

Peru 2017



**Peruvian Rice with Duck (Arroz con Pato)(Tested)**  
**Serves 6 to 8**

The combination of rice and duck is an esteemed dish that is popular all over northern Peru. Muscovy duck was domesticated there by the pre-Inca civilizations. It benefits from long slow cooking. The rice is perfumed by a combination of cilantro and spinach leaves pureed into the stock used to cook the rice. Make sure your rice is well seasoned and tasty, as it really is the most important element of this dish, the duck is simply a flavoring for the rice.

Dried panca peppers are used in this dish, but guajillo peppers are more easily found and make a good substitute – that’s what I used. They are found in many grocery stores and Latin markets, but you can use any dried pepper that you can get your hands on. If you can find a jar of aji amarillo paste that works too, add about half cup to your braising liquid. And if that all fails, try using a tablespoon or two of chili powder in the dish to give it some kick.

**Ingredients**

- 4 duck legs, about 2 lb. (or substitute 4 chicken legs)
- 3 dried panca peppers or guajillo peppers
- 1 tbsp. red wine vinegar
- 6 large garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 red onion, finely chopped, about 1 heaping cup
- 1 green or red bell pepper, finely chopped, about 1 heaping cup
- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- 1 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tsp. kosher salt
- 1 bottle dark beer
- 2 handfuls baby spinach
- 1 cup cilantro leaves
- 2 cups long-grain white rice
- 1 cup frozen peas

## **Directions**

Heat a soup pot over medium heat. Prick the duck pieces all over with a fork, and place skin side down in the hot pot. Brown on both sides, about 10 minutes, turning occasionally, until the fat is starting to render. Remove the duck pieces to a plate, pour off the excess fat and reserve. Leave 2 tablespoons in the pot to continue with the recipe.

While the duck is browning, stem and seed the dried peppers, place in a small saucepan with 2 cups of water and bring to a simmer. Cook the peppers until soft, about 15 minutes. Put the peppers, the red wine vinegar, and enough of the liquid into a blender so that it will blend properly, and puree until smooth. Set blender container aside for now.

Add the garlic to the soup pot and sauté for 30 seconds. Next, add the onions and cook for one minute, followed by the green peppers for one minute. Add the cumin, salt and pepper, stir for one minute.

Pour the dark beer and the chile stock into the soup pot. Add 3w cups of water to the blender jar to clean out any chile residue, add to the pot. (Hang on to the blender jar. You'll use it again.) Place the duck legs into the broth. Bring to a simmer, uncovered, and cook until the duck is tender, about 45 minutes to an hour. Remove the duck from the pot to a plate again. Hopefully the liquid will have reduced to about 4 cups, but if not reduce the broth until it has.

(You can make the dish one day ahead to this point. Shred the duck meat, and store the broth separately. The next day, heat up the broth and continue with the recipe.)

Grab your blender again. Add the spinach, cilantro, and a ladleful of the hot duck broth. Blend and pour back into the pot.

Rinse the rice and let drain until dry, or pat dry with paper towels. Heat up a large sauté pan and add two tablespoons of the reserved duck fat. Add the rice and stir to coat with the fat. Let the rice cook for a few minutes until the grains look dry and a little toasty. Add the rice to the hot broth.

Bring to a low boil, (do not cover) and simmer until most of the liquid has been absorbed, about 10 minutes. Reduce heat to low, add the frozen peas to the top of the rice, cover the pot, and finish cooking for another 10 minutes. Turn the heat off, remove the lid, fluff the rice with a fork, cover with a lid for 10 more minutes.

While the rice is finishing, shred the meat from the duck legs.

To serve, turn the rice out onto a large platter, and add the shredded duck meat on top. Garnish with more cilantro. Serve with Salsa Criolla.

Recipe credit: Linda McElroy, adapted from Gran Cocina Latina, by Maricel Presilla

Photo credit: Linda McElroy



**Salsa Criolla (Tested)**  
**Makes 2 cups**

This simple onion and lime relish is found accompanying just about every meal. You can sometimes find aji amarillo peppers in the freezer section, but a jalapeño pepper makes a fine substitute.

**Ingredients**

1 red onion, thinly sliced, vertically  
1 aji Amarillo pepper, or jalapeño pepper, thinly slivered  
2 tbsp. fresh squeezed lime juice  
1 tsp. white vinegar  
¼ tsp. kosher salt  
Chopped cilantro leaves

**Directions**

Slice the red onion as thin as possible. I like to slice the onion vertically (from stem through root) for this preparation. Break up the sliced onion, and soak in ice cold water for 10 minutes. Drain the slices and pat dry with a tea towel.

Add the onion slices to a bowl along with the rest of the ingredients. Make at least 30 minutes before you want to serve.

Recipe credit: Linda McElroy, adapted from Gran Cocina Latina, by Maricel Presilla  
Photo credit: Linda McElroy



## Chocotejas

What are “Chocotejas?” They are a sweet confection, similar to truffles or turtles. Melted chocolate is poured into a mold, followed by a spoon of dulce de leche. Next, a piece of dried fruit or nut is pressed into the center. More melted chocolate tops off this creation.

If you don’t have candy molds, I suspect an ice cube tray lined with plastic wrap would work perfectly fine. An egg carton could sub in a pinch as well. Or, more simply, put a tablespoon of dulce de leche between two pecan halves, cover with melted chocolate, and cool in the fridge.

For more on the history of this famous confection, please see <http://perudelights.com/chocotejas-confections-from-the-desert/>.

This is more of a template for you to create your own confection. Be creative!

## Ingredients

Melted dark chocolate

Dulce de leche, purchased, or make your own – See <https://diningforwomen.org/recipes/caramel-cookie-sandwiches-alfajores-tested/>

Pecan halves, walnut halves, hazelnuts, etc.

Candied orange or lemon peel

Dried figs, dates, or other dried fruits

## Directions

Pour a thin layer of melted chocolate into your mold.

When the chocolate is firm and dry, fill with a spoonful of dulce de leche.

Press a nut or piece of dried fruit into the caramel.

Cover with more chocolate and put in the fridge to firm up.

Unmold and arrange on a serving tray.

Recipe credit: Linda McElroy, adapted from Peru Delights

Photo credit: Morena Escardó, with permission

## Peruvian Customs and Cuisine

Located in South America, Peru is divided in three main geographical zones; the Pacific coast, the Andean highlands and the Amazon rainforest.

With its western border on the Pacific Ocean, Peru is bordered on land by Ecuador, Columbia, Brazil, Bolivia and Chile. A multi-ethnic country of Amerindians, Europeans, Africans and Asians, Peru is also home to one of the oldest civilizations in the world, the Notre Chico as well as the Inca Empire. Spanish is the official language, but Quechua and other languages are spoken in Peru as well.

Agriculture is Peru's most important commodity. While most who inhabit the provinces rely solely on their crops, they export almost as much as they keep for themselves. An example is quinoa, where the demand for it from the U.S. has created shortages in their own country.

One of the world's most popular vegetables, *papas* (potatoes), were first grown in Peru, and Peru continues to produce the most potato varieties and has been referred to as the "Potato Capital of the World." In addition it has at least 150 varieties of sweet potato and 35 varieties of corn. Aji (chili pepper) is a major force in creating spicy Peruvian dishes. Other herbs like mint, oregano, parsley and cilantro are commonly used.

The variety of climates and landscapes from Peru's three main differing agricultural areas has really helped establish the cuisine as one of the most interesting in South America. From the Pacific Ocean comes a bounty of fish. Cebiche, marinated fish, is considered one of the iconic dishes of Peru. The mountain or highland diet consists of basic staples of potatoes, corn, rice and various meats. And in the Amazonian rainforest you will find a diet rich in fresh fruits and vegetables, bananas, plantains and yucca, along with meat.

Source material: <http://www.foodbycountry.com/Kazakhstan-to-South-Africa/Peru.html#ixzz3IMAMuuRM>

<http://whatscookinginyourworld.blogspot.com/2011/06/day-141-peru-peruvian-grilled-chicken.html>