

WHY DON'T WE COOK?



COOK. BOND. ENJOY

Some of life's greatest pleasures don't only involve food, they revolve around food. Cooking together offers the opportunity to create powerful, positive, and lasting memories associating flavors and smells with emotional experiences.

Enjoy the benefits of disconnecting from daily life and focusing on simple things while working together in a shared activity that promotes communication, teamwork, problem solving and bonding – all proven to be part of a healthy romantic relationship.



RECIPES
FOR

FRENCH
NIGHT



cocktail | French 75

INGREDIENTS

- ¾ ounce simple syrup
- ¾ freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 1½ ounces dry gin
- Ice
- 2 ounces Champagne, chilled
- Lemon peel for garnish

HOW TO COOK

1. In a cocktail shaker, combine the simple syrup, lemon juice, and gin.
2. Add the ice and shake to chill.
3. Strain into a Champagne flute.
4. Top with the Champagne, stirring briefly.
5. Garnish with a lemon peel.



appetizer | Easy Peasy Cheese Gougeres

INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup water
- ½ cup whole milk
- 1 stick butter
- 1 cup flour
- 4 eggs
- 1 tablespoon chopped rosemary
- ¼ cup diced ham
- 2 ounces gruyere shredded, plus extra for topping
- 1 ounce grated parmigiano reggiano

HOW TO COOK

1. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees.
2. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
3. In a saucepan, combine the water, butter, milk and salt. Bring to a boil.
4. Add the flour to the water mixture and stir (over low heat) until the dough forms, about 2-3 minutes.
5. Scrape the dough into a bowl and allow it to cool for a couple of minutes.
6. One by one, beat the eggs into the dough.
7. Add the cheeses, chopped rosemary and the chopped ham.
8. Stir until just combined.
9. Use a tablespoon scoop and plop one tablespoon sized balls onto the parchment paper. Keep two inches in between each one.
10. Sprinkle with some gruyere.
11. Bake for 18-20 minutes or until golden brown.
12. Best if served warm with butter.



main | Sheet Pan Steak Frites

INGREDIENTS

For the Steak Frites:

- ½ pound frozen shoe string French fries
- 1 tablespoon black truffle olive oil
- Skirt steak
- Salt and pepper
- Chopped rosemary

For the compound butter:

- 1 stick butter, at room temperature
- 1 tablespoon chopped chives
- 1 tablespoon chopped parsley
- 1 clove garlic minced

HOW TO COOK

1. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees.
2. Season the steak with salt, pepper and chopped rosemary and set aside.
3. Layer a sheet pan with one sheet of tin foil and one sheet of parchment paper.
4. Partially bake the frozen french fries, turning halfway through. Cook according to the package (for half the recommended cooking time).
5. Remove the parchment layer so the foil is exposed. Move the fries to one side of the pan, and add the steak to the other side.
6. Turn on the broiler and move the sheet pan closer to the top of the oven (one below the very top).
7. Cook the steak for 3-4 minutes on each side (depending on thickness of steak and how you want it done). Flip the fries when you flip the steak. If the fries are starting to burn, remove them and continue cooking the steak.
8. When the steak is done, let it rest for five minutes. While it is resting, make the compound butter.
9. In a small bowl, add the butter (room temperature), chives, parsley and garlic. Stir until combined.
10. Put the french fries in a bowl, add one teaspoon salt, and the truffle flavored olive oil. Toss until combined.
11. Serve steak with a tablespoon of compound butter on top and a side of french fries



dessert | French Apple Tart with Dried Cherries

INGREDIENTS

- 2-3 yellow delicious apples, peeled and sliced in ¼" slices
- 1 sheet puff pastry
- ¼ cup granulated sugar
- ¼ cup dried cherries (can substitute with dried cranberries)
- 3 tablespoons butter, chilled and diced
- ¼ cup apricot preserves, strained
- 2 tablespoons water

HOW TO COOK

1. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees.
2. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
3. Take one sheet of thawed puff pastry sheet. On a flour surface, lightly roll it out so it has an even thickness.
4. Take a fork and poke holes in the pastry (about 1-2 inches apart), leaving a one inch border around the edge.
5. Wash and peel the apples. Remove the cores and thinly slice them into uniform pieces, about 1/4 inch thick.
6. Neatly layer the slices of apple on the puff pastry. Leave the border about 1/2-1 inch thick. You should get three rows of apple.
7. Evenly toss the dried cherries on top.
8. Top the pastry with the sugar.
9. Bake for about 25 minutes, or until the top is browned. The sugar will caramelize and may spill onto the parchment paper.
10. Allow to cool for five minutes.
11. While the tart is cooling, in a small saucepan, combine the apricot preserves and water on low heat for about 5 minutes.
12. Use a pastry brush and brush the apricot and water mixture on top of the tart.
13. Slice and serve.





RECIPES
FOR

**GREEK
NIGHT**



cocktail | Greek Mojito

INGREDIENTS

- 1 ½ OZ OF METAXA
- 4 sprigs of fresh mint
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon of freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons of chilled club soda

HOW TO COOK

1. In a cocktail shaker, muddle the mint with brown sugar and lime juice.
2. Add the Metaxa, lemon juice and ice.
3. Shake well and strain into an ice-filled highball glass.
4. Top with a splash of club soda.



appetizer | Marinated Eggplant with Capers & Mint

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound Eggplant, cut into ¼ inch rounds
- 5 Tablespoons extra virgin olive divided
- 2 Tablespoons red wine vinegar
- ¼ chopped fresh mint
- 2 tablespoons capers, drained and rinsed
- ¼ Teaspoon of Salt
- ½ Teaspoon of Pepper

HOW TO COOK

1. Preheat your oven Broiler
2. Arrange your eggplant in 1 layer on a large baking sheet and brush both sides with 2 tablespoons of oil. Broil about 4 inches from heat, turning once, until golden. 8 to 12 minutes total.
3. Stir together vinegar, mint, capers, ¼ teaspoon of salt, ½ teaspoon of pepper, and the remaining three tablespoons of oil and toss with warm eggplant. Marinate at least 20 minutes.

NOTES

- You can make this appetizer 1 day ahead and keep refrigerated.
- Serve with pita bread or toasted bread.



main | Leg of Lamb with Garlic & Rosemary

INGREDIENTS

Lamb:

- 4 to 5 pounds boneless leg of lamb roast, fat trimmed to ¼ inches thick
- 4 medium garlic cloves cut into slivers
- Olive Oil
- 4 medium garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tablespoon fine sea salt
- 2 tablespoons fresh chopped rosemary
- ½ teaspoon fresh pepper

Sauce:

- ¼ cup dry red wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch

HOW TO COOK

Prepare & Roast Lamb:

1. Pat the lamb dry with paper towels. Score the fat by making shallow cuts all over with the tip of a sharp, small knife. Tick a sliver of garlic clove inside of each cut. Rub olive oil all over the outside of the roast.
2. In a small bowl, stir together the minced garlic, sea salt, rosemary and black pepper. Mash it around a bit until it turns into a paste (or kind of).
3. Place the lamb into a lightly oiled roasting pan. Rub the paste made in step 2, all over the lamb. **MAKE AHEAD TIP:** wrap the lamb in plastic wrap and refrigerate for a few hours or overnight.
4. Let stand at room temperature for 30 minutes before roasting. Place a meat thermometer into the thickest part of the roast.
5. Preheat oven to 425oF.
6. Roast uncovered at high heat for 15 minutes. Then turn the temperature down to 375o F and continue to roast for another 1½ Hours. Watch the meat thermometer closely. When it reached 150o F, pull the roast out of the oven. Remove the roast to a cutting board and let it rest – the temperature should rise to about 160o F.

The Sauce:

1. While the lamb is resting, prepare the sauce. Add wine to pan and de-glaze by boiling over moderately high heat, stirring and scraping off brown bits for about 1 minute.
2. Take out a little bit of liquid and mix with the cornstarch. Add it back to the pan, along with the butter. Season with salt and pepper and serve with the lamb.



main | Greek Potatoes with Lemon Vinaigrette

INGREDIENTS

- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
- 5 Tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 2 Tablespoons chopped shallots
- 2 Tablespoons chopped freshly oregano
- 1 Tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
- 2 medium garlic cloves chopped
- Salt and pepper to taste

Potatoes:

- 3 pounds red potatoes, each potato cut length wise into 6 wedges
- ½ cup low sodium chicken broth

HOW TO COOK

1. Preheat Oven to 475o F

Prepare the Vinaigrette:

1. In a medium bowl, whisk together the olive oil, lemon juice, shallots, oregano, parsley, and garlic.
2. Season the vinaigrette with salt and pepper.

Prepare the Potatoes:

1. On a heavy large, rimmed baking sheet, toss the potatoes with ½ cup of vinaigrette.
2. Reserve the remaining vinaigrette for serving. Pour the chicken broth around the potatoes.
3. Roast the potatoes until tender and golden brown, stirring occasionally for about 45 minutes.
4. Cool completely. Using a metal spatula, loosen the potatoes from the baking sheet to prevent sticking.
5. You can serve the potatoes now, but if you roast them twice, you'll get a crispier feel.

If you wanna roast them twice:

1. Preheat oven to 425 F.
2. Rewarm the potatoes until crispy, about 15 minutes.
3. Divide the potatoes equally among the plates.
4. Drizzle some reserved lemon vinaigrette over the potatoes.



dessert | Revani Cake

INGREDIENTS

For the syrup:

- 1 cup granulated sugar.
- 1 1/2 cup water.
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract.
- Juice of one lime.
- 1/2 cup honey.

For the cake:

- 4 large eggs at room temperature.
- ½ cup (100g) granulated sugar
- ¼ cup (55g) butter, melted.
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract.
- ¾ cup (125g) fine semolina flour.
- 3/4 cup (100g) all-purpose flour.
- 1 teaspoon baking powder.
- ¼ teaspoon salt.

For garnish:

- 1/2 cup shredded sweetened coconut.
- 1/2 cup ground pistachios.

HOW TO COOK

Make the syrup:

1. In a medium saucepan, combine the syrup ingredients, bring to a boil and simmer for 5 minutes.
2. Set aside to cool completely.

Make the cake:

1. Preheat the oven to 350 °F.
2. In the bowl of your standing mixer, add eggs, sugar and whip on high until it triples in volume and gets pale yellow and fluffy. 4-5 minutes.
3. Add butter, vanilla extract and mix.
4. In a separate bowl, combine flour, semolina, baking powder and salt.
5. Fold the dry ingredients into the wet ingredients working in batches.
6. Bake in the oven for 25-30 minutes until a toothpick inserted in the middle comes out clean.
7. Poke the cake several times using the toothpick then pour the cooled syrup over.
8. Allow the cake to cool down and rest for 1-2 hours before inverting on a serving platter. Decorate with coconut flakes and pistachios if desired.

NOTES

- You can also add a teaspoon of almond extract, use lemon zest or orange zest to flavor the cake more.







RECIPES
FOR

ITALIAN
NIGHT



cocktail | Campari Negroni

INGREDIENTS

- 1 ½ ounces (3 tablespoons) bourbon whiskey
- 1 ounce (2 tablespoons) sweet or semi-sweet red vermouth
- 1 ounce (2 tablespoons) Campari · Ice, for serving (try clear ice!)
- For the garnish: Orange peel

HOW TO COOK

1. Combine the bourbon whiskey, sweet vermouth, and Campari in a cocktail mixing glass (or any other type of glass). Fill the mixing glass with 1 handful ice and stir continuously for 30 seconds.
2. Add ice to a lowball glass, and strain the drink into the glass (or you can use a cocktail glass without ice).
3. Use a knife to remove a 1" wide strip of the orange peel. Squeeze the orange peel into the drink to release the oils. Gently run the peel around the edge of the glass, then place it in the glass and serve.



appetizer | Garlic Bread Bruschetta

INGREDIENTS

- 1 loaf Italian bread, sliced
- 3 tablespoons butter, melted
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- Italian seasoning, to taste
- parmesan cheese, to taste
- 6 roma tomatoes, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 4 fresh basil leaves, finely chopped

HOW TO COOK

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C).
2. In the microwave, melt the 3 tablespoons of butter with 1 clove of garlic.
3. Slice up a loaf of Italian bread to about 1-inch (2 ½ cm) thickness.
4. Top with melted garlic butter, Italian seasoning, and parmesan cheese.
5. Bake for approximately 15 minutes or until golden brown.
6. In a mixing bowl, combine the tomatoes, garlic, salt, pepper, basil, and olive oil and stir until everything is fully coated with olive oil.
7. Top the garlic bread with desired amount of tomato mixture.
8. Garnish with parmesan cheese.
9. Enjoy



main | Penne Alla Vodka

INGREDIENTS

- 8 oz penne pasta, cooked
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- ½ white onion, diced
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- ½ teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1 teaspoon dried basil
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ cup vodka
- 1 ½ cups tomato sauce
- ½ cup heavy cream

HOW TO COOK

1. Heat 1 tablespoon of olive oil in a large skillet.
2. Add onion and 1 clove of garlic, and cook until onions are translucent.
3. Add tomato sauce and mix to combine with onion and garlic.
4. Add vodka, dried basil, red pepper flakes, and salt. Let this to simmer for 2 minutes to allow most of the alcohol to burn off.
5. Add heavy cream and stir until fully combined. The sauce will turn into a beautiful light orange creamy mixture.
6. Add cooked pasta to vodka sauce and mix until noodles are fully coated in sauce.
7. Cover with a lid and let simmer for 5 minutes or until the sauce has reduced by half.
8. Garnish with basil.
9. Enjoy!



dessert | Vanilla Panna Cotta

INGREDIENTS

- 1 teaspoon unflavored gelatin
- 1 tablespoon cold water
- 1 ½ cups heavy cream
- ¼ cup sugar
- ¼ teaspoon vanilla extract

HOW TO COOK

1. Sprinkle gelatin over the water. The gelatin will absorb the water and dissolve, in a process called “blooming.”
2. In a small saucepan, combine heavy cream with sugar and cook over medium until it's at the scalding point, or just under a boil.
3. Once the cream has almost reached the boiling point, remove from heat and add vanilla extract and bloomed gelatin. Stir until fully dissolved.
4. Strain panna cotta mixture into desired serving tempered glasses.
5. Allow cream to come to room temperature before chilling in the fridge for 2-4 hours, or until the cream is firm in texture.
6. Top with berries and honey.
7. Enjoy!





RECIPES
FOR

**MEXICAN
NIGHT**



cocktail | Micheladas

INGREDIENTS

- 1 Dash Chili-salt blend (We use Tajín)
- 2 oz Lime Juice (Fresh is best)
- 2 tsp Hot sauce (Mexican style is best)
- 1 tsp Worcestershire Sauce
- 1 dash Salt
- 12 oz Light Mexican beer

HOW TO COOK

1. Add chili-salt to a wide, shallow dish to cover the bottom. Rub the rim of the glass with water or lime juice from the squeezed lime. Dip the glass into the salt to create a chili-salt rimmed glass.
2. Fill the glass with lime juice, hot sauce, Worcestershire sauce and a pinch of salt. Mix to combine.
3. Fill the glass with ice and top with beer. Gently stir to combine keeping the carbonation in tact.
4. Enjoy!



appetizer | Nachos Supreme

INGREDIENTS

- Taco Seasoning (or you can use one packet/ serving of store-bought taco seasoning)
- 1 pound ground beef
- 1/2 yellow onion diced
- 2 bags tortilla chips (16 ounces each)
- 1 can refried beans
- 16 ounces shredded cheese of choice (I used cheddar and Monterey jack)
- 3 roma tomatoes diced
- 2 to 3 green onions sliced

HOW TO COOK

1. Preheat the oven at 400 degrees.
2. Meanwhile on the stovetop, brown the ground beef and diced onions over medium-high heat until fully cooked (about 8 minutes) and drain.
3. Return the beef to the pan, and sprinkle on the taco seasoning.
4. Stir in 3/4 cup water, bring it to a simmer, reduce heat and simmer until the liquid mostly evaporates, about 5 minutes.
5. While the beef is cooking, add a generous layer of chips to two baking sheets lined with parchment paper.
6. Spoon on refried beans, half on each pan. These are thick, but I just add spoon fulls all over the chips. (The spoon fulls will spread with the heat of the oven.)
7. Spoon on half the ground beef to each pan of chips.
8. Sprinkle shredded cheese on top.
9. Bake at 400 degrees for 15 minutes.
10. Remove from the oven, and sprinkle on diced tomatoes and green onions.
11. Serve immediately.

NOTES

Make sure your tortilla chips are thick and sturdy. NO thin ones. I recommend Costco's Kirkland organic tortilla chips, or a similar brand.

I wrote this recipe with entertaining in mind. If you are making this for a smaller crowd (4 to 6), I think half the recipe would work just fine. Just change the number of servings on the recipe card to adjust all measurements.



main | Shrimp & Avocado Tostadas

INGREDIENTS

- 6 corn tortillas olive oil, to taste
- 1 lb shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 1 cup English cucumber, diced
- 1 cup tomato, diced
- 1 avocado, diced
- 1 cup red onion, diced
- 1 lemon, juiced
- 1 lime, juiced
- 1 tablespoon fresh cilantro, chopped
- salt, to taste
- 1 serrano pepper, finely chopped, optional

HOW TO COOK

1. Preheat oven to 425°F (220°C).
2. Lay the corn tortillas on a parchment paper-lined baking sheet and lightly brush both sides with olive oil.
3. Bake the tortillas for 5 minutes and then flip them over continue baking another 5 minutes. The tostadas should be brown and crispy. Set the pan aside to cool.
4. Roughly chop the shrimp and transfer to a bowl.
5. Add the cucumber, tomato, avocado, red onion, lemon juice, lime juice, cilantro, salt, and serrano chile (optional), and stir to combine.
6. Marinate for 10-15 minutes.
7. Spoon the shrimp mixture onto the tostadas.
8. Enjoy!



dessert | 2-Layer Tres Leches Cake

INGREDIENTS

- 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 6 large eggs
- 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups granulated sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup whole milk
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon vanilla extract
- onstick cooking spray, for greasing
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup evaporated milk
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup coconut milk
- 14 oz condensed milk, 1 can
- 2 cups heavy whipping cream
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup powdered sugar
- assorted berry, for serving, optional

HOW TO COOK

1. Whisk the flour, baking powder, salt, and cinnamon together in a medium bowl.
2. In a separate large bowl, beat the eggs and sugar together with an electric mixer until light, fluffy, and nearly doubled in size, 6-8 minutes.
3. Using a spatula, gently fold in the flour mixture until just combined (some streaks of flour are okay).
4. Preheat the oven to 350°F (180°C).
5. Combine the milk and vanilla extract in a liquid measuring cup or small bowl, then gently fold into the batter, mixing just to blend.
6. Spray 2 9-inch (23 cm) round cake pans with nonstick cooking spray. Divide the batter between the pans.
7. Bake until the cakes are golden brown around the edges and spring back slightly when pressed in the center, about 20-25 minutes.
8. While the cakes are baking, combine the evaporated milk, coconut milk and condensed milk in a liquid measuring cup or small bowl and whisk to blend.
9. Once the cakes are done, immediately remove the cakes from the pans and invert them onto a wire rack or baking sheet. Cool for 2 minutes. Then, poke the cakes all over with a fork.
10. Return the cakes to the pans. Drizzle the condensed milk mixture over the cakes, letting it soak in. Let sit for 15 minutes.
11. In a medium bowl, whip the heavy cream and powdered sugar with an electric hand mixer until stiff peaks form.
12. Carefully transfer one of the cakes to a cake stand.
13. Spread a layer of the whipped cream over the cake. Place the other cake on top and spread with the remaining whipped cream.
14. Decorate with berries, if desired.
15. Slice and serve.
16. Enjoy!







RECIPES
FOR

PERUVIAN
NIGHT



cocktail | Pisco Sour

INGREDIENTS

- 1 Dash Chili-salt blend (We use Tajín)
- 2 oz Lime Juice (Fresh is best)
- 2 tsp Hot sauce (Mexican style is best)
- 1 tsp Worcestershire Sauce
- 1 dash Salt
- 12 oz Light Mexican beer

HOW TO COOK

1. Add chili-salt to a wide, shallow dish to cover the bottom. Rub the rim of the glass with water or lime juice from the squeezed lime. Dip the glass into the salt to create a chili-salt rimmed glass.
2. Fill the glass with lime juice, hot sauce, Worcestershire sauce and a pinch of salt. Mix to combine.
3. Fill the glass with ice and top with beer. Gently stir to combine keeping the carbonation in tact.
4. Enjoy!



appetizer | Fish Ceviche

INGREDIENTS

- 1 ½ pounds very fresh and high quality fish filets corvina, halibut, escolar, hamachi, mahi-mahi
- 1 red onion thinly sliced
- 1 cup freshly squeezed lime juice from about 35- 40 key limes, or 15-20 Peruvian limes
- 1-2 habanero peppers cut in half, without seeds and deveined
- 2-3 sprigs of fresh cilantro
- Salt to taste
- Finely chopped cilantro to taste

To serve:

- Lettuce leaves
- Cancha, tostado or chulpe corn nuts
- Fresh boiled corn
- Sweet potato: thinly fried or baked chips or boiled thick slices
- Chifles or fried green plantain chips
- Diced or sliced hot peppers - optional
- Olive oil - optional
- Lime slices

HOW TO COOK

1. Cut the fish into small cubes, place in a glass bowl and cover with cold water and 1 tablespoon of salt, cover and refrigerate while you prepare the onions and juice the limes.
2. Rub the thin onion slices with 1/2 tablespoon of salt and rinse in cold water.
3. Rinse the fish to remove the salt
4. Place the cubes of fish, half of the sliced onions, and hot peppers in a glass bowl and pour the lime juice over the ingredients. Sprinkle with a little bit of salt. To minimize the acidity of the limes you can put a few ice cubes in the mix.
5. Cover and refrigerate for about 5-15 minutes.
6. Remove the cilantro sprigs and the hot peppers from the mix. Taste the fish ceviche and add additional salt if needed.
7. Use a spoon to place the ceviche in each serving bowl, add additional sliced onions to each bowl, sprinkle with finely chopped cilantro, and diced or sliced hot peppers.
8. Serve immediately with your choice of sides and garnishes.

NOTES

Soaking the fish in cold salt water helps it keep a firm texture. Rinsing the onions with salt and cold water helps remove their bitterness. Adding ice cubes to the cebiche mix helps neutralize the acidity of the limes – this is especially true for the South American limon sutil variety, but less needed for the Mexican limes found in the US.



main | Lomo Soltado

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound (450g) beef tenderloin, skirt steak, or other tender and flavorful quick-cooking steak
- 1/4 cup (60ml) peanut, canola, or vegetable oil, divided, plus more if needed
- Kosher salt
- 1 medium (8-ounce/225g) red onion, cut into 1/2-inch slices
- 4 scallions (about 2 ounces/60g total), roots and any wilted parts trimmed, remainder cut into 2-inch lengths
- 1 fresh or frozen ají amarillo chile pepper (about 2 ounces/60g), defrosted if frozen, then stemmed, seeded, and sliced lengthwise into matchsticks (see notes)
- 2 medium plum tomatoes (about 5 1/2 ounces/160g total), cored and cut into 3/4-inch-thick wedges
- 2 medium cloves garlic, minced
- 1-inch piece peeled fresh ginger (about 1/4 ounce; 7g), minced
- 1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon (20ml) soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon (15ml) apple cider vinegar
- 2 teaspoons minced fresh cilantro leaves and tender stems
- Freshly ground black pepper · French fries, for serving
- Cooked long-grain rice, for serving

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

- Wok

NOTES

Ají amarillo peppers are fruity and floral, and they pack a good dose of heat. If you can't find fresh ones, good Latin groceries will often stock frozen whole ones in the freezer section. Alternatively, you can use a similar quantity of red bell pepper and jalapeño.

HOW TO COOK

1. Cut the beef across the grain into roughly 1/2-inch-thick strips.
2. In a wok or large cast iron or stainless steel skillet, heat 2 tablespoons (30ml) oil over high heat until heavily smoking. Meanwhile, season beef all over with salt.
3. Working in batches, add just enough beef to the pan to sear it heavily without steaming in its own juices. Spread the beef around so the pieces are evenly spaced apart and allow to cook until very well seared and charred on one side, 30 seconds to 1 minute. Stir and toss beef so that it cooks all over, about 30 seconds longer; if you are working over a gas flame and aren't afraid of some fire, toss the beef near the flame so that the oil briefly combusts in big bursts. (If this makes you nervous, don't allow it to catch fire. Instead, manage the heat to prevent flare-ups.) Using a spatula, transfer beef to a platter to rest. Repeat with remaining beef, always getting the pan smoking-hot before the next batch and adding more oil if needed.
4. When all the beef is cooked, return the empty pan to high heat. Add 1 tablespoon (15ml) oil and heat until smoking. Working in batches, add just enough red onion so that it sears and browns rapidly without steaming, about 30 seconds. Toss a few times until the onion is crisp-tender. Using a spatula, transfer onion to a platter. Repeat with remaining onion, always heating the pan until smoking first and adding more oil if necessary.
5. Return the empty pan to high heat, add 1 tablespoon (15ml) oil, and heat until smoking. Working in batches if necessary, add scallions and cook, without stirring, until seared on bottom side, about 30 seconds. Push scallions to the side and add peppers. Cook until seared, about 30 seconds longer.
6. Push scallions and peppers to the side and add tomatoes to the pan, allowing them to sear on one side, about 30 seconds. (If your burner isn't very strong, you can remove the scallions and peppers from the pan before adding the tomatoes to guarantee good searing. Otherwise, leave them in.) Try not to let the tomatoes grow too soft and pulpy; it's better that they retain their shape rather than brown to the point of becoming mushy.
7. Add garlic and ginger and cook, tossing and stirring constantly, until lightly sautéed and fragrant, about 15 seconds. Add soy sauce and vinegar and toss to combine.
8. Return beef and all accumulated juices to the pan along with the red onions. (If you've removed the scallions and peppers, add them back now, too.) Add cilantro. Toss over high heat to combine well, seasoning with salt and pepper as you go. Remove from heat.
9. Spoon stir-fry onto plates with a mound of cooked rice and French fries and serve right away.



dessert | Lomo Soltado

INGREDIENTS

Dulce de Leche

- 1 can condensed milk, sweetened

Caramel

- 4 ozs caster sugar
- 2 1/2 tbsp water

Custard

- 2 pints milk
- 1/2 vanilla bean split, seeds removed
- 6 eggs at room temperature
- 2 egg yolks at room temperature
- 5 ozs caster sugar

HOW TO COOK

1. To make the dulce de leche, place a can of sweetened condensed milk (label removed) on its side, in a large pot. Cover with room temperature water. Bring to the boil and then simmer for 2 hours (lighter color) to 3 hours (darker). Make sure the water level is always above the level of the can. Top up with boiling water, if necessary. Remove with tongs, allow to cool, transfer to a heatproof container and store in the refrigerator.
2. For making the caramel, place the sugar and water in a small saucepan over low heat. Stir and use a wet pastry brush to prevent crystals forming on the side of the saucepan. Once the sugar dissolves increase the heat to medium and bring to the boil. Boil, without stirring, for 4 to 5 minutes until the caramel is golden brown.
3. Turn off the heat. Pour into a round 8 inch (20cm) cake pan. Swirl the caramel around until the base is well coated.
4. Pre-heat oven to 390 F (200 C).
5. To make the custard, place the milk, vanilla seeds and pod and the remaining caster sugar into a saucepan and over moderate heat, bring to a boil. Immediately take off the heat and allow to cool for 5 minutes.
6. Meanwhile, place the whole eggs and egg yolks in a large bowl. Whisk to combine well. Gradually add the warm milk mixture to the egg mixture, whisking as you go. Return the combined mixture to the pan used for the milk and whisk continuously for 5 minutes over a medium/low heat.
7. Carefully pour the mixture through a fine sieve into the cake pan containing the caramel. Cover the cake pan with foil and place in a roasting pan. Add boiling water to the roasting pan so that the water level is halfway up the cake pan. Place the roasting pan in the oven, reduce the temperature to 320 F (160 C) and cook for 60 -70 minutes or until just set. Slightly wobbly is ok.
8. Carefully remove the pan from the roasting dish and allow to completely cool. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight or for a minimum of 6 hours.
9. To serve, run a thin, sharp knife around the inside of the pan. Invert onto a serving plate.
10. Slice and serve with dulce de leche. I prefer to gently heat the dulce de leche, as it pours easier. Place your heatproof container holding the dulce de leche in a small saucepan and gently heat.

