



A Cultural Publication for Puerto Ricans

From the editor . . .

Si yo no hubiera nacido, en la tierra en que nací, estuviera arrepentido – de no haber nacido allí!

Happy Discovery Day, November 19th, to all Puertorriqueños, where ever you may be. This our day, our celebration.

Soy Boricua, mi amor es . . . Puerto Rico!

Read more about Puerto Rico’s Discovery Day in this issue.

November is also Thanksgiving for those of us in the states. Make your celebration more meaningful by celebrating with Puerto Rican food and a Puerto Rico flavored turkey. Follow our easy recipes in this issue.

Don’t forget, after thanksgiving our website will include musica jibara, aguinaldos with letra to sing along. Each week a different Aguinaldo. Our December issue will, as always, be dedicated to our Puerto Rican Navidad. It will be all about our holiday celebrations, food, and music.





YOUR AD



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Nature and Adventure

Joe Roman Santos, Editor

Discovery of Puerto Rico Day: November 19

November 19th, is a National Holiday in Puerto Rico, it is the celebration of 'Discovery Day,' the day in 1493 when Cristobal Colón found or discovered the island, landed his ship and put our island on a map for the very first time.

On November 19, 1493 during his second voyage to the New World, Christopher Columbus discovered an island populated by as many as 50,000 Taíno (Arawak Indians). Columbus claimed it for Spain and christened the island "San Juan Bautista" for St. John the Baptist. A few years later the island was colonized and that area (what is now San Juan), was named Puerto Rico. Soon after, and purely by accident or mistake, the names were switched and San Juan Bautista became Puerto Rico and the village San Juan. San Juan, Puerto Rico became Spain's most important military outpost in the Caribbean.

Puerto Rico was controlled by Spain for more than 400 years, from 1493 until 1898. While its culture and history was shaped by many other cultures, it is the Spanish who dominated the rich history of this Caribbean island nation. Ours is a Spanish heritage.

Discovery Day on the island is celebrated with all schools and public offices being closed. A huge parade is held annually on November 19 to celebrate the occasion. In the States we celebrate Hispanic Month collectively, all Latinos are lumped together. Discovery Day in November is the celebration of *lo nuestro*, our culture, our music, our food and everything Puerto Rican.

Happy Discovery Day!



EL BORICUA is a monthly cultural publication, established in 1995, that is Puerto Rican owned and operated. We are NOT sponsored by any club or organization. Our goal is to present and promote our "treasure" which is our Cultural Identity - "the Puerto Rican experience." EL BORICUA is presented in English and is dedicated to the descendants of Puerto Ricans wherever they may be.

C R E D I T S

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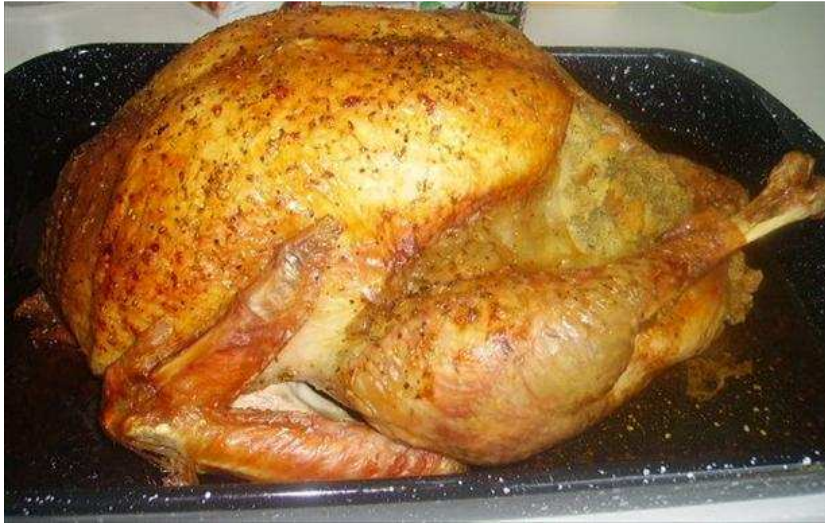
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Special Thanks to . . .

Tayna Miranda Zayas of MarkNetGroup.com

There are three Puerto Rico's you need to learn about; the old, the new and the natural. Learn about our little *terruño*. Subscribe to EL BORICUA, a monthly cultural publication for Puerto Ricans.

<http://www.elboricua.com/subscribenow.html>



My First Thanksgiving Turkey

By Milli Iglesias in Miami

This photo was taken 18 years ago. My husband was a soldier and we were stationed in Panama. Papo showed up on Wednesday night with 7 Puerto Rican soldiers and a freshly killed turkey, feathers and all.

I was born and raised in Río Piedras, a city girl, but I had watched abuela remove feathers from chickens in then rural Caguas. Some of the soldiers had also witness this ritual, barbaric really, so we prepared to plucked the feathers together.

The men built un fogón, a campfire in the yard, as our grandmothers did. Papo borrowed a huge pot from the German neighbors next door, and proceeded to boil water outside in the fogón. We held on to the bird tightly and dipped the dead bird, head first into the boiling water. Waited a minute (not too long or the meat would cook), pulled it out and plucked the feathers with our bare hands. We had to dip the bird back in the water a few times, for just seconds, to remove some rebellious feathers, but finally it was cleaned. It smelled horrible. Now we had to open it and clean it out. Since the men were enjoying this I excused myself.

The next step was easy. Place the turkey in the large metal pan, rubbed it with olive oil and then with sofrito, and extra garlic powder. I had not heard about stuffing a turkey back then, so I didn't. I wasn't used to eating Thanksgiving turkey and it wasn't the best turkey - I guess, but it was good enough. I served arroz con habichuelas, a salad and tostones. It was a simple meal prepared by a newlywed who never cooked Thanksgiving or turkey before, but it was a lot of fun. Took many pictures. We stayed up all until way after midnight playing cards and drinking beer. We are still friends with most of those men.

Even though Thanksgiving was not always a traditional holiday on the island, many Puerto Rican families calling the States home began celebrating it by adding a touch of Sabor Criollo. Today, a traditional Puerto Rican Thanksgiving menu will likely consist of Pavochon, Mofongo stuffing, Arroz con Gandules (rice with pigeon peas), Tostones or amarillos fritos, and maybe guineitos en escabeche. It is the best of Puerto Rican cooking and these tend to be the favorite dishes.

For an appetizer I fry up some green plátanos, sliced into 1" rounds and I serve those whole, versus the Tostones. I season mine with garlic, black pepper and salt and serve them with Mojo Criollo. I also grill sausages and then slice them into 1" rounds and serve those next to the plantains.

For dessert I always prepare a flan – sometimes a regular flan, sometimes a cheese flan, and every now and then a pumpkin flan. I also prepare a rum cake, because they are delicious and easy to prepare. Guests usually bring tembleque and besitos de coco.

Water in the Caribbean

One of the most asked questions we receive is about the ocean temperature in Puerto Rico in the winter.

In the Caribbean, the water stays a pleasant warm temperature year round, from 75 degrees F in the winter to 88 degrees in the summer.

Speaking Puerto Rican . . .

Mi madre me enseñó sobre RELIGION - 'Pídele a Dios que yo no te agarre!!!'

Refrán . . .

Como dos jueyes machos en una misma cueva.

Describes a situation where two angry and aggressive people find themselves in a difficult confrontational position.

Trivia

Thanksgiving is known in Puerto Rico as el '*Día de Acción de Gracias*'



http://www.elboricua.com/CCNOW_Calderos.html

BORICUA . . .
is a powerful word.
It is our history,
it is our cultural affirmation,
it is a declaration,
it is a term of endearment,
it is poetic . . .
. it is us.

Táinos

What did Táinos do for fun?

The Táinos loved stories, myths and legends, especially stories about warriors and how they won battles using strength, speed, cleverness, and accuracy.

They liked dancing, singing and music.
 There were canoe races.
 There was wrestling matches.
 There were minor and major ball games
 There were running games and races.
 They loved to play in the rivers and oceans.
 They liked mountain and rock climbing.
 They liked drawing & carving on rocks on rocks
 They had arrow competitions.
 The had stone throwing competitions
 They liked to collect seashells.

Areytos were celebrations and were held often and they lasted for days.



I am Roki Lopez and I live in Houston. I used to live in Puerto Rico but was rescued from the beach eight months ago and now I am happy. I am almost blind, but I can find my way around the yard and the house. I like to listen to Salsa music and I like to eat rice and beans. My new family loves me and lets me be with them in the house. I like to snuggle up my mom when we watch TV. I take weekly baths in the bathtub, but I don't like that. I don't like storms either.

I have other friends in PR that also need to find a home.

<http://www.saveasato.org>

Boricua Calendar

- Nov. 1, 1935 b. Nicholassa Mohr, writer and artist.
- Nov. 1, 1966 Hermán Badillo becomes the first Puerto Rican elected Bronx Borough President
- Nov. 2, 1992 Nydia Velázquez is elected first Puerto Rican woman in U.S. Congress.
- Nov. 3, 1970 Hermán Badillo becomes first stateside Puerto Rican congressman.
- Nov. 6, 1900 Oscar García Rivera, first Puerto Rican elected official in NY.
- Nov. 7, 1909 b. Ernesto Juan Fonfrías, lawyer, writer, poet, and politician. He wrote about customs & folklore.
- Nov. 7, 1903 b. Jesús María Sanromá, became one of the century's most accomplished and important pianists.
- Nov. 8, 1942 b. Angel Cordero, champion jockey.
- Nov. 12, 1851 b. José Gautier Benítez, poet and writer on Puerto Rican customs and folklore.
- Nov. 19, 1493 Puerto Rico's Discovery Day
- Nov. 22, 1868 b. Milagros Benet de Newton, born in Cayey, became a civic leader and fought for women's rights.
- Nov. 23, 1935 b. Celeste Benítez, journalist, politician, PPD leader.
- Nov. 25, 1897 Spain grants Puerto Rico autonomy under the leadership of Luis Muñoz Rivera.
- Nov. 28, 1843 Manuel Tavárez, composer and father of Puerto Rican danza.
- Nov. 28, 1900 Washington Llorén Llorén, born in Ponce became a scientist, writer and journalist, linguist, and scholar.
- Nov. 30, 1850 Cayetano Coll y Toste, was born in Arecibo, became a physician, writer and historian. Was the editor of the Boletín Histórico de Puerto Rico.



Don Guillo, the gardener . . .

The most common way to guard against frost is with the use of some type of covering. Most anything will work, but old blankets, sheets, and even burlap sacks are best. When covering plants, drape them loosely and secure with stakes, rocks, or bricks. The lighter covers can simply be placed directly over the plants, but heavier covers may require some type of support, such as wire, to prevent the plants from becoming crushed under the weight. Covering tender garden plants in the evening will help retain heat and protect them from freezing. However, it is important that the covers be removed once the sun comes out the following morning; otherwise, the plants may fall victim to suffocation.

Poemas Riqueños

THAT TREE IS ME!

I was laying on the ground
 My heart full of sorrow
 So much to be done
 When shall I start, tomorrow?
 So much heartbreak, so much pain
 Where to begin? How shall I begin?
 This endless road...
 does it lead somewhere...
 Oh, look! A little green stem,
 I wonder what it'll turn out to be
 a flower perhaps, or maybe a weed,
 I don't know where to begin, perhaps...
 One step first... or maybe two...
 So many dreams that come and go,
 nothing is accomplished
 Oh what pain!... my body is hurting also my soul
 the slightest move brings such pain...
 Why look at this!...The stem is growing
 I think it might be a bush...
 How I wish I could become a writer,
 or a singer... oh I know... a ballerina
 Yes a ballerina and dance and dance
 what beautiful music...
 It touches the heart enlightens the soul
 What rich and beautiful music
 Oh! No, no, no, it's just a dream...
 I'll never be able, I'll never do,
 I just don't know how to...
 Four steps, five maybe, ALRIGHT!... six...SEVEN
 Oh my goodness it's a flower!
 How exquisite!...
 what kind of mysterious flower could this be?
 A rose? a daisy? I wonder ...
 What's this?... my feet are dirty and sore,
 as if I had walked for miles and miles
 Could it be... wait I'm wearing dancing shoes
 A book in my hand, a song in my voice
 I don't understand how could all of this happen
 Wait, I said, I did, one step maybe two...
 that's right I said one step or two
 I did it... oh! I did indeed... and look its' not a flower,
 The stem became a tree, what grandeur what greatness
 Oh! Blessed Lord... That beautiful tree is ME!

Elizabeth C. Vega, Puerto Rico



San Juanita Punch

1 part Puerto Rican rum
 1 part tequila
 1 part vodka
 1 part gin
 1 tsp grenadine syrup
 1½ parts sweet and sour mix
 1 splash Cola

Mix ingredients together over ice in pitcher. Stir with wisk – should get a bit foamy. Garnish with lemon.



* *Diego Matos Dupree, born in Bayamón, is a bartender (tavernero) for a popular cruise line. He lives on board most of the year and gets to travel the world.*

PRIMOS

Our PRIMOS section journeys through Latin America celebrating our cousins.



Panamenian Carimañolas

- 3 lbs yuca
- salt
- 2 tbsp butter, sliced
- 5 eggs
- flour

Filling:

1 tablespoon olive oil
 1/2 cup finely chopped yellow onions
 2 large jalapeno peppers, finely chopped
 2 teaspoons minced garlic
 1 teaspoon ground cumin
 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
 1/4 teaspoon chili powder
 8 ounces ground **Iguana**, pork or beef
 4 teaspoons tomato paste
 2 teaspoons vinegar
 1 teaspoon sugar
 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
 Vegetable oil, for deep frying



In a large saucepan combine the yucca and 1 teaspoon salt, and enough water to cover. Bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer until tender, but not falling apart. Drain and transfer to a large bowl. Using a potato masher, mash with the butter. Add 2 of the eggs one at a time, stirring well with a large wooden spoon after the addition of each until smooth. Add 1/4 cup flour and 1 1/2 teaspoons salt, and stir well to incorporate into a somewhat stiff dough. (If the dough is too soft, add slightly more flour 1 teaspoon at a time.) Let sit until cool enough to handle.

To Make Filling: In a large skillet or saute pan, heat the oil over medium-high heat. Add the onions and peppers, and cook, stirring, until soft, about 3 minutes. Add the garlic, cumin, thyme, and chili powder, and cook, stirring, for 30 seconds. Add ground meat and cook, stirring, until no longer pink. Add the tomato paste, vinegar, sugar, remaining 3/4 teaspoon of salt, and the pepper. Simmer, stirring until thick and pretty much dry. Remove from the heat and adjust seasoning to taste. Let sit until cool enough to handle.

Roll the yucca mixture into balls, about 1/4 cup each. Using a finger, press a deep hole into the center of each. Spoon about 2 teaspoons of the filling into the center of each ball and gently work the yucca dough around it to completely enclose. These are usually shaped into cylinders or balls.



Elena Cintrón Colón

Primos Editor

* Elena, born and raised in Puerto Rico to Brazilian and Peruvian parents, lives in Buenos Aires most of the year. She works for a large South American firm and travels throughout Latin America.

The **history of the Panama Canal** goes back almost to the earliest explorers of the Americas. The narrow land bridge between North and South America offers a unique opportunity to create a water passage between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. This potential was recognized by the earliest colonists of Central America, and schemes for such a canal were floated several times in the subsequent years.

By the late-19th century, technological advances and commercial pressure advanced to the point where construction started in earnest. An initial attempt by France to build a sea-level canal failed, but only after a great amount of excavation was carried out. This was of use to the U.S. effort, which finally completed the present Panama Canal in 1914. Along the way, the nation of Panama was created through its separation from Colombia in 1903. Today, the canal continues to be not only a viable commercial venture, but also a vital link in world shipping.





Cocina Criolla – Cooking Hints

By: Anna María Vélez de Blas

You know what's good. Baking cakes using cake mixes. And you know what is good too? Adjusting recipes to fit your taste.

I make a mean Tres Leches Coconut-Rum Cake and the recipe is easy. Ever since I came up with this recipe people have been asking for it more and more – especially my husband.

This is a bundt cake or a pound cake. Prepare a boxed yellow cake but add a total of 4 eggs and a box of vanilla instant pudding. Increase the oil to half a cup. Reduce the water by a half a cup and then add half a cup of Puerto Rican rum. It doesn't matter if you use white or dark rum, it will be delicious. Bake it following box instructions.

Meanwhile, make the milk syrup: in a blender, combine the 1-15 oz can of coconut milk (not cream), 1-12oz can evaporated milk, 1-14oz can condensed milk and 1 tsp vanilla extract and process until smooth.

Pierce the cooled cake all over the top with the tines of a fork or a thin wooden skewer. We are talking all over! The more pokes, the more the syrup will soak into the cake. Using a large spoon or ladle, spoon some of the milk syrup over the cake. Let the syrup soak into the cake and continue spooning the syrup on top until all of it has been used up. When you have finished, not all of the syrup will be completely absorbed and might be pooling on the top but that's ok because it will absorb as it refrigerates. Cover the cake loosely with plastic wrap and refrigerate until all of the syrup is absorbed, 2 hours.



Tres Leches Coconut-Rum Cake

To frost this cake I prefer a Dulce de Leche Buttercream frosting. Cream together 1½ cups butter, softened; 3 tbsps milk; 1 teaspoon vanilla. Slowly add 4 cups powdered sugar and a pinch of salt. Then add ¾ cup prepared Dulce de Leche Crème. Mix until there are no lumps scrapping the sides of the bowl. Frost the cooled cake with this. Sprinkle with toasted coconut if desired. Delish!

**Anna is a Recipe Tester for EL BORICUA and is also a professional Chef, she lives in California with her husband, Joe and their three children.*



Jaime in the Kitchen

A Food Blog

I love Thanksgiving because that's when my family comes together and we eat delicious food till we can't no more, and because I don't have to cook any of it myself.

My daughters drive in with their families with some of the dishes already prepared. They start the turkey in the morning and go back to bed. My grandkids are mostly well behaved so I don't mind them dropping in – just kidding, I love my four grandchildren, most of the time. Everyone has a good time, we are so happy to be able to get together and give thanks. We have a lot to be thankful for.

Early Friday morning everyone takes off except for my son and I. RG and I spend Black Friday doing what we do best, that is watching sports, CNN, eating and drinking beer. After eating leftovers all day, wearing our stretchy warm ups, we prepare a light late night dinner. We make Turkey Soup. Now there's only a couple of soups that I prepare at all and this is one of them. It is my special super easy Black Friday Soup.

I found the recipe one time in El Boricua and then made it mine. What's in it? . . . leftovers, of course.

I find a big caldero, add water and the Turkey carcass, maybe add a few chopped pieces of turkey, any large pieces of skin that hadn't make it to the garbage yet and about half a cup of the dripping. I bring this to a boil and then lower the heat and simmer it for a couple of hours. (I recently learned what simmer means, that is bring down the heat so that whatever cooks over a slow boil).

After simmering for two hours any meat that was stuck to the bones has fallen off and I just fish for the bones and dump them along with any pieces of skin. I am left with a savory broth that I add sofrito, recajo, and Sazón to. Next I find other stuff to put in the soup such as left over vegetables like onions and peppers, corn and peas, even habichuelas (just drain them first). I also add diced potatoes if I have them and maybe some frozen mixed vegetables and I always like to add a little sprinkle of Cayenne Pepper. Then I toss in some sliced olives and capers. I usually have to bring it to a boil again after adding more ingredients. When it's done I add a bit of any leftover rice that I find in the fridge.

This soup is delicious, very easy to make and always hits the spot. You know I only make easy stuff.

When it starts getting dark the rest of the family begins to drag in. They've eaten junk food all day, are dead tired, broke and are grateful that I've made this delicious and tremendously aromatic soup. ¡Papi! they exclaim.

Hasta la proxima.

** Jaime Garibay Rivera, Ph.D. is a retired college professor (Aerophysics), now living in Miami. He has three children and his family roots are in Mayagüez.*

Nuestra Cocina Criolla



Chilean Batata or Yam Casserole

Delicious Thanksgiving side-dish

- 1 large batata (or mashed yams)
- 1 cup chopped onions
- 3 cloves garlic, crushed
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- 1 dash cayenne pepper
- 1 cup red bell peppers, coarsely chopped
- 1 cup green bell peppers, coarsely chopped
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 4 eggs, beaten
- 2 cups corn kernels (fresh or frozen)
- 2 cups grated sharp cheddar cheese

Peel and chunk batata, boil in salted water until done (test like in boiling potatoes). Drain, let it cool a bit and mash.

Meanwhile, sauté onion, garlic and spices in olive oil until onion is translucent. Add peppers and salt, stir, cover and cook on stove top on low heat 5 min. Preheat oven to 350°.

Stir beaten eggs into mashed batata. Add corn, sautéed vegies and grated cheddar; stir to mix well. Bake 20 minutes covered, then bake another 25 minutes, uncovered.

Bake 20 min. covered, uncover and bake 20-30 minutes more.



A batata is the equivalent of the American Sweet Potato but not exactly. Batata or boniato is a root vegetable that is native to Central and South America. The American batata, known as sweet potato or yam is orange inside.



Black Friday Turkey Cheesy Casserole, a lo Rican

Easy . . .

- 2 tablespoons of olive oil
- 1 1/2 cup of celery, chopped
- 2/3 cup of green bell pepper, chopped
- 1/3 cup of onion, chopped
- 1 can (10 1/2 ounces) of cream of chicken soup
- 2/3 cup of milk
- 1/2 cup of sour cream
- 2/3 cup of cheddar cheese, grated
- 2/3 cup of mozzarella, grated
- 2/3 cup of Gouda, grated

- 1 can Italian Style stewed tomatoes, diced
- 1 package (8 ounces) of elbow noodles, cooked
- 1 package (4 ounces) of frozen broccoli, thawed and drained
- 2 1/2 cups of cooked turkey, chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon of salt
- 1/4 teaspoon of pepper
- 1 tpb Adobo
- 1 pkt Sazón with achiote
- 1 tsp Sofrito
- sprinkle Cayenne pepper
- 1 cup cheese of (cheddar, mozzarella, or gouda) for topping

Heat olive oil in a large skillet.

Saute peppers, celery, and onion until tender.

Add the next 6 ingredients.

Heat the mixture on low, stirring until cheeses have melted.

Mix together cheese sauce, tomatoes, cooked noodles, broccoli, turkey, and seasonings.

Grease a 9x13-inch baking dish.

Pour mixture into dish.

Top with a cup of cheese of your choice.

Bake for 40-45 minutes at 350 degrees F. or until golden brown. Serve with a salad.

Serves six.

Nuestra Cocina Criolla



Stuffing Crust Turkey Quiche Black Friday Dish

5 large eggs
 2½ -3 cups leftover stuffing or half of a 6 oz pkg bread stuffing mix,
 prepared according to pkg directions
 1 cup shredded Swiss cheese
 1 cup diced cooked turkey, no skin
 1/3 cup thinly sliced green onions
 ½ cup sliced mushrooms
 1 cup half and half
 salt and pepper

Beat one egg till blended then add stuffing and mix well. Press stuffing mixture over bottom and up sides of a greased 10" pie pan or deep quiche pan. Bake on lowest rack of oven at 425° until stuffing is crisp and dry to touch, about 15 minutes. Remove from oven, reduce temperature to 350°

Sprinkle cheese over bottom and sides of stuffing crust, then top crust evenly with turkey, onions, and mushrooms.

Beat remaining eggs, then stir in half and half and season to taste with salt and pepper. Pour over turkey mixture.

Bake on lowest rack of oven until filling appears set when pan is gently shaken, about 30 minutes.

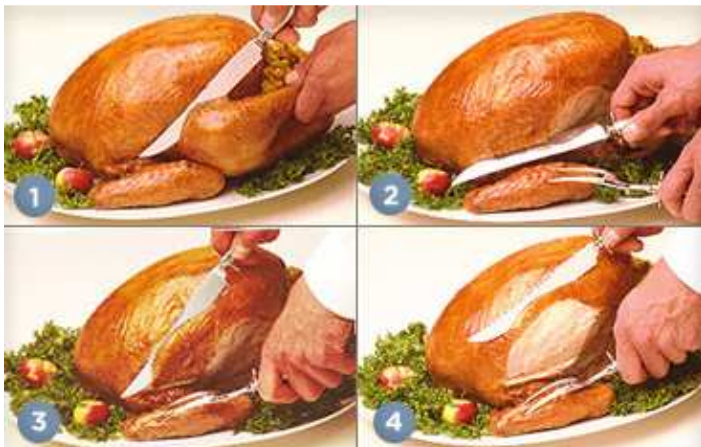
Let stand for at least 10 minutes before cutting into wedges. Serve with a salad.



Thanksgiving Criollo Spiced Rubbed Turkey

1 whole fresh turkey (20 to 24 pounds)
 ¼ cup coarse salt
 ¼ cup coarse black pepper
 ¼ cup crushed oregano leaves
 ¾ cup dried minced garlic
 3 packets Sazón with achiote
 1 orange
 Fresh sage, recajo or cilantro for garnish (optional)

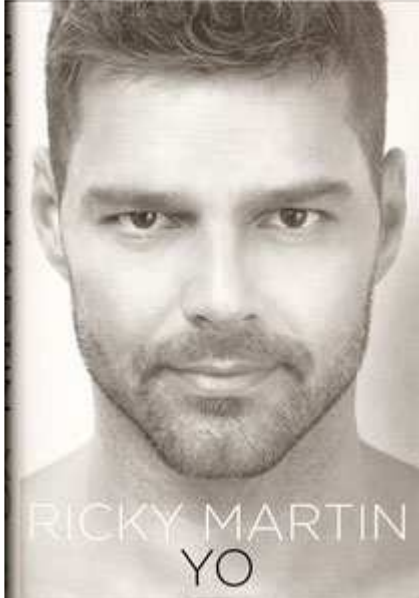
1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Rinse inside and outside of turkey; pat dry with paper towels. Transfer to a large roasting pan. Let stand at room temperature for 1 hour. Tuck wings under turkey. Fill cavity loosely with stuffing, and tie legs together with kitchen twine.
2. Mix together salt, pepper, oregano, garlic and Sazón. It is a 'grainy mix, and it might seem like there is too much garlic, but it is not fresh garlic, so the flavor is not as intense. Squeeze 1 orange over turkey. Season outside of turkey generously with mix. Gently rub seasonings into turkey. Generously sprinkle inside the cavity as well.
3. Roast turkey, basting every half hour. After two hours, tent turkey with foil to protect from burning and rotate the pan. Cook a total of 3½ to 4 hours.
4. Allow turkey stand for 30 minutes. Transfer to a platter; prepare gravy using the pan drippings. Carve turkey.



Puerto Rican Criollo cooking is traditional-old fashioned Puerto Rican style food. It is a style of cooking that originates in Puerto Rico and is a blend of mostly Spanish (Catalonia and Canary Islands) with French, Italian, and Portuguese influences with a hint of Taíno and African.

The wild turkey is native to all the Americas, that includes North America, Central and South America and the Caribbean.

Book Reviews

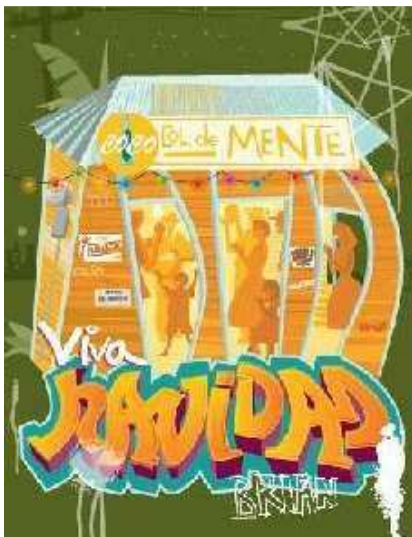


Ricky Martin YO

Release: November 2010
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 ISBN: 0451234162

Available in English or
 Spanish

How can you sell 60 million albums, become a world famous humanitarian, and still remain secretive? Ricky Martin became an international star two decades ago as a Menudo teenager, but this autobiography stands as his first full true full self-disclosure. YO or Me describes the multiple transformations of a former Puerto Rican altar boy into a "Livin' la Vida Loca" international pop idol sensation, into the man he is today. This heartfelt memoir describes, among many things, Martin's difficult struggle coming to terms with his sexuality.



"Viva Navidad"

2006 Banco Popular Release, DVD

For 17 years Banco Popular in Puerto Rico has been releasing their annual homage to our culture and music via a Musical DVD, all are still available online. Our favorite is the 2006 Release "Viva Navidad."

Nuestra Música



Ismael Rivera "Maelo...El Único" (1992)

Rafael Cortijo's Combo, in the '50s and '60s, served as a musical platform that launched other popular artists and orchestras like Roberto Roena and El Gran Combo, as well as the very popular Ismael "Maelo" Rivera (1931 – 1987) from Santurce, P.R. Ismael was Cortijo's lead singer, and together they recorded a variety of rhythms that included Bombas and Plenas, helping to keep these two genres alive when other newer ones were developing. Eventually became a soloist, nicknamed "El Sonero Mayor", and represented an inspiration and a model to other younger singers who learned and imitated his "soneo" techniques ("soneo" is an improvised verse between refrains). This iconic singer, devoted to the Black Christ in Portobelo, Panama, always has been respected and remembered by everyone in the popular music environment in Puerto Rico and all Latin America.

Maelo's many hits were played everywhere in radio stations and "velloneras". This greatest hits production, "Maelo...El Único", put together a good representation of them. "Las Caras Lindas", by the prolific songwriter Tite Curet, and "Dime Por Qué", by Pedro García, are two of his best. Other big hits in this recording are "De Todas Maneras Rosas", also by Tite, and compositions from legendary Puerto Rican authors like "Sale El Sol" and "Las Tumbas" (Bobby Capó), "Traigo de Todo" (Pedro Flores), and "Mi Jaragual" (Felipe R. Goyco).

-Alberto González lives in South Florida, works in Spanish & ESL education and provides translation services. Graduated from the Inter American University of Puerto Rico and attended the Music Conservatory of Puerto Rico-