



CARIBBEAN HISPANICS FOOD GLOSSARY FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Foods Used in Traditional Hispanic Caribbean Cuisine

Starchy Vegetables

- Beans (*habichuelas, frijoles, judías, alubias, judias, porotos, and caraotas*) Habichuelas in Puerto Rico and Dominican Republic – Frijoles and Judias in Cuba
- Chayote squash (*tayota*) – Chayote in Puerto Rico and Tayota in Dominican Republic
- Green bananas – boiled and served as a side dish. It could be accompanied by fish and other starchy foods
- Green peas (*petit pois, arvejas, or chícharos*) Petit Pois in Dominican Republic
- Pigeon peas (*guandules or gandules*)
- Pumpkin (*calabaza or ahuyama*) Calabaza in Puerto Rico – Ahuyama in Dominican Republic
- Sweet potato (*batata or boniato*) Batata in Puerto Rico and Dominican Republic – Boniato in Cuba
- Yautía (taniens) A starchy root vegetable. It's white to yellow to pale pink, turns mauve-gray or violet when cooked. The taste has been described as a combination of chestnuts and artichoke hearts.
- Yam (*ñame*)
- Yuca (*cassava or mandioca*)

Nonstarchy Vegetables

- Broccoli
- Cabbage
- Cucumbers
- Eggplant
- Lettuce
- Okra
- Onions
- String beans (*vainitas, habichuelas tiernas, or habichuelas*)
- Watercress (*berro*)

Dairy

- Cheddar cheese (*queso de papa*)
- Gouda cheese
- White cheese. Also known as *queso blanco* or *queso para freir*, this is a firm cheese that doesn't melt when fried.
- Whole milk

Fruits

- Avocado (*aguacate*)
- Banana
- Breadfruit (*pana* or *panapen*). A large, round green fruit with a rough rind and pale flesh.
- Chirimoya. A heart shaped or oval fruit with white flesh that has a sweet-sour flavor.
- *Chico zapote* (*nispero*). Sweet fruit with a flavor similar to maple sugar
- Grapefruit
- Guava (*guayaba*)
- Mamey. A large, oval football-shaped fruit.
- Mango (*mango*)
- Orange (*china* or *naranja*) China in Puerto Rico and Dominican Republic – Naranja in Cuba
- Papaya (*lechoza* and/or *fruta bomba* for Dominicans and Cubans)
- Parcha (*maracuyá*). Also known as yellow passion fruit, this is a round, green fruit with orange pulp.
- Passion fruit (*parcha* [*chinola*, or *ceibey*]). Round or oval fruits with green-orange pulp and sour-sweet flavor.
- Pineapple
- Plantain (*plátano*). Resembling large, thick-skinned green bananas, plantains are a popular fruit in Caribbean cuisine. When ripened, the outer skin turns yellow with black pigmentation and it is sweet.
- Queneps [(*kenepas*, *limoncillos*, or *mamoncillo*)] Also known as Spanish limes, this fruit appears like green grapes. The sweet yellow flesh is surrounded by a large inedible pit.
- Soursop (*guanabana*). Deep green heart-shaped fruit with white juicy flesh and a tangy, acidic flavor..
- Star fruit. Unusually shaped fruit with golden yellow skin and crisp juicy flesh.
- Tamarind (*tamarindo*). Cinnamon-brown pods that contain sticky and tart brown pulp and inedible large brown seeds.

Spices

- Achiote (annatto seeds). Used to impart a yellowish color to rice dishes.
- Adobo. A seasoning made by mixing crushed peppercorns, oregano, garlic, and salt, with olive oil and lime juice or vinegar
- *Alcaparrado*. Capers and olives in brine that are added to rice dishes and stews.
- Bay leaves. Used in fricassee and other stews.
- Coriander (cilantro)
- Sofrito. Made of tomatoes, garlic, cilantro, peppers and recao (a green leafy vegetable with a pungent, peppery taste), sofrito is the principal condiment used to season stews, beans, and meats.

Meats

- Beef
- Blood sausage (*chorizo* or *morcilla*)
- Chicken
- Codfish (*bacalao*)
- Eggs
- Fried pork rind (*chicharrón*). A crunchy piece of fat-back pork that is sold in Puerto Rico. Small pieces of *chicharrón* are used to season rice dishes, especially rice with pigeon peas.
- Oxtail.
- Salami (*salchichón*)
- Shredded beef (*carne ripiada* or *ropa vieja*)
- Tripe (*mondongo*, *tripas*, *panza*, or *menudo*)

Mixed Dishes

- *Arroz con camarones*. Rice with shrimp.
- *Arroz con pollo*. Rice with chicken.
- *Asopaos*. A soupy rice, vegetable and protein mixture.
- *Casabe*. Cassava bread.
- *Locrio*. A dish of mixed rice, beans and meat.
- *Kipe*. Fried meat patty made of ground beef, bulgur wheat, and spices.
- *Maduros*. Sweet fried plantain.
- *Mafongo*. Mashed green plantains with added meats such as pork.
- *Mangú*. A Dominican dish of green plantains that are boiled and mashed and used in place of bread or cereal for breakfast.
- *Pastelón*. A Hispanic variation of lasagna that uses slices of fried sweet plantains instead of pasta.
- *Pernil*. Pork chops and roasted pork shoulder.
- *Platanitos en escabeche*. Green bananas in a vinegar/oil dressing.
- *Serenata*. Puerto Rican dish that mixes cod fish (*bacalao*) with root vegetables.
- *Tostones*. Twice fried green plantains.

Beverages

- Coffee
- Rum
- Malta, a non-alcoholic beverage made of barley and hops. Often perceived as highly nutritious and iron rich.
- Herbal teas such as chamomile, passiflora, cinnamon, peppermint, ginger, and aloe. Are considered to have medicinal properties, especially among Dominicans.

Desserts

- Dairy desserts such as *dulce de leche*, *flan*, *majarete*, and *tembleque*.
- *Piraguas*. Shaved ice cones with syrup flavors such as tamarind, raspberry, pineapple and coconut.

Drago, Lorena. Beyond Rice and Beans: The Caribbean Latino Guide to Eating Healthy with Diabetes. Alexandria, VA: American Diabetes Association;2006
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