

# LATIN AMERICAN HERITAGE FOOD GLOSSARY

As you explore the Latin American Heritage Diets, you may encounter some unfamiliar words in menus or in recipes. We don't want anyone to pass up trying a new food simply because they don't know what it is—so we've included this glossary of food terms for all types of foods, spices, dishes, and more.

**Amaranth** (AM-ahr-anth) right: A tiny grain with a lively, peppery taste that was a staple of Aztec culture. In Latin America it is often sold as street food popped like corn. It's also popular in cereals and breads.



**Arepas** (ah-RAY-pahs): Crispy cornmeal cakes traditional to Colombia, Venezuela, and Panama.

**Arroz Congri** (ah-ROHS KOHN-gree): A Cuban-style rice and beans dish. We recommend it made with brown rice.

**Arroz con Pollo** (ah-ROHS kohn POY-oh): A traditional Latin American dish similar to a Spanish paella.

**Bacalao** (bah-kah-LAH-oh): Codfish that has been preserved for longer storage through a process of salt-curing and drying so that all the moisture is drawn out.

**Carambola** (kahr-uhm-BOH-luh): This fruit, sometimes called "star fruit," has a mild sweet and sour flavor similar to that of a green grape.



**Ceviche** (suh-VEE-chay): A dish consisting of cubed raw fish or shellfish marinated in lime juice.

**Chayote** (chai-OW-tay): A green squash with a mild taste similar to zucchini.

**Chiles** (CHIL-ees): There are roughly 4,000 different types of chile peppers coming in all different shapes, sizes, colors, heat levels, and flavor profiles. They are an essential element of many Latin American dishes, lending spiciness and flavor to the cuisine.

**Chimichurri** (chim-ee-CHUR-ee): A classic Argentinian condiment made from parsley and garlic that's bright, fresh, and tart, with a touch of heat.

**Curtido** (kur-TEE-doh): A spicy and refreshing Salvadoran slaw made with pickled cabbage, carrot, and onions.

**Elotes** (ay-LOHT-ays): A street food favorite made from grilled corn on the cob, coated with a cheesy sauce and drizzled with lime juice.



**Epazote** (eh-pah-ZOH-tay): A pungent herb, used in Mexico and Guatemala, which has hints of oregano, anise, mint, and citrus. It's best used fresh.

**Gallo Pinto** (GUY-oh PEEN-toh): A beans and rice dish traditional in Costa Rica and Nicaragua, often served alongside eggs for breakfast.

**Guacamole** (GWAHK-a-moh-lay): An avocado-based dip or spread used in Mexican cuisine.

**Hominy** (HAA-muh-nee): Dried corn kernels that have been treated with an alkaline solution that softens the kernels and makes some of the nutrients more bioavailable.

**Huitlacoche** (WEET-lah-koh-chay):

Considered a delicacy in Mexico, this pathogenic fungus, also called corn smut or corn mushrooms, is a type of plant disease that grows on corn kernels (and tastes delicious). It has a puffy, gray appearance and a flavor profile somewhat similar to a truffle.



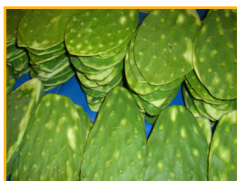
**Jicama** (HIK-ah-mah): A crunchy, juicy root vegetable that can be eaten raw or cooked. It has a mild flavor and the texture of an apple or Asian pear.

**Masa** (MAH-sah): A dough or flour made from ground corn that's been treated with an alkaline solution that makes some of the nutrients more bioavailable.

**Mole** (MOH-lay): A rich sauce made with chiles, spices, and chocolate that is often earthy and nutty in flavor.

**Mosh** (MOHSH): A milky oatmeal beverage served for breakfast in Guatemala and a few other Central American countries.

**Nopales** (noh-PAH-lays): The edible pads of the prickly pear cactus, which can be eaten raw or cooked, and are commonly used in Mexican cuisine.



**Pico de Gallo** (PEEK-oh day GUY-oh): Also called "salsa fresca," this popular salsa is made of fresh tomatoes, onion, chiles, and lime juice.

**Pitaya** (pih-TY-ah) right: often called "dragon fruit," this hot pink or yellow fruit grows on cactuses and is a bit like a mild kiwi in both flavor and texture.



**Plantain** (plan-TAYN): A more savory cousin of the banana, these fruits are often pan-fried, or boiled and they get softer and creamier as they ripen and their peels turns brown.

**Pozole** (poh-ZOH-lay): This is a rich, hearty soup, traditional in Mexico, made with hominy and chiles, and accompanied by fresh toppings such as cabbage, avocado, limes, and herbs.

**Pupusa** (puh-POOS-ah): A Salvadoran corn cake stuffed with cheese, beans or pickled vegetables, and often served with curtido and salsa.

**Queso Fresco** (KAY-soh FRES-koh): A fresh, soft, moist cheese that is salty, milky, and mildly tangy.

**Quinoa** (KEEN-wah): An ancient grain native to the Andes and long cultivated by the Inca. It's a relatively fast-cooking grain that works as a light, fluffy side dish, or as an ingredient in soups and salads.



**Sofrito** (soh-FREE-toh): A rich, vegetable-based puree that add deep flavor to soups, stews, and sauces. Red sofritos are made with tomatoes and/or red peppers, while green sofritos are made with green peppers and cilantro.

**Tamales** (tah-MAH-lays): A Central American and Mexican dish consisting of masa dough wrapped in a corn husk or banana leaves and steamed. They are often stuffed with ingredients like beans and cheese.

**Tomatillo** (toh-mah-TEE-oh): A type of husk tomato native to Mexico and Central America and used in Mayan and Aztec cuisine. They are often used in salsas and green sauces.



**Tortilla de Maíz** (tor-TEE-yah day MAYS): A type of masa-based flatbread that is a staple of the cuisine in Latin America. These serve as the base for tacos, enchiladas, fajitas, quesadillas, tostadas and many other dishes.

**Sikil Pak** (sik-KEEL PAHK): With roots in Mayan cuisine, this dish combines pumpkin seeds, spices, tomatoes, and onion in a smoky, spicy salsa-like dip.

**Yuca** (YOO-kah): Also called cassava, this root vegetable looks a bit similar to a sweet potato with a rough, bark-like skin. It has a grainy, starchy texture similar to a potato and has a mildly sweet and nutty flavor.

