

## CAZUELITA PAISA

- "Papa ', can you promise me that you will tell me another story tomorrow?" my child whispered, before closing his eyes, when I tucked him in his bed.
- "Yes, son. Tomorrow will be another story and another Cazuelita" I replied, with a kiss on his forehead.
- "Another Cazuelita? ... I want ". He hugged his teddy, and fell asleep.

I decided then to sit next to my wife, to remember beautiful moments around the dinner table, and the smells, tastes and stories about our homemade meals in our hometown.

Since that night, we both took on the task of searching, reading and learning more about the history of Latin cuisine, to tell our son the origin and evolution of a cultural heritage that will always be with us: Latin food.

### **Questions with a "taste"**

Like all children, ours started the new day with a new question:

- "Pa 'Do people in your country always eat the same Cazuelita?"
- "Dear son, Cazuelitas are as variable as the regions, climates and people. Everyone can give a unique personality to his/her Cazuelita" I explained.

And mom added:

- "Son, the way we cook is very regional. The dishes are a little or a lot different, depending on where they are prepared.

The regional cuisine is the one that people create with the tools or accessories they have on hand, and from the products and spices available on their own land. Therefore, preparing a classic meal or dish is influenced by factors such as air, climate, heating system (electric or wood stove, for example), and most importantly, the passion and the hand of the cook, to achieve a rich recipe."

- "How about if we eat a "Cazuelita Paisa" today, my love?" I suggested to my wife ...

### **History of the beans: *the Cazuelita Paisa***

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Europeans found in America a vast inventory of vegetable products that caused a sensation in the Old Continent. Without exaggerating: the list is endless.

Because of its abundance, beans quickly became a symbol of America, over other products that were part of the Aboriginal diet. A bean base feeding, in Colombia, these indigenous groups survived: Nutabes, Katie and Tahamíes. In the nineteenth century, beans remained a key or basic ingredient to families who colonized the coffee regions of southwestern Colombia.

With beans, the weary appetite of the builders of the national railways was satisfied. The ink of a bean Cazuelita (or Cazuelita de frijoles) is the same ink as that on the letters of Don Tomas Carrasquilla, famous Colombian writer, one of the greatest in American literature.

(Please note that in Spanish, the thick liquid in a pot of cooked beans "in water" is called "La tinta", which closest English translation would be: "The ink").

Beans, main source of vegetable protein for the American men, were called "judias" by the conquering Spaniards. Today, in different geographical places, beans are called "alubias", "caraotas", "chícharos", "fréjoles", "frijones", "frijoles", "pochas" o "porotos".

For the vast extent of his crops in Mexico, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Colombia, Venezuela and Brazil, the bean is enshrined as a key product in the American kitchen. In Colombia, for example, one of the regions where most beans are grown in South America, nearly forty varieties are known, some of them are: "sangre de toro", "petaca", "huevo de pinche", "carcha", "cuarentano", "andarín", "chengue", "escarlata", "culatero", "liborino", "zarzaleño" y "cargamanto", among many others.

It is said by the Colombian anthropologist and expert in gastronomy, Julian Estrada, that in the town of Envigado (Antioquia - Colombia) there is a legendary place called "Puerto Envigado" whose most famous dish is "Bandeja Ferrocarril de Antioquia" (Antioquia Railroad tray), a version of the Cazuelita paisa, composed by "a 'chicharrón' (fried side pork) of the size of the locomotive, sweet ripe plantains, a 'chorizo' (sausage) that simulates the train wagons, and an internal landscape of rice and cooked ground beef, illuminated by the sun of a fried egg".

Among the many forms of the Cazuelita paisa, it's worth quoting the "Feijoada", from Brazil, considered the "national dish", which is a stew of beans, beef, leg, ear and pig's tail, accompanied by sausage (Portuguese origin).

Similarly, this is very popular: "Moors and Christians" (Moros y Cristianos), the popular Cuban dish, consisting of rice and black beans.

- "Mommy, where's my Cazuelita Paisa? I did get hungry! " Complained the boy.
- "Hold on, son, it will be ready in just a few minutes, 6 or 7min", replied the mother.

Humans have a biological clock connected to the stomach, which is why, when it's noon or the night falls, no matter how busy we are ... the belly always makes us a warning: it's time to go home to eat!

But times have changed: to eat a delicious and homemade flavor dish, there's no need to cook for hours ... or take a plane back to our homeland to find our popular meals. If the craving is now for a Cazuelita paisa, ***Cazuelitas Inc.*** has the answer to that call of your stomach ... and of your heart.