

Cynthia Connolly & Sushmita Mazumdar toelord free Book Art Project



like a big city yet not really. picked Arlington, VA. It was we could settle down in. I spowed me many places the US from India my fiancè When I decided to move to



the world too! world and there was food here from all over And there were people here from all over the

as I had a great time creating it perfect for that. I hope you enjoy this book to know each other. This project would be share them. And that keeps us from getting have less and less time to listen to them or I love the stories people have but I find we to know the owner's stories. As a book artist restaurants and their food. Now I could get when Cynthia shared it with me. I knew the years, I loved the idea of the recipe project Having lived off of Columbia Pike for five

Photo: Yur Long Studio PAUSE, Arlington, May, 2016 Sushmita Mazumdar, Artist, Writer, Educator.

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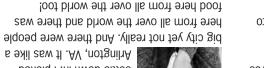
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Arlington Arts, May, 2016 Cynthia Connolly, Special Projects Curator,

Cynthia Connolly & Sushmita Mazumdar

A Community Book Art Project





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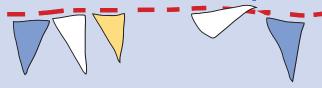
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Baleada Sofia's Pupuseria



At **Sofia's Pupuseria** breakfast items, served all day, are the most popular foods. Baleadas, a traditional Honduran breakfast, are made of a thick flour tortilla—different from Mexican tortillas—folded in half and filled with refried beans. Other fillings can be added as well.

HONDURAS

* * *

Tortillas

To make 7 flour tortillas:

- 1 lb all-purpose flour
- 2 cups of milk
- 1 tsp baking soda, and some oil

Mix the above and keep for 2 hours so the dough can soften.

Put a sheet of aluminum foil on the counter. Divide the dough into seven balls and put one on the foil. Holding down the middle with one hand, pull the edges out with the fingertips of your other hand. Turn the foil and pull, turn and pull, until the tortilla is flat and round. Put it on a hot skillet and cook both sides without oil. Repeat the process with the remaining balls of dough.

Fillings

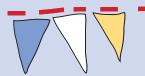
The fillings for the baleadas can vary as per your choice. The simplest one has refried red beans, Salvadoran cheese and sour cream, which you can buy at any Latino grocery store.

To make refried beans, rinse dried red beans and boil. Drain the cooked beans and cook them with chopped garlic, onions, and salt until soft. Cool and puree in the blender or food processor until smooth. Then refry.

Other topping options include avocado, scrambled eggs, or cooked chicken, beef, or Salvadoran chorizo.

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Edith & Esmeralda Owners, Sofia's Pupuseria

Edith tells me. " But we did." The sisters helped their friend get licenses, buy equipment, and get the space ready for inspections. When that place opened this for myself." But for so many years this for myself." But for so many years she had convinced herself she couldn't have her own restaurant.

One day Edith spoke to a property manager and he told her of a space on Columbia Pike, right next to a laundromat. They knew The Pike so they took it. "We cleaned it up, fixed it up, and changed all the equipment. We opened our own place, named after Esmeralda's four year-old daughter Sofia, on March 13, 2016." Esmeralda says they have 12 employees, sell Salvadoran, Honduran, Peruvian, and Mexican food, and are ready for customers to come in.

- Sushmita Mazumdar, Artist, 2016

On a rainy spring afternoon, my family was excited to spot a new restaurant on Columbia Pike. There, I ate my first baleada. Even after living 17 years in Arlington and having eaten food from the many cultures represented here, I got to try something new.

Sofia's Pupuseria's owners are sisters Edith and Esmeralda. Edith started working at age 13, selling clothes in a market in San Salvador, El Salvador, and paid her way through school to get her nurse's assistant certificate. She came to the US at age 21 and for 16 years worked at a Latino bakery in Alexandria with her sister Esmeralda. She learned English from her two daughters who were in school here and in 1996 got were her American citizenship.

"It started with helping a friend. She had a space and wanted to start a restaurant but didn't know how to do it,"

Owners, Sofia's Pupuseria

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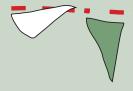
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Pique a lo Macho

Pike Pizza





The most popular dish at **Pike Pizza** is the famous Bolivian dish from Cochabamba, Pique a lo Macho or Pique. It's sautéed beef and beef franks on a bed of fried potatoes, topped with onions, tomatoes, and jalapeños.



Ingredients

Beef, cut bite-sized (soft, lean) Hot dogs, sliced into ovals

Vegetable oil

Garlic, smashed

Salt and pepper

Cumin powder

White wine

Beer

1 small red onion

1 small bell pepper

1 small tomato

Jalapeño (optional)

Lime juice

Cooked French Fries (any)

Method

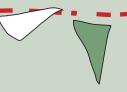
Cook the beef in a pan in a little oil. Add the garlic, some pepper, salt and cumin powder. Add white wine and reduce. Cook the hot dogs separately, adding some beer and reducing it as well.

Slice the onions, bell peppers, and tomato. Mix with a little oil, salt and pepper, and lime juice.

Serve the meats over the French Fries, topped with the vegetables. Guests at Pike Pizza eat Pique a lo Macho with jalapeño, mayonnaise, mustard, ketchup, and hot sauce. 4111 Columbia Pike, Arlington VA 22204. 703. 521.0310

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Partner, Pike Pizza zayoues huuyor

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restaurant's name. adds flavor to the story behind the be pronounced pique and how that down I realize how "pike" itself could to make and very filling. As I write it "is called Pique." He says it's easy "Our most popular dish," Johnny says, they know everybody in the community. and regulars about friends and family as Pizza." They ask the restaurant owners come directly from the airport to Pike US and have no family or friends they "When new immigrants come to the about Pike Pizza too," Johnny says. "In Cochabamba many people know

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name," she finished, mysteriously. don't forget to ask them about their their contact info from her phone. "And visit Pike Pizza," she said, sending me told her about this project. "You must at an event at my daughter's school and Sánchez, Arlington School Board Chair, I bumped into Dr. Emma Violand-

restaurant—on Columbia Pike. are closed and they only have the one Ballston, and Maryland. Today those Pike—in Falls Church, Annandale, They opened four more locations called Johnny and other siblings joined her. siblings Mario and Carmen. Later, Pike Pizza restaurant along with her Cochabamba, Bolivia, and took over Gloria Sanchez came to the US from told me that 25 years ago his sister So I met Johnny Sanchez and he

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Papaya Salad

Rincome Thai Cuisine



At **Rincome** the Green Papaya Salad is a popular dish that is easy to make. Called Som Tom in Thai, you can make a vegan version by replacing the fish sauce with soy sauce. It can be made without the peanuts as well.

THAILAND

Ingredients

About 1/2 lb green papaya

5 green beans

5 cloves garlic

Thai chili pepper, to taste

Handful peanuts, roasted and unsalted

6 cherry tomatoes, halved

2 1/2 tbsp lime juice

2 1/2 tbsp fish sauce/soy sauce

1 tbsp sugar

1/2 tbsp tamarind paste

Method

Shred the green papaya.

Using a mortar and pestle smash the garlic, chili, peanuts and green beans.

Mix the lime juice and fish sauce or soy sauce. Add to it the sugar and tamarind paste. Add the mixture to the mortar and mix some more. Then add the shredded papaya and tomato into it all. Mix well. In Thailand they mash the papaya as well but you can leave it unmashed if you like.

3030 Columbia Pike, Arlington VA 22204. 703.979.0144

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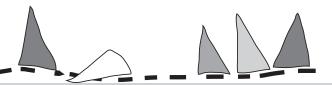
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Owners, Rincome Thai Cuisine Mihee & Miok



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experience. Mihee tells me—with over 30 years of the best bartenders on the Pike, now they do. But they are definitely never cooked before, they admit, but that way," she smiles. The two sisters Pad Thai with no peanuts if you want it and you come back. I will make you and I'll make the dish so you are happy kitchen. "Tell me what you don't like restaurant kitchen is like their own says she tells her customers that the from Springfield eight years ago. She Mihee's sister Miok moved to Arlington

- Sushmita Mazumdar, Artist, 2016

neighborhood. went to eat there, right there in their son grow up—that's how often they of Rincome had literally watched her My friend Kiersten said that the owners

drink the beer here then and now loves she says proudly, "and said he used to returned after 20 years in the UK," their names. "Yesterday a customer are regulars, and everybody knows TV show—so a lot of the customers neighborhood "Cheers" bar-like the She says their restaurant is the neighborhood for over 20 years. Mihee herself has lived in the this restaurant in 1985," she explains. husband Kenny is Thai and we started original owner. "I am Korean but my exrestaurant on Columbia Pike run by the restaurant is the longest running Thai Thai Cuisine, told me that her Mihee, one of the owners of Rincome

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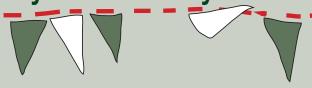
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3205 Columbia Pike, Arlington VA 22204. 571.257.8816

Saag Paneer City Kabob & Curry House



At **City Kabob** Saag Paneer is the second most popular dish after Butter Chicken. Saag means "leafy vegetable" and paneer is a pressed cheese that can be found at any Pakistani or Indian grocery store.



Ingredients

- 1 bunch spinach, stems removed
- 1 red onion
- 1 inch ginger, grated
- 4 cloves garlic, grated
- 1/2 fresh tomato, grated

Spices—box of Saag Paneer spice mix from an Indian/Pakistani grocery store, or:

- 1 tsp cumin powder
- 1 tsp cilantro powder
- 1 tsp turmeric powder
- 1/4 tsp cayenne powder
- 1 tsp salt

Paneer –400g/14 oz block or prefried cubes

Method

Bring a pot of water to boil. Cook spinach in the boiling water until wilted. In a separate pan add oil and heat it up. Add chopped onions, ginger and garlic and stir. When this turns golden add in the grated tomato and the spices. Stir till the ingredients are mixed well. Cook for a few minutes.

Remove the spinach from the water and puree after it has cooled. Add it to the onion-spice mixture in the pan and mix well. Cover and cook.

Cube the paneer and fry lightly in oil separately. Add it to the spinach mixture. Cook till the paneer is soft. Serve with rice.

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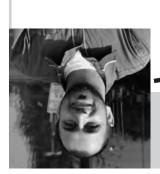
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Mohammad Sajid Partner, City Kabob & Curry House



Four years ago Sajid moved from Morth Arlington to live on Columbia Pike. He found that there was an Indian restaurant in Shirlington and there was another in Clarendon. "But there was nothing in the middle. So we decided to open a restaurant on Columbia Pike," he says, as his uncle nods in agreement.

City Kabob serves vegan and vegetarian dishes as well as meat dishes. "Our most popular dish by far is Butter Chicken," Sajid says. But his uncle decides to share the Saag Paneer recipe. "He has trained all the chefs we have had so don't worry," Sajid adds with a smile, as I got my pen and paper weady to take notes and he brought me a chilled mango lassi from the fridge.

- Sushmita Mazumdar, Artist, 2016

I was surprised to find a Pakistani-Indian restaurant on my list of Columbia Pike restaurants. I had no idea there was one. I was excited when I found it tucked away among a few other takeaway places.

City Kabob opened on Columbia Pike in August 2015, Sajid tells me. His father and uncle are partners and he joins them in running the restaurant. But his family has been in the restaurant business for a long time so its not new to them.

Sajid's family moved to Arlington from Pakistan in 1990. He is a graduate of Yorktown High School and his sister went to Washington-Lee. "Desi people love their culture and their food," Sajid says, using a word, which means 'from the home country.' "And we wanted to give back to the community by opening an Indian-Pakistani restaurant."

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Kik Wot/Alicha Wot

Dama Pastry and Restaurant



Dama is owned by siblings who named it after their father, Dama. A poor man who came to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from a village, he was a humanitarian who died a millionaire. Kik Wot is owner Almaz's favorite dish. If cooked without the turmeric, it is called Alicha Wot.



Ingredients

1 small onion

2 cloves garlic

Oil

16 oz. package Yellow Split Peas, available at any grocery store

2 tsp turmeric powder

1 tsp salt

White pepper powder, to taste

Water

Method

Chop onions and garlic. Heat oil in a pan and add the onions and garlic. Sauté until the onions and garlic change color. Add a little water and let it come to a boil. Boil it a bit and add more water and bring to a boil again.

Then add the full package of yellow split peas. Add the turmeric, salt, and white pepper.

Cook until the lentils are soft. Add water as needed to keep it from drying out.

Garnish with chopped jalapeño.

1505 Columbia Pike, Arlington VA 22204. 703.920.5620

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Garnish with chopped jalapeño.



HIMBZ Dama Pastry & Restaurant



comes first. We named our restaurant after him so we siblings always remember that," she smiles. Sixteen years ago her sister Kelam, who lived on Columbia Pike, decided to open a restaurant there and Almaz and her brother and his wife opened the pastry place next door. Recently they opened a restaurant in Annandale.

"We don't serve pork or shellfash," Almaz tells me inviting us in for lunch. I ask if it's a religious tradition. "My dad is Muslim and my mom is Christian but in Ethiopia nobody sees religion as hard as people here do." she says, looking at Hanan. She agrees.

She didn't let Hanan and me pay for our lunch. "In America they say there is no such thing as a free lunch," I remind her. Almaz laughs. "In Ethiopia we have a saying—The door is always open."

- Sushmita Mazumdar, Artist, 2016

I interviewed Almaz for an article in 2012 so I knew where to find her. I went to the restaurant with Hanan, a local Ethiopian-American journalism student who volunteers at my studio. We found Almaz coming out of the kitchen, her hair in a net and wearing a flour-dusted apron. She took us to a quiet room and pulled up three chairs.

Almaz told us how she followed her sister and came to the US in 1974 to attend Howard University to study clinical nutrition. She then attended Academy de Cuisine and trained to be a pastry chef. Her teacher was the White House pastry chef. "He came here when we opened and gave us his blessing," she remembers fondly.

The government in Ethiopia had been overthrown and the siblings had to help their family back home so they decided to open a restaurant in Washington DC. "Father always said, never argue—love "Father always said, never argue—love

Partner, Dama Pastry & Restaurant

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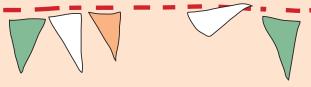
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Beef Stew

The Celtic House Irish Pub & Restaurant



The Beef Stew at **Celtic House** has a special ingredient—Guinness! The chef says he makes 10lbs of this every day so he can't give me a recipe for two. He gives this base recipe and encourages people to make it as they like it.



Ingredients

Beef stew meat or lamb, cut in cubes

Celery, chopped

Carrots, chopped

White Onion, chopped

Beef stock, or lamb stock

Bay leaves

Black pepper

Olive oil

Guinness beer

Method

In a big pot sear the beef cubes in olive oil. Then add the Guinness, stock, bay leaves and black pepper and cook it until the beef is soft—around 45 mins.

Meanwhile, sauté celery, carrots, and onions in a separate pan until the onions are golden. When the meat has cooked for 45 minutes, add the onion mixture to the meat. Cook for another hour or until the meat is tender. Adjust salt as needed.

2500 Columbia Pike, Arlington VA 22204. 703.746.9644

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Danny Mc Fadden

Partner, Celtic House Irish Pub & Restaurant



and worked in restaurants there as well. He moved to this area in 2005 and now lives in Alexandria.

designed by the architect. area with a little doggy park specially his place has the only patio seating says. Including people with pets—as as well. "We cater to everybody," he there are quesedillas on the menu here restaurant he worked at in New York, Danny said. And just like the Irish decided to serve curry here too," #1 in the UK and then in Ireland, we India. "You know when curry became where I was from. I told him I was from Danny explains. Then he asked me cooked Irish food for over 30 years," one partner running the kitchen. "He's Celtic House serves Irish food with

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The Celtic House recently held a fundraiser for the Wakefield High School band, and we were there to support my son and his friends. When I went in to interview Danny it was a gray and rainy May morning and he was greeting guests at a table with, was greeting guests at a table with,

The Celtic House is Danny Mc Fadden's fourth Irish pub in the VA-DC area. His first was in Clarendon and he started looking at the Columbia Pike location four or five years ago. He liked the new development that was starting on the Pike and also liked the idea of a big interior space with ample outdoor seating as well.

It all started in a little town in northwest Ireland when 14 year-old Danny started working in his neighbor's restaurant and pub. At 17, Danny was working in Dublin. In 1987 he came to New York

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Spanakopita Atilla's Restaurant



The signature appetizer at **Atilla's** is the hummus, but Seren, the manager, decides to share the recipe of a Greek favorite, Spanakopita, or Spinach Pie. With a filling of specially seasoned spinach, wrapped in phyllo dough and baked to perfection, it is enjoyed with a Cacik dip.



Ingredients

Spanakopita:

- 2 packages of #4 phyllo dough
- 2 bunches of fresh spinach, chopped
- 1 medium white onion
- 2 fistfuls of crumbled Feta cheese

Olive oil

Vegetable oil

Method

Add equal amounts of olive oil and vegetable oil in a pan. Sauté the chopped onions, spinach, and Feta together until the spinach is cooked. After it cools, unroll the phyllo dough flat on a counter. Then put some

spinach on it near the edge of the phyllo and pat it flat. Then roll the phyllo over and close the edges shut. Roll it tightly all the way to the other edge of the phyllo, flattening it as you go.

Brush olive oil on a baking sheet and place 8 spinach pies on it—they should fit nicely. Bake at 350°F for 35-40 minutes.

Cacik Dip: Mix yogurt, garlic, a little salt, fresh chopped dill, dry mint leaves crushed fine, a little bit of olive oil, and fine chopped cucumber. Mix well and use as dip for the Spanakopita.

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The food at Atilla's is a mix of Turkish and Greek dishes—or Mediterranean. The doner kebab entrée, served on Friday and Saturday only, is very popular and is Turkish. But the Spinach Pie, another popular dish, is Greek.

After taking over Zulkuf decided to keep the name, Atilla's. "The name was very popular and Mr. Atilla still visits—he is our friend and many customers who came here when they were little still visit as adults now," Seren tells me. Many of their customers come here from the Pentagon and they do weddings and birthdays here as well. They used to have live music in the past but not anymore. "Mowadays everyone brings anymore. "Mowadays everyone brings fheir own DJs so we go with that," Seren explains.

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My friend Patty told me I should check out Atilla's. Her family has lived off Columbia Pike for years and have eaten there often.

I got to chat with Seren Engin, who has worked at Atilla's as cashier and manager for 10 years. She takes time out from managing the register to answer my questions as the owner and cheft is busy in the kitchen. Every now and then she runs into the kitchen to get specific answers from him as we get into the interview and recipe.

Mr. Atilla opened Atilla's in 1977. Erol Ozkan has been the chef here since the '80s and Zulkuf Gezgic joined him as chef in the '90s. In 1998, Zulkuf took over and has run the restaurant since. "Zulkuf is from Turkey, but before coming to the United States he lived in larael where he and his brother ran a restaurant for ten years," Seren says.

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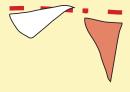
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4704 Columbia Pike, Arlington VA 22204. 703.566.1686

Quinoa Soup

Cafe Sazón





Quinoa originated in the Andean region of Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia and Chile and has a high nutritional value. For a vegetarian option Claudia of **Café Sazon** says this soup can be made without adding the beef.



Ingredients

1 Cup Quinoa Real

1 onion, chopped

1 clove garlic, minced

1 carrot, diced

1/4 cup peas

1/4 cup chopped celery

1/4 cup chopped green and red peppers

2 large potatoes, cut in quarters

1/2 lb. top round beef

1/2 lb. short ribs for soup

Olive oil

Salt & pepper

Fresh cilantro & parsley

Water

Method

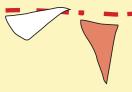
In a soup pot, caramelize chopped onion and minced garlic in olive oil on medium-high heat. Add chopped green and red peppers, stir for 2 minutes, add quinoa to lightly toast. Add diced carrots, chopped celery, peas, beef and short ribs. Stir, adding enough water to cover the ingredients three times. Add salt and pepper, let it come to a boil. Add potatoes and cook until the vegetables are tender and rings of quinoa appear floating in the soup.

Quinoa will become super plump and soup will have a thick consistency.

4704 Columbia Pike, Arlington VA 22204. 703.566.1686

Quinoa Soup Cafe Sazón





BOLIVIA

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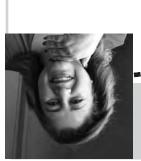
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Claudia Salazar Partner, Café Sazon

"Five years ago this space was vacant. Mom, my sister Adriana, who was a new architect, and I—we decided to do it!" There was a bus stop in front and stream of customers. Adriana did the interiors. But then the construction on the Pike started and went on for 3 years. And they moved the bus stop! "We started with the idea of coffee and pastries but it was a struggle. So when customers asked for Bolivian food we customers asked for Bolivian food we added that." As customers are from added that." As customers are from

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"At one point we had moved to Fairfax but mom liked it here— on the Pike— so we moved back," Claudia smiles, sipping her peach drink, as I sip my coffee.

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- Sushmita Mazumdar, Artist, 2016

On a visit to my studio, Ginger Geoffrey told me about Café Sazon where she holds many of her lunch meetings. So I went to check it out and met Claudia.

Claudia's mom Eva came here from La Paz, Bolivia 27 years ago. "I am really glad we came here," Claudia remembers. "We felt welcome—the schools in Arlington were accommodating and there were many other Spanish speakers here."

Eva is a strong woman, and hard working with a "we can do it!" attitude. She worked in a hair salon and one asked if she'd like to take over. She worried—how could she own a hair salon? "Mom spoke to the property owner and thank God he didn't ask for much, so she started," Claudia says. "But one thing she always wanted was to serve pastries and coffee there, but of course, it was not allowed," Claudia

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Plato Azteca **Cantina Mexicana**



Gloria wanted the community to know that Mexican food is more than tacos and burritos. So she changed the name of the restaurant from Taco House to **Cantina Mexicana**. Plato Azteca is an entrée and a complete meal.



Rice

Rice, 1 package of plain white rice, Mexican Chorizo: Buy at any grocery cooked as per instructions.

In a skillet melt some butter. Add chopped onion, green hot peppers, tomatoes, and tomato paste, and sauté until it is mixed well. Mix into the cooked rice.

Meats

Chicken breast: Rub with chicken base seasoning, seasoning salt, and an Italian dressing. Grill.

4-inch Steak: Rub with seasoning salt mixed with fajita seasoning. Grill. Double for two servings.

Shrimp: Mix 3-6 shrimp with Old Bay seasoning and cook on a skillet.

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Refried beans: Use any store bought kind. Or buy dried beans and boil them until soft. Then drain and smash the beans. Chop onions finely and cook in oil. When the onions are brown, discard them and add the beans to the oil. Cook and mix well.

Presentation: Place a lettuce leaf in the middle of a plate and put a small salad in it—whatever you like. At the top left put a helping of the beans with the rice to the right. Below the salad, place a piece of the chicken, next to it a piece of steak, and next to that 3 shrimp. Lay the chorizo on top.

922 S. Walter Reed Dr., Arlington VA 22204. 571.970.6571

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4-inch Steak: Rub with seasoning salt mixed with fajita seasoning. Grill. Double for two servings.

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Owner, Cantina Mexicana seinA sinold

her hair in a ponytail. life," she says, wearing a black apron, gives my family a chance to live a better life. "But I love doing this because it owner she must be rich and live an easy people think because she is a restaurant to do so I did the mopping." She says woman had something else she needed stopped by and apologized. "The Soon Gloria was done mopping and changed the name to Cantina Mexicana. the owner in 1995 and in 2000 she a whole other thing." So she became a restaurant but paying salaries was me. "Of course, Gloria knew how to run my house." Rafael stops and looks at can't pay you in 5 years you can have

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— Sushmita Mazumdar, Artist, 2016

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2919 Columbia Pike, Arlington VA 22204. 703.521.4070

Grilled Salmon With Spicy Green Mango-Lime Sauce Bangkok 54



Nack, who runs **Bangkok 54** with her family, wanted to share the grilled salmon recipe as salmon is easy to find and the special sauce—spicy green mango-lime sauce with cashews was great on a hot day.

THAILAND

Fish

11/4 lbs salmon fillet, cut into 4 pieces

1/4 tsp each salt and pepper

Season the salmon pieces with the salt and pepper and grill over mediumhigh heat until opaque throughout, 3 to 5 minutes per side; transfer to plates.

Sauce

2½ tbsp fish sauce

2 tbsp fresh lime juice

2 tsp palm sugar

1 chopped Thai red chili

1 medium fresh green mango, peeled and roughly grated

3 tbsp cashew

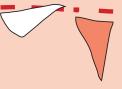
1 shallot or red onion, thinly sliced

In a large bowl, whisk together fish sauce, fresh lime juice, palm sugar, and Thai red chili. Toss with the fresh green mango, cashew, and shallot/red onion. Serve with the salmon and brown rice.

2919 Columbia Pike, Arlington VA 22204. 703.521.4070

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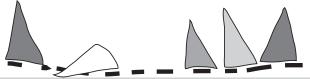
3 tbsp cashew

1 shallot or red onion, thinly sliced

In a large bowl, whisk together fish sauce, fresh lime juice, palm sugar, and Thai red chili. Toss with the fresh green mango, cashew, and shallot/red onion. Serve with the salmon and brown rice.



Vartner, Bangkok 54 Partner, Bangkok 54



2002. And when the Goodwill store next door became available in 2002 the family decided to open a restaurant.

"People ask me if we want to expand and I say 'over my dead body!" Nack laughs. "I don't want to hire someone to every summer farmers from Florida to Pennsylvania sell them their Thai produce. They buy, clean, and store it all. "So we have fresh ingredients all year long," Nack says proudly. Even the fish and crab is hand-picked, bought from vendors they know personally.

"The architect said he could design the space to be beautiful but the special touches should come from the owners," she remembers, as I spot her mom carrying fresh flowers to a table. "It's what makes it our space."

- Sushmita Mazumdar, Artist, 2016

When my friend Amar visited the U.S. last summer after his recent move to Korea, he took us to Bangkok 54. He complained that they didn't know how to make good Thai food in Korea.

When I met Nack, she told me that Bangkok 54 was an oriental grocery store in Alexandria in 1999. Her mom Ann had come to the US from Bangkok around 1980 and worked very hard at an American restaurant in Washington, DC. One day the owners asked her to take over and she did. "Then this Thai market was for sale," Nack says, "so market was for sale," Nack says, "so market was for sale," Nack says, "so the market was for sale," Nack says, "so market was for sale," Nack says," he market was for sale,"

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Lomo Saltado a la Criolla

El Puerto Restaurant



Tito and his brother bought **El Puerto**, a Bolivian and Peruvian restaurant, even though they are Salvadoran. And kept it that way so as not to compete with the Salvadoran and Tex Mex restaurant next door. This Creole-style Peruvian sautéed beef dish can also be made with chicken.



Meat

Beef, cubed

Red onion, minced

Garlic

Olive oil

Tomatoes, chopped

Soy sauce

Salt and pepper

Red wine vinegar

Salsa Madre or vegetable gravy

French fries, any

Sauté the beef in olive oil with the onion and garlic. Add the tomatoes.

In a bowl mix the soy sauce, salt, pepper, red wine vinegar, and Salsa Madre or vegetable gravy. Pour the mix into the beef.

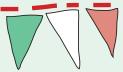
When it is cooked add cooked French Fries into the beef. Serve over white rice.

Rice

In a pan add olive oil and sauté garlic and salt and pepper. Add water to it and boil. Add the rice and let it cook as per instructions on the package. 3007 Columbia Pike, Arlington VA 22204. 703.271.8100

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With that they bought this place—EI Puerto. "We picked this because my brother wanted to have his own restaurant," Tito explains. "But also to do something different and connect with our own community." They had grown up here in Arlington is nice and a familiar place. "Arlington is nice and friendly, and easy to get around—you can take a bus or bike anywhere. And there is excellent food," Tito beams,

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The usual Peruvian restaurants in Arlington serve chicken so I decided to explore El Puerto to see what else was part of Peruvian cuisine.

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Tito started as a dishwasher. Then he became the salad bar boy and three months later, a cook. After two years at Northern Virginia Community College he went to culinary school in Washington, DC and worked in the French restaurant until 1990 when they closed. They had paid for his culinary closed. They had paid for his culinary

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Fish Tagine Mazagan



I had noticed **Mazagan** but couldn't tell from the outside what kind of food they served. I got a hint when its owner shared the recipe for fish tagine, which can be made in a tagine or traditional Moroccan clay pot, cooked on a stovetop or charcoal grill. Or you can cook it in a pot.





Ingredients

3 lbs fish, Branzino, Salmon, Red Snapper, or Rockfish

3 potatoes & 2 carrots, peeled, sliced

3 fresh tomatoes, chopped fine

1 green and 1 red bell pepper, sliced

1/4 cup whole, pitted green olives

1 bunch cilantro, 1 bunch parsley

1 tsp salt, 1 tsp black pepper

1 tbsp cumin powder

1 tbsp paprika

½ tsp cayenne (or as needed)

4 cloves garlic

Juice of ½ lemon

Pickled lemons, from any halal store or from World Market

Olive oil

Method

Making Charmoulah: Blend the spices (salt, pepper, cumin, paprika, cayenne and garlic) with the olive oil, lemon juice, cilantro and parsley in the food processor. Mix the tomatoes with the charmoulah in a bowl. Add water to create a sauce.

Place the potatoes and carrots in the bottom of the tagine. Layer with the fish, the red and green peppers, the olives and pickled lemons. Add the charmoulah mix as the last layer and close the lid. Put it on the stove on medium to low heat to cook for 20-25 minutes. The way to check if it is cooked is by testing the potatoes.

Serve it in the tagine and eat with French bread.

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