



The Peruvian Kitchen

Morena Cuadra
with Morena Escardó

FREE 10 RECIPES MINI BOOK



THE PERUVIAN KITCHEN



TRADITIONS, INGREDIENTS, TASTES,
AND TECHNIQUES IN DELICIOUS RECIPES

MORENA CUADRA
WITH MORENA ESCARDÓ

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◀◀ PERUVIAN FOOD IN HISTORY ▶▶

Our Roots

Once upon a time Peru was a vast empire that covered most of South America. Despite this land's unbelievable biodiversity, Peruvian food was mostly Andean food, with a few highlights from the coast and the Amazon jungle.

Many of the ingredients known and used today in most parts of the world, considered the most basic and indispensable players in people's diets (like potatoes, tomatoes, corn, and chili peppers), are native to Peru. The ancient Peruvian man domesticated these crops and improved their quality with natural methods, making them resistant to plagues and disease, weather and pests. To us, these were abundant from the beginning of our history, and have never lost their place as staples of our diets.

The Incas, and the cultures before them, put all their efforts in preserving the copious supply of food the Pachamama

(mother nature) provided them. These people mastered the crafts of smoking, drying, and salting food. In the Andes, they took advantage of the inhospitable temperatures to freeze-dry potatoes and meats to use in times of scarcity. At the same time, they built storage spaces in the mountains, similar to barns, in such a form that cereals were protected from insects and humidity, yet received the right amount of cold air to keep them fresh. Thanks to their intelligence, understanding of agriculture, and innovative methods, food in this empire was bountiful, and the word famine was probably not even in their vocabulary.

The cooking methods were simple. They never fried, but instead roasted, toasted, and cooked food using hot stones or baked it in underground ovens. They seasoned their dishes with salt (in the form of a rock that they would add to their clay pots, or by licking the rock while they ate), abundant chili peppers, and lots of Andean herbs such as huacatay (black mint), which imparted their intense taste to soups and stews.

Thanks to their mostly vegetarian diet dense with ingredients that are now considered "superfoods" around the world, Peruvians were healthy and strong. They didn't eat eggs or milk, and meat was not an everyday ingredient for them, but generally eaten in times of celebration. Potatoes, quinoa, kiwicha (amaranth), tarwi, cañihua, chili peppers, and corn, were, and still are, a few of their daily basics.

Sugar was unknown, but they used honey as an occasional treat. They sparingly enjoyed fresh and dried llama meat, cuy (guinea pig), and every now and then, fish.

It's hard to believe that fresh fish was brought from the Pacific Ocean to Cusco every day for the Inca's dinner. Although it seems like an impossible task, it was achieved thanks to the famous runners of the empire (called chasquis), who were in charge of the transportation of fish and other items that needed to be transported throughout the vast empire. Despite the altitude, lack of communication, and large distances, these men always got to their destination—and they ran as fast as the wind!

The Arrival of the Spanish Conquistadors

The arrival of the Spanish brought new ingredients and foods to America for the first time, along with Moorish women who quickly made their way to Peruvian kitchens with recipes from their homeland. These women were the wives, lovers, or cooks of many Spanish men, and they immediately started adapting their Arab-Spanish dishes until they were barely recognizable, making good use of all the new ingredients this land had to offer. These women are the reason rice pudding, stuffed potatoes, and alfajores exist in Peru, among many other dishes, particularly sweets.

Europe also became the recipient of a myriad of native Peruvian fruits, vegetables, and cereals. Tomatoes, for example, were used to decorate hats and gardens in European homes, as well as potatoes, which were grown for their beautiful purple flowers, but were considered too dangerous to eat (they were believed to be poisonous and diabolic). Many years went by before people tried these crops and fell in love with them.

While all this culinary exchange and fusion was taking place, Andean soups and stews also changed forever with the addition of cheese and milk (two ingredients previously considered taboo), with the growing popularity of beef, lamb, and pork, which became the “new meat,” and with all the other foreign flavors and techniques that the natives were now exposed to. Both cultures (Peruvian and Spanish) enriched themselves when they found each other, and this was only the beginning of a delicious evolution.

A Food Obsession

I have a fascination with the life and the culinary practices in vogue during the viceroyalty in Peru, and I have eagerly devoured many books on the subject, especially the ones written by food historian Rosario Olivas Weston, whose expertise in Peruvian gastronomy is astounding.

For centuries Lima was a sophisticated city, the center of the Viceroyalty of Peru, where the most important events of the area took place. The city was small—starting with 50 inhabitants and growing from there—but it was beautiful and had a bursting and vibrant commercial, cultural, social, and political

More about this Essay in the full book version, available for purchase on Amazon [here](#)

THE RECIPES





AJÍ DE GALLINA MINI TARTLETS

◀ Serves 24 ▶

- 24 baked mini tartlet shells
- 1 recipe ají de gallina
- 12 hard-boiled quail eggs, peeled
- 24 curly parsley leaves

These adorable tartlets—or hojarascas, as we call them in Peru—used to be present in every cocktail or dinner party a few decades ago. Despite being so popular in the past, they were eventually forgotten, as more modern nibbles replaced them.

1. Place about ½ tablespoon of ají de gallina in each tartlet.
2. Garnish with ½ quail egg and a small parsley leaf.
3. Serve immediately with cocktails or white wine.

Do not bother baking the tartlets yourself. Buy them ready-made in a good bakery or grocery store. These tartlets are a good way to use up any ají de gallina—or any other stews— leftovers. Use this as inspiration to create your own finger foods.



CONCHITAS A LA PARMESANA

◀ Serves 2 ▶

- 12 bay scallops in the half shell (see tip box)
- Salt and pepper
- 12 drops Worcestershire sauce
- 12 drops lime juice
- 4 tablespoons butter
- 12 tablespoons Parmesan cheese, grated

This is a traditional hors d'oeuvre, made with bay scallops covered in grated Parmesan cheese, and ran under the broiler for a few minutes. When served, the cheese is bubbling but the scallops remain almost raw. A crowd pleaser!

1. Preheat the broiler.
2. Clean and wash the scallops in the half shell, dry, and season with salt and pepper.
3. Put them in a baking tray and season each one with a drop of Worcestershire sauce and a drop of lime juice. Cover with one tablespoon grated Parmesan cheese, and ½ teaspoon butter.
4. Run under the broiler for about 4 minutes or until the cheese is bubbling and golden brown.
5. Serve immediately, piping hot, with lime slices on the side.

If you can't find bay scallops in the half shell, broil them in small ramekins. If you don't find scallops, you can use razor clams.



ANDEAN CHICKEN FRITTERS

◀ Serves 4 ▶

- 1.5 lbs skinless chicken breast
- Salt and pepper
- 2 garlic cloves, mashed
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped parsley, divided
- 1 tablespoon mustard
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1½ cups all-purpose flour
- 2 lightly beaten eggs
- 1 cup cooked quinoa
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon ají amarillo paste
- 1 tablespoon lime juice
- 1 tablespoon capers, chopped
- Fried plantain strings, to garnish (optional)

To make the fried plantain strings, peel a green plantain, and cut thin slices using a vegetable peeler, and then cut to make strings thin like matchsticks. Fry in hot oil for a few minutes, until lightly golden. Drain on paper towels, sprinkle with salt, and serve.

Traditional chicken fritters are covered in quinoa in this recipe to give them an Andean touch. This superfood adds texture to this dish by making it crunchier, and it gives it a beautiful color, which will vary depending on the type of quinoa used.

1. Cut the chicken in slices (about 2 inches long and ¾ inch thick).
2. Season with salt and pepper. Add garlic, half the parsley, mustard, and lemon juice. Mix, cover, and marinate in the fridge for one hour.
3. Put the flour in one bowl, the eggs in another one, and the quinoa in a third one.
4. Dip each chicken piece in flour, then eggs, and then quinoa. Put on a plate.
5. Heat the oil in a saucepan over medium heat.
6. Fry the chicken, a few pieces at a time, turning once until golden all around (about 5 minutes). Transfer to a plate covered with paper towels to drain the oil.
7. Combine the mayonnaise, ají amarillo paste, lime juice, capers, and the remaining parsley in another bowl. Season with salt and pepper, and stir.
8. Serve the fritters with the sauce on the side and garnish with a few plantain strings.



CHICKEN AGUADITO

◀ Serves 4 ▶

- 4 chicken thighs and legs
- Salt and pepper
- ¼ cup vegetable oil
- ½ cup onion, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, mashed
- 3 tablespoons ají amarillo paste
- 2 cups cilantro leaves (discard the stems)
- 4 cups chicken stock
- 1 cup beer (optional)
- ½ red bell pepper, sliced
- 1 cup carrot, diced
- 1 cup corn kernels
- ½ cup white rice
- 4 small potatoes, peeled
- ½ cup green peas

Peruvians jokingly say this dish is a levanta-muertos (literally, that it wakes up the dead). It's usually eaten at dawn, after partying all night long, for its restoring and soothing qualities. The same soup made with duck is even more popular than this homey chicken version.

1. Season the chicken with salt and pepper. Heat the vegetable oil in a saucepan over medium heat, and sear the chicken pieces. Transfer them to a plate, and sauté the onion, garlic, and ají amarillo paste in the same saucepan, until golden.
2. Process the cilantro leaves in a blender with ¼ cup water, until smooth. Add to the onion mixture, along with the chicken stock, beer, chicken, corn, and carrots. Bring to a boil, turn the heat to low, cover, and simmer for 30 minutes.
3. Add the rice and potatoes, put the lid on again, and simmer until the potatoes are tender and the rice is cooked. If the soup is too thick, add more stock. Taste for seasoning, and serve.

This dish is quite big, so I recommend you make it your only course. Even if you serve it in small bowls, the corn, potatoes, and rice will make it very filling.



VEGETARIAN ARROZ CON POLLO

◀ Makes 4 ▶

- 2 bunches cilantro (only the leaves)
- 4 spinach leaves
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 cup red onion, chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, chopped
- 3 tablespoons aji amarillo paste
- 2 cups vegetable stock
- 2 cups beer (optional)
- 2 cups white rice
- Salt and pepper
- ¼ cup carrots, diced
- 1 red bell pepper, cut in slices
- 1 cup white corn
- 1 cup green peas
- Salsa criolla

Peruvians are extremely fond of rice in general, which is the most popular side dish along with potatoes. Arroz con pollo, or rice with chicken, is one of our all-time favorite rice dishes. You can enjoy it freshly made or after a day in the fridge; with or without chicken; and with salsa criolla, Huancaína sauce, or a fried egg on top.

1. Process the cilantro and spinach in a blender with ½ cup water. Reserve.
2. Heat 2 tablespoons vegetable oil in a saucepan over medium heat. Sauté the onion, garlic, and aji amarillo, stirring for 5 minutes. Add the cilantro mixture and fry for 3 minutes.
3. Add the rice, stirring for a couple minutes, and then pour in the vegetable stock, beer, carrots, red bell pepper, and corn. Season with salt and pepper, and stir well. (If you don't use beer, add more vegetable stock).
4. Bring to a boil, put the lid on, lower the heat, and cook undisturbed for about 20 minutes or until the rice is cooked.
5. Add the peas, stir with a kitchen fork, put the lid back on, and cook for an extra 5 minutes.
6. Serve the rice topped with salsa criolla

To make the original version with chicken, use any part of the chicken, and sear with oil until golden. Transfer to a plate and cover. Follow steps 1 and 2 using the same pan where you seared the chicken. Add the chicken, stock, and beer to the pan, and cook, covered, for 30 minutes. Only then go to step 3.



SEAFOOD GRATIN

◀ Makes 1 ▶

- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 tablespoon roasted garlic
- 1 tablespoon ají amarillo paste
- 4 ounces fish, cut in bite-size pieces
- 2 ounces shrimp, cleaned and peeled
- 2 ounces calamari, cleaned and cut into rings
- 2 ounces scallops, cleaned
- ½ cup white wine
- ½ cup heavy cream
- Salt and pepper
- ¼ cup mozzarella cheese, grated
- 2 tablespoons Parmesan cheese, grated

This dish is one of the stars of the Peruvian restaurant Roberto Cuadra, in El Salvador. It is made to order, with a side of white rice to mop up the delicious sauce.

1. Turn on the broiler.
2. Melt the butter in a skillet over medium heat. Add the roasted garlic and ají amarillo paste, and cook for 2 minutes, stirring.
3. Add the fish, shrimp, calamari, and scallops, and simmer for one minute.
4. Add the white wine, put the lid on and cook for two minutes more.
5. Add the heavy cream, stir, and season with salt and pepper.
6. Transfer to a baking dish, cover with the cheeses, and broil until they are bubbling and golden brown.
7. Serve immediately.

When buying fish, select the catch of the day, and make sure you choose sustainable species only. You can use any variety of fish for most recipes.



FISH WITH BLACK OLIVE SAUCE

◀ Serves 4 ▶

- 4 fish fillets (about 1-inch thick)
- Salt and pepper
- Juice of ½ lemon
- 4 tablespoons vegetable oil
- ½ cup mayonnaise
- ¾ cup Botija or Alfonso olives
- 1–2 tablespoons ají amarillo paste
- 2 cups cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 garlic clove, grated
- 2 tablespoons fresh oregano leaves (or 1 teaspoon dried)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- ½ cup sunflower sprouts (or any other sprouts)

Pulpo al olivo is a famous appetizer consisting of sliced cooked octopus served with a creamy black olive sauce. That was my inspiration to create this dish made with fish fillets instead.

1. Season the fish fillets with salt, pepper, and lemon juice.
2. Heat the vegetable oil in a skillet over medium heat and fry the fillets until they have a beautiful brown color and are cooked through but not dry.
3. In the meantime, make the olive sauce by processing the olives, mayonnaise, and ají amarillo, if using, in a blender until smooth. Reserve.
4. To make the salad, combine the cherry tomatoes with grated garlic, oregano leaves, olive oil, lemon juice, salt, and pepper. Stir and reserve.
5. Put some black olive cream on each plate, and top with a fish fillet, tomato salad, and a few sprouts.
6. Serve immediately.

You can use any kind of fish you like to make this dish. Instead of the tomato salad, you may serve it with steamed potatoes or rice.



BRAZIL NUT BALLS

◀ Makes 48 ▶

- **2 14-ounce cans condensed milk**
- **3 egg yolks**
- **2½ cups Brazil nuts, coarsely grated and divided**

One or two of these tiny treats look beautiful next to a steaming cup of tea or coffee. They will make your friends feel special when they visit you, or make you look extra professional and meticulous if used at business meetings.

1. Cook the condensed milk, eggs yolks, and 2 cups Brazil nuts, in a heavy saucepan over medium heat. Stir frequently until you can see the bottom of the pan.
2. Turn off the heat and transfer to an oiled plate. Cool completely.
3. Toast the remaining ½ cup Brazil nuts in a clean skillet, stirring until lightly golden and fragrant.
4. When the milk and nut mixture is cool, put a little vegetable oil in your hands, and form balls with ¾ teaspoon of the mixture. Roll the little balls on the toasted Brazil nuts until completely covered.
5. Put in candy paper cups and serve.

These candies can be made up to 4 days in advance, and they will actually improve in flavor as the days go by. Keep them in tightly sealed containers at room temperature or in the fridge.



CHOCOLATE CAKE

◀ Serves 4 ▶

- 3 cups cake flour
- 8 tablespoons cocoa
- 1 teaspoon instant coffee
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2½ teaspoons baking soda
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 2 cups milk
- 1 tablespoon vinegar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla essence
- 3 eggs
- 2 cups sugar
- ½ cup sliced almonds or coconut flakes

For the syrup:

- 1 cup water
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

For the fudge

- ½ cup cocoa
- 3 tablespoons hot water
- 1 12-ounce can unsweetened evaporated milk
- 1 14-ounce can condensed milk
- 2 tablespoons butter

To make this cake you only need a bowl, a spoon, and a baking pan. This means that you don't even need a mixer to blend it all together.

I don't think this rich, fudgy, syrup-drenched cake is originally from Peru. However, it is hugely popular in Lima and you can find it in every bakery, café, corner store, and home. If there's a birthday party, rest assured that this will be the cake holding the candles.

1. Grease a 10-inch tube pan, and cover the bottom with parchment paper.
2. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
3. Sift the flour, cocoa, coffee, salt, and baking soda, in a big bowl.
4. Make a well in the center and add the oil, milk, vinegar, vanilla, eggs, and sugar. Mix with a spatula or wooden spoon.
5. Pour into the baking pan and bake for 1 hour. Let cool.
6. To make the syrup: Put the water and sugar in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil until the sugar dissolves. Add the vanilla essence and cool.
7. To make the fudge: Stir the cocoa into hot water until it dissolves completely. Put the evaporated milk, condensed milk, and cocoa in a pan, and cook over medium-low heat, stirring all the time, until the mixture thickens and you can see the bottom of the pan.
8. Turn off the heat and add butter. Stir. If it's too thick, add a little milk.
9. To assemble the cake: Cut it in three layers and pour some syrup on each one.
10. Spread some fudge on the first layer, and cover with another layer. Repeat.
11. Cover the cake with fudge, and sprinkle with sliced almonds or coconut flakes.



MINI VOLADORES

◀ Makes 40 ▶

- **1 cup all-purpose flour**
- **Pinch of salt**
- **6 egg yolks**
- **3 tablespoons Pisco**
- **½ cup manjar blanco (dulce de leche)**
- **½ cup pineapple marmalade (or any other flavor)**
- **½ cup confectioners sugar**

These cookies, made with the same dough used for guar güeros, are served with coffee or tea at many social gatherings and celebrations. You can use the same dough to make a large volador, the size of a regular cake.

Light, sweet, and pretty...these voladores are the mini version of the volador, a dessert that has been popular in Lima for over a century. The trick to make them is to roll the dough until very thin—almost transparent—and then prick it all over with the tines of a fork, baking it until cooked but still pale in color.

1. Sift the flour and salt. Put them on the table and make a well in the center.
2. Add the yolks and Pisco to the well. Using your fingers, start to incorporate the flour with the yolks and Pisco, until a dough is formed.
3. Knead with your hands until the dough is elastic and doesn't stick to your fingers. Form a ball, cover with plastic wrap or put in a plastic bag, and rest at room temperature for about 20 minutes.
4. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
5. Sprinkle the table with flour. Take a small portion of the dough (about ½ cup) and roll with a rolling pin until very thin. You should be patient and keep rolling, until you get a perfect, smooth layer. Cut in 1-inch circles.
6. Place them on a baking sheet covered with parchment or Silpat, and prick each one several times with the tines of a fork. Repeat with the rest of the dough.
7. Bake for 8 minutes, until firm but not golden. Cool on wire racks.
8. Place one layer of cookies on a plate, and put ½ teaspoon manjar blanco or dulce de leche on each one. Cover with another cookie. Place ½ teaspoon pineapple marmalade, and top with a third cookie.
9. Sift confectioners sugar over them.
10. Place each volador in a paper candy cup, and serve.



GLOSSARY

TUBERS

Mashua

Similar in looks, but not as popular as potatoes, mashua is considered the antidote for an overindulgent sex drive (yes, there is an antidote for that!). It can be eaten on its own, or as part of many dishes, by roasting it, mashing it, or adding it to many sweets and desserts. An easy way of enjoying its sweet side is roasting it and serving it with honey. Its neutral flavor also makes it the ideal side dish. When they want to use this tuber, Andeans put it in the sun for a day or two to bring out all its best qualities.

Oca

This tuber is sweet, especially if kept in the sun for a couple days before cooking, just like mashua. Its starch content is low, giving it a less floury texture than potatoes, and it is so versatile that it can be used in sweet or savory dishes alike. You can make a gratin with layers of oca and other tubers, or mash it instead of potatoes whenever you want a comforting meal.





Olluco

This Andean tuber looks like a small, finger-shaped potato, with colors that range from pale to bright yellow, to orange, pink, and red. It has a somewhat slimy and watery texture, very different from the starchy and doughy characteristics of a potato, and it can be eaten raw or cooked, and always unpeeled (just scrub it under running water and cut it in fine sticks or round slices). Cooking it, is preferred when making stews and chupes (thick soups). Of these stews, ollucos with charqui—dried llama meat—is far and away the most popular. The name of this ingredient comes from the Quechua word *ullucu*, which means “tuber.” It is also called *papalisa* (smooth potato).



Sweet Potato

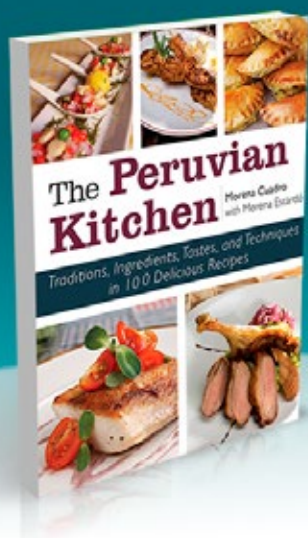
Delicious and nourishing, the sugar content of this tuber makes it extremely sweet and energizing. Sweet potatoes also help regulate high blood pressure, and are fantastic to relieve stress. One inch of sweet potato added to juices will give you bright and shiny hair. You can find white, purple, and orange varieties, but Peruvians love the sweeter orange ones to serve next to a fresh *cebiche*, or thinly sliced, fried, and stacked inside a *pan con chicharrón* (pork sandwich).

More glossary terms in the full book version, available for purchase on Amazon [here](#)

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AND TECHNIQUES IN DELICIOUS RECIPES



This mini book is a extract of

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TRADITIONS, INGREDIENTS, TASTES AND TECHNIQUES IN 100 DELICIOUS RECIPES

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