

CROQUETAS DE CANGREJOS

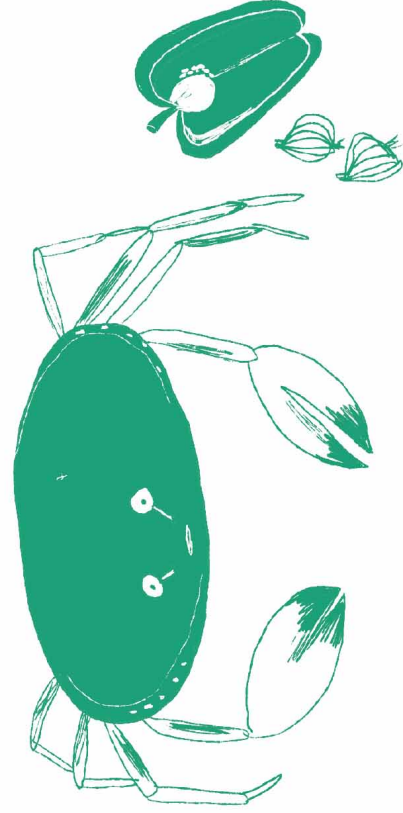
Cuban-style Crab Cakes

Makes: About 30 crab cakes

- 2 tablespoons olive oil for sautéing vegetables
- ½ medium green pepper (finely chopped)
- ½ medium onion (finely chopped)
- 2 cloves garlic (minced & crushed)
- 1 teaspoon dried leaf oregano
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1 pound crab meat
- 1 cup canned or thawed frozen corn kernels
- 1 egg (beaten)
- breadcrumbs
- cornmeal
- 1 tablespoon of olive oil for finishing crab cakes

Crab and corn make a wonderful marriage in this recipe. The whole kernel corn inside the cake keeps the crab moist, while the cornmeal breading gives them an extra crispy crust. Try these with spicy *Mayonesa Pimentita* (page 82).

- 1** In a saucepan, heat the olive oil over medium heat until fragrant.
- 2** Add the onion and green pepper and cook for about 3 minutes. Reduce the heat to low, stir in the garlic and dry spices, and sauté for about 2 more minutes or until the onion is translucent and tender.
- 3** Remove from the heat and let cool.
- 4** In a large bowl, combine the cooled vegetable mixture, crabmeat, corn and egg.
- 5** Add just enough breadcrumbs so that mixture works easily and will hold its shape when squeezed.
- 6** Scoop up a tablespoon full of the crab mixture and shape into a round flat cake about 2" in diameter and ½" high.
- 7** Dip the cake into the cornmeal and coat it.
- 8** Repeat with the remaining mixture, refreshing the cornmeal as necessary.
- 9** In a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat, heat a tablespoon of olive oil. When hot, place six to eight of the croquettes in the pan and sauté them, turning frequently to ensure even browning. Place croquettes in a warm oven until ready to serve.



FRICASÉ DE POLLO

Chicken Fricassee

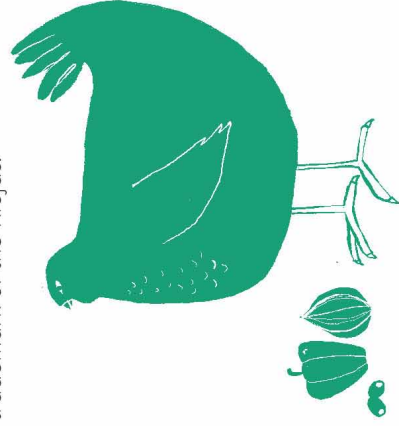
Serves: 6

A savory, full-flavored chicken stew

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
 - 3–5 pounds chicken legs and thighs with skin removed
 - 1 large onion (chopped)
 - 1 large green pepper (coarsely chopped)
 - 6 cloves garlic (minced & crushed)
 - 1 teaspoon salt
 - ½ teaspoon ground black pepper
 - ½ teaspoon cumin powder
 - ½ teaspoon dried leaf oregano
 - 1 8-ounce can of tomato sauce
 - ½ cup orange juice
 - ½ cup dry white wine
 - 4 medium potatoes (peeled & cut in quarters)
 - 4 medium carrots (pared & cut in large pieces)
 - ½ cup green salad olives
- 1** In a large casserole or dutch oven over medium heat, warm the oil until fragrant.
 - 2** Add the chicken pieces and brown them in the oil.
 - 3** Add the onion and green pepper and cook for about 3 minutes. Reduce the heat to low, stir in the garlic and dry spices, and sauté for about 2 more minutes or until the onion is translucent and tender.
 - 4** Add all of the remaining ingredients, cover and cook slowly until the chicken is done and the vegetables are tender, about 40 minutes.
 - 5** Check periodically while cooking and add more liquid if needed to keep dish from cooking dry.

♥ You can reduce the fat in this dish by making it the day before and refrigerating it. Much of the fat in the dish will rise to the top and harden when chilled, at which point it can be easily removed with a spoon. I think this dish is better the second day, as the flavors have an opportunity to mingle. You may also want to substitute boneless, skinless chicken pieces for the whole legs and thighs in this recipe and to eliminate the green olives or reduce by half.

! *Fricasé de Pollo* is a full-flavored hearty chicken stew. A hearty dish deserves a full-bodied wine like the Spanish Rioja. This is a match made in heaven, or better yet, the heavenly vineyards of Northeastern Spain. In the 18th century, Bordeaux wine makers left a lasting impression on the people of the Rioja region of Spain, leading to the use of French oak barrels. Oak leaves a pronounced vanilla flavor in the aging wines, making this a trademark of the Riojas.



PASTEL DE MÁNGOS Y VACCINIOS

Mango and Blueberry Cobbler

Serves: 12

A merger of Cuban and American country cuisine, this crispy cobbler was a favorite at Mucho Gusto Café.

FOR THE FRUIT FILLING

- 3 large ripe mangos (peeled, pitted & cut into slices)
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 cup fresh or frozen blueberries

FOR THE TOPPING

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter (softened)
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 large egg
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

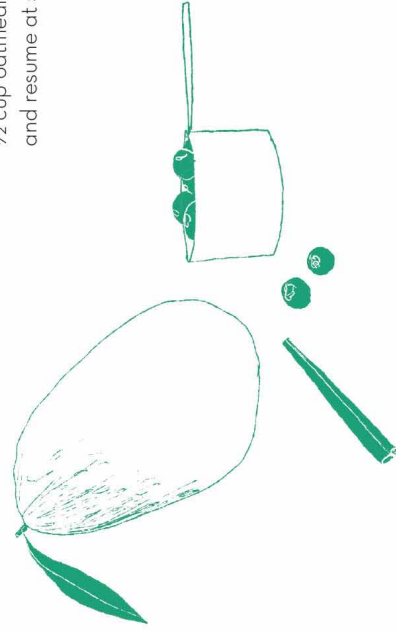
FILLING

- Preheat oven to 350° and prepare 9"x13" baking dish by treating it with non-stick cooking spray.
- Combine the mango, sugar, cornstarch and spices and mix thoroughly.
- Pour into the baking dish and bake for about 15 minutes, remove from oven and cool for a few minutes.
- Stir in the blueberries and set aside.

TOPPING

- Meanwhile, combine the flour, baking powder and salt in a bowl and set aside.
- Using an electric mixer, beat the butter and sugar in a mixing bowl until light and fluffy.
- Add the egg and vanilla and continue mixing until smooth.
- Stir in the dry ingredients until thoroughly combined.
- Drop spoonfuls of topping evenly over the fruit.
- Return the baking dish to the oven and continue baking for about 30 minutes more or until the topping is nice and brown and the fruit is tender.
- Remove from the oven and allow it to cool for a few minutes in the pan before serving.

♥ Substitute this simple crumb topping for the cobbler topping in this recipe—combine 1/2 cup flour, 1/2 cup oatmeal, 2 tablespoons butter and 1/2 cup brown sugar and sprinkle over the top of the fruit and resume at step 6.



PLATANO VERDE (GREEN STAGE)

SOPA DE PLATANO

Plantain Soup

Serves: 8

- 6 cups beef stock
- 4 green plantains (peeled & cut into chunks)
- 1 medium potato (pared & quartered)
- 1 large onion (quartered)
- 1 large green pepper (quartered)
- 6 cloves garlic
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon powdered cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon dried leaf oregano

This soup is ideal as a first course for a special dinner party. Or serve it as the main event for an informal family winter supper, accompanied only by a salad or sandwich—delicious, hearty and so nutritious.

- 1** In a large deep pot, combine all ingredients, and bring to a boil over medium-high heat for 10 minutes.
- 2** Reduce heat to low and continue to cook slowly for about an hour or until all of the vegetables are very soft and tender.
- 3** Remove from heat.
- 4** Ladle the cooked vegetables and broth into the bowl of a food processor and purée until smooth.
- 5** Pour the soup into serving bowls and garnish with a *Tostone* (page 106).

VARIATION: Plantain Soup is a great choice for vegan or vegetarian guests. Substitute vegetable stock for the beef in this recipe.

HELPFUL HINT: Plantain Soup can be made ahead of time and stored in the refrigerator or freezer for later use. The soup will thicken during storage. Reconstitute it to the consistency you want by adding additional broth when you reheat it.

