



Celebrating our foods,  
recipes and traditions

# Latin American Culture

## The Region

- ✿ Latin America is one of the most diverse regions in the world. It includes more than 30 countries, all with many different ethnic groups and cultures.
- ✿ Its land varies from mountains to deserts to rainforests and is rich in biodiversity.
- ✿ Fresh foods like tomatoes, tomatillos, sweet peppers, hot chili peppers, onions, garlic, cilantro, and oregano are available throughout the year and used in countless dishes.

## Traditions

- ✿ Family is the heart of the Latinx community.
- ✿ In Latinx culture, cooking and eating together is a common way of bonding.
- ✿ Family meals lead to better nutrition by exposing children to more fruits and vegetables. They also improve relationships and emotional health, helping family members learn about one another as they sit together at the table.

## Stories

- ✿ When they move to a new country, most people carry their cultural traditions with them.
- ✿ The video *Sabores Latinos* tells the story of Rosario and her family. It shows how they use herbs and spices to give their dishes authentic Mexican flavor now that they live in Oregon. To watch our video, visit <https://www.foodhero.org/oregon-harvest-schools-latinx>

## Our Celebrations

**Family meals are especially important on holidays. Here are examples of holidays that some countries in the region celebrate:**



- ✿ **Independence Day:** July 20 in Colombia; September 15 in Costa Rica; September 16 in Mexico; September 18 in Chile



- ✿ **Día de Muertos (Day of the Dead):** November 1 and 2 in Mexico



- ✿ **Children's Day:** April 30 in Mexico; August 8 in Chile; September 9 in Costa Rica



- ✿ **Mother's Day:** May 10 in Mexico; second Sunday of May in Chile, Colombia, and Cuba; August 15 in Costa Rica



- ✿ **Father's Day:** third Sunday of June in Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, and Mexico



This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). SNAP provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. SNAP can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, contact Oregon Safe Net at 211. USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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# Celebrating with Salsas

## Salsa Roja



### Ingredients:

- 3 dried **chiles de árbol** (omit for mild salsa or see **Note**)
- 3 medium **tomatoes**, stems removed
- ¼ medium **onion**, cut in big chunks
- 3 **serrano peppers** (use ¼ to ½ bell pepper for mild salsa)
- 1 clove **garlic**, unpeeled
- ¼ teaspoon each **salt** and **pepper**
- 2 Tablespoons chopped **cilantro**

### Directions:

1. On a dry skillet on medium heat, grill chiles de árbol until lightly toasted, about 2 to 3 minutes on each side.
2. In a blender, grind the toasted chiles until pieces are small.
3. Place vegetables and garlic on the skillet. Grill on medium heat until soft, about 10 minutes. Move around a few times to brown all edges.
4. Remove peel from garlic. Add garlic, vegetables, salt and pepper to blender. Pulse 4 to 5 times to a thickness you like.
5. Move salsa to a bowl. Stir in cilantro and serve.
6. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.

### Note:

- No whole chile de árbol? Use ¼ teaspoon ground chile de árbol or cayenne pepper. For mild salsa, use 1 teaspoon ground California chile.

**Makes** 1½ cup

**Prep time:** 10 minutes

**Cook time:** 25 minutes

## Notes About Salsas

🌶️ Wash hands with soap and water right after handling hot peppers; avoid touching face.

🌿 Chop the leaves and stems of cilantro; all parts are flavorful.

🔪 No blender? Use a knife or grind with a molcajete, a traditional stone mortar and pestle.

Go to [FoodHero.org](https://www.foodhero.org) for easy, tasty salsa recipes

## Salsa Verde



### Ingredients:

- 1 pound **tomatillos**, husks removed
- ¼ medium **onion**, cut in big chunks
- 5 **serrano peppers** (use ½ bell pepper for mild salsa)
- 2 cloves **garlic**, unpeeled
- ¼ teaspoon **salt**
- ½ cup chopped **cilantro**

### Directions:

1. Scrub tomatillos under running water with a clean vegetable brush.
2. Place the vegetables and garlic on a dry skillet. Grill on medium heat until soft, about 10 minutes. Move around a few times to brown all edges.
3. Remove peel from garlic. Add garlic, vegetables, salt and pepper to a blender. Pulse 4 to 5 times to a thickness you like.
4. Move salsa to a bowl. Stir in cilantro and serve.
5. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.

**Makes** 2 ½ cups

**Prep time:** 10 minutes

**Cook time:** 15 minutes

## Pico de Gallo



### Ingredients:

- 2 large **tomatoes**, diced
- ¼ **onion**, minced
- 1 **serrano pepper**, seeds removed and minced (use ¼ cup minced bell pepper for mild salsa)
- ¼ cup chopped **cilantro**
- 2 Tablespoons **lime juice**
- ¼ teaspoon **salt**

### Directions:

1. In a large bowl, combine all ingredients. Serve right away.
2. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.

**Makes** 2 cups

**Prep time:** 15 minutes