{rokbox title=|Colombian Food|}images/stories/turistainternacional/Quehacer/informeespecial/gastronomia1.jpg{/rokbox}

Colombian Food

Colombia has numerous things to captivate. On the one hand, an ample offer of traditional regional recipes; on the other, new trends that make the best of local products to turn Colombian flavors into innovative dishes.

It is unforgiveable to visit tourist attractions in Colombia without savoring their respective traditional cuisine.

They say that one of the strategies to win over someone's affection is through the charm of a good meal. “A way to a man's heart is through his stomach.” as some would have it. A corresponding consequence could be the colloquial expression, “Full belly, happy heart.”

Colombian national cuisine is as diverse as its climate, landscapes, and cultural expressions. Aside from the fertility of a land that grows practically everything, there is the unlimited imagination of expert cooks who add to the sentiment they infuse into their preparations new ways of seasoning and creating recipes.

Traditional Colombian Dishes

Many of the most famous dishes, like the *bandeja paisa* and the *ajiaco bogotano*, are usually enjoyed in their places of origin, with the precise ingredients and quantities and in the appropriate atmosphere: decor, tableware, and the final appearance of the dish.

Bandeja paisa

Thus, for example, the *bandeja paisa* of the department of Antioquia and nearby regions has as its main ingredient the beans harvested in the region, where climatic characteristics make Colombia the largest producer of beans in the Andean region, as well the country with the highest consumption of beans in the daily diet.

Ajiaco santafereño

On its part, the *ajiaco santafereño*, prepared in Colombia's central region, is a soup based on several kinds of potatoes from the high plains of the departments of Cundinamarca and Boyacá, an herb by the name of "*guasca*", and local corn and chicken.

"I want to try your typical dishes…" is a common phrase among foreign tourists visiting Colombia.

However, culinary arts have traveled over time and have positioned themselves at every corner, especially in large capital cities, where by virtue of generous food menus, it is possible to travel across the nation. Thus, the secrets of fine dining were transported by the labor of cooks who laid the recipes of their regions on the tablecloths of typical country restaurants or large urban centers, making it impossible to deprive anyone of ancestral delicacies.

Many visitors from around the world arrive and bow to the wealth of tastes and, even if they are served a generous portion, will want seconds. Those who are not coming for the first time will know exactly what to order. Also, thanks to many Colombians living abroad, our cuisine is expanding by way of eateries of various kinds that become true embassies of the culture and traditions of Colombia.

Colombian Flavors in Contemporary Cuisine

On the other hand, the audacity and ingenuity of Colombian cooks increasingly surprises by virtue of the continuous study of gastronomy, history, and the ingredients necessary for innovating preparations and adding to every new creation the characteristics that captivate not only the sense of taste, but others as well.

Julián Gómez Simmonds, a young yet experienced chef, is one of the professionals who have been working on creating recipes from native Colombian flavors and ingredients to present them in ways, colors, and textures that, aside from pleasing the palate, create a pleasant impact of sensations.

To mix the products provided by our lands and waters is to travel and get to know the country.

While carrying out interesting field work and research across the departments of Colombia, Gómez and Alejandro Olaya got to know the strategies, methods, and resources of male and female cooks that enabled them to design new proposals and menus at the Habemus Papa restaurant in the Usaquén district of Bogotá. Olaya, the manager, says that the experience was useful to begin revolutionizing Colombian food through the preparation of recipes that evoke regions without replacing traditional menus. Thus, were created the peasant goat pie, the grouper with the taste of the Caribbean, and the Guapi hearts of palm in three periods.

"*The dishes named serve as an example to show how the flavors and resources of the various regions are highlighted and to create authentic Colombian recipes with a more modern touch* ", says Gómez, the resourceful chef who represented Colombia at the culture and gastronomy sample during Guadalajara's International Book Fair.

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Colombian Food

The goat pie is a recipe that calls to mind the department of Santander with an emblematic product of its cuisine; it is served with a special potato *omelette*. The grouper is a version of Caribbean seafood, with the fusion of
patacón
(fried green plantain slices),
ñame
(a variety of yam), and coconut, all traditional ingredients of Atlantic Coast cuisine. The Guapi dish consists of hearts of palm, carefully extracted from the heart of a special tree, mixed with seafood and cod purée; this time, elements are from the Pacific Coast of the department of Cauca.

Aside from enriching national gastronomy, these dishes become export-type products that contribute to positioning our food among the most desired due to the highly esthetic sense of their conception, which even includes the tableware on which it is served. Nevertheless, these variations are not in conflict with the originality of national flavors or products. On the contrary, they seek to increase concepts for the international positioning of Colombian gastronomy.

Tasting contemporary Colombian recipes means creating a bond that evokes and takes us to the depths of lovely, dissimilar regions. Thanks to the clever artists of the new gastronomy, it is possible to travel the route of taste and imagination to the stoves, pans and pots of the land. Because, inevitably, the tastes of Colombia seduce, captivate, and always leave good memories.

If you are interested in gastronomy, continue reading:

- Gallery of Colombian cuisine Flickring – photos of tourists like you
- Different Colombian regions
- A few coffee recipes
- or perhaps, you would like to see how Colombians manufacture handicrafts from edible products like coconut.