

UCLA Dashew Center



Cookbook of Cultures

2025 Edition

Featuring delicious recipes from Bruins around the world!



International Education Week 2025
November 17–21 | UCLA





Message from Dashew Staff

The Cookbook of Cultures was created to celebrate the incredible diversity of our global Bruin community. Through this collection, we hope to share the stories, traditions, and flavors that make each culture unique. We also aim to bring people together through the universal language of food.

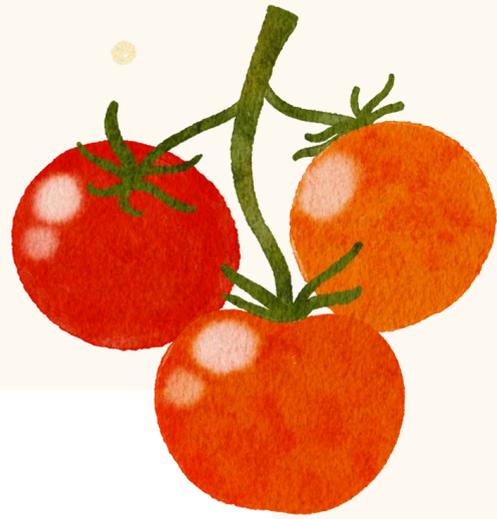
This project also honors International Education Week, a time to recognize the importance of global exchange, learning, and connection. Each recipe represents not only a dish but also a piece of someone's home, shared with warmth and pride.

The Cookbook of Cultures was a collaborative effort by the Dashew Center team, including undergraduate and graduate students, visiting scholars, and staff. We hope it inspires you to explore, cook, and celebrate the many cultures that make UCLA such a vibrant community.

This year's editorial team included Gracie Dixon, Jamie Hayduk-Jones, Jenna Bustamante, and Rose Merida.



Recipe Highlight



Chapli Kebab - **Pakistan**

Zuppa Toscana Soup - **Italy**

Luo Song Tang Soup - **Chinese Borscht**

Peri Peri Paneer Sandwich - **India**

Cola Chicken Wings - **China**

Sour Beef Pot Roast - **Germany**

Bean Sprout Rice - **Korea**

Tomato-Braised Pork - **China**

Ghapama - **Armenia**

Atol De Elote Guatemalteco - **Guatemala**



Chapli Kebab Pakistan

BY: NAZISH ZAFAR

Prep Time: 30 mins Cook Time: 20 mins Servings: 10

Ingredients

- 500g beef/veal mince
- 2 tbsp coriander*
- 2 tbsp crushed pomegranate seeds*
- 2 tbsp red chili flakes
- 2 tsp turmeric*
- 2 tsp all spice*
- 4 tbsp gram/chickpea flour*
- 2 tomatoes
- 2 red onions
- 3-4 green chiles
- 5 tbsp cilantro
- 1 egg
- oil for shallow frying
- salt to taste

Tips

Top this dish with jalapenos or banana peppers. Serve it with coleslaw, garlic fries, or mint chutney.

This dish can be frozen for up to 3 months. Thaw it in the refrigerator, and then fry it to make burgers or sandwiches.

*Can be found in an Indian grocery store

Note from the Chef!

This dish originated in the late 19th century during British rule in India. The name “Chapli Kabab” means flat or patty-like. The dish was likely invented for British soldiers who were stationed in what is now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The dish has since become a popular street food throughout the region.

Instructions

1. Wash and clean the mince thoroughly. Strain excess water until completely dry.
2. Add coriander, pomegranate, chili flakes, turmeric, all spice, salt, and gram/chickpea flour. Mix well. Marinate in the freezer for an hour.
3. Chop the green chiles, tomato, and cilantro. Add to mince.
4. Beat an egg and add it to the mixture. Shape the mince into patties. Place in the refrigerator or freezer for 30 minutes.
5. Shallow fry in oil until the patties are golden brown.

Plate up and enjoy!



Zuppa Toscana Soup Italy

BY: CHLOE GAMBOA

Prep Time: 10 mins Cook Time: 30 mins Servings: 8

Ingredients

- 1 pound of spicy Italian ground sausage
 - 4 tablespoons of butter
 - ½ diced white onion
 - 1 tablespoon minced garlic
 - 6 cups of chicken broth
 - 2 cups of water
 - 4-5 yellow potatoes, cut into 1-inch pieces
 - 3 teaspoons of salt
 - 1 teaspoon of black pepper
 - 2 cups of heavy cream
 - 4 cups of chopped kale
- Optional:
chopped bacon
grated parmesan

Note from the Chef!

First tried it at Olive Garden but became a household favorite to cook every few months with fresh ingredients.

Instructions

1. In a large pot, saute the sausage for 5-6 minutes until browned. Use a slotted spoon to transfer the sausage and set it aside.
2. In the same pot, add butter and saute onions until translucent. Add garlic and saute for another minute until fragrant.
3. Add chicken broth, water, potatoes, salt, and pepper. Bring the soup to a boil and cook until the potatoes are tender. Stir in kale and heavy cream. Add sausage. Taste, and add salt and pepper if needed. Top with parmesan cheese and chopped bacon (optional).

Plate up and enjoy!

Tips

Omit the ground sausage to make this recipe vegetarian-friendly, and use mild sausage to make this recipe kid friendly.

“The more cheese the better!”
-Chloe



罗宋汤 Luó Sòng Soup

Borscht

China, adapted from Russia and Ukraine



BY: KAYLA CAO

Total Time: 60 mins

Servings: 3-4

Ingredients

- 300g beef brisket (cut into chunks)
- 150g chopped cabbage
- 30g diced tomato
- 30g diced onion
- 50g diced carrot
- 100g potato (cut into chunks)
- Flour for coating (as needed)

Use to taste:

- Ketchup
- Spicy soy sauce
- Sugar
- Salt



Instructions

1. Coat beef chunks lightly with flour and sear in a pan with oil until browned. Remove and set aside.
2. Sauté onions until translucent, then add tomatoes, carrots, and potatoes. Cook for 2-3 minutes.
3. Return beef to the pan, add water or broth to cover, and season with ketchup, soy sauce, sugar, and salt. Simmer for 30-40 minutes until the beef is tender.
4. Stir in cabbage and cook for another 5-10 minutes until softened.
5. Mix flour and water into a slurry and stir into the sauce if needed.

Served with steamed rice or noodles!

Note from the Chef!

Growing up in Shanghai, my first memory of Luó Sòng soup is from kindergarten—tiny chairs, long tables, and the familiar sweet-sour aroma filling the room. Though it wasn't served every day, it always made a comforting return. Later, I learned that Luó Sòng soup actually comes from Russian borscht, brought to Shanghai by Russian émigrés who fled after the 1917 Revolution. Since beets were rare, locals replaced them with tomatoes, creating a uniquely Shanghainese flavor—both sweet and tangy. Now, as a college student in Los Angeles, I cook it during winter break for my family, each sip reminding me how migration, history, and adaptation all live within one bowl of soup.



Peri Peri Paneer Sandwich India

BY: SAAKSHI PHILIP

15 mins Cook Time: 10 mins Servings: 4

Ingredients

- 2 heaping spoons of Greek Yogurt
- ½ block of paneer/dried cottage cheese*
- 1-2 bell peppers
- ½-1 onion
- bread (white is recommended)
- butter
- lemon juice
- cheese (slices or shredded)
- mint leaves
- coriander
- chili powder
- turmeric
- chaat masala powder*

Note from the Chef!

I made this dish with my mom for the first time because we're both vegetarians and are always looking for something new to try. It came out so well that I now make it for potlucks and small parties!

*Can be found in an Indian grocery store



Instructions

1. In a bowl, add the greek yogurt, chopped peppers, and onion, and mix. Add coriander, chili powder, turmeric, chaat masala powder, and salt to taste.
 2. Cut the paneer/cottage cheese into small cubes and mix with the greek yogurt. Let the mixture marinate in the refrigerator for ~20 minutes.
 3. In a blender combine coriander, mint leaves, lemon juice, and salt. This is the chutney
 4. Butter both sides of the bread slices. Place on a pan on the stove and allow both sides to toast.
 5. Add yogurt and cheese mixture to one slice of bread. On the other one, spread the green chutney. Add cheese atop the chutney.
- Allow cheese to melt and enjoy!

Cola Chicken Wings China

BY: RUIZE WANG

Total Time: 40 mins

Servings: 2

Ingredients

- 2 pounds of chicken wings
- 2 regular 500ml bottles of cola
*Coke or Pepsi works
- 1 tbsp cooking oil

Optional Seasoning:

- 2 tbsp light soy sauce
- 1/2 tbsp dark soy sauce
- 2 slices of ginger
- 5 cloves of garlic
- 1 tbsp fish sauce
- 1 tbsp cooking wine

Tips

There is a 1:1 ratio of pounds of wings and cola!

Make sure the Cola is enough to cover the wings in the pot.

Note from the Chef!

This is one of the most popular dishes for families in China, but not in restaurants. And it is very easy to make!

Instructions

1. Blanch the chicken wings with cold water.
2. When the water is boiling, take the chicken wings out and wash them to remove the blood.
3. Dry the surface water off the chicken wings, and fry on medium in the oil them until the chicken skin is dried and gold.
4. Pour in enough cola to cover the chicken wings, and add any additional seasoning. Stew for 20 min on medium heat with the lid on.
5. Take the lid off and turn the heat up to high. Boil until the cola reduces and forms a sauce.

Plate up and enjoy!



Sour Beef Pot Roast Germany

BY: FABIAN SCHRAUDOLF

Prep Time: 40 mins Cook Time: 2 hours Servings: 4-6

Ingredients

Marinade:

- 3.5 lbs beef roast (e.g. rump roast)
- 2 medium yellow onions
- 2 medium carrots
- 1 leek
- 0.25 lbs celery root
- 5-10 juniper berries (whole and/or slightly crushed)
- 5 all-spice seeds (whole and/or slightly crushed)
- 5 cloves (whole and/or slightly crushed)
- 5 bay leaves
- 1 tbsp of salt
- 1 tbsp of sugar
- 1 bottle of simple, very dry red wine
- 375 mL apple or red wine vinegar

Side

Originally, this is served with potato dumpling, but I highly advise against making them at home (as way too much effort for mediocre results) or from a dry pre-mix (fresh pre-mixes are good, but typically not available in North America), and instead use boiled potatoes (e.g., Yukon) or high-quality Pasta.

Optional: get 1 glass of red Cabbage from world market as a side (heat it 15 min prior to eating on stove at low heat)



Ingredients (cont.)

Sauce:

- 3 tbsp ghee or vegetable oil
- 1 large yellow onion
- 2 medium carrots
- 3 tbsp tomato paste
- 0.25 lbs celery root
- 5 juniper berries (whole and/or slightly crushed)
- 5 all-spice seeds (whole and/or slightly crushed)
- 3 cloves (whole and/or slightly crushed)
- 5 bay leaves
- 500-750 mL of beef stock
- 6 tbsp of raisins
- 0.5 lbs of Printen (spiced flour) or Pumpnickel
- 2 tbsp golden syrup or honey

Instructions

For Marinade:

1. Peel Onions and celery root, wash Leek (and if used, celery sticks), cut off ends and roughly chop all vegetables.
2. Put a base layer of vegetables in a large container, add roast, followed by all spices, excluding salt and sugar. Then add remaining vegetables to container.
3. Separately dissolve the sugar and salt in a small container with some of the red wine. Then add this and all of the vinegar to the container with.
4. Fill the container with the remaining red wine until the meat is fully covered (if there is insufficient red wine to cover the meat, add more water until it is covered, feel free also to add more vinegar in relation 1 part vinegar : 2 parts additional water)
5. Store Meat in a cold place (e.g., fridge) for at least a week, ideally

Note from the Chef!

The German name of the dish is “Sauerbraten” which translates to “Sour Roast”. It is a very flavorful dish with spices commonly used in the colder months in central Europe, but with an untypical twist due to the sourness. And while it requires some lead time for marinating, it is generally a relatively low-effort dish that is hard to mess up, yielding very tender meat, making simple cuts of beef suitable for a holiday meal. This dish was invented a few centuries before Christopher Columbus discovered America. Initially, it was made with the meat of old horses, and as this meat was very tough to eat, a marinade was created to tenderize it and add additional flavors. However, since the end of the Second World War, this was substituted by beef, as horse meat became rare and unpopular.

For Cooking:

1. Peel Onions and celery root, wash Leek (and if used, celery sticks), cut off ends and finely chop all vegetables and put them in separate bowl
2. Put the meat from the container onto a large plate/board. Pat dry with paper towels and season generously with salt and pepper
3. Preheat the oven to 170C/340F
4. On the stove, heat a large pot with the vegetable oil at high heat. Once the pot is very hot, add the meat and sear from all sites until visibly browned on the surface
5. In the mean time, capture the liquid of the marinade but separate it from all of the solids (the solids are thrown out)
6. Add the onion and sauté it at medium heat until glossy (feel free to remove the roast from the pot for this)
7. Add the onion and sauté it at medium heat until glossy (feel free to remove the roast from the pot for this)
8. For all whole spices used in the marinade, add the equivalent spice (e.g., juniper berry) now to the pot with the remaining finely chopped vegetables and bring to a boil on the stove, stirring occasionally
9. Roughly break the Printen/Pumpnickel into large chunks and add to the roast (if Pumpnickel is used, also add the syrup/honey)
10. If there is still some wine left over add it now and fill the pot with the stock until the meat is covered (the pot might be pretty full at this point). Put a lid on it and again bring to a boil
11. Put the pot with the lid in the stove for 2 hours, stirring every 15-30 minutes. If the liquid starts to slightly develop bubbles in the oven, the meat is cooked to the desired temperature
12. 15 min before the meat is done, add half of the raisins
13. Carefully (meat is very tender and can fall apart) get the meat out of the pot and onto a cutting board
14. In the meantime, season the sauce with salt and pepper to taste, removing as many of the whole spices as possible.
15. Add the remaining raisins and heat up at high heat on the stove, while cutting the roast into ½ inch thick slices (in such a direction that you cut vertically against fibers)
16. Serve on a plate with the side(s) of your choice and a slice of the meat, add the sauce on top



Bean Sprout Rice

Kongnamul-bap

Korea

BY: JU HAN

Prep Time: 10 mins

Cook Time: 30 mins

Servings: 2-3

Ingredients

- 280–340 g (10–12 oz) fresh soybean sprouts (kongnamul)
- 1.2 cups water
- 1.5 cups short-grain rice
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 tsp sesame oil

Sauce:

- 1 tbsp tuna extract (can substitute with 1 T_s fish sauce or 1 T_s soy sauce)
- 2 tbsp soy sauce (required)
- 1 tbsp Korean red chili flakes
- 1 tbsp water
- 1 tbsp minced garlic
- 1 tbsp finely chopped green onion (white part)
- 1 tbsp sesame oil
- 1 tbsp toasted sesame seeds
- 1 tbsp finely chopped green and red chili peppers



Ingredients (cont.)

Optional Ground Beef and Seasoning:

- 150 g (about 5 oz) ground beef
- 2 tsp soy sauce
- 1 tsp sugar

Notes

1 tbsp is equivalent to 15 ml, 1 tsp is equivalent to 5 ml, and 1 U.S. cup is equivalent to 240 mL.

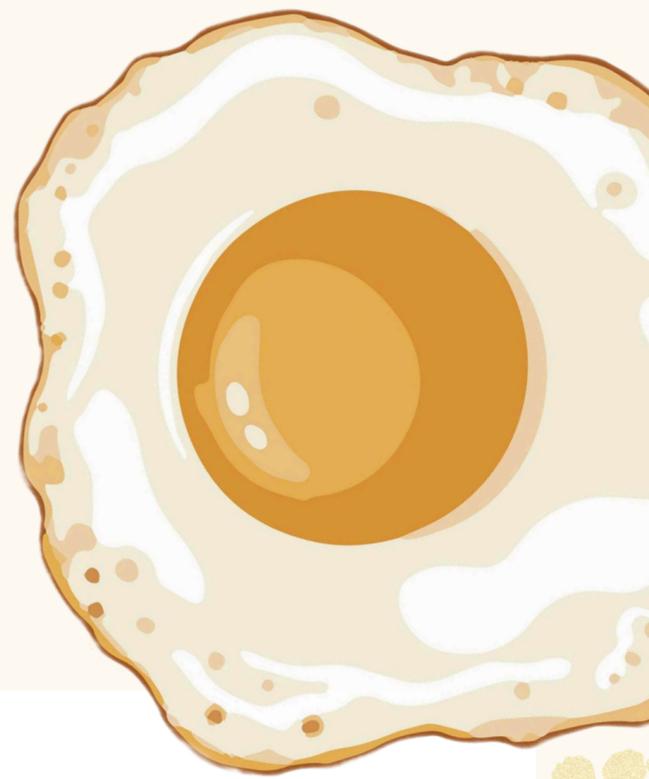
Can substitute Korean red chili flakes with mild red pepper flakes or a mix of paprika and cayenne pepper.

The green and red chili peppers can be substituted for finely chopped, drained jalapeño.



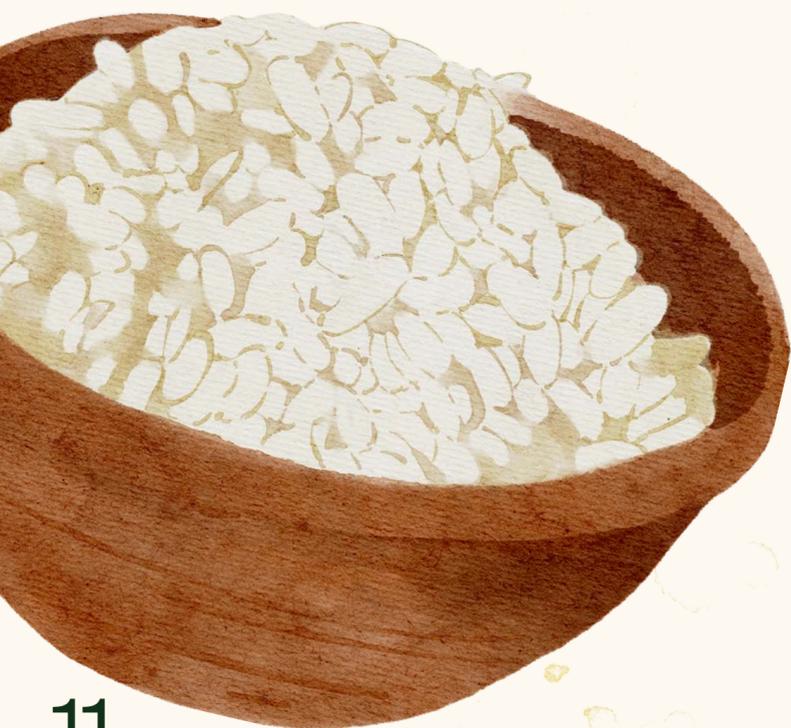
Instructions

1. Rinse the rice and soak it in water for about 20 minutes, then drain.
2. If using ground beef, mix it with soy sauce and sugar in a small bowl. Set aside.
3. Place the rice and 1.2 cups of water in a pot or rice cooker.
4. Spread the seasoned ground beef evenly on top of the rice (optional).
5. Place the bean sprouts on top of the beef layer.
6. Sprinkle salt and drizzle sesame oil over everything.
7. Cover and cook over medium heat until the water starts to boil.
8. Once it boils, reduce the heat to low and cook for about 10 minutes.
9. Do not open the lid while cooking or steaming. Opening it too early can cause a raw bean smell.
10. Turn off the heat and let it steam for another 10 minutes with the lid still closed.
11. While cooking, mix all sauce ingredients in a small bowl.
12. When the rice is done, gently mix the rice, bean sprouts, and beef together.
13. Serve warm in a bowl, drizzle with the sauce, and top with a sunny-side-up egg if desired.



Note from the Chef!

Bean sprout rice (Kongnamul-bap) is a simple but flavorful Korean comfort food made by steaming rice together with fresh bean sprouts and seasoning it with soy sauce, sesame oil, and chili flakes. It's often enjoyed with a fried egg on top. It represents the Korean value of making something wholesome and delicious from humble ingredients. Many Koreans remember this dish from childhood, especially as an easy, nutritious meal prepared by their parents.



Tips

If using a rice cooker, it's even easier — there's no risk of a bean smell since the cooker keeps the steam sealed perfectly.

This dish tastes best when freshly cooked and pairs perfectly with a sunny-side-up egg on top.

Tomato Braised Pork

China
Yunnan Province



BY: EVAN SU

Prep Time: 10 mins Cook Time: 40-60 mins Servings: 3-4

Ingredients

Meat:

- 1.5 lbs of pork suitable for braising chopped into bite sized pieces

Vegetables:

- 1 large onion, chopped into small pieces
- 4 medium tomatoes, chopped into small pieces

Seasonings:

- 2-3 tbsp of doubanjiang
- 1-2 tbsp of soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon of rice wine or other clear alcohol to deglaze
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 piece of star anise (optional)
- 2 slices of ginger
- 1 small clove of garlic
- pinch of Sichuan peppercorns (can be replaced with black pepper)



Note from the Chef!

I learned this dish from my aunt when she came to visit us in the US from overseas many years ago. The first time I tasted it, I immediately wondered where it had been all my life. My family's from southern China, near the border with Vietnam, and there's not many folks from our region in the Chinese-American diaspora since it's historically rural and less developed. While I haven't been able to find good details on its origin, this recipe has uncomplicated ingredients and basic methods for an average Chinese farmhouse kitchen. The tomatoes, onions, and Asian seasonings melt into a luscious, reddish-golden sauce coating tender meat that's both tantalizing and comforting, and it's been a hit for everyone I've served it to. To me, this dish reflects the blue skies, clear waters, and green hills of my ancestral home where down-to-earth lifestyles and a clean environment allow the simple things in life to delight the spirit. I haven't seen this style of tomato-braised pork in restaurants around the world, so even folks from China are likely to find this intriguing.



Instructions (cont.)

1. For pork or beef, blanch in boiling water for 1-2 minutes to extract impurities (foam and clots that float to the surface), then discard water and rinse well. This is a normal procedure for braised meats in Chinese cooking, recommended unless you have exceptionally fresh and high quality meat. Set aside

2. In a wok or similar cooking implement, add cooking oil and fry the meat over medium-high heat for a few minutes until browned on all sides. Set aside or push to edges of wok.

3. Set heat to low, there should still be some oil (add a little more if dry). Add doubanjiang to center of wok, add spices, and fry gently for 1-2 minutes until color and fragrance are pronounced.

4. Add tomatoes and onions, mix contents of the wok, turn up the heat to medium. Fry for several minutes until tomatoes soften and onions are somewhat browned. Stir well and be careful that the doubanjiang and spices aren't burning during this time.

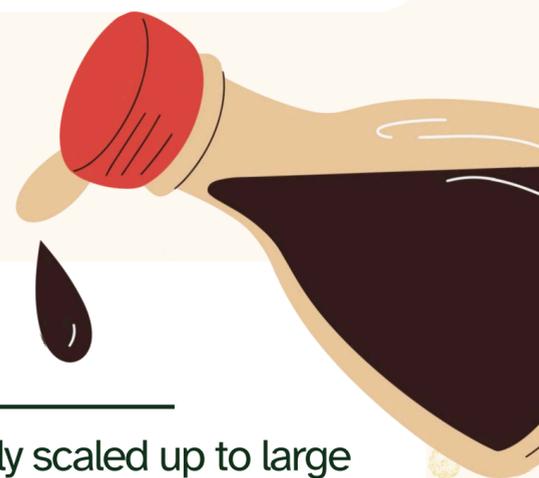
5. Deglaze wok with cooking alcohol, mix and scrape the bottom. Add warm water until all contents are covered and start to float. Add soy sauce.

6. Cover the wok, increase heat to high until the contents reach a boil. Then turn heat down to medium-low. The meat and vegetables are now braising.

7. Braise for at least 30 minutes, up to an hour until meat is soft and tender. In the example of rib tips, I wait until the cartilage itself is soft and the meat is ready to fall off the bone. Stir once or twice to ensure that everything cooks evenly. Add more water if the level is getting low but the meat still needs more braising. You can taste midway to determine if it needs more soy sauce.

9. Remove from heat and serve. My preference is ladled generously over Asian noodles with blanched leafy veggies, chopped cilantro garnish, and a touch of Chinese grain vinegar, but it's delightful with anything.

8. Once meat is done, the vegetables should be nice and melted. If you think the sauce is too thin, uncover the wok, turn heat to high, and condense to desired consistency - I like it soupy to serve over noodles and thicker to serve over rice.



Tips

This can be easily scaled up to large batches and kept in the refrigerator for meal prep. It reheats very well and the flavors mingle even better with time.

The quality of the tomatoes strongly helps the final flavor of the dish. I mostly use normal supermarket tomatoes here in Westwood, but if you can shell out for vine-ripened or heirloom tomatoes, the dish will be even more savory.

Make sure the cut of meat is suitable for braising, meaning it's not excessively lean and will soften properly after prolonged cooking (pork loin would be a poor choice). You want some fat and/or connective tissue, hence why pork rib tips are my favorite. For those who don't eat pork, chicken thighs and beef chuck would probably be the best alternatives.

For a vegan take, you can replace the meat with deep fried tofu (golden brown crust, puffy interior that absorbs juices from braising) available from an Asian supermarket. Cut to bite size as usual if needed. Skip the blanching and browning, add it to the pan at the same time as the vegetables, and the braising can be maintained just until the vegetables are soft and dissolved.



Ghapama Armenia

BY: SOFIA GEVORGIAN

Prep Time: 20 mins Cook Time: 2.5 hours Servings: 2-4

Ingredients

- 1 small/medium-sized pumpkin
- 1 cup assorted chopped dried fruits (i.e. apricots, prunes, raisins, plums)
- 1 cup assorted nuts (i.e. almonds, walnuts, pistachios)
- 1 cup rice, boiled
- 2 tbsp butter
- 2 tbsp honey



Note from the Chef!

Ghapama, or rice-stuffed pumpkin, is a fall staple, so much so that the song “Hey Jan Ghapama” by Harout Pamboukjian, was written in the 1980s and is still among the most iconic Armenian songs!

Instructions

1. Cut the top of the pumpkin and save it for later. It will become the lid. Clean the entire inside of the pumpkin, and puncture the inside of the pumpkin with a fork.
2. Melt the butter and honey. Brush ~1 tbsp of the mixture on the inside, filling the puncture holes lightly.
3. Cover the pumpkin with the lid and cook for 1 hour at 350°F (~175°C). Once done, let cook for 10 mins.
4. Mix the nuts, fruit, rice, and remaining butter-honey. Fill the pumpkin with the mixture and add ~2 tbsp of water if the rice needs to finish cooking.
5. Close the lid and bake for approximately another hour or until the pumpkin is soft.

Cut into slices like a cake and enjoy!



Atol De Elote

Guatemalteco

Guatemala

BY: ROSE MERIDA

Prep Time: 15 mins Cook Time: 45 mins Servings: 8 cups



Ingredients

- 6 medium-size yellow corn cobs (around 2 cups of kernels, try to avoid using canned corn)
 - 2.5 cups of cold water
 - 2 cups of whole milk
 - 1 cinnamon stick
 - 1 cup granulated sugar
 - 1 tsp of salt
- Optional:
ground cinnamon for garnish
¼ cup cooked corn kernels for garnish

Instructions

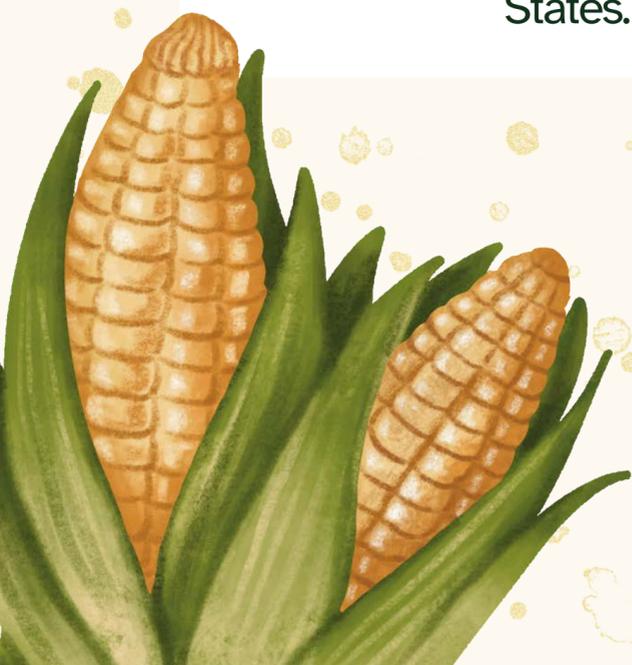
1. Peel and wash the corn, and cut the kernels off. Put them and their juices aside. Discard the cobs as they will not be needed in this recipe.
 2. Put the kernels and ~1 cup of water in a blender and blend until coarsely grounded. Add the rest of the water and keep blending until smooth.
 3. Pour the kernel mixture onto a large pot and add the milk, cinnamon stick, sugar, and salt. Bring to a low boil for ~20 minutes (keep the heat low and avoid very high temperatures).
 4. Stir to avoid the mixture sticking to the bottom. Lower the heat and let simmer for ~15 minutes until it thickens. Serve the atol warm and in cups.
- Optional: Garnish with ground cinnamon and a handful of cooked corn kernels. Enjoy!

Note from the Chef!

This is a traditional Guatemalan hot corn-based drink perfect for cold weather and holidays. I remember drinking this for the first time and feeling immediate joy because I felt the warmth in my body and know it was made with love. It was perfect having a piece of my Guatemalan home in my home here in the United States.

Tips

If the beverage is too watery, mix three tablespoons of corn starch with about ½ cups of cold water, and slowly add it to the pot. Stir consistently until fully mixed in to avoid lumps.





Thank You!

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who contributed to the 2025 edition of the Cookbook of Cultures! We are so grateful to all of our chefs, storytellers, and community members who shared their recipes and traditions. Your contributions remind us how food connects us across cultures and celebrates the diversity that makes UCLA so special. We are proud that the Dashew Center can continue to provide a space for international students, staff, and scholars to share their voices, and their flavors, with the Bruin community.

