**DIG1712 – Capstone I**

Research each meal that will be made and type up a paragraph on each meal explaining its cultural significance.

* **Rabo Encendido:**

Rabo Encendido is Cuba’s version of Spain’s Rabo de Toro, which originates from Spain’s Bullfighting. Spain’s bull fights dates as far back as 711 A.D, where if a bull wins, he would be kept alive until the next fight, but if the bull loses, then he is taken to the slaughterhouse. The bulls meat would make its way to butcher shops and restaurants. Skip to today’s times, where Spain’s influence has reached Cuba’s cuisine culture and Rabo Encendido was born. Rabo Encendido translates from Spanish to “Tail on Fire”, which refers to the cut of the meat, the warm spice profile, and the chile heat provided by cayenne. Rabo Encendido is a Cuban dish of Oxtails cooked in a mixture of wine, tomato paste, and vegetables until the tough meat becomes fork tender and all the connective tissue and fat has melted, creating a rich sauce.

* **Frijoles negro / White Rice:**

Frijoles negros or black beans hold a story in Cuban Culture, alongside white rice. They combine to become a dish known as Moros y Cristianos which is symbolic of Spanish History. This story commemorates the period of Islamic domination of most of the Iberian Peninsula and the series of battles that took place between Muslims and Christians.

* **Fricassee de pollo:**

Fricassee de Pollo originated in France, dating all the way back to the early 1300s. The first record of this classic dish is found in the French cookbook Le Viandier. Many think the word fricassee is a hybrid of the French words Frire (to fry) and Casser (to break in pieces). It was brought to the Spanish Caribbean islands by the Spanish and the French, and it remains a popular recipe there. In Cuba, the dish evolved to include vibrant elements like citrus, cumin, oregano, and olives, reflecting the island’s diverse cultural influences, including Spanish and African traditions.

* **Croquetas:**

Croquetas originated in France as croquettes, gaining popularity in Cuba in the 19th Century as way to preserve food scraps like ham, beef, pork, chicken, or fish from being wasted. Today Croquetas are available on street corners and gourmet restaurants. While Spanish and Cuban immigrants brought the croqueta to Miami, chefs today are taking the croqueta’s basic framework and adapting it to reflect the county’s increasing cultural diversity.

* **Tostones:**

Tostones are a famous side dish in many Latin American countries, this recipe originated from the Dominican Republic. In today’s time, Tostones embody Cuba. Being made of Plantains, they grow well in warm, tropical climate which made them important staples in the Special Time. This was a period during the reign of Fidel Castro when the USSR pulled its financial support from Cuba. This dominoed into a food shortage. Thus, explaining why Tostones are so central to the Cuban diet and culture.

* **Platano Maduros:**

No Cuban dish is complete without a side of maduros, or fried sweet plantains. Some historians believe that fried plantains were already popular among African slaves. They reached the Caribbean onboard the European slave ships, and they were able to cook the dish in Cuba because of the abundance of plantains there. Eventually becoming a major side dish in Cuban cuisine.

* **Cafe con leche:**

The café con leche drink originated in Spain. After becoming popular in Spain, this coffee beverage has spread to other Spanish-speaking countries and area. Cuban restaurants in Florida often have walk-up windows (Ventanita) that serve café con leche. Café con leche is considered a breakfast drink in many countries that serve it. Because of the milk, it is heavier and more filling than coffee drinks.