

Clockwise from top left: pisco sour in progress at Andina; braised grouper with ginger, shiitake mushrooms, and chiles; Doris Rodriguez de Platt talks to customers.



Peruvian passage

Fresh seafood recipes from a Portland restaurant

BY MOLLY WATSON

The high altitude of Doris Rodriguez de Platt's Andean homeland is said to cause its residents' hearts to grow in order to extract enough oxygen from the thin air. That her heart may be literally larger than most would not surprise the customers at Andina, in Portland. Mamá Doris, as she is known, oversees her family's restaurant with the kindness and concern of a mother hen. And while talking tableside with customers about the cuisine of her native Peru, consulting with chef José Luiz Cossío de La Puente (whom the family recruited from Peru), or teaching Spanish classes filled with details about Peruvian food to the staff, she continues to be the impassioned teacher she was

before her family opened Andina.

Peruvian food is a true fusion cuisine, taking bits and pieces of its past and combining them in exciting, often unusual ways. Spanish influence is seen in *arroz con mariscos*, a shellfish-and-rice dish resembling paella. Grilled marinated beef hearts became a national dish after African slaves on sugarcane plantations found ways to tenderize the tough meat. Asian ingredients appear too, a legacy of Chinese and Japanese laborers who came to work the mines in the 19th century; the restaurant's grouper with ginger, shiitake mushrooms, and chiles is an example.

The fresh tastes of this food are being embraced throughout the West, with

Peruvian restaurants popping up all over—from progressive places such as Andina and San Francisco’s Limón to simple eateries like Los Balcones del Peru in Los Angeles, Mi Lindo Peru in San Francisco, and El Chalan in Seattle.

“The restaurant represents our family: two cultures together,” Rodriguez de Platt says. “I love to see wonderful Oregon fish and produce cooked in a Peruvian way. The delicious dishes we make are a tribute to Oregon, and to my country of Peru.”

INFO: Andina (\$\$\$; lunch Mon–Sat, dinner daily; 1314 N.W. Glisan St., Portland; 503/228-9535)

Peruvian Ceviche

Ceviche is a national dish of Peru. Originally created by fishermen as a way to eat part of their catch during long days at sea, ceviche uses the acid in lime juice to “cook” the fish.

PREP TIME: 1 hour

MAKES: 4 servings

- 1½ pounds ono, mahimahi, or bluenose bass, diced
- ½ small red onion, halved and slivered
- ¾ cup lime juice
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 habanero chile, seeded, halved, and thinly sliced (optional)
- 1 tablespoon ají amarillo sauce (optional; see “Peruvian Pantry,” opposite page)
- ½ cup cilantro leaves, chopped
- 1 orange sweet potato (such as Garnet or Jewel), boiled, peeled, and sliced
- 1 cob sweet corn, boiled and cut into 4 pieces
- 4 butter lettuce leaves

1. Rinse diced fish and slivered red onion in cold water and dry thoroughly.

2. In a large bowl, combine fish, red onion, lime juice, salt, habanero (if using), and ají amarillo sauce (if using). Cover and refrigerate 20 minutes.

3. Just before serving, stir in cilantro. Divide between 4 bowls and serve with sweet potato, corn, and lettuce leaves on the side.

Per serving: 226 Cal., 6.6% (15 Cal.) from fat; 33 g protein; 1.7 g fat (0.4 g sat.); 19 g carbo (2.2 g fiber); 458 mg sodium; 124 mg chol.

Mussels with Corn-Tomato Salsa

This is a specialty of Callao, the chief seaport of Peru, as served at Andina.

PREP AND COOK TIME: 30 minutes

MAKES: 4 servings

- 1 cup cooked corn kernels
- ½ cup each diced onion and tomato
- ½ cup loosely packed cilantro leaves, plus a few for garnish
- 2 tablespoons lime juice
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 tablespoon salsa rocoto (see “Peruvian Pantry,” opposite page) or Sriracha hot sauce
- Salt and pepper
- 1 cup white wine
- 30 clean, debearded mussels
- 1 lime, cut into wedges

1. In a medium bowl, combine corn, onion, tomato, cilantro, lime juice, vegetable oil, and salsa rocoto. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

2. In a large pot with a tight-fitting lid over high heat, bring white wine to a boil. Add mussels, then cover and cook until mussels are open, about 3 minutes. Drain. Discard any closed mussels.

3. Shuck mussels, leaving them on the half-shell. Top each mussel with a spoonful of corn salsa. Arrange on a serving platter or individual plates (6 or 7 mussels per person). Garnish with lime wedges and cilantro leaves.

Per 6-mussel serving: 102 Cal., 35% (36 Cal.) from fat; 5.8 g protein; 4 g fat (0.5 g sat.); 12 g carbo (1.8 g fiber); 131 mg sodium; 10 mg chol.

Braised Grouper with Ginger, Shiitake Mushrooms, and Chiles

This delicate, simple dish can also be made with another firm, white-fleshed fish such as bluenose bass.

PREP AND COOK TIME: 30 minutes

MAKES: 4 servings

- 4 6-ounce grouper fillets
- Salt and pepper
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil

- 4 cups vegetable stock
- 2 heads baby bok choy, leaves separated
- 12 shiitake mushrooms, stems removed
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 2 teaspoons minced ginger
- 2 teaspoons thinly sliced green onion
- 2 teaspoons thinly sliced red jalapeño chile
- 2 teaspoons toasted sesame oil

1. Season fillets with salt and pepper. Heat a frying pan (not nonstick) over medium-high heat; add oil, then fillets. Cook until fillets start to brown on one side, about 2 minutes. Flip fillets and reduce heat to medium. Add stock, bok choy leaves, mushrooms, soy sauce, and ginger. Cover and cook until fish is opaque in the center, about 3 minutes.

2. Divide fish, mushrooms, and bok choy between 4 deep, wide soup plates. Pour stock over fish and vegetables (depending on size of your plates, you may have extra stock). Garnish with green onion and jalapeño and drizzle with toasted sesame oil.

Per serving: 246 Cal., 28% (68 Cal.) from fat; 35 g protein; 7.6 g fat (1.2 g sat.); 7.2 g carbo (1.2 g fiber); 1,600 mg sodium; 63 mg chol.

Pisco Sour

Greg Hoitsma, Andina’s bartender, is known for his ever-changing seasonal cocktails, but the pisco sour, invented in Peru around 1900, is always on his list. Hoitsma recommends using a pisco (Peruvian grape brandy; see “Peruvian Pantry,” opposite page) that has a bit of bite to it—that is, nothing too smooth—to create the balance in this creamy, frothy, limey drink.

In a blender, whirl 3 ice cubes, ¼ cup (2 oz.) pisco, 1 tablespoon sugar, 1 tablespoon fresh lime juice, and 1 teaspoon pasteurized egg whites. Whirl until smooth (you’ll no longer hear the ice cracking against the side of the blender) and serve straight up in a martini glass with a dash of aromatic bitters and a wedge of lime. Makes 1 serving.

Per serving: 224 Cal., 0% (0.2 Cal.) from fat; 0.7 g protein; 0.2 g fat (0 g sat.); 33 g carbo (0 g fiber); 9 mg sodium; 0 mg chol.



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Peruvian pantry

■ **Ají amarillo.** A yellow chile with a slightly sweet flavor and plenty of heat. Available in this county in jars or as a puréed sauce at many Latin markets.

■ **Pisco.** A brandy distilled from several different grape varieties grown in South America, it is the national drink of Peru and comes in many styles—from smooth and sippable to rough and fiery. (Chile also produces pisco, although Peru contends that the Chilean version is not real pisco but a Chilean brandy that needs its own name.) Pisco became popular in California during the Gold Rush, when Peruvian miners there extolled its virtues to fellow fortune-seekers.

■ **Salsa rocoto.** Ají rocoto is a chile somewhat like a red jalapeño. Salsa rocoto is a puréed sauce made with this chile and is available at many Latin markets. Asian Sriracha hot sauce makes an excellent substitute. *

Above: Tomatoes and corn, both native to the New World, top mussels at Andina. **Right:** Ceviche and pisco sours are both Peruvian classics.

