Happy New Year and Blessings to our readers. This year resolve to be happy, to be content with what you have, but to also resolve to reach for the Gold! Be the best you can be. Be kind and generous, be helpful and trustworthy, for these are the things that keep us sane. I wish you peace, joy, love and laughter.

_Siempre Boricua, _Ivonne Figueroa

This is what you will see in a Puerto Rican gathering, New Year’s Eve, New Year’s Day, and all day, all night, all over the island – wherever four or more are gathered, there’s bound to be bones flying.
Asopao

Mami is cooking dinner
I have to run and help.
Run to pick some ajiés dulces,
recáos and tomatoes también.

Walking carefully between the guayaba tree and el limón,
I pick five beautiful red ajiés dulces,
then close to the ground,
I find two nice long recáos leaves.

Mami chops and dices,
she adds ajo and cebollas.
And into the pilón everything goes.
Mash, mash, plop, plop,
mash, mash, plop, plop.
She’s making sofrito for an asopao.

And into the caldero everything goes.
Achiote and sofrito makes a nice sound.
sizzle and sizzle
sizzle and sizzle
The spices sing as they dance in the pot.

That delicious aroma makes me hungry
I can hardly wait.
In goes boiling water,
in goes the chicken,
then later some arroz.
Boil, boil, boil
Um! I'm hungry now.

By: Ivanná
written at age 12
Miami
Island Restaurants . . .

Cafe Manolin
Old San Juan
251 San Agustín

787-723-9743

This is a small and quiet restaurant in Old San Juan that serves a variety of food, including traditional Puerto Rican food and has an extensive menu. There are no thrills or gimmicks, just good food at reasonable prices and good service.

It was recommended to us by locals as the spot for the true San Juan experience. It is not a place for dinner as they close around 5pm daily. Mostly islanders visit for breakfast and lunch.

I have been there several times with my husband who is usually in a rush to get to a meeting. Once he leaves I hang around for another round of their café con leche, outstanding.

The mofongo relleno was amazing, especially with the sauce served with rice and beans. You will feel stuffed for hours. So delicious! I also love their very basic bistec encebollado with white rice and beans, served with the best tostones, hot, salty, and just crunchy enough to make your mouth water.

I will return.

Lisa Santiago Brochu

* Lisa Santiago Brochu, is a trained professional Chef and a former restaurant owner in New York. She travels to Puerto Rico on business often. Her island roots are in Caguas.
Puerto Rico
(segmento)

¡Borinquen!, nombre al pensamiento grato como el recuerdo de un amor profundo, bello jardín de América el ornato, siendo el jardín América del mundo.

Perla que el mar de entre su concha arranca al agitar sus ondas placenteras, garza dormida entre la espuma blanca del níveo cinturón de tus riberas.

Tú que das a la brisa de los mares, al recibir el beso de su aliento la garzota gentil de tus palmares;

Que apareces en medio de la bruma, al que llega a tus playas peregrinos, una ciudad fantástica de espuma que formaron jugando las ondas;

Un jardín encantado sobre las aguas de la mar que domas, un búcaro de flores columpiado entre espuma y coral, perlas y aromas.

Tú, que me das el aire que respiro y vida al ritmo que en mi lira brota cuando la inspiración en raudo giro con sus alas flamígenas azota la frente del cantor, ¡oye mi acento!

José Gautier Benítez

Sato Wall of Fame

Adopt a Senior

Soy Gonzito Gonzalez y Gonzalez

I was rescued from under a bridge in Puerto Rico and now live with my new family in Santa Fe. I love my new life, except it gets really cold here and I’m not used to it. I am happy, very happy.

I have other friends in PR that also need to find a home.
http://www.saveasato.org

Don Guill , the gardener . . . .

Find the best spot for an indoor herb garden. To grow well indoors, herbs need as much natural light as possible. Place them in a sunny spot near a window where they’ll get at least 4 hours of sun daily. Windows that face south or southwest are your best shot at sun, though east- or west-facing windows also will do.
**A Traditional Puerto Rican Wedding**

The question we get asked most often is . . . “what are the traditional Puerto Rican wedding customs?” The only tradition that comes to mind is the use of capias for the guests. Capias is a small memento of the wedding that is pinned on all the guests, male and female.

We might not have any particular wedding traditions but we can surely give weddings *sabor* Boricua.

When you think of things Puerto Rican you think of: **coquí**, tropics, palm trees, seashells, taínos, guitars, coconuts, rum, pig roast, and amapolas. You can use things in the wedding and party that remind us of our Isla del Encanto.

The wedding party could be held in the bride's parents house and yard area. That is traditional because long ago there were no ball rooms for rent. Lights were strung on the trees outside to light the yard for the party - I am talking about strings of large bulbs. If it is impossible to have it there find a party room that has a yard that you can use. Wealthy families would serve a large banquet, others served a lechón on la varita. That sounds like an unforgettable event - doesn't it? Serve all Puerto Rican foods and desserts.

Make the wedding cake coconut, rum, or pineapple flavored. Cake decorations could include seashells, pineapple motifs, etc.

Capias for all the guests. The capias were attached to ribbons that hung from the bridal bouquet. At the reception the bride and groom would cut off the capias from the bouquet and pin them on the guests. The capias had a piece of “abeto” fern (spiny fern used in weddings) attached to the capia (about 5 inches of fern), and the capia sat in the middle of the fern. The fern lasts a long time. The capias include a piece of folded narrow ribbon printed with the bride and groom’s names on one end, and the date of the wedding on the other. This ribbon can be ordered at bridal shops.

The bride's bouquet was made using wild flowers of Puerto Rico – mostly amapolas, but also flamboyán flowers, and margaritas (include local greenery and abeto). The bouquet may include a fan - in Puerto Rico fans were a traditional part of a woman's attire. Wealthy women had fans in different colors to match their clothing. There is a long and detailed history of fans - too long to go into now.

Bridesmaids may carry a fan and an amapola (maybe a silk amapola) - the amapola or flor maga is the official flower of Puerto Rico.

During the ceremony - in very low volume - play a tape of coquí sounds - that would be most romantic.

If you are interested in the Taíno culture use strings of seashell jewelry for the bridal party and to decorate the table. Centerpieces could reflect our Taíno heritage using petroglyphs somehow.

Of course - play Puerto Rican music.

Flowers were used to decorate the church, house, and the yard. Again these were flowers that grew wild including amapolas, margaritas and flamboyán flowers as well as local greenery and palm branches.

Select a wedding invitation that is tropical maybe with ferns, palm trees, or seashells. Select matching napkins.

If you need napkin rings they can be made using elastic and have a sea shell on top with some ferns. The napkin rings are those rings that hold the silverware that has been rolled on a napkin.

Honeymoon – a Caribbean Cruise, of course.

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**Palazio Cocktail**

- 1/2 oz vodka
- 1/2 oz gin
- 1/2 oz Bacardi white rum
- fill with sweet and sour mix

Shake, serve over crushed ice and top with lemon wedge.

Can be made ahead in quantities and refrigerated for later use.

*Diego Matos Dupree, born in Bayamón, is a tavernero for a popular cruise line and lives on board most of the year. He gets to travel the world for free.*
Our PRIMOS section journeys through Latin America celebrating our cousins.

*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. She comes home to San Juan.*

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### Rosquillas

**Nicaraguan Corn Masa Cookies**

1 stick (8 tablespoons or ¼ pound) unsalted butter at room temperature
¼ cup granulated sugar
2 cups instant corn masa, also called Masa Harina
½ teaspoon baking soda
¼ teaspoon salt
½ cup water at room temperature

**For the topping:** 1 cup brown loaf sugar, shaved or coarsely grated

1. Preheat an oven to 350 F.
2. In a large mixing bowl, cream the butter until it is light and fluffy. Add the granulated sugar in a slow, steady stream, continuing to beat until the mixture is well blended and creamy.
3. Whisk together the Masa Harina, baking powder, and salt.
4. To the creamed butter, add the water, alternating with blended dry ingredients. Beat the mixture with the paddle attachment of the electric food mixer, or by hand with a wooden spoon until a uniform dough is formed.
5. Line two baking sheets with parchment. Scoop up a rounded tablespoon of dough and form it into a ball. Repeat this process and arrange 12 balls of dough on each of the parchment-lined pan, leaving at least an inch between each.

For the flower shape, press the bottom of a glass onto each ball to flatten to about ¼-inch, or flatten each by hand. The edges will appear to crack, but the cookie will stay intact and the rustic texture will just decorate the edges.

6. If decorating with loaf sugar, after forming the flower shape, spoon about a small mound onto the center of each round.
7. Slide the rosquillas onto the middle rack of the oven and bake until cooked through and lightly browned on the bottom and around the edges, 20-25 minutes.
8. Transfer them at once to wire racks to cool completely. Store over night or for up to two weeks in air-tight containers, chilled.

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In 1502, Christopher Columbus became the first European known to have reached what is now Nicaragua as he sailed southeast toward the Isthmus of Panama.

On his fourth voyage, Columbus explored the Miskito Coast on the Atlantic side of Nicaragua. The Spanish then returned to the western part of what became known as Nicaragua and encountered the three most populous indigenous tribes of people in the land: the tribe led by Nicaragua, the indigenous chieftain Nicaragua is truly named after, but was erroneously thought to be Nicarao, the chief of another group of indigenous peoples, andDiriangen, the chieftain of a group of indigenous peoples living in central Nicaragua. The Spanish attempted to convert all three tribes to Christianity; Nicaragua and Nicarao and their people converted, but Diriangen, however, did not, and was openly hostile to the Spaniards.

*Wikipedia*
Cocina Criolla – Cooking Hints
By: Anna María Vélez de Blas

Arepas de Coco
Tortitas de coco are mostly served on the southern coastal areas of Puerto Rico. They are often stuffed or just served as is with coffee.

2 cups all-purpose flour 1½ tsp baking powder 1 cup sugar ½ tsp salt 1 tbsp butter, melted 1 cup coconut milk

Combine dry ingredients. Add butter and coconut milk. Mix until combined. Knead dough until completely combined and a bit sticky. Place in a bowl to rise, cover with kitchen towel, and let rest for about 30 minutes in a warm place.

Divide the dough into sections and roll to about 1/8” thin. Cut into circles and set aside until all the dough is prepared.

Heat vegetable oil in a caldero and fry the tortitas until golden on each side. Drain on paper towels. Serve warm.

Yuca and Fish Soup
Like Mami used to make

This is one of those quick and easy soups I like to prepare on cooler weather. My son, RJ, learned how to make this for when he entertains and wants to impress the opposite gender. Looks complicated with exotic ingredients but it’s not.

12 oz white fish, such as tilapia or mahi-mahi 1 tablespoon Olive Oil 2 tomatoes, chopped 1 green bell pepper, chopped 1 onion, sliced 5 cloves garlic, minced 1 teaspoon aji dulce, minced ½ teaspoon cayenne pepper 1 lb yuca, peeled and cubed and centers removed ¼ cup sofrito Adobo seasoning Salt and pepper to taste

Season the fish filets with salt, pepper and Adobo. In a medium caldero, heat the oil over medium-high heat. Once oil is hot add the fish and cook until golden on both sides and cooked through. Remove the filets from the caldero and set aside.

In the same pot, add sofrito and chopped vegetables and cook until soft, about 5 minutes. Season with salt, pepper, Adobo, and cayenne pepper. Stir to incorporate. Add four cups of water and bring the liquid to a boil. Upon boiling, remove the soup from the heat. Flake the fish and mix with into the soup cook this another 5 minutes or so, don’t stir too much. That’s it!

Served with toasted French bread with garlic butter.

* 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.
**Coquito Flan**

4 cups coquito (yes, with Puerto Rican rum, of course)
8 eggs
8 oz cream cheese, softened
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Preheat oven to 350°.

Pour 1 cup sugar and about ¼ cup water in a 2 cup glass Pyrex measuring cup (they are microwavable). Just stir the sugar and water a bit and microwave on high for about 5 minutes until it reaches the right color. Must keep your eye on the microwave. Open the door once the caramel reaches that golden color. If it is not dark enough at 5 minutes, add another 30 seconds, but open the door once the color is right. You are looking to get the perfect color, not too light and not too dark. Immediately and very carefully, pour into the flan pan and swirl to cover the bottom. Always let the caramel set before pouring in the custard.

Next get the 'baño de María' or bain-marie (water bath) ready. Use a large cookie sheet on the bottom, then set a large roasting pan on the sheet. At the last minute you will need to boil some water to pour into the roasting pan. Start water to boil when just before you begin preparing custard.

For the custard beat cream cheese with an electric mixer until smooth, add eggs and mix. Add the rest of the ingredients. Blend smooth but do not over mix.

Pour custard into caramelized mold, cover with foil, and sit in the baño de María. Then pour hot water into the baño and into the oven for 1 to 1½ hours until done and knife comes clean. Refrigerate for at least 6 hours.

**Riqueño Pulled Pork**

3-4 lbs pork boneless sirloin roast, trimmed
1 tbs vegetable oil
6 cloves garlic, crushed, skins removed
1 tb kosher salt
1 tb black pepper
1 tb oregano, crushed

Mix garlic, salt, pepper and oregano.

Poke many holes in pork with a sharp knife and stuff with the garlic mixture.

Warm oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the pork and brown on all sides. About 6-8 minutes

Place the pork in a slow cooker, pour half a cup of water in the sides of cooker. Turn slow cooker on let and set timer for 8 hours.

After 8 hours remove pork and shred using two forks on a large cutting board.

Remove all liquid from the slow cooker except for 1 cup and add the pork back to the pot.

Let cook for another 15-20 minutes on high.

*a slow cooker pernil recipe for those without ovens.

**When salt is applied to raw meat, juices inside the meat are drawn to the surface. The salt then dissolves in the exuded liquid, forming a brine that is eventually reabsorbed by the meat. The salt changes the structure of the muscle proteins, allowing them to hold on to more of their own natural juices. Salting is the best choice for meats that are already relatively juicy and/or well marbled.**
**Chicken Stew Riqueño**  
*Slow Cooker recipe*

1 large onion, sliced  
7 cloves garlic, minced  
1 green bell pepper, seeded and diced  
3 Russet potatoes, diced into 1/2" pieces  
8 oz can tomato sauce  
1/2 cup dry white wine  
1/2 cup water  
1/2 tsp dried oregano  
2 bay leaves  
1 tbsp salad olives (sliced)  
1 tsp capers  
1 tsp cayenne pepper (optional)  
2 lbs chicken thighs, boneless, skinless, cut into pieces  
salt and pepper, to taste

Coat slow cooker with cooking spray then add all ingredients. Cover and cook on low heat for 6–8 hours or until chicken is fall-apart tender.

If you would like your dish to be a bit thicker, just remove a few potatoes to a plate, mash them and stir them back into the broth. Remove bay leaves and serve over rice if desired. Enjoy!

*Chicken thighs are considered dark meat and are more flavorful since they have a bit more fat and the flavor is richer. Dark meat just tastes better.*

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**Cayey’s Orange Cake**  
*Modified*

1 box orange cake mix (*Duncan Hines Orange Supreme Cake Mix*)  
1 box (3.4oz) Vanilla INSTANT pudding mix, dry  
1 cup vegetable oil  
1/2 cup milk  
1 cup sour cream  
3 large eggs  

Preheat oven to 350F degrees. Spray (2) 9x2 inch cake pans] with nonstick spray. Set aside.

Use a electric or stand mixer, mix the cake mix, vanilla instant pudding mix, vegetable oil, milk, sour cream and eggs until combined.

Pour cake batter evenly into 2 prepared cake pans. Bake for 25-27 minutes or until a toothpick inserted near the center comes out clean. Allow to cool before frosting.

**Orange Buttercream Frosting**

1 (2 sticks) cup unsalted butter, softened  
4 cups powered sugar  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon clear vanilla extract  
2 Tablespoons heavy whipping cream or milk  
3 Tablespoons sweet orange marmalade

Mix the softened butter on medium speed with an electric or stand mixer. Beat for about 3 minutes until smooth and creamy. Add powdered sugar, whipping cream, vanilla extract, and salt. Increase to high-speed and beat for 3 minutes. Using a spoon, stir in 3 Tablespoons of sweet orange marmalade until evenly distributed throughout the frosting.

Frost the bottom layer, then place top layer and frost it. Run a knife around the sides to combine the layers. Yum!
One of Puerto Rico's notable exports is its music, which is probably the predominant Caribbean music heard in the United States.

The music of Puerto Rico has been formed by a complex melding of sounds and cultures. From indigenous roots to colonial influences and slave-related migrations, Puerto Rican music embodies the diverse social elements that have shaped this tiny collection of islands.

The most conspicuous musical sources have been Spain and West Africa, although many aspects of Puerto Rican music reflect origins elsewhere in Europe and the Caribbean and, in the last century, the USA.

The most widely heard and influential form of music from Puerto Rico today is called salsa and denotes music that spices and enlivens things. It is a complex musical genre that evolved from many roots into a uniquely Puerto Rican product.

It could be said that "salsa" is primarily a commercial tag for contemporary Latin pop music that connotes a feeling that sums up the variety of redefined and reinterpreted styles at its roots. It encompasses a broad range of musical genres, instrumental combinations and cultural influences, ranging from Cuban son montuno, Puerto Rican bomba and plena, Dominican merengue, Cuban Yoruba ritual music and Afro-American jazz and rhythm and blues.

The term "salsa" began to circulate in the late 1960's to describe this unique genre, born of these many distinct musical influences from many parts of the world but with its locus in New York City.

Highly danceable, salsa's rhythms are hot, urbane, rhythmically sophisticated, and compelling.

Today, the center of salsa has shifted from New York to Puerto Rico.

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Nuestra Música

The versatile Mr. Denis’ latest endeavor is a book titled, War Against All Puerto Ricans, published in 2015. The nonfiction story examines the topic of the forgotten Puerto Rican Nationalists during the times of Abizu Campos, and the violence that followed in the 1950’s.

The book has ignited some controversy. It has received positive reviews from major newspapers for its brave content. There is talk of a film to follow. I am sure we will hear more from this multifaceted story-teller.

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Betty is a literacy teacher in Harlem and writes children’s books. She is publishing her first, “La Despeinada” in late spring. Betty lives with her two children Natasha and Xavier in Brooklyn, New York.