pickled red onions, and aji criollo hot sauce. To serve them traditional style or as a main course, add a fried egg and some avocado slices.

http://laylita.com/recipes/2012/04/25/llappingachos-de-mote-or-hominy-corn-patties/
Come y Bebe or Ecuadorian drinkable fruit salad

*Come y bebe*, which literally translates as *eat and drink*, is an Ecuadorian fruit salad made with papaya, bananas, pineapple, and orange juice. The fruit is cut in small pieces and usually has a good amount of orange juice so that you can actually drink it. This is a very refreshing drink or dessert for the summer. You can also add other types of fruit if you like, mangos are a good option.

**Ingredients:**

- 10 oranges, juiced, about 4 ½ cups of juice
- 1 large papaya, peeled, seeded and diced
- 1 pineapple, peeled, cored and diced
- 6 bananas, peeled and diced
- Sugar or honey to taste
- Optional – honey whipped cream to serve on top
  (2 cups of heavy whipping cream with 4 Tbs of honey)

**Preparation:**

Combine the diced papaya, pineapple and bananas in a large non-reactive bowl. The papaya, pineapple and orange juice can be prepped a few hours in advance, but peel and dice the bananas right before serving to keep them browning. Mix in the freshly squeezed orange juice, add sugar or honey if needed.
Serve immediately or chill for about 30 minutes if you prefer it very cold (recommended on a hot day).


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