

Discover Latin America's Inspiring Flavors

Looking for a new taste trend?



Adobe Pork Pozole delivers lusty Latin flavor

Bold flavors, ethnic intrigue, rich culinary traditions. Covering a far-flung region that includes South and Central America, Mexico, and the Caribbean, Latin America is expansive and diverse, but one thing is for certain: The food is robust, flavorful, and always inventive. And that makes it perfect for today's menus. According to the website [The Latin Kitchen](#), Latin cuisine spans a multitude of geographic and cultural regions, making it highly rich and varied.

Some of the most exciting inspirations are coming out of South America and the Caribbean, including Peru, Cuba, Brazil, and Puerto Rico, with their distinctive tropical ingredients and multicultural culinary influences. Despite this multicultural history, however, there are many food specialties that the countries of Latin America share.

- **Stews and Braised Dishes** — Flavorful, long-simmered recipes that make the best use of tougher cuts of meat and fibrous vegetables like boniato (a type of yam) and dried corn are a hallmark of Latin American food
- **Carne Guisada** — Rich, complex beef stew that takes a touch of sweetness from coconut milk and brown sugar, along with tomatoes, sweet or white potatoes, cumin, garlic and onions, and chile powder
- **Canja** — A Brazilian chicken and rice soup flavored with tomato, garlic, onion, and carrots
- **Seco de Cordero** — Delicious Peruvian lamb and potato stew seasoned with aji peppers, cumin, and lots of cilantro, braised in beer until tender
- **Callaloo** — Peppery vegetarian stew from the Caribbean made with leafy vegetables such as amaranth or spinach
- **Ropa Vieja** — Cuban shredded beef stew (the name literally means "old clothes" in Spanish) flavored with onions, garlic, and green pepper
- **Galinhada** — Thick stew of saffron rice and chicken garnished with peas, pimientos, and hard-boiled eggs, popular in Brazil
- **Empanadas** — Baked or fried, this stuffed, savory pastry is widely enjoyed in many countries in Southern Europe, Latin America, and parts of Southeast Asia. The name comes from the Portuguese and Spanish verb *empanar*, meaning to wrap in bread. Empanadas are made by folding dough or bread around stuffing, which usually consists of a variety of meat, cheese, *huitlacoche* (a type of edible fungus that grows on the corn plant), and vegetables or fruits, among others. Each country has its own special variation, from

Bolivian *salteñas* (made with beef, pork, or chicken, and usually containing potatoes, peas, and carrots, as well as a hard-boiled egg, and olives or raisins) to the empanadas of Venezuela (which use a corn flour-based dough and are fried in oil or lard, with a stuffing of white salty cheese, shredded chicken or beef, and ground beef). Often served at parties and festivals in Latin America, in this country empanadas make a wonderful appetizer, shared plate, or portable snack)

- **Grilled Meat** — Led by Brazil, South America is one of the world's largest producers of beef, so it stands to reason that the region specializes in grilled meat, a tradition that started with the gauchos (cowboys) cooking over an open flame on the pampas grasslands. Restaurants in Argentina, Colombia, and Brazil continue to serve *parrillada*, a flavorful mixed grill that might include several cuts of steak, sausages, and organ meats, along with chicken and/or pork, served with a piquant sauce like chimichurri (parsley garlic sauce). There are many other famous traditional South American *asado* (barbecue) specialties, such as the Colombian *lomo al trapo* (an entire beef filet wrapped in a thick layer of salt and cloth and cooked in the coals) and Peruvian *anticuchos de pollo* (grilled chicken skewers).