
Chef Clint Jolly's 10 Favorite Recipes From South America

Discovered, Learned and Shared on The Road



By Chef Clint Jolly

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Welcome!

As I write this, I am four months into exploring South America. Five countries, many cities and about 300 meals eaten in restaurants ranging from a [stool in a bustling market](#) to the [5th best in the world](#) (based on the opinion of a [panel of “experts”](#)). Along the way I have also been blessed to [cook alongside chefs](#), [eat with others](#) and take notes about every experience.

Spending about a month in each major city has given me the time to explore markets and walk the streets to find some of the best food each had to offer. I get a lot of pleasure out of the unexpected, which means that sometimes a sausage on a dirty street corner impresses me more than a curated 17 course meal from a renowned chef. I try to learn from each, and this book is part of my chance to share these experiences with you from afar.

Each of the recipes are my own, adapted from a dining experience or watching a chef cook. I've made each of them to make sure they're tasty but please use them as a starting point and adjust a bit to your liking. Just as I was inspired to make them my own, I'd love to see you do the same. Make the recipes, taste them, tweak them, and let me know how your friends and family enjoy them. The notes in each share the most important ingredients that you shouldn't skip, everything else is up for your interpretation and exploration in making it your own.

Buen Provecho!!!

Sides, Sauces and Accompaniments



Chimichurri

A staple in Argentina, and very common anywhere close. Funny enough, the first time I cooked for local Argentines they judged me more on the chimichurri than the rest of the meal. Luckily it passed the test so they could relax and have a good time. I had been making this sauce for years before my first trip to Argentina but refined it a bit when I tasted the aji molido they use (much sweeter and less spice than I had used before), and realized that fresh oregano is nearly impossible to find in the markets there. Store extra in a jar in the fridge for up to a week.

Ingredients

<i>2 Bunches</i>	<i>Italian Parsley</i>
<i>1 Bunch</i>	<i>Fresh Cilantro</i>
<i>2 oz.</i>	<i>Dried Mexican oregano</i>
<i>1 oz.</i>	<i>Chopped fresh garlic</i>
<i>1 Tbs.</i>	<i>Aji molido (use 1/2 the amount of red chile flakes if needed)</i>
<i>1/2 C</i>	<i>Red wine vinegar</i>
<i>3 tsp.</i>	<i>Kosher salt</i>
<i>1/4 C</i>	<i>Hot water</i>
<i>6 cranks</i>	<i>Fresh black pepper</i>
<i>3 C</i>	<i>Virgin olive oil</i>

Method

Remove heavy stems from herbs and chop fine, along with garlic. Dissolve salt in hot water. Combine all ingredients in bowl, adjust seasoning. Let sit overnight, or at least 6 hours, for flavors to combine.

Curtido de Repollo

Looks like slaw, tastes more like sauerkraut. This is a recipe from El Salvador that ends up alongside many plates in the region. Again, one that I have been making for a while back home and refined a bit on my travels. All of the ingredients are easily found, just make sure you use whole “Mexican” oregano instead of the ground European version.

Ingredients

<i>1 small</i>	<i>Green cabbage</i>
<i>1/2</i>	<i>Red cabbage</i>
<i>2 ea.</i>	<i>Carrots</i>
<i>1/2</i>	<i>Red onion</i>
<i>1/2 C</i>	<i>Distilled vinegar</i>
<i>1/2 tsp.</i>	<i>Granulated sugar</i>
<i>1 tsp.</i>	<i>Kosher salt</i>
<i>Pinch</i>	<i>Ground allspice</i>
<i>Pinch</i>	<i>Black pepper</i>
<i>Pinch</i>	<i>Ground cumin</i>
<i>1 Tbs.</i>	<i>Mexican oregano</i>

Method

Heat vinegar in sauce pan until just simmering. Add salt, sugar and spices. Stir to combine and let cool at room temperature. Julienne (thin slice) cabbages and onion, peel carrots and grate with larger side of a box grater. Mix all ingredients in a bowl and use your hands to make sure the vegetables are well dressed. Pack the mix into a jar or plastic container, pushing the veggies down below the liquid. It will keep fine for a week.





Charred Baba Ganoush

A night of [cooking with Luciano](#) will be burned into my memory forever. Such a character! I enjoyed this dish with him a few times, he never measures a thing and simply cooks by feel but I narrowed down the basics here. It's not a traditional recipe for sure but fits right in with a meal of grilled meats, veggies and such. Make extra as it is just as good for leftovers with tomorrow's breakfast. The real key here is to control the char on the eggplants, onions and garlic. You want the skins crispy and black, but not ash. If any parts do get a bit ashy, just cut them away and use the rest.

Ingredients

2 medium Eggplants
1 each Yellow onion
1 whole Head of garlic
1/2 bunch Italian Parsley
2 T Aji molido
2 Limes
Kosher Salt
Fresh black pepper

Method

Over high heat char the eggplants, onions and garlic. You can put them right into hot coals (best), or directly over a gas burner. Cook until the skin is charred and black, the eggplants will be done first, onions and garlic next. Let them cool slightly and remove the charred skin of the onion and any ashy bits from the eggplant. Add to the a mortar and pestle, or food processor. Squeeze the garlic from it's skin, as well as the juice from the limes. Add remaining ingredients and process until mostly smooth, with some chunks. Adjust seasoning to your liking. Serve alongside warm bread, grilled cheese, scrambled eggs, roasted vegetables, etc.

Starters

Ceviche

The national dish of Peru is literally ubiquitous on the streets of Lima. Every restaurant serves ceviche, street carts roll around hawking the raw fish dish and chefs take pride in whose is best. The recipe is simple, but relies on a great quality fish to start with. I suggest using a white fish you can reliably get fresh, that doesn't have too much fat in it. Go ahead and add shrimp or baby scallops if you like, they add an interest to the texture. The hardest to find ingredient here will be fresh aji amarillo. Use a quality paste if you can find that, or substitute fresh serrano chiles but cut the amount in half to control the heat.



Ingredients

<i>1 lb.</i>	<i>Super fresh white fish- sole, snapper, halibut, sea bass</i>
<i>2 tsp.</i>	<i>Sea salt</i>
<i>2/3 C</i>	<i>Fresh squeezed lime juice</i>
<i>1 pc</i>	<i>Fresh ginger, peeled, about the size of your thumbnail</i>
<i>2 cranks</i>	<i>Fresh black pepper</i>
<i>1/4 C</i>	<i>Chopped fresh cilantro</i>
<i>1 ea.</i>	<i>Fresh aji amarillo, seeded and chopped. Or substitute 1 tsp. paste</i>
<i>2 Tbs.</i>	<i>Coconut milk</i>
<i>1 clove</i>	<i>Fresh garlic, finely minced or grated</i>
<i>1/4</i>	<i>Red onion, thinly sliced</i>
<i>1/2 C</i>	<i>Chulpe (Peruvian dried corn) toasted, optional but tasty!</i>
<i>1 medium</i>	<i>Sweet potato, peeled and cut into 1/2" slices</i>

Method

Boil sweet potato slices in salted water until just tender, shock in ice water and drain. Combine lime juice, 1 tsp. salt, ginger, black pepper, 1/2 of the cilantro and coconut milk in blender and process until fully incorporated. Refrigerate.

Dice fish into 1/2" pieces. Dissolve remaining salt in cold water and soak fish for 15 minutes. Drain fish and season with minced garlic and remaining cilantro. Add juice from blender to fish and mix well. Let sit 10 minutes. Serve ceviche with sweet potato, garnished with toasted corn and red onion

Ceviche carries a long and storied history, with some experts saying that it is tied to an ancient dish of beef stewed in vinegar that was popular in Persia around the year 500 AD. You can see the similarities of fish cured in citrus or vinegar all over the world, from fish and chips in London to tempura in Japan. Just don't tell the Peruvians that they didn't invent it!

Tiradito

Ceviche's stepbrother in Peru became my preferred dish to order. The fish is thin sliced instead of cubed, and less citrus in the sauce lets the spice and fish stand out a bit more. There are three sauce recipes included, and the presentation of the "tres colores" style with all three looks stellar and gives a nice variety to mix and match. The chiles will be the toughest to find, but quality pastes will work for this dish easily. It is essential to slice the fish thin, against the grain, so that it is tender and will soak up the marinade quickly.



Salsa Aji Amarillo

Ingredients

<i>7 ea.</i>	<i>Aji amarillo, seeded and deveined</i>
<i>1 ea.</i>	<i>Red serrano chile</i>
<i>1/2 C</i>	<i>Water</i>
<i>1 tsp.</i>	<i>Olive oil</i>
<i>1 ea.</i>	<i>Garlic clove</i>
<i>6</i>	<i>Lemons, juiced</i>
	<i>Salt and pepper to taste</i>

Method

Boil chiles in salted water until soft. Process in blender with remaining ingredients until smooth. Pass through a sieve to remove skins and stray seeds.

Salsa Rocoto

Ingredients

<i>3 ea.</i>	<i>Rocoto pepper - Also called manzano, manzanilla or chile caballo. (substitute habanero if needed)</i>
<i>1/2 C</i>	<i>Water</i>
<i>2 Tbs.</i>	<i>Sugar</i>
<i>1/2 Tbs.</i>	<i>Distilled vinegar</i>
<i>1 Tbs.</i>	<i>Olive oil</i>
<i>1 rib</i>	<i>Celery</i>
<i>1/4</i>	<i>Yellow onion, diced</i>
<i>8 ea.</i>	<i>Lemons, juiced</i>
<i>1 ea.</i>	<i>Garlic clove</i>
	<i>Salt and pepper to taste</i>

Method

In saucepan, combine water with sugar and vinegar, add chiles and cook over high heat Process in blender with remaining ingredients until smooth. Pass through a sieve to remove skins and stray seeds.

Salsa Blanco

Ingredients

<i>1 ea.</i>	<i>Red serrano chile, finely chopped</i>
<i>1 pc.</i>	<i>Fresh ginger, about the size of your thumbnail, finely grated</i>
<i>1 ea.</i>	<i>Garlic clove, finely grated</i>
<i>3 ea.</i>	<i>Lemons, juiced</i>
<i>1/4 C</i>	<i>Chopped fresh cilantro</i>
	<i>Salt and pepper to taste</i>

Method

Combine all ingredients in small bowl and adjust seasoning with salt and pepper.

Tiradito Recipe

Ingredients

<i>1/2 lb.</i>	<i>Super fresh white fish- snapper, halibut, sole, sliced very thin against the grain</i>
<i>2</i>	<i>Lemons, juiced</i>
	<i>Salt and pepper to taste</i>
<i>1/2 C</i>	<i>Cooked and chilled fresh corn kernels</i>
<i>1/4 C</i>	<i>Chopped fresh cilantro</i>
<i>1 ea.</i>	<i>Sauce recipes from above</i>

Method

Arrange slices of fish on a plate, slightly overlapping each. A long, rectangle plate is best. Lightly season fish with salt and pepper, then lemon juice. Pour each sauce over one third of the plate, with blanco in the middle. Garnish with corn and cilantro and let sit for about 5 minutes before enjoying.

Peru has a huge influence of Asian immigrants that have arrived over the last 500 or so years. Culinary wise, Japan has made a big impact with their sushi. The term “nikkei” is used to describe the style of food that is a fusion of both cultures. Tiradito is a classic example of a sushi-like presentation of local ingredients.

Strong Plates

Ajiaco

Put simply, it's chicken and potato stew. A great option for a hearty cold weather meal and plenty filling to be the main attraction. I love soups that are served with garnishes as it gives guests a chance to play with their food a bit. Feel free to add your own items to top and stir in, but the cream, capers and avocado are traditional. In this recipe, the herb called guascas are going to be the hardest to find (they're actually considered a noxious plant in the US...) but they can be found dry online if nowhere else. The trio of potatoes is also key, they combine into the flavor and texture that makes the dish so lovely. Again, make a big pot to have leftovers for a few days.



Ingredients

<i>3 ea.</i>	<i>Whole chicken breasts, boneless and skinless</i>
<i>12 C</i>	<i>Chicken broth</i>
<i>3 ears</i>	<i>Fresh corn cobs, cut in thirds</i>
<i>3 ea.</i>	<i>Green onions</i>
<i>2 ea.</i>	<i>Garlic cloves, chopped</i>
<i>1 lb. ea.</i>	<i>Yellow new, russet and red potatoes, peeled and sliced 1/2"</i>
<i>1/3 C</i>	<i>Guascas</i>
<i>2 ea.</i>	<i>Avocados (fuerte variety preferred)</i>
	<i>Salt and pepper to taste</i>
<i>1 C</i>	<i>Sour cream to serve</i>
<i>1 C</i>	<i>Capers to serve</i>
<i>4 ea.</i>	<i>Limes, cut into wedges, to serve</i>

Method

In a large pot, place chicken, corn, chicken broth, cilantro, green onion, garlic. Bring to a boil, lower the heat to medium and cook for about 35 to 40 minutes, until the chicken is cooked and tender. Remove the chicken and reserve.

Continue cooking corn for 30 more minutes. Remove the green onion and add the red potatoes, russet potatoes, and the guascas. Cook for 30 more minutes. Uncover the pot and add the yellow potato and simmer for 15 to 20 minutes, season with salt and pepper to taste.

Tear the chicken meat into small pieces and put it back in the pot. Serve hot ajiaco with avocado, capers, limes and sour cream on the side for guests to garnish. If you have fresh guascas, a bit of that chopped is great for garnish as well.

I actually had a very familiar feeling about the food after my first few days in Colombia. The ingredients, style and simplicity of it just seemed as if I had seen it before. After eating a bowl full of ajiaco, I jumped online to do some research on the history of the area and learned that many Colombians had moved to the Sierra Nevadas near my home town in the gold rush of the 1800's. Their Spanish Basque heritage is still alive and well in the state of Nevada. In looking at the indigenous ingredients in a lot of the traditional dishes of the area I saw they are the same that grow back home as well. Such a small world...

Choripan

My family started making an Argentinian style chorizo when I was about 5 from a recipe given to us by an Olympic skier that brought it to my hometown from Mendoza. Needless to say, I was excited to try the sausage in its homeland! I have included a recipe for the sausage here as well if you're keen on making your own. If not, seek out an Argentinean style first or a basque style as a substitute. The Mexican version is great for many things, but not this sandwich.



Argentinian Chorizo

Ingredients

<i>3 lbs.</i>	<i>Boneless pork shoulder</i>
<i>2 lbs.</i>	<i>Boneless beef chuck</i>
<i>15 feet</i>	<i>Hog casing</i>
<i>1.6 oz. (1 Tbs.)</i>	<i>Kosher salt</i>
<i>.3 oz. (1 Tbs.)</i>	<i>Ground black pepper</i>
<i>.5 oz. (2 ea.)</i>	<i>Garlic clove, minced</i>
<i>.2 oz. (2 Tbs.)</i>	<i>Whole Mexican oregano</i>
<i>.2 oz. (2 tsp.)</i>	<i>Ground fennel</i>
<i>.2 oz. (2 Tbs.)</i>	<i>Aji molido (1/2 the amount if subbing chile flakes)</i>
<i>.4 oz. (1 1/2 tsp.)</i>	<i>Ground Cayenne</i>
<i>.2 oz. (2 tsp.)</i>	<i>Hungarian paprika</i>
<i>1/2 C</i>	<i>Water</i>
<i>1/2 C</i>	<i>Red wine</i>

Method

Cut pork and beef into 2" cubes and chill to almost freezing. Grind beef once through fine (1/8") plate. Grind pork once through medium (3/8") plate. Mix meat together and grind through medium plate once more. Refrigerate meat as you work. Add all ingredients to meat, mix well and let sit overnight. Move mixture to stand mixer. Mix on medium speed until tacky. Alternatively, use your hands to mix in a large bowl.

Stuff into hog casings. Link into 1/4# links, approx. 6". Let cure overnight in refrigeration, uncovered, single layer on sheet pan or tied and hanging.

Choripan Recipe

Ingredients

6 ea.	<i>Argentinian chorizo</i>
6 ea.	<i>Crusty French roll</i>
3 Tbsp.	<i>Best Foods/Hellman's mayonnaise</i>
4 oz.	<i>Chimichurri</i>
1 C	<i>Curtido de Repollo</i>
6 slices	<i>Aged manchego cheese</i>
2 ea.	<i>Roma tomatoes, sliced 3/8" thick</i>

Method

Grill sausage, starting on low heat to cook through and finishing on high heat to crisp the skin. Split rolls and swipe with mayo. Toast rolls on the grill, mayo side down, until lightly browned and warmed through. Top roll with sausage, then cheese. Let sit on grill with lid down and burners off to melt cheese and warm through. Open a beer. Garnish sandwiches with chimi, tomato and curtido de repollo.

The 5th annual Festival Mundial del Humor y el Choripan, or the World Festival of Comedy and Choripan, was held in Cordoba, Argentina, while I was visiting. We submitted an application to participate, were accepted, then things didn't work out. Either they were scared an American would show them up, or they weren't convinced we could pull it off without equipment. I like to think the latter! So, you could say that this recipe was almost named the best in the world?

Arroz con Mariscos

My favorite dish from Peru! A classic mix of shellfish and rice, all bathed in a rich sauce spiked with achiote paste for an earthy kick. Fresh shellfish is best, or good quality frozen works as well. Ideally you can find scallops with the coral still attached, as it gives a great color and seafood flavor to the dish.



Ingredients

<i>3 Tbs.</i>	<i>Vegetable oil</i>
<i>1/2 C</i>	<i>Red onion, finely diced</i>
<i>3 ea.</i>	<i>Garlic cloves, chopped</i>
<i>1 ea.</i>	<i>Aji amarillo, seeded and chopped, or 2 tsp. paste</i>
<i>1 ea.</i>	<i>Roma tomato, peeled, seeded and chopped, or 2 Tbs. tomato paste</i>
<i>1/2 tsp.</i>	<i>Dried Mexican oregano</i>
<i>2 ea.</i>	<i>Bay leaves</i>
<i>1 tsp.</i>	<i>Achiote paste</i>
<i>1/4 C</i>	<i>White wine</i>
<i>1/4 C</i>	<i>Fish stock</i>
<i>1 ea.</i>	<i>Sweet red bell pepper, roasted, peeled, seeded and chopped</i>
<i>1/2 lb.</i>	<i>Raw shellfish- squid, peeled shrimp, clams, mussels, scallops, etc.</i>
<i>1/2 C</i>	<i>Thin sliced green onion</i>
<i>2 C</i>	<i>Cooked white rice</i>
<i>1/2 C</i>	<i>Grated aged Parmesan</i>
<i>1/4 C</i>	<i>Chopped cilantro</i>
	<i>Kosher salt and pepper to taste</i>
<i>1 ea.</i>	<i>Lime, cut into wedges</i>

Method

In a large sauce pan, heat vegetable oil and cook onion until light brown. Lower heat to medium, add garlic and cook for a couple minutes until soft. While cooking, mix the achiote with a bit of warm water to soften. Add the tomato, chile, oregano, bell pepper, bay leaf and achiote. Cook until fragrant. Add the stock, wine, fish, green onion and bring to a simmer for 3-4 minutes. Add rice and cilantro, season with salt and pepper and stir well. Stir in parmesan cheese and blend until melted. Serve hot, garnished with a bit of chopped cilantro and lime wedges.

When buying shellfish, I always think opting for a good frozen product is better than a questionable fresh one. If you aren't near the sea, go frozen or substitute more local options.

Yerba Mate Pollo Asado

My long time favorite dish has been grilled chicken in the style of the Yucatán in Mexico. While in Buenos Aires cooking for some friends, I wanted to make a more local version of the dish which turned out really nice. The yerba tea gives it a good musky flavor and the citrus makes for a great crispy skin. Find a yerba without added flavors, and ideally in bulk so you don't have to open all the little packages!



Ingredients

<i>1 ea.</i>	<i>3.5# chicken, cut or split</i>
<i>1 C.</i>	<i>Yerba leaves</i>
<i>1 C.</i>	<i>Water</i>
<i>1 ea.</i>	<i>Red grapefruit, juiced</i>
<i>3 ea.</i>	<i>Oranges, juiced</i>
<i>2 ea.</i>	<i>Limes, juiced</i>
<i>2 tsp.</i>	<i>Sea salt</i>
<i>2 Tbs.</i>	<i>Pork lard</i>
<i>1 tbs.</i>	<i>Dried Mexican oregano</i>
<i>1 tsp.</i>	<i>Whole allspice</i>
<i>1/2 tsp.</i>	<i>Black peppercorns</i>
<i>2 ea.</i>	<i>Garlic cloves</i>

Method

Warm water to just simmering and add yerba leaves. Let steep for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Toast allspice, peppers and oregano in dry pan until fragrant. Grind spices with garlic. Strain the liquid from yerba into a large bowl, use cheesecloth to wring out as much as possible. Warm lard to liquid, mix all marinade ingredients well. Marinate chicken 6 hours to overnight.

To cook, two options-

Best is over charcoal or wood fire. Semi direct heat, skin should be lightly charred. Baste chicken with marinade during cooking. Follow the directions for the asado below.

Indoor option- heat oven to 425. Heat cast iron pan on high heat. Sear skin side of chicken in pan. Flip and move to oven. Cook 20 minutes and baste with marinade, finish 20-25 minutes until 165 degrees internal temp.

Asado



In Argentina, asado is king. You asado (grill) with friends and family for every special occasion, and if you don't have an occasion an asado is one in itself. Less recipe here and more style. Follow some simple rules and you're guaranteed to have a great time.

- Buy more meat than you think you need. 1.25 pounds per person as a minimum
- Get a variety of cuts- short ribs, flank steak, tri-tip, tenderloin, sausages, pork ribs, chicken, sweetbreads, blood sausage
- Soak the sweet breads in fresh lemon juice, salt and garlic for a couple hours before cooking.
- Buy more wine than you think you need, Malbec is never a bad choice
- Don't rush it, an asado in Argentina never starts on time, goes longer than expected and is always more fun than it should be.
- Invite good people. It really is more about them than about the food
- Get a nice, large fire going in the grill. Real wood is best, but charcoal will work fine as well. Gas? Yes, but not the best option for this.
- Spread your coals out to have a small area of high heat, a small of low and most of the grill about medium.

- Everything goes on the grill at once. Sweetbreads, skirt steak over the high heat. Chicken, tenderloin, sausage and short ribs over the medium heat. Save the area with low heat for keeping items hot.
- Season the cuts liberally with thick kosher salt. If you like, mix it up with a bit of granulated garlic and black pepper for a quick easy rub.
- Serve the meats as they are ready, don't rush things to get done at once. Sweetbreads and sausages first, veggies, tenderloin, flank steaks up next and then the ribs and chicken.
- When finished with the meats, your guests should all cheer for you with "un aplauso para el asador" if you did a nice job, which you will!
- To do it like a real Argentine- grab a two liter bottle of Coke. Empty 1/3 of it out and cut off the top. Use a lighter to melt the edge and get rid of any sharp parts. Dump in a 375 ml bottle of Fernet Branca (you should have 70% Coke, 30% Fernet) and a little ice. Pass it around the party until gone. Repeat as desired!

I hope you enjoy sharing these recipes with your friends and family! Remember to make them your own and keep notes so you can revisit them again. Keep an eye out for more recipes as I transition over to Europe for the summer. Cheers!



Don't forget to share your pictures of the dishes with me online!

