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The Latin Road Home: Savoring The Foods Of Ecuador, Spain, Cuba, Mexico, And Peru



Synopsis

Spanning cultures and continents, *The Latin Road Home* is a look back at the many food traditions that have shaped Garces' culinary life. Beginning in Ecuador, ancestral home to his family and the foods nearest to his heart, Garces celebrates the traditional recipes of his childhood. The book makes its way through Spain, Cuba, Mexico, and Peru's extraordinary cuisines Garces has come to know, love, and master. He shares not only recipes, but colorful memories of local cultures and insights into their unique ingredients and techniques. The cookbook features over 100 recipes tailored to the home cook, accompanied by over 100 food and travel photographs that truly immerse the reader. Each chapter features a different country with menus highlighting Garces' takes on both mainstays of home cooking and popular street foods. The book is full of recipes for bright salads and ceviches, comforting stews, hearty beans, and tender braised meats. When a celebratory feast is in order, Jose's party menus are full of hors d'oeuvres, cocktails, and impressive fare for a kind of night where cooking becomes a part of the festivities. Recipes are titled in both English and Spanish and stay true to their roots. Soulful, vibrant Latin dishes such as these will surely become the home-cooked staples of readers' kitchens: Green Plantain Empanadas with Braised Chicken, Grilled Spring Onions with Almond Sauce, Fried Stuffed Chiles, Braised Beef Stew with Red Beans, Pan-Roasted Shrimp with Tequila, and Salt-Baked Fish with Ginger Oil. From the gastronomic powerhouse that is Spain to the seafood-rich shores of fiery Peru, Garces showcases the heart of Latin cooking with dishes that are at once sophisticated and elemental.

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Customer Reviews

The Latin Road Home Jose Garces is the chef and owner of Amada, and has won many awards, such as the 'Best Chef Mid-'Atlantic award in 2009. He is a master of Latin cuisine, and his book reflects this in a beautiful way. There are gorgeous pictures throughout, of the food, and the countries. The book is arranged in chapters, with each chapter featuring the food of one country that has influenced Garces the most. The chapters include Ecuador, Spain, Cuba, Mexico, and Peru. Garces thoughtfully provides a map of each country, and Quick Info about each country, with information about the Land, People, and Food. On the side, in the margin, is a list of historical notes. So if you dislike reading about history, you can easily skip that part! I love reading about why a particular country is of interest to Garces as well. I turned to that first to see, for example, how he is connected to the foods of Peru and Cuba, since his parents came from Ecuador. The recipes are arranged in menus, which is very thoughtful for those of us who would like to prepare an entire meal. There are several menus for each country, some short, and some very long. For example, from Ecuador we have a menu of Crab Ceviche, Salt Cod and Legume Chowder, Griddled Potato Cakes with Queso Fresco, Aji Mushrooms with Ginger and Saffron, and Figs in Honey Syrup with Goat Cheese. He also has a beautiful and mouth watering section on Empanadas. From Spain we have a menu consisting of Almond Gazpacho with Smoked Trout, Butter-Toasted Marcona Almonds, Seafood Vermicelli Paella, and Piquillo Pepper Aioli. A menu from Cuba features Lobster in Spicy Tomato Sauce, Fried Stuffed Chiles, and Garbanzo Bean Salad with Lemon-Dijon Dressing. A simple menu from Mexico consists of Tortilla Soup, Red Snapper in Tomato Sauce, and Warm Green Bean Salad. A more complex one had 2 types of Margaritas, Chipotle Chicken Nachos, Guacamole and Tortilla Chips, then a Taco Bar (which has 7 recipes in it, such as Beer and Citrus-Braised Fried Pork and Roasted Poblano Chiles with Mushrooms), then Tres Leches Cake. From Peru he has a menu with Corvina Ceviche, Pickled Red Pearl Onions, Stewed Duck with Potatoes, Peas, and Chiles, and Red Chile Butter. There are a few ingredients that might be difficult for people without a good latin grocery to find, like Yuca flour, but Garces notes these and has a list of sources to find them. My only real complaint is the photo of the brined suckling pig, which I found pretty revolting (I mainly eat vegetarian). But I suppose if you want to make the recipe it pays to know what you are getting into. Oh, and packed it poorly and the corners are all crunched, but I did not want to do without the book while having the hassle of return shipping it.

I am Ecuadorian and I love cooking all sorts of food. That being said, this book is great if you are looking for latin food with a twist. The recipes in the book are classic Ecuadorian dishes (and other latin countries as well) revised. For instance, I have never had a ceviche in Ecuador with avocado in

it, but that is the recipe in the book. I have cooked a lot of dishes from this book already, and they all have a great flavor, HOWEVER, most of the recipes have the cooking time wrong. For instance, the pork for the Cubano sandwich takes twice as long to reach the desired temperature (from 45 to 90 minutes), and the beans from the Mexican section take half as long to reach the desired consistency. I can forgive these mistakes for the strength this book has in terms of the flavors and cooking techniques. Some people have commented on the fact that this book is not for beginners, I agree. Especially since many of these traditional recipes take many hours of preparation, for instance the Ecuadorian Fig desert, takes about 3 days to be completed. But that is not Garces' fault, it is actually the beauty of this book because you get to season something, let it rest for a day, and have an explosion of flavors! So enjoy and cheers to cooking !

I have never reviewed anything on Amazon before. But I wouldn't be able to live with myself if I didn't spread the good news about this book! First, as others have noted, it is beautiful and entertaining to read. It is more than a book of recipes, it is a story about traveling, home, and family which is supplemented with recipes so that you can experience the tastes and smells of the places of the book. That isn't to say it isn't a cookbook. It is. But it is more too. I have tried a variety of the recipes. Notable favorites from my home crowd are the recipes from the Mexico section. The pastel de tres leches was RIDICULOUS - in a good way. The dark and stormy mojito, which is called la tormenta in the book? Worth going overboard in a hurricane. The carnitas was delicious. I will say, many of the recipes will require a sense of adventure on the part of those who don't have experience with Latin cooking (I had little before this book but a great big sense of adventure). Some of the recipes require at least some culinary skill. But many of the recipes are incredibly accessible if only a person is willing to try a technique or ingredient they hadn't encountered before. I really can't recommend it highly enough.

This is a most attractive book and contains lots of information about the Latin American countries covered. The photography is very beautiful, too. My enjoyment of owning it was spoiled somewhat by the way in which it was sent to me; badly packaged, the corners of this hefty book have been damaged in transit. I was disappointed, too, that Jose Garces doesn't cover more of the Latin American countries (he only gives us a small selection of recipes from Ecuador, Spain, Cuba, Mexico and Peru). However, I am pleased to have it and will refer to it from time to time.

This book is a beautifully laid out and photographed. I bought it for research rather than cooking (in order to plan a "culinary diversity of the Spanish-speaking world" course), after hearing an

interview with the author on NPR. I only hope the publisher translates it to Spanish eventually- it would be quite nice as a textbook, with excellent cultural context provided for each region and food. Very glad I bought it!

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