

Peru boasts one of the finest cuisines in Latin America. Recipes such as ceviche, (raw fish marinated in lemon juice), pachamanca (meat and vegetables cooked underground), chupe de camarones (shrimp soup), aji de gallina (spicy chicken) and juane (cornmash pastries) are just a few of the mouth-watering dishes served up in Peru. The quality and variety of dishes in Peru are due to several reasons.

First, Peru's ecological and climactic diversity (Peru is home to 84 of the 104 ecosystems existing on Earth) results in a major supply of fresh produce. The rich Peruvian fishing grounds abound in fish and shellfish species, the heart of the succulent coastal gastronomy; rice, fowl, and goat are the key ingredients of Peru's north coastal cooking. In the Andes, ingredients such as the potato (it is said there are 600 varieties) and sweet corn (60) in all its varieties, plus cuy (guinea pig) and ají chili pepper are the basis of highland cooking and are to be found across the country. The jungle adds its own touch, wild game with a side serving of fried banana and manioc root. Local fruit varieties such as chirimoya (custard apple) and lucuma produce incomparable desserts.

The second reason is the rich mix of Western and Eastern cultural traditions. Over the course of centuries, Peru has felt the influence of Spain in stews and soups, Arab sweets and desserts, African contributions to Creole cooking, Italian pastas, Japanese preparations of fish and shellfish, and Chinese culinary methods which have given birth to one of the most popular gastronomic traditions in Peru: chifa. (Chifa is the term for Chinese restaurants in Peru. From very elegant to simple, all seem to serve excellent food in and around Lima.)

The food in Ecuador varies substantially between the regions of their country as well. Ecuadorians typically eat three meals per day. The morning meal is a light meal, while lunch and dinner are usually a bit heavier.

Breakfast in the Andean region, including Quito, usually consists of coffee and a bread pastry. A very common breakfast (or snack throughout the day) is empanadas, which are bread dough with another ingredient (cheese or meat) rolled in the middle. The roll is then baked in the oven. Also common in the highlands are a type of sweet tamales called *humitas*.

Lunch is the biggest meal of the day. It is usually the cheapest meal of the day as well because restaurants prepare the lunch, or *almuerzo*, in bulk and only offer one or two set options. Many Ecuadorians eat in restaurants for lunch. Lunch always consists of soup and a main dish. The main dish always has rice and usually is served with a meat stew.

The dinner is very similar to lunch. The set dinner menu is called *merienda*. In Quito, the international traveler will find all sorts of restaurants with menus from all over the world.

Food in Ecuador is amazingly homogenous, but very cheap and healthy. The main dish consists of rice and a choice of chicken, beef or shrimp. They also eat a lot of papas fritas or french fries. All meals are accompanied by a salsa-like sauce called aji, the main ingredient, is a particular species of tomato that grows high up in the mountains called tomato de arb-les. Mixing these small tomatoes with onions, cilantro and several spices create a very tasty condiment that varies with each restaurant and family recipe. Meat is normally served in very small portions (it is expensive). On the coast, fish and shellfish are quite cheap, popular and prepared in a large number of variations.

In March and April of 2006 Nancy and Zoltan were on a wonderful trip to Peru and Ecuador (including the Galapagos Islands). These recipes are those they enjoyed, many from their Guides, families they visited, or restaurant favorites, from both countries.

Pisco Sour (Peru)

Pisco is a clear distilled grape brandy made from the quebranta grape grown in the Inca valley, and around the Pisco and Inca rivers. Located three hundred kilometers to the south of Lima, Peru, the favorable soil and mild climate of the Inca valley made an ideal home for the wineries which were established by Peru's Spanish and Italian immigrant families. This recipe is the "home-brewed variety" that comes directly from the Guide who escorted Nancy and Zoltan around Peru. The only difference in the sugar syrup is that the general population uses commercially bottled jarabe de goma (sugar syrup). He makes his own.

Ingredients:

To make sugar syrup:

½ cup sugar

3 Tbl water

To serve:

Angostura Bitters

For the drink:

7 ½ oz (223 ml) Pisco*

2 ½ oz (75ml) key lime juice

1 egg white

Ice

* Pisco is available at Rumrunners, See Reference Page

Nancy and Zoltan have "Sour" glasses and a blender.

Preparation:

To prepare the sugar syrup, put ½ cup of sugar in a small sauce pan with 3 tablespoons of water, just enough to moisten the sugar. Bring the mixture to a slow boil and while stirring, cook until the sugar has dissolved. Remove from heat and set aside to cool for a few minutes.

To make the "sour," pour the key lime juice and the Pisco into the warm sugar syrup and stir thoroughly to blend the ingredients completely. Pour the mix into a blender jar and add just enough ice to double the volume of liquid in the glass. Blend on High for an additional 30 seconds to crush ice. Add one egg white and blend on High for one minute. Transfer to a pitcher and serve immediately in "sour" glasses (or either old-fashioned or white wine glasses, if one does not have sour glasses). Traditionally a drop of Angostura Bitters is placed in the middle of the foam in each glass.

Yield: ~ 8 – 4 oz servings

The essential mix is 3 parts Pisco to 1 part key lime juice and 1 part sugar syrup: you can use this proportion to increase the recipe to produce any number of drinks. (For this dinner we will not be using this "Tip.") Tip: A fourth measure of Pisco may be added for a stronger drink. If you like, the "edge" can be taken off this stronger version by adding more sugar syrup.

Peruvian Ceviche (Sometimes spelled “Seviche” in Peru)

1 lb fillet of fish, a firm mild fish like turbot, orange roughy, grouper
Lemon juice to cover fish
½ medium onion, diced
1 large ripe tomatoes, peeled and diced
3 Tbl chopped cilantro
3 Tbl olive oil
2 4-oz. canned (Macayo brand) green diced chilies, drained and finely diced
¼ tsp dried oregano
Salt and pepper to taste
2 ripe avocados, diced

Cut the fish into small cubes and place in a glass bowl. Cover with the lemon juice (you can also use a mixture of lime and lemon juices). Let stand in the refrigerator, covered for at least 8 hours. This “cooks” the fish. Now add the remaining ingredients, except avocado. Refrigerate a few hours more. When ready to serve, stir in the avocado (at the dinner). We should plan ¾ cups per person.

Corn Fritters with Corn Relish (Peru)

2 Tbl Quaker Masa Harina Maiz Corn Tortilla Mix, (Nancy will provide)
3 eggs, lightly beaten
Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

2 cups frozen C&W brand petite white corn
2 Tbl finely chopped onion
2 Tbl fresh chopped parsley
Canola Oil for frying

Yield: ~46 two-inch fritters

In a medium bowl, mix the batter ingredients (first three) until smooth. Prepare corn according to package directions. Drain. Add corn, onion and parsley and combine thoroughly.

Heat a small amount of oil (¼” deep) in a heavy skillet to medium setting.. Drop the fritter batter in the hot oil by a tablespoon, (each fritter should be 2½“- 3” in diameter) frying each side about 2 minutes until golden brown. Caution: if oil gets too hot the corn pops and spatters. Please use care in monitoring the heat of the oil. Drain on paper towels. Can be served at room temperature or reheated at the Rosztoczy’s, if desired. Serve with Corn Relish below.

Corn Relish

1 cup (8 oz.) canned whole kernel sweet corn, drained (maiz dulce de granos enteros)
2 Tbl red bell pepper, finely chopped
½ cup chopped tomato, drained
2 Tbl minced onions
¼ Olive Oil
1 Tbl hot chili oil
Salt and Pepper to taste

Combine all ingredients and chill. Can be served at room temperature.
Yields approximately 2 cups.

Sweet Potato pancake with Mango-Papaya Salsa (Ecuador)

1.6 lb Sweet potato (weigh at market) divided:
~16 oz. sweet potatoes, grated
~ 8 oz. cooked mashed sweet potatoes
~ 1½ cups all purpose flour (add a little at a time until you get the right consistency)
1 tsp baking soda
~ 3 cups milk (add milk as needed)
Salt and Pepper
Canola Oil for frying

Wash and dry potato. Cut potato into a 2/3 section (~ 16 oz.) and a 1/3 section (~8 oz.). With a sharp knife, cut a deep slit into each section of potato. Microwave the larger section 4 minutes. Let cool. Meanwhile, microwave smaller section 8 -10 minutes until soft. Peel and discard skin of larger section, being careful not to burn your hand. (A heavy duty rubber glove or pot holder works well to hold the potato.) You may need a potato peeler for the larger section, but the skin separates easily from the pulp of the smaller section. Grate the larger section into a bowl. Set aside.

Peel and discard skin of smaller section. Put the pulp of this section through a Foley Food Mill, a potato ricer, or mash by hand. Add enough of the milk to get very soft mashed potatoes until smooth. Add flour and baking soda and mix well. These mashed potatoes should be loose. Adjust more milk as needed. Season well.

Add the grated potatoes to the mashed potatoes and carefully blend.

Heat a lightly oiled griddle or large non-stick frying pan. Drop a tablespoon of the "batter" into the pan or griddle, easier if in a slight bit of oil to drop batter on. Each pancake should be approximately 2" - 2½" in diameter and ~ ½" thick. Cook over a moderate heat for ~ 4 minutes on each side until crisp and medium brown. Serve hot. (Reheat from frozen in 400° oven for 10 minutes. Or reheat room temperature pancakes until hot in microwavable pan 2-3 minutes.) Serve one to each person with the Mango-Papaya Salsa. Yields ~ 34 - 38, 2" - 2½" pancakes.

Mango-Papaya Salsa (makes 2 ½ cups)

Mix together until sugar dissolves:

3 Tbl sugar
1½ Tbl white wine vinegar
Pinch red chili pepper flakes

Fold in:

1 cup mango
1 medium papaya, seeded, peeled and diced
½ small red onion, diced
3 Tbl red bell pepper, diced
2 Tbl cilantro, chopped

(Note: A similar recipe was used in 2005 for the Hawaiian Pupu Party)

Bread A selection of nice bread and butter

Pear and Walnut Salad of Mxed Greens and Balsamic Vinaigrette (Ecuador)

Your choice of mixed greens with sliced pears and walnuts. If someone wants to use a "store-bought-dressing," Ken's Steak House Lite Balsamic Vinaigrette, 16 oz. bottle, is very nice. We will give the amount and proportions at the Planning Meeting. We should count on ~ ¾ cups salad per person.

Shrimp in Coconut Sauce served in a coconut half on a bed of mashed plantains (Ecuador)

This recipe comes from an elegant restaurant, in the "Old City" section of Quito, Ecuador.

A fresh coconut should sound full of liquid when you shake it. The coconuts we will be using are called "quick crack" and have already been scored for easier breaking. (Please see "References" for the local markets where these can be ordered 5 - 7 days prior to our dinner at no additional cost. They cost \$1.99 each; one will serve two people.)

Coconut milk, as it exists in tropical countries, is taken from green coconuts and is made by pressing the meat of the fresh coconuts. Generally the green coconut is unavailable here; ripe coconuts contain a tasteless fluid that must be discarded. Brown "Quick Crack" coconuts, packaged shredded coconut and canned coconut milk will be used for this recipe. However, the coconut halves will be used as the "bowls" in which to serve the shrimp dish. Since we need whole halves, DO NOT pierce the "eyes" with a screwdriver to let the milk drain out. Place the coconut in a large, strong pan (a broiler pan works well), carefully place a large, strong flat bladed knife over the scored groove and carefully tap the top of the blade with a hammer to neatly separate the two halves. (It works even better if you take a saw and cut one section, only 1" long, a little deeper, along the scored line.) So that the coconut halves stay upright when serving, they will be stabilized by being placed on a bed of mashed plantains for the final presentation.

Sauce Ingredients:

2 Tbl butter	¼ tsp salt
2 Tbl flour	1/8 tsp white ground pepper
1 cup Trader Joe's Lite coconut milk*	1 egg yolk, beaten
¼ cup flaked sweetened coconut	1 Tbl lemon juice

Shrimp: 20 medium cooked, without tails, shrimp

In a double boiler, cream butter, flour, gradually whisking in coconut milk. Add salt and pepper. Reduce heat and add egg yolk stirring continually. When the mixture has thickened slightly add lemon juice. Continue stirring. Add ¼ cup flaked sweetened coconut. Blend. Add shrimp. Simmer at least one half hour, stirring from time to time. (Even though the shrimp are cooked, they will shrink in size.) Can be made ahead. Yields two servings. Each person should be served 10 shrimp. See "Mashed Plantains" for serving instructions.

Mashed Plantains (Ecuador)

Plantains are used as a staple food in many tropical countries around the world. The fruit is used in many of the same ways potatoes are in North American diets. They have a distinctive flavor at all stages of development. Plantains begin at a green stage, moving to yellow and then to black as they ripen and gain sweetness. Plantains cannot be eaten raw at any stage. They must be cooked like potatoes.

Green plantains are starchy and have a taste more comparable to a potato.

Yellow plantains are between the green and black stage. The skin may be spotted with brownish-black spots. Yellow fruit may be used in recipes that call for a flavor that is slightly sweet but with a firm texture.

Black plantains are the sweetest and are used in recipes requiring a ripe or sweet plantain. The black stage can range from heavy black spotting to a fully black and very soft fruit. Fruit pulp is a yellow-orange color and very soft.

Peeling a plantain:

Using a sharp knife, cut off the top and bottom ends of the plantain. With the tip of the knife, make one slit in the skin from top to bottom. Use your thumb and fingers to work the peel away from the pulp of the fruit beginning at the slit. The less ripe plantains have tougher skins and are best peeled under cold water to avoid bruising.

Ingredients:

2 large green plantains (Available at Sprouts, Safeway, call ahead)

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup low fat milk

(5 Tbl margarine, optional - not used for this purpose)

Salt and Pepper

6 cups of water

Place peeled plantains in a saucepan with the water and cover. Boil on High for 60 minutes or until soft. Once soft, discard the water and put through a Foley Food Mill, ricer or mash with electric mixer or by hand after adding the milk, (margarine,) salt and pepper. This is usually served as a substitute for mashed potatoes, but we will be using them to stabilize the coconut shells that the shrimp will be served in. These plantains must be VERY stiff to hold the coconut halves. Yields $2\frac{1}{4}$ cups. (Will yield 9, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup servings.)

To Serve:

Place mashed plantains into a $\frac{1}{4}$ stainless steel cup. Turn out onto plate. Press coconut half into mashed plantains and fill coconut with shrimp mixture.

Rice

3 cups Extra Long Grain White Rice

6 cups water

6 tsp Wyler's Instant Bouillon & Seasoning "Shakers" chicken flavored

Bring water and bouillon to a boil. Stir in rice. REDUCE HEAT, cover and simmer 20 minutes. Remove from heat and let stand covered 5 minutes or until water is absorbed. Serves 12

To serve, place rice in a ½ cup buttered (or Pammed) bowl, pack, and turn out molded on plate.

Green Peas

Cook according to package directions. Plan on ½ cup per person.

Caramel Cheesecake Custard

This is a full-proof simple version that has the taste and flavor of the real McCoy!

2/3 cups of Smucker's Caramel flavored "Fat Free" Toppings (available at all the supermarkets)

1 - 8 oz cream cheese, can be fat free, at room temperature (or microwave cold cream cheese for 30 seconds)

½ cup sugar

1 tsp vanilla

6 eggs

2 cups skim milk

Pour caramel topping into a 9" round buttered cake pan at least 1½" deep, set aside.

In a large mixer bowl, beat the cream cheese until smooth; then beat in the sugar and vanilla. Add the eggs one at a time, beating at medium speed until smooth after each addition. Blend in milk a very slow speed. Carefully pour cheese mixture over the caramel topping. Set cake pan in a roasting pan. Add ½" to ¾" boiling water to the larger pan and bake at 350° for 50 minutes or until set in center when lightly touched.

Cool custard from rack, then loosen from pan edge with a knife. Invert onto a rimmed serving plate (caramel will flow over the sides of the custard); spoon any remaining caramel over the custard. Cover with inverted larger pan or cake pan cover so as not to disturb the top surface of the custard and chill. Serves 6-8.

References:

Pisco is available at:

[Rumrummers Wine & Cheese Co.](#) Hours: Tu – Sat 11a.m. – 10 p.m.
3200 E. Speedway Blvd. Sun & Mon 11a.m. – 7 p.m.
Tucson
Tel: 326-0121

Nancy and Zoltan have "Sour" Glasses

“Quick Crack” Coconuts are available at:

[AJ’s](#) (232-6340) – La Encantada Shopping Center, NW corner Campbell and Skyline Drives

Please order 3-4 days prior for assured delivery. Their brown “Quick Crack” coconuts are \$1.99 each and individually shrink wrapped

Produce Manager, Leticia

Hours: 6 a.m. – 9 p.m. Every day

Coconut Milk comes both in both “Lite” (\$2.49) and regular (\$2.79), 13.5 ounce cans. The brand “A Taste of Thai,” sells both and they are available at AJ’s. The “Lite” has 58% fewer calories and 60% less fat than regular coconut milk. Please see Trader Joe’s Listing. It is only \$.99/can there, their brand.

[Safeway](#) (Chris, Oro Valley – 297-4344; call your local stores)

Hours: 5 a.m. – midnight 7 days/week

“Quick Crack Coconuts, \$1.99 each. Order one week in advance.

Canned Coconut Milk is available in the liquor department. Check your local stores. Please see Trader Joe’s Listing. It is only \$.99/can (14 oz.) there; their brand.

[Trader Joe’s](#)

1101 N. Wilmot Road	733-1313
4209 N. Campbell	325-0069
4766 E. Grant	323-4500
7912 N. Oracle, Oro Valley	797-4207

Hours: 9 a.m. – 9 p.m. every day

Trader Joe’s does not sell coconuts. However they do sell Canned “Lite” Coconut milk in 14 oz. cans for \$.99 each. It is their own “Trader Joe’s” Brand and it is located on the bottom shelf of the grocery aisle. They do not sell “regular.”

I’m sure there are many other sources. Please call your favorite market ahead of time to place your orders.

Quaker Masa Harina de Maiz Corn Tortilla Mix

Nancy will provide at the Planning Meeting