



## **Rotisserie Chicken (Pollo a la Brasa) (Tested)**

**Serves 8**

This is potentially a three-part recipe, but I hope that doesn't scare you off from making it! First, you will marinate the chicken overnight. Then, depending on whether you are able to obtain aji amarillo paste, you may have to make your own. That recipe is also included here. Finally, you will make a very simple yogurt sauce to accompany the chicken. So although the recipe looks long, it's pretty simple to execute.

Peru's iconic peppers, aji amarillo, which are used in just about everything, can be difficult to find depending on where you live. In Latin markets you may find them frozen, in jars as a paste, or perhaps dried – rarely fresh though. You should also check the spice section, where I've found aji amarillo chile powder (at Whole Foods). Amazon is always a source if you plan ahead. If all else fails, you can try substituting 1 orange bell pepper and ½ of a habanero pepper. (Sauté the peppers together and blend to make a paste.) Or use your favorite hot sauce in place of anything calling for the aji amarillo paste.

### **Ingredients**

#### **Marinade**

- 4 tbsp. purchased aji amarillo or aji panca paste (or see recipe below)
- 2 tbsp. chopped garlic
- 2 tbsp. minced rosemary
- 1 tbsp. ground cumin
- 1 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- ¼ cup soy sauce
- ¼ cup red wine vinegar
- ½ cup oil
- 8 chicken thighs, bone-in, skin-on (about 3 lb.)

### **Directions**

Put all ingredients into a large bowl and marinate overnight, or at least four hours.

Cook the chicken as desired, either on your grill, or baked in the oven until done. Serve with Yogurt-Chile Sauce (recipe below).

### **Yogurt-Chile Sauce**

**Makes about 1 ¼ cups**

#### **Ingredients**

½ cup yogurt  
½ cup buttermilk or mayonnaise  
2 green onions, chopped fine  
1 tbsp. aji amarillo paste  
1 tbsp. ketchup  
1 tsp. ground cumin  
½ to 1 tsp. kosher salt

#### **Directions**

Blend ingredients together and refrigerate about an hour before serving to thicken. Serve with the chicken.

Recipe and photo credit: Linda McElroy

Adapted from “The Fire of Peru,” by Ricardo Zarate and Jenn Garbee



**Potatoes in a Spicy Cheese Sauce (Papa a la Huancaína)**  
**Makes about 2 ½ cups sauce**

Papa a la Huancaína originates from the Huancayo area of Peru. It is usually served at room temperature. Enjoy with Pollo a la Brasa.

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**Ingredients**

Lettuce leaves  
8 to 10 boiled new potatoes, cooled and sliced  
Huancaína sauce (recipe follows)  
2 to 3 hard-boiled eggs, sliced  
black olives

**Directions**

To serve, place the lettuce leaves on a large platter and arrange the potato slices over the lettuce. Pour the sauce over the sliced potatoes, leaving some of them exposed, and garnish with hard-boiled eggs and olives.

**Huancaína Sauce**

**Ingredients**

2 tbsp. oil  
¾ cup chopped onion (about 3.5 oz.)  
2 cloves garlic, chopped  
¼ cup purchased aji Amarillo paste (or see recipe below)  
½ cup (scant) soda crackers, or 4 saltines  
1 cup queso fresco OR farmers cheese/fromage blanc (Trader Joe's has this), OR ricotta cheese,  
OR ¼ cup feta cheese combined with ¾ cup crème cheese  
1 cup milk  
1 tsp. kosher salt  
freshly ground black pepper

**Directions**

Heat the oil in a medium sauté pan over medium heat. Add the onion and sauté for a few minutes, just until it softens, then add the garlic and aji amarillo paste, and sauté for another few minutes until everything is softened.

Scrape the chile mixture into a blender jar, add the crackers, cheese, milk, salt and pepper, and blend until very smooth.

**Aji Amarillo or Panca Paste****Ingredients**

1 oz. dried Amarillo (mirasol) chiles, or panca chiles

**Directions**

Soak the chiles for ½ hour. Remove the stems, and split the chile lengthwise. Remove the seeds and veins.

Bring a saucepan of water to a boil, add the chiles, and simmer for 5 minutes. Drain, and repeat the process 3 more times. This helps remove some of the heat from the chiles.

Place the chiles in a blender jar and puree until smooth, add additional cooking water from the chiles if needed to blend easily. The paste should be about the texture of ketchup.

Recipe credit: Linda McElroy (adapted from several sources)

Photo credit: [Wikipedia](#)



**Spicy Macaroni and Cheese (Huancaína Macaroni) (Tested)**  
**Makes 1 9x13 pan**

This recipe is a riff on the huancaína sauce that typically adorns steamed potatoes, and instead we'll make mac and cheese with it. How fun! It is a decidedly less cheesy version of what we're used to here in the U.S., and the addition of the chile paste takes it from being bland to just a little bit exciting. Just use whatever hot sauce you have on hand if you're not able to come by the aji amarillo paste.

**Ingredients**

1 lb. dried macaroni  
1 recipe Huancaína Sauce  
1 to 2 tbsp. aji Amarillo paste (optional, or other hot sauce)  
¼ cup half and half  
1 cup cheddar cheese, grated  
crushed potato chips or tortilla chips

**Directions**

Bring a large pot of salted water to the boil and add the macaroni. Cook until al dente, or just a few minutes short of being done.

Drain the pasta, reserving ½ cup of the pasta cooking water. Put the pasta back into the pot, along with the Huancaína sauce, additional hot sauce if using, the half and half, and the cheddar cheese. Mix well. Use the extra water that you saved if you need to loosen up the macaroni. It should look saucy because it will tighten up as it bakes. Pour into a baking dish and top with the crushed chips. Bake at 350 for 30 minutes.

Recipe and photo credit: Linda McElroy  
Adapted from "Ceviche," by Martin Morales

## Peruvian Customs and Cuisine

Located in South America, Peru is divided in three main geographical zones; the Pacific coast, the Andean highlands and the Amazon rainforest.

With its western border on the Pacific Ocean, Peru is bordered on land by Ecuador, Columbia, Brazil, Bolivia and Chile. A multi-ethnic country of Amerindians, Europeans, Africans and Asians, Peru is also home to one of the oldest civilizations in the world, the Notre Chico as well as the Inca Empire. Spanish is the official language, but Quechua and other languages are spoken in Peru as well.

Agriculture is Peru's most important commodity. While most who inhabit the provinces rely solely on their crops, they export almost as much as they keep for themselves. An example is quinoa, where the demand for it from the U.S. has created shortages in their own country.

One of the world's most popular vegetables, *papas* (potatoes), were first grown in Peru, and Peru continues to produce the most potato varieties and has been referred to as the "Potato Capital of the World." In addition it has at least 150 varieties of sweet potato and 35 varieties of corn. Aji (chili pepper) is a major force in creating spicy Peruvian dishes. Other herbs like mint, oregano, parsley and cilantro are commonly used. Local cuisine includes stuffed peppers, guinea pig, fermented corn liquor, sweet corn with cheese, and grilled bull or cow heart.

The variety of climates and landscapes from Peru's three main differing agricultural areas has really helped establish the cuisine as one of the most interesting in South America. From the Pacific Ocean comes a bounty of fish. Cebiche, marinated fish, is considered one of the iconic dishes of Peru. The mountain or highland diet consists of basic staples of potatoes, corn, rice and various meats. And in the Amazonian rainforest you will find a diet rich in fresh fruits and vegetables, bananas, plantains and yucca, along with meat.

The Andes of Peru are home to some incredibly loud, bright and tasty festivals!  
Popular festivals include:

**Carnavales** (during most of February):

The whole town turns into a great water fight, as water balloons and water pistols are a favorite way to celebrate carnavales. Chutanakuy is another carnavales celebration that consists of a giant tug-of-war between the two sides of town and lots of chicha (corn liquor) consumption.

**Choquekillka** (50 days after Easter): This is Ollantaytambo's (where Sacred Valley Health's office is located) biggest festival of the year. It is an over-the-top four-day bonanza of feasting, drinking, dancing, costumes, music, fireworks, a beauty pageant and a bullfight.

**Fiesta de Compadres/Niño de Melchor:** During this festival, Ollantaytambo residents and Quechua villagers meet at the central point of Marcaqocha, an Inca and Catholic religious site. They celebrate the reciprocal ties between the town and the rural communities and the apparition of the Niño de Melchor, a young Jesus who appeared dressed in Quechua clothing. This includes great typical food, a bullfight and lots of water and silly string fights.

Sources:

Sacred Valley Health

<http://www.foodbycountry.com/Kazakhstan-to-South-Africa/Peru.html#ixzz31MAMuuRM>

<http://whatscookinginyourworld.blogspot.com/2011/06/day-141-peru-peruvian-grilled-chicken.html>