



In the Kitchen

with Paula Leichty

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In a Spanish Kitchen

Spanish cuisine varies region by region and is heavily influenced by the local geography. There is an abundance of seafood available by the ocean and seas that surround the country. In the interior of the country- beef, lamb, chicken and pork are grown. Citrus and fresh vegetables influence the dishes prepared in the south. Bordering countries that at one time inhabited Spain, such as France and the Moors from Northern Africa, greatly influenced the flavors and the way that food is prepared today. This month while I'm "In the Kitchen", I'll share a few favorite recipes gathered from a recent trip through Spain and one with an import from Mexico included in the ingredients!

Jicama, Orange and Avocado Salad

¼ cup lime juice, from 2 limes	2 tablespoons olive oil
2 small cloves garlic, minced	2 oranges, segmented
1 teaspoon chili powder	1 avocado (preferably Haas), halved, pitted, and sliced ¼-inch thick
¼ teaspoon cumin	Fresh baby spinach
1 teaspoon grated orange zest	

Whisk lime juice, garlic, chili powder, cumin, and orange zest in medium bowl; whisk in oil. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Pour all but 2 tablespoons dressing over jicama and oranges, toss to coat, chill in refrigerator. Just before serving; add remaining dressing and avocado and toss together. Serve immediately on a bed of spinach.

Flan (*Caramel Custard*)

½ cup sugar	One 12 ounce can evaporated milk
4 eggs	1½ cups water
¾ cup sugar	1 teaspoon vanilla

Preheat oven to 350°F. Spread ½ cup sugar evenly over bottom of an 9½-inch or 10-inch round – 2-inch deep baking dish (glass pie plate, that will hold 4½ cups of liquid). Heat in oven 40 to 50 minutes, or until sugar is melted to a golden brown syrup. (watch carefully so as not to burn.) Remove from oven; let cool 10 minutes, or until hardened.

Meanwhile, in medium bowl, with a whisk, beat eggs well. Add sugar, evaporated milk (shake can well and scrape out any milk left in bottom), water, and vanilla. Stir until sugar is dissolved. Pour into prepared baking dish. Place pie plate with flan into a shallow 10½ x 13-inch pan and put in oven; pour hot water to 1-inch level around dish to make a water bath. Bake 1 hour, or until silver knife inserted in center of custard comes out clean. Cool; then refrigerate until well chilled.

To serve, run small spatula around edge of dish to loosen. Invert flan onto a shallow serving dish that has a rim to hold the liquid caramel sauce.



Almond Chicken Empanada Pie

3 tablespoons olive oil, or more if needed
1 large onion, quartered and thinly sliced
½ cup chicken stock or broth, plus more for onion
3 cups skinned rotisserie chicken, torn to bite-sized pieces
1 tablespoon sweet (*not smoked*) paprika
½ teaspoon ground cumin
¾ teaspoon ground ginger
¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
⅓ teaspoon cayenne

2 plum tomatoes, chopped
⅓ cup dark raisins
Coarse salt (kosher or sea)
All-purpose flour, for dusting the work surface
2 sheets frozen puff pastry, thawed
¼ cup lightly toasted pine nuts
¼ cup lightly toasted slivered almonds
1 large egg yolk
1½ teaspoons milk

Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the onion and cook until it begins to soften, 3 to 5 minutes. Reduce the heat to low and cook until the onion is very soft but barely browned, about 15 minutes, stirring occasionally and adding a little more olive oil and 1 to 2 teaspoons of the chicken stock if the skillet looks dry. Stir in the chicken and cook for 1 minute. Add the paprika, cumin, ginger, cinnamon, and cayenne and stir for a few seconds. Add the ½ cup chicken stock, the tomatoes, and raisins, cover the skillet, and cook for 12 to 15 minutes.

The filling should be soft and moist; if it seems a little too wet, increase the heat to high for a few seconds so the liquid reduces.

Season the filling with salt to taste and let it cool completely. The filling can be prepared up to a day ahead, covered and refrigerated.

Place an oven rack in the center of the oven and preheat the oven to 375°F. Lightly brush a 17x11-inch baking sheet with olive oil. Lightly flour a work surface. Using a floured rolling pin, roll out 1 sheet of puff pastry to a roughly 18x12-inch rectangle. Transfer it to the oiled baking sheet.

Roll out the remaining sheet of puff pastry to a rectangle that is slightly smaller than the first. Spread the filling evenly over the pastry on the baking sheet, leaving about 1 inch bare along each of the 4 edges. Sprinkle the pine nuts and almonds evenly on top. Cover the filling with the second pastry rectangle. Fold the edges of the bottom crust up over the top and crimp them decoratively.

Place the egg yolk and milk in a small bowl and whisk to mix. Brush the top of the pie with this egg wash. Using a sharp knife, make slits all over the top crust to allow steam to escape. Bake the pie on the center rack of oven at 375°F until golden brown and baked through, 20 to 30 minutes. Let the pie cool until slightly warm or room temperature. Cut into squares and serve.

Serves 15 people as a 3x2-inch tapa or 8 as a 5x4-inch main course piece

