

The
Brunet-García
Cuban
KITCHEN



From Our Kitchen to Yours



BIENVENIDOS

The salsa music is playing and the warm smell of sofrito, is rising up through the air – but you aren't at a restaurant in Little Havana – you're in Jacksonville, at **JORGE BRUNET-GARCÍA'S VERY CUBAN KITCHEN**. It's a kitchen filled with laughter, comfort food and history – history that dates back to 1492 when Columbus, searching for spices, made landfall in Cuba. He didn't find what he was looking for, but now, all these years later, you have in your possession the essential spices of the island. Within these pages are the instructions you need to use these spices as the building blocks for good food and good times. Of course it adds to the experience if you have a real Cuban like Jorge in your kitchen, talking too loud, drink in hand, gesticulating wildly while he cooks and tries to make a point at the same time. You may not have access to a Cuban cook, but we promise you that after testing, trying and perfecting these recipes you'll have a better insight into Cuban culture.

Cuban cuisine is much more than a dish – it's a destination. The menus and recipes in this book should take you on a journey, because for the last half-century, the easiest way for most of us to travel to Cuba has been by way of the palate. Cuisine is one of the few things Cubans brought to this country when they could bring very little else. So much of Cuban life revolves around the dining table – families finding a way to sit together, come hell or high water – to talk, gossip, argue, connect. The food Cubans cook is **FUSION FOOD** – a combination of Spanish, African and Caribbean cuisines that has also been influenced by the French, Arabic, Chinese and Portuguese cultures. A very distinct Cuban flavor and style evolved as these various influences came together, resulting in hearty, home-style cooking. Recipes were passed down by oral and eye tradition instead of specific measurements. This led to dishes that varied from family to family, home to home.

Publishing an “authentic” Cuban cookbook is an inherently ironic exercise, considering most Cubans still on the island don’t have the ways or means to prepare many of these staple dishes. Cuban government mismanagement has created food shortages since the early 1960s, leading to the establishment of a food rationing system that remains in place today. Fortunately, for Cuban food lovers here in the U.S., the ingredients utilized in this cookbook are plentiful and most can be found with a little digging at your local supermarket.

These recipes represent a typical weekly Cuban menu emanating out of Jorge’s Jacksonville, Florida kitchen. Born in Cuba, raised here in the U.S., these are Jorge’s classic

family recipes with some subtle manipulations and flourishes – as is the way with so many Cuban-Americans who have lived **“LIFE ON THE HYPHEN.”** The preparation of most of the dishes in these menus can be accomplished in an hour or less. The memories they provide will hopefully last much longer; memories like those Jorge has of his Uncle Otto putting ice cubes in his Sopa de Fideos y Aguacate to cool it off while the rest of the family blew into their soup bowls frantically. Or the memory of how his grandmother Carolina’s house smelled when she cooked codfish: in a word, terrible. We hope that one day, the menus and recipes Jorge has shared here will provide you similar feelings of **NOSTALGIA, GRACE, AND LOVE.**

¡ahora a cenar!





Jorge Brunet-Garcia, Circa 1950

menú

PLATOS FUERTES

Dish	Complexity	Page
Lechón asado	●●●	1
Picadillo	●●○	8
Ropa vieja	●●●	11
Masitas de puerco	●●○	17
Dorado	●●○	20
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SOPA

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ENSALADAS

Dish	Complexity	Page
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Tomato and onion salad	●○○	10
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POSTRES

Dish	Complexity	Page
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Arroz con leche	●●●	13
Natilla	●●●	16

The Brunet Guide

Cuban Kitchen

SUNDAY

Dish	Complexity	Page
Lechón asado	●●●	1
Mojo criollo	●●○	2
Frijoles negros (the easy way)	●●○	3
Arroz blanco	●○○	4
Yuca con mojo	●○○	5
Aguacate salad	●○○	6
Flán	●●○	7

What to do with leftovers



Cuban sandwich

Yuca frita

MONDAY

Dish	Complexity	Page
Picadillo	●●○	8
Fried sweet plantains	●○○	9
Tomato and onion salad	●○○	10
Frijoles negros (the easy way)	●●○	3
Arroz blanco	●○○	4

TUESDAY

Dish	Complexity	Page
Ropa vieja	●●●	11
Yuca frita (from leftovers)	●○○	5
Arroz blanco	●○○	4
Ensalada mixta	●○○	12
Arroz con leche	●●●	13

WEDNESDAY

Dish	Complexity	Page
Garbanzos con chorizo	●●○	14
Tortilla de plátanos maduros	●○○	15
Aguacate salad	●○○	6
Arroz blanco (optional)	●○○	4
Natilla	●●●	16

THURSDAY

Dish	Complexity	Page
Masitas de puerco	●●○	17
Moros y Cristianos	●●○	18
Yuca frita (from leftovers)	●○○	5

FRIDAY

Dish	Complexity	Page
Dorado	●●○	20
Ensalada de aguacate y mango	●○○	21
Tostones	●●○	22
Arroz blanco	●○○	4

SATURDAY

Dish	Complexity	Page
Sopa de plátanos	●○○	23
Cuban sandwich	●○○	24
Tomato and onion salad	●○○	10

Lechón ASADO



Ask Jorge what he wants for Christmas and he'll probably tell you a white Porsche 911. Ask him again, and he'll give you a more reasonable and seasonal answer: a big Christmas Eve family gathering complete with a classic **NOCHEBUENA** (*Christmas Eve*) feast. Cooking the Nochebuena dinner is any Cuban dad's ultimate patriarchal kitchen experience. It's a way to expose kids, in-laws, and American born relatives to the same tastes, sights and aromas many older

Cubans experienced as children. The centerpiece of any **NOCHEBUENA** dinner is the garlicky lechón asado. While it's a holiday essential in the Brunet-García household, this recipe can be, and should be, enjoyed year round. When you get your pork, just make positively sure it's un-smoked and still has the skin on. Don't be afraid of the leftovers with this one. They are your friend and perfect for Cuban sandwiches.



LECHÓN ASADO

INGREDIENTS

- ☞ One 5-6 pound leg or shoulder of pork
- ☞ 6-10 cloves of garlic
- ☞ 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- ☞ 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- ☞ 1 1/2 tablespoons salt
- ☞ Freshly ground pepper to taste
- ☞ 1/2 cup sour orange juice (can be substituted with 1/4 cup orange juice combined with 1/4 cup lime juice)
- ☞ 1/2 cup dry white cooking wine
- ☞ 2 large onions thickly sliced
- ☞ 4 bay leaves



SERVES
12-14



4H-5H
(PLUS RESTING TIME)

The night before serving

Remove any excess fat from the pork and pierce the meat all over with the tip of a knife. Place meat in a non-reactive roasting pan, fat side up. Score top of roast in diamonds.

In a mortar (or food processor) combine the garlic, oregano, salt and cumin into a paste. Rub pork well with the paste, sprinkle liberally with pepper, add the orange juice, wine, bay leaves, and onions, cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight, turning meat over several times.

About 4 1/2 hours before serving

Remove pork from the refrigerator 1/2 hour before cooking time. Preheat oven to 450°F. Drain any liquid that may have seeped from the meat and pour over meat before putting it in the oven. Lower heat to 325°F and cook until temperature inside pork reaches 155°F (around 4 hours of cook time).

Before serving

Remove the pork to a serving platter and allow it to stand, covered with foil, 15 minutes before carving. Serve with Mojo criollo.



Mojito

CRIOLLO

The signature marinade
of Cuba

You can use it for a ton of other dishes besides lechón asado.
Learn this recipe, love this recipe, use this recipe.

MOJO CRIOLLO

INGREDIENTS

- ☞ 6-8 cloves of garlic
- ☞ 1 teaspoon oregano
- ☞ 1 teaspoon salt
- ☞ 1 medium sized sweet onion thinly sliced
- ☞ 1/2 cup sour orange juice (can be substituted with 1/4 cup orange juice, combined with 1/4 cup lime juice)
- ☞ 1 cup olive oil (Spanish preferred)



Preparation

Using a mortar and pestle, crush the garlic and salt to form a thick paste.

In a mixing bowl combine the garlic paste, onion and juice and let the mixture sit at room temperature for an hour or so. Minutes before you are ready to serve the mojo, heat the oil over medium-high heat in a

deep pan until the oil is very hot. Add the garlic mixture (do this quickly because it will splatter), stir for a few seconds and serve immediately.

To reheat, simmer over low heat until heated through (6-8 minutes). The sauce will keep several weeks refrigerated.



SERVES
12-14



15M-20M



Frijoles Negros

The original Indian population of Cuba ate black beans long before the Europeans arrived, so cooking up this legume is about as traditional and authentically Cuban as you can get. Every Cuban will tell you their black bean recipe is best. It would be presumptuous to say Jorge's beans are the greatest, but they are pretty darn tasty. Everyone makes black beans a little differently depending on which province of Cuba you grew up in. Some add

sugar, others vinegar, but the essential ingredients that make up the **SOFRITO** (*the soul of most Cuban dishes*) is the same. Feel free to experiment. Traditionalists will tell you they never use canned black beans. But the truth is there probably isn't a Cuban cook out there who hasn't had to resort to using a couple of cans of black beans to speed things up. We recommend Goya Black Bean Soup, which you can find at just about any supermarket.

FRIJOLES NEGROS

INGREDIENTS

- ☞ 4 cans of black beans in salt water (or you can cheat a little and use "prepared" beans instead)
- ☞ 1 medium sweet onion finely chopped
- ☞ 1 green pepper, seeded and finely chopped
- ☞ 1/2 red pepper, seeded and finely chopped
- ☞ 3-4 cloves of garlic, mashed
- ☞ 2 tablespoons of olive oil (Spanish is preferred)
- ☞ 1 small can of Hispanic tomato sauce (you can use 1/4 cup of ketchup in a pinch)
- ☞ 2-3 tablespoons of dry white cooking wine
- ☞ 2 bay leaves
- ☞ 1 teaspoon of dry oregano
- ☞ 1 teaspoon of ground cumin
- ☞ Pinch of salt
- ☞ Freshly ground pepper



Sofrito

In a skillet, heat the oil over medium low heat until it is fragrant, then add the garlic and onion and cook until the onion begins to soften. Add the green and red peppers and cook until the onion is transparent (6 to 8 minutes depending on your cooking surface). Add the cumin, oregano, bay leaf and stir. Pour in the cooking wine and the tomato sauce, lower the heat to low and simmer for a couple of minutes, stirring so it will not stick.



Beans

Pour the beans liquid and all in a large enough container that will hold them and the sofrito. Heat on medium until they begin to warm. Add the sofrito and mix well. Bring the heat down to low, cover and let simmer (making sure that the bottom will not burn) for about an hour until all the flavors are mixed. This is when you add the vinegar (1-2 tablespoons) and/or the sugar (1 tablespoon).



SERVES
10



1H



ARROZ BLANCO



It's too bad there is not a macro key for typing, "serve over fluffy white rice." **ARROZ BLANCO** goes with just about any Cuban dish. Jorge cooks rice the way his

mother taught him and it always comes out right. The secret to perfect rice is not to take the top off the pot until it is done!

ARROZ BLANCO

INGREDIENTS

- ☞ 2 cups long grain rice (Jasmin rice works well)
- ☞ 2 cups water
- ☞ 1/2 teaspoon of salt
- ☞ 2 tablespoons of olive oil (Spanish preferred)

Preparation

Place all ingredients in a medium sized pot. Heat on high until the water begins to boil. Stir the rice with a fork to loosen up, cover and lower heat to low.

Cook covered for 30 minutes. Do not uncover the pot for any reason!

Once cooked, stir with a fork and set aside until ready to serve.



SERVES
10-10



30M



Yuca con Mojo

Don't be fooled by its looks. Yuca may come off as a humble tuber, but when you clean it up and dress it in some **GARLIC AND OLIVE OIL**, it's ready for a

night on the dinner table – and what a stunning dinner date it is.

YUCA CON MOJO

INGREDIENTS

- 👉 2 packages frozen cassava (yuca)
- 👉 1 tablespoon salt
- 👉 7 - 8 cloves of garlic (mashed)
- 👉 1/2 cup olive oil (Spanish is preferred)
- 👉 6 limes (halved)

In a large stock pot over medium heat, simmer yuca in salted water to cover until very tender, 25 to 30 minutes. Drain, place in a serving bowl and set to the side.

In a frying pan over medium heat fry the garlic cloves in the olive oil until they begin to brown.

Pour the hot garlic oil over the yuca. Squeeze the lime over the sizzling yuca.

Serve immediately.



The leftovers: Yuca frita

One of the bonuses of having leftover yuca con mojo is having fried yuca the next day. Think of fried yuca as the french fry's sassier, tastier cousin. The starchy, crispy texture of the yuca is addictive in the best way imaginable.

In a large kettle, heat 2 to 3 cups of vegetable oil in medium high heat until very hot. Take the refrigerated yuca leftovers and slice lengthwise into 3/4 inch strips. Deep fry the yuca strips a few at a time until golden. Drain on paper towels and salt to taste.



SERVES
10-12



45M



Aguacate

SALAD

— *Tired of leafy green salads?* —

We humbly suggest this recipe. A bunch of raw onions and avocados may sound kind of lame, but we promise once you try this recipe, you'll be hooked on how delicious and easy it is. Make sure you use Florida avocados. They are larger and smoother than Hass

avocados and have a milder flavor. Get them when they are **BRIGHT GREEN AND RIPE**. Keep them around until they feel perfect: just tender when pushed but not mushy.



AGUACATE SALAD

INGREDIENTS

- ☞ 2 ripe avocados (better if they are FL avocados and are refrigerated)
- ☞ 1/2 sweet onion sliced thinly in rounds
- ☞ 2 tablespoons olive oil (Spanish preferred)
- ☞ 1 tablespoon white or rice vinegar
- ☞ 1/2 teaspoon of salt
- ☞ Freshly ground pepper to taste

Preparation


Peel, seed and slice the avocados; cut into 1" cubes. In a large bowl, mix the avocados, the thinly sliced onions, oil, vinegar, salt and pepper.



SERVES
4-6



10M



Flan

Jorge has a sweet tooth.

He comes by it naturally. Consuming sweets used to be seen as kind of a patriotic duty in Cuba, which early in the 20th century was the world's "Sugar Bowl." Perhaps because of this, most Cuban desserts are really sweet. Though not unique to Cuba, **FLAN** has become the most ubiquitous of all Cuban desserts. If you pull it off right, your family and dinner guests

will think you worked all day on this creamy custard. The trickiest part of this recipe is melting the sugar in the beginning. Don't make the same mistake Jorge often does and get distracted by making a drink or having a conversation while the sugar is caramelizing.

FLAN

INGREDIENTS

- 👉 1/2 cup sugar
- 👉 5 eggs
- 👉 1 can condensed milk
- 👉 1 can evaporated milk
- 👉 1 teaspoon vanilla

Preparation

In a small heavy saucepan over medium-high heat, cook the sugar, stirring after it starts to bubble, until it caramelizes, 6 to 8 minutes. Pour into a 2-quart ovenproof mold, swirl to coat the bottom, and set aside. Preheat oven to 350 F.

Beat eggs and stir in condensed milk, evaporated milk and vanilla. Blend well trying not to create bubbles (some pass this mixture through a strainer in order to remove the bubbles). Pour into the caramelized mold and cover. Place the mold with the mixture into a larger pan in the middle oven rack and pour lukewarm water into the outer pan, reaching two thirds of the way up the side of the custard.



Bake one hour, uncover, insert a toothpick to see if it is set. If not set, cook the custard uncovered another 15 minutes. Remove from the oven and the water bath, let cool to room temperature, cover and refrigerate 2 to 3 hours.

To serve, run a knife around the inside edges of the mold, invert the custard onto a serving plate, and spoon the caramel over it.



SERVES
12-14



2H
(PLUS REFRIGERATION)



PICADILLO

Picadillo roughly translates from the Spanish as “mince.” **TO CUBANS**, *it means pure comfort food*. The dish bears some resemblance to American sloppy Joes, or to hash. Some cooks use tomato sauce in the base. Others insist on fresh tomatoes. Ernest Hemingway liked to put slivers of almonds in his.

Jorge’s recipe eschews those additions, but he does love his raisins in this dish. It’s kind of hard to explain to non-Cubans the wonderful flavor balance that results from the combination of olives and raisins. If you just don’t “get it” that’s ok, it only means there is more for Jorge to eat.

PICADILLO

INGREDIENTS

- 👉 1 medium sweet onion chopped
- 👉 1 green pepper chopped
- 👉 1/2 red pepper chopped
- 👉 3 cloves garlic mashed
- 👉 1 tablespoon olive oil (Spanish preferred)
- 👉 1 tablespoon white cooking wine
- 👉 1/4 cup raisins
- 👉 1/4 cup pitted olives chopped
- 👉 2 bay leaves
- 👉 2 tablespoons Hispanic tomato sauce
- 👉 1-2 pound ground beef

Preparation

In a skillet heat the oil over low heat until it is fragrant, then add the garlic, onion, and bell pepper; cook, stirring until the onion is transparent, 8 to 10 minutes. Add the beef and cook, stirring, until brown, 10 to 15 minutes, breaking up any large chunks with a wooden spoon. Drain excess fat.

Add the wine, tomato sauce, cumin, oregano and bay leaves, and cook, uncovered, over medium heat for 15 to 20 minutes. Add the raisins and olives to the meat, correct the seasoning, and continue cooking until most of the liquid is absorbed, 10 to 15 minutes.



SERVES
4-6



1H



FRIED Sweet PLANTAINS

Ok, let's clear things up. Plantains are not, strictly speaking, bananas.

What they are is economical and easy to make. Don't be scared when you see them at the grocery store or market.

They need to be almost black for this recipe. That doesn't mean they are rotten. It means they are ready!

FRIED SWEET PLANTAINS

INGREDIENTS

- ☞ 2-3 very ripe plantains (the darker spotted the better as this makes them sweeter)
- ☞ 2 to 3 cups of vegetable oil



Preparation

Peel and slice the plantains diagonally into 2 1/2-3 inch pieces.

In a large kettle, heat the vegetable oil on medium high

heat until hot. Deep fry the plantain slices a few at a time until dark golden. Drain on a non-stick surface.



SERVES
4-6



15M



Tomato and Onion SALAD

This is a great salad to make in the summer,
when tomatoes are at their ripest and most flavorful.

TOMATO AND ONION SALAD

INGREDIENTS

- 👉 3-4 ripe tomatoes
- 👉 1/2 sweet onion sliced thinly in rounds
- 👉 2 tablespoons olive oil (Spanish preferred)
- 👉 1 tablespoon white or rice vinegar
- 👉 1/2 teaspoon of salt
- 👉 Freshly ground pepper to taste

Preparation

Slice the tomatoes into 1/4 inch rounds. In a large bowl, mix the tomatoes, the thinly sliced onions, oil, vinegar, salt and pepper.



SERVES
4-6



10M



Ropa Vieja

Ropa vieja literally means **"OLD CLOTHES."** So why does something as delicious as this savory shredded meat stew have such an unappetizing name. Some say the shreds of meat, peppers and onions in this dish resemble remnants of colorful old rags. We can kinda see it, but that's not our favorite origin story. According to folklore, a poor man had nothing to cook

his family except a pile of clothes; but he cooked them with so much love they turned into this delicious dish of shredded beef stewed with peppers and onions. There are lots of ropa vieja recipes that call for boiling the meat or slow cooking it for hours to get it to the point where you can easily pull it apart. We are sharing Jorge's fast and easy recipe.



ROPA VIEJA

INGREDIENTS

- ☞ 2-3 pound skirt steak (you can also use flank steak)
- ☞ 1 green pepper sliced in strips
- ☞ 1/2 red pepper sliced in strips
- ☞ 1 sweet onion sliced into rounds
- ☞ 3 cloves garlic crushed
- ☞ 4 tablespoon olive oil (Spanish preferred)
- ☞ 1 can Hispanic tomato sauce
- ☞ 2-3 tablespoons dry white cooking wine
- ☞ 2-3 bay leaves
- ☞ Salt & pepper to taste

Preparation

Place the meat in a large pot with enough water to cover. Add 1 teaspoon of salt to the water and bring to a boil. Lower to medium and cover until the meat is cooked and falls apart in your hand (about 3/4-1 hour). When cooked, let cool and shred the beef into fine threads with your hands. Set aside. Do not discard the broth.

Peel and slice the onions into rounds; seed, core and slice the peppers into strips; peel and mash the garlic.

In a large pot, heat the olive oil over medium low heat until it is fragrant, then add the garlic and onion and cook until the onion begins to soften. Add the green and red peppers and cook until the onion is transparent (6 to 8 minutes depending on your cooking surface). Pour the cooking wine and the tomato sauce, lower the heat to low and simmer stirring so it will not stick. Add the meat to the sauce and enough broth to cover the meat. Cover the pot and let it simmer stirring frequently for 45 minutes. Taste and adjust seasoning.



SERVES
12-14



2H



Ensalada Mixta

This is a popular Cuban party salad. The key to the salad is getting a good **CRISP HEAD OF LETTUCE.**

ENSALADA MIXTA

INGREDIENTS

- ☞ 3-4 ripe tomatoes
- ☞ 1/2 sweet onion sliced thinly in rounds
- ☞ 1 small head of Boston or Bibb lettuce (you could also use mixed greens)
- ☞ 3-4 baby carrots thinly sliced
- ☞ 2 tablespoons olive oil (Spanish preferred)
- ☞ 1 tablespoon white or rice vinegar
- ☞ 1/2 teaspoon of salt
- ☞ Freshly ground pepper to taste

Preparation

Slice the tomatoes into wedges. Shred the lettuce leaves then in a large bowl, toss the tomatoes, the thinly sliced onions, the lettuce, sliced baby carrots, oil, vinegar, salt and pepper.



SERVES
4-6



10M



Arroz con Leche

For a long stretch of his childhood, Jorge's oldest son Joash was obsessed with this dessert. His abuela was usually the one that made it for him though. Arroz con leche is made with a lot of love and requires constant

stirring. This rice pudding is **WORTH THE WAIT** and is a real treat *served warm or cold sprinkled with a little extra cinnamon on top*. Enjoy it in all its creamy, starchy glory.

ARROZ CON LECHE

INGREDIENTS

- 👉 1/2 cup short grain rice
- 👉 1 1/2 cup water
- 👉 1 qt whole milk
- 👉 1 cup sugar
- 👉 Peel of 1 lime
- 👉 1 stick of cinnamon
- 👉 teaspoon salt
- 👉 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 👉 Cinnamon powder

Preparation

In a medium-size saucepan over medium heat, cook the rice in the water, until the rice is softened, 15-20 minutes. Pour off any excess water.

Reduce heat to low, add the milk, vanilla, cinnamon, lime peel,

salt and sugar, and cook stirring frequently to avoid sticking, until the pudding has thickened, about 45 minutes. Remove the lime peel and cinnamon stick, transfer the pudding to a serving bowl, dust with cinnamon powder, and refrigerate until ready to serve.



SERVES
12-14



1H
(PLUS REFRIGERATION)



Garbanzos con CHORIZO

Jorge is no fan of the cold, but that doesn't mean he can't whip up some mean dishes perfectly suited for the fall and winter. **GARBANZOS** *are chick-peas, the stuff you make hummus out of.* Some highfalutin types might demand that you soak the beans overnight for this to be an authentic recipe. Nonsense. When it comes to Jorge's beans, these are the rules: no soaking, no fear of

pressure cooking, no manual mashing of beans and less cooking time than dry, uncooked beans. The garbanzos you get in a can are fine; in fact the Goya ones are great. Combine them with all the other ingredients, including the chorizo and ham, and you will be hooked for life on this hearty soup. Also, we cannot stress enough how good this is with some Cuban bread for dipping.



GARBANZOS CON CHORIZO

INGREDIENTS

- 👉 1/2 cup olive oil (Spanish preferred)
- 👉 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 👉 1 small green pepper, seeded and finely chopped
- 👉 1/2 red pepper, seeded and finely chopped
- 👉 2 to 3 cloves garlic, mashed
- 👉 1/2 cup drained and chopped canned whole tomatoes or Hispanic tomato sauce
- 👉 3 to 4 spanish chorizos cut in inch thick rounds
- 👉 1/2 cup diced ham
- 👉 3 cups canned garbanzos (chick peas) drained
- 👉 2 tablespoon fresh parsley
- 👉 Salt and pepper to taste

Preparation

In a large pot heat the oil over medium-low heat until it is fragrant, then add the garlic, onion, green and red pepper. Cook, stirring until the onion is transparent, 8 to 10 minutes.

Add the tomatoes and cook until heated through, 2 to 3 minutes.

Add the garbanzos, chorizos and ham, reduce the heat to low, cover and cook until heated through, 20 to 25 minutes. Garnish with the parsley and serve with crusty Cuban bread.



SERVES
12-14



45M



Tortilla de Plátanos MADUROS

Before we go into this recipe, we have to clarify some Spanish cuisine semantics. In Cuba, **TORTILLA** is not the Mexican flatbread most Americans associate with the word. To Cubans, tortilla means **OMELET**. But these aren't your Waffle House style omelets. Cuban tortillas

are often dinner fare, and the pan they are made in is very important. An **IRON SKILLET** is the way to go when preparing this tortilla, with its ripe plantain filling. You can't get more typically Cuban than this dish.

TORTILLA DE PLÁTANOS MADUROS

INGREDIENTS

- 👉 6-8 large eggs
- 👉 6-8 fried sweet plantains (see earlier recipe or you can use leftovers)
- 👉 2 tablespoons olive oil (Spanish preferred)
- 👉 Fresh parsley for garnish
- 👉 Salt and pepper to taste

Preparation

Coat a heavy, oven-proof skillet (like cast iron) with the olive oil set on the stove at medium.

Place the egg yolks and whites in a bowl and beat until frothy. When the skillet is hot pour the egg mixture in the skillet and arrange the sweet plantains so that they are all covered by the egg mixture. Let cook for a few minutes making sure that the bottom does not burn.

When the eggs begin to harden place the skillet in a pre-heated 325° oven until the eggs are totally cooked and firm.

Remove from the oven and let cool slightly. Work a spatula around the sides and bottom of the skillet to release the tortilla and place on a plate. Add salt and pepper to taste and garnish with the parsley.

Slice and serve.



SERVES
4-6



30M



Natilla

Look closely and you'll see some striking similarities between Cuban cooking and **TRADITIONAL SOUTHERN COOKING**. Both cuisines utilize a lot of frying, pork, starches and very sweet desserts. This Cuban

classic bears some similarities to good ole' **SOUTHERN BANANA PUDDING**. But don't wait for Paula Deen to whip up a batch of this egg custard. Use this recipe and you'll be good to go.

NATILLA

INGREDIENTS

- ☞ 1 Sara Lee pound cake sliced in 1/2 inch slices
- ☞ 8 eggs
- ☞ 4 cups milk
- ☞ 4 tablespoons cornstarch
- ☞ 1 1/2 cups sugar
- ☞ 1/4 cup water
- ☞ 1 teaspoon vanilla
- ☞ 1 lime peel
- ☞ 1 cinnamon stick
- ☞ 1/4 teaspoon salt

Custard

Boil the milk with the cinnamon, lime peel and salt. Let cool. Mix the cornstarch with the water then add the egg yolks (save the whites), sugar, vanilla and milk. Mix well. Strain the mixture through a fine strainer. In a heavy, medium sized saucepan over medium heat, cook the mixture, stirring constantly, until thickened, about 20 minutes.

Line the bottom of an oven-proof, glass mold with the pound cake slices, pour the custard on top and let cool to room temperature.

Meringue

Beat the egg whites until almost stiff. Gradually add 10 to 12 tablespoons of sugar, and beat until stiff.

Spread the meringue over the cooled custard to cover. Put in the oven under the broiler until the meringue is golden. Refrigerate at least 4 hours or overnight.



SERVES
8-10



45M
(PLUS REFRIGERATION)



MASITAS de Puerco

Masitas de Puerco is a good Cuban starting dish for the easily intimidated or unadventurous eater. There's no game of "guess what you just ate?" With this dish you know exactly what you are getting: **DEEP FRIED, FATTY AND DELICIOUS LITTLE PORK CHUNKS.** If you're like Jorge and have a reckless disregard for cholesterol, you can mix in the lard

leftover from your lechón asado to make these tasty little pork chunks. If you've ever been to Calle Ocho (Little Havana) in Miami, you may have seen stacks of these sitting under a heat lamp at a Cuban sandwich window or Cuban bakery. Now you have Jorge's recipe for making them at home. Make sure you cut up a couple of lime wedges to squeeze on your masitas.

MASITAS DE PUERCO

INGREDIENTS

- 2 pounds lean boneless pork shoulder cut into 2 inch cubes
- 4 cloves garlic, mashed
- 1/2 cup sour orange juice (can be substituted with 1/4 cup orange juice combined with 1/4 cup lime juice)
- 1/8 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1/8 teaspoon ground cumin
- Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
- Vegetable oil for frying

Preparation

Sprinkle the meat liberally with salt and pepper. In a mortar, crush the peeled garlic adding the oregano and cumin as you go. Rub the pork with the garlic paste, put in a covered nonreactive bowl or plastic bag, and pour the sour orange juice over it. Refrigerate for 2-3 hours.

Preheat the oven to 200°F. Drain the pork cubes. Heat 2 inches of oil in a large pan over medium heat until very hot but not smoking. Add the pork cubes, one at a time, without crowding them. Raise the heat (as it cooks, the pork will release some moisture, lowering the oil temperature considerably) and brown the cubes, turning often with a slotted spoon. When the



oil temperature rises again, lower the heat and cook the cubes, turning frequently, until they are a rich, golden brown color (about another 10 minutes). Occasionally turn the heat up or down as necessary to crisp the cubes but not burn or dry them. As the cubes are finished, transfer them to a paper-towel-lined tray to drain and keep warm in the oven until all the cubes are fried.



SERVES
12-14



45M
(PRE-REFRIGERATION)



Moros y Cristianos

So this is a recipe and history lesson all in one. The dish is a nod to the Moorish invasion of **CHRISTIAN SPAIN** and the *mélange* of *Caribbean, African and Spanish cultures* reflected in the dish. We try not to

stereotype, but for the purpose of this dish the black beans represent the Moors and the white rice the Christians. If you have extras, they refrigerate well and come out great when reheated.

MOROS Y CRISTIANOS

INGREDIENTS

- ☞ 4 ounces slab bacon (tocino) diced in 1/4 inch cubes
- ☞ 1 medium sweet onion, finely chopped
- ☞ 1 medium sized green pepper, finely chopped
- ☞ 1/2 medium sized red pepper, finely chopped
- ☞ 2 cloves garlic mashed
- ☞ 2 16-ounce cans of black beans, undrained
- ☞ 2 cups long grained white rice
- ☞ 4 1/2 cups water
- ☞ 2 teaspoons salt
- ☞ 1 bay leaf
- ☞ 1/4 tablespoon ground cumin
- ☞ 1/4 tablespoon oregano
- ☞ 2 tablespoons olive oil (Spanish preferred)
- ☞ Fresh ground pepper to taste

Preparation

In a large pan, over medium-low heat, cook the bacon 6 to 8 minutes or until it renders its fat. Add the onion, green pepper, red pepper and garlic and cook stirring until tender, 6-8 minutes. Add the remaining ingredients and cook (boil) uncovered over medium-high heat for about 10-15 minutes until most of the water has been absorbed and a small crater begins to form over the surface of the rice.



Stir with a fork, cover and cook over low heat until the rice is tender (about 15 -20 minutes). Fluff with a fork, check the seasoning, adjust and serve.



SERVES
6-8



45M-1H



Sopa de Fideos con AGUACATE

Feeling sick? Then get a loving relative or special someone to fix this Cuban version of **CHICKEN-NOODLE SOUP**. If you haven't experienced the

awe-inspiring power of **CHILLED AVOCADO CUBES** in a simmering hot soup, then get ready for an unexpected culinary delight.

SOPA DE FIDEOS CON AGUACATE

INGREDIENTS

- ☞ 1 whole chicken breast
- ☞ 4 cups chicken broth
- ☞ 1 stalk celery
- ☞ 1/2 sweet onion
- ☞ 2 cloves of garlic peeled and mashed
- ☞ 1/2 package very thin Spanish noodles (you could also use "nest" type noodles)
- ☞ 2 ripe avocados cold from the refrigerator
- ☞ 2 limes quartered
- ☞ Salt and freshly ground pepper

Preparation

In a soup pot bring the chicken broth to a boil. Add the onion, celery, garlic and chicken breast. Simmer until the chicken is cooked. Add more broth or water if needed.

Remove and discard the onion, celery and garlic.

Remove the chicken, debone and dispose of the skin and bones. Cut the chicken in 1/2 inch cubes and return to the broth.

Add the noodles and cook until the noodles are done.

Taste the soup and add salt and pepper as needed.



Peel and cut the cold avocados into 1 inch cubes.

Serve soup in bowls, add some of the cold avocado cubes and squeeze lime over them. Salt to taste.

As you eat the avocados add more to the soup.



SERVES
4-6



1H



Dorado

Cubans cook a variety of different fish in a variety of different fashions. Jorge prefers to **GRILL HIS CATCH**

most of the time. This recipe calls for Mahi (Dorado) but any mild, flaky and flavorful fresh fish will work just as well.

DORADO

INGREDIENTS

- ☞ 6 Mahi (Dorado) fillets (6-8 ounces each)
- ☞ Juice of 2 limes
- ☞ 2-3 garlic cloves peeled and mashed
- ☞ 1 teaspoon salt
- ☞ 1 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- ☞ 1/2 cup olive oil (Spanish preferred)
- ☞ 1 1/2 cup chopped parsley
- ☞ Extra oil for grill rack

Preparation

Season the fish with the salt, ground pepper, garlic, lime and olive oil. Let it marinate, turning occasionally, in a nonreactive dish or plastic bag for 30 minutes to an hour.

Preheat grill and lightly grease rack. Grill fillets 3-4 minutes making sure that they do not stick to the rack. Brush with marinade and turn over for another 3-4 minutes or until flakes when tested with a fork. Remove from grill and let rest.



Sprinkle chopped parsley and squeeze additional lime on the fillets.

Serve with plenty of limes.



SERVES
4-6



45M



Ensalada

de AGUACATE
y MANGO

Some people think **SWEET FRUIT** in a salad is a no-no. This recipe will quickly dispel that notion. The flavor and textural elements of this salad are awesome. Jorge

likes to use a little bit of creativity to keep his salads interesting. He thinks a salad should be more than just a bowl of greens, and after you try this, you'll agree.

ENSALADA DE AGUACATE Y MANGO

INGREDIENTS

- 👉 1 bunch watercress, stems removed
- 👉 1 large Florida avocado peeled, pitted and thinly sliced
- 👉 1 large ripe mango peeled, pitted and thinly sliced
- 👉 1/2 medium red onion, cut in 1/2 and each half thinly sliced
- 👉 Olive oil (Spanish preferred) to taste
- 👉 Fresh lime juice to taste
- 👉 Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

Preparation

Line a platter with the watercress and arrange over it alternating slices of mango, avocado and onion. Drizzle with oil and lime juice. Season with salt and pepper.



SERVES
4-6



20M



TOSTONES

Think of tostones as the stiff, salty cousin to the sweet plátanos maduros.

The plantains you pick for this dish must be green, no exceptions. Perfect tostones are crisp on the outside and tender on the inside. **FRIED TWICE** has never

been so nice, and that double fry is what makes this staple plantain dish unique.



TOSTONES

INGREDIENTS

- 2 large green plantains, peeled and cut into 2-inch slices
- 2/3 cup vegetable oil
- Salt to taste

Preparation

Peel the plantain by cutting the ends of each plantain off with a sharp knife. Use the knife to cut through the peel the entire length of the plantain. Loosen the peel along the cut and remove peel by hand.

Cut the plantain into slices, about 2 to 2 1/2-inches wide.

Fill a large skillet a third full with oil and heat over medium-high heat. Once the oil is hot, fry the plantain slices for approximately 3 to 5 minutes, turning once, just long enough to make them soft.

Remove the plantains and drain on paper towels. Use a plantain press or a brown paper bag folded over to smash the plantains to about half their thickness.

Let the oil come back to a higher temperature. Fry once again, turning occasionally, until golden brown on both sides.

Remove and use paper towels to absorb excess oil. Sprinkle with plenty of salt and serve.



SERVES
8-10



30M



Sopa de Plátanos

When it comes to **PLANTAINS**, *they are going to go in either a sweet or savory direction.* This recipe takes the latter route for a simple and budget-friendly meal. Jorge is a big fan of leftovers, so he'll often make a big

batch of this soup – or any of the other recipes we've shared – and store it in the fridge for a quick dinner after work. By the way, this soup will make your house smell great.

SOPA DE PLÁTANOS

INGREDIENTS

- ☞ 3 to 4 cups fried plantain chips (a couple of large bags should be plenty)
- ☞ 4 cups chicken broth (you can use beef broth if you choose)
- ☞ Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
- ☞ 2 limes quartered



Preparation

Place plantain chips in blender or food processor and grind finely.

In a soup pot over medium high heat, bring the broth to a low boil. Slowly, stirring constantly so it will not lump, spoon in ground

plantain chips a little at a time until the desired consistency (medium thick soup). Bring temperature to low and cook stirring frequently, about 20 minutes. If the soup is too thick, add more broth; if too thin, add more plantains.

Serve hot in soup bowls, season to taste and sprinkle with lime juice.



SERVES
4-6



30M



Cuban SANDWICH

A lot of places claim to make Cuban sandwiches, but few really offer up the real deal. Jorge has two mandates with this recipe:

First, an authentic Cuban sandwich has to be made with authentic Cuban bread. Anything else and the sandwich is a badly disguised imposter. Real Cuban bread is made with lard giving it a slightly deli-like flavor and smell. Cuban bread is also very airy. So airy that if you throw it into a pool it will float. (Please don't try this and expect to

get reimbursed for the cost of your bread.)

Second, you have to use a press to make them. Cuban restaurants use a special press called a **PLANCHA**. You can get by with pressing them on a griddle like Jorge does. In a pinch, use a pan and drop a brick wrapped in foil on top of the sandwich – seriously. One of the greatest sins in Cuban sandwich preparation is too light a press. A heavy hand on the press pushes all the juices and flavors together while still achieving the desired crunchy crust.

CUBAN SANDWICH

INGREDIENTS

- 1 loaf Cuban bread (don't use French or Italian; it will not taste the same)
- 1/2 pound baked deli ham sliced thickly
- 1/2 pound roast pork sliced thickly
- 1/2 pound Swiss deli cheese sliced thickly
- Dill pickles
- Mustard
- Butter

Preparation

Slice the loaf of bread horizontally in half and spread mustard generously on both halves. Start piling the ham on the bottom half of the bread, then the sliced pork, the Swiss cheese and finish with the pickles.

Put on the top side of the bread, and slice the sandwich in half.

Butter lightly the top and bottom of the sandwich and place on a panini press set on medium until the bread is crispy and the cheese



is melted. If you do not have a panini press, you can press the sandwich on a skillet or griddle on the stovetop by pressing and turning the sandwich once one side is done.



SERVES
4-6



15M

*The recipes contained in this cookbook have been handed down **through the generations**, from **Cuban to Cuban**, and adapted of late by **Jorge in the Brunet-Garcia test kitchen**. The images were shamelessly taken with **smart phones**, and the **design and layout** are courtesy **Brunet-Garcia Advertising**, © 2014.*