



ARTICLE / COOKING STORY

Cooking Up the Magic of Encanto

Our recipes inspired by Disney's all-new musical comedy take us deep into the mountains of Colombia, where magic is everywhere — especially in the kitchen. In collaboration with Disney.



Yummly

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In collaboration with Disney. Now Stream Disney's Encanto on Disney+. (Subscription required.)

Imagine a place where the coffee pot pours itself; warm, freshly made arepas (cornmeal cakes) have healing powers; and magic is everywhere. That's life in the Encanto, a special place that's the home of the extraordinary Madrigal family. Every member of the family has a unique gift, from super strength to the power to heal. Every member except Mirabel, that is. But when she discovers that the magic surrounding the Encanto is in danger, Mirabel decides that she, the only ordinary Madrigal, might just be her exceptional family's last hope.

Disney's *Encanto* immerses you in a breathtaking world where even the food is magic. In

Disney's *Encanto* immerses you in a breathtaking world where even the food is magic. In that spirit, Yummly has teamed up with Disney and our sister brand Whirlpool to create six delicious Colombian recipes that bring the enchantment to your home kitchen. They were created by [Erica Dinho](#), the Colombian-American blogger behind [My Colombian Recipes](#). Each one is simple, flavorful, and as special as the country itself.

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Let's Get Started



Note: The [Yummly Meal Planner](#) is available to paid subscribers.

Get to know Colombian cuisine

With one coastline facing the Caribbean Sea, another on the Pacific Ocean, the Andes mountains running through its center, and the Amazon rainforest filling nearly the entire southern half, Colombia has a rich array of culinary influences. Depending on the region, you might find foods with indigenous, Spanish, African, Caribbean, and even Middle Eastern traditions. But no matter where you go within the country, you'll find things like rice, arepas, avocado, cassava, and plantains. Dishes tend to be hearty, and soup precedes almost every meal. And no surprise given the climate: Tropical fruits are abundant.

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Colombian cooking Q & A with Erica Dinho

Erica Dinho, the blogger behind My Colombian Recipes, grew up in Medellin, Colombia, and moved to the United States more than 20 years ago. Now a mom with two sons, she was delighted to create some classic Colombian recipes to celebrate Disney's magical *Encanto*.

Yummly: What did you think when you heard about the new movie set in Colombia?

Dinho: My friends in Colombia knew before I did! Everyone was talking about it. I was happy to see they were doing something from Colombia. I'm excited for people to see Colombia in a different way. My husband is American, and our two sons don't speak Spanish that well. I try to keep both cultures in the house, to teach them about their Colombian heritage because I don't have any family here. I can't wait for them to see it. I was excited just seeing [the trailer](#), before I heard about developing these recipes. As soon as I saw the arepas in the kitchen, I knew my family was going to make a big deal of seeing it.

Yummly: Why were you excited to create the recipes?

Dinho: I felt like I needed to show the real thing, real food from Colombia. I remember telling my kids, I can't wait to create the recipes. And now I can't wait for the movie to come out. I think it's going to be great for Colombia. We're very passionate about our country.

Yummly: In the movie, Julietta, the mom, has a special power: She heals with food. Your blog was inspired by your grandmother, Mamita, and her traditional recipes. What kind of healing powers does her food have?

Dinho: My grandmother had 10 kids and then all the grandkids, and every Sunday we'd go to her house. It was always full of food. She'd get up in the morning, make coffee and arepas, and hot chocolate. My mom, my aunts were always cooking. I can't go to Colombia every year, so when I feel homesick, the first thing I do is make my grandmother's [rice pudding](#), or one of her soups. The smell is there, it's like being in my grandmother's kitchen.

I hear that from my readers. They'll write to me, "I just made your [arroz con pollo](#), it was just like my mom used to make." The food really does have powers, it can cure you when you're homesick.

Yummly: What were your favorite things to eat growing up in Colombia?

Dinho: Growing up, in the morning before school, I'd have a fresh arepa with [Colombian-style scrambled eggs](#) and cheese, butter, and hot chocolate. My boys now, they'll have a bowl of cereal or eat a waffle on the way to school. But when I was a kid, we didn't go out of the house without a full meal.

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Yummly: Why do you want to introduce Americans to traditional Colombian dishes?

Dinho: It's important because when I'd tell people I'm from Colombia, they'd think I ate tacos. They'd assume Colombian food was spicy. But no, it's different, it's not Mexico. There wasn't one blog about Colombian food in English here when I started in 2009. Nothing on YouTube. After I started the blog I started getting emails and comments, beautiful stuff, from people who'd been looking for these recipes. People whose mothers had cooked these foods for them, but they grew up in the U.S. and now they don't know how to recreate it. They're homesick, missing that food, and they don't have a restaurant where they can get it. My blog started from necessity — I wanted to eat it, so I needed to cook it — and now I need to share it with people.

Let's cook Colombian recipes

Dinho has created six classic recipes for us, each one inspired by the upcoming movie, *Encanto*. Any one of them will give you an authentic taste of Colombian food, but you can also mix and match them to create a bigger menu.

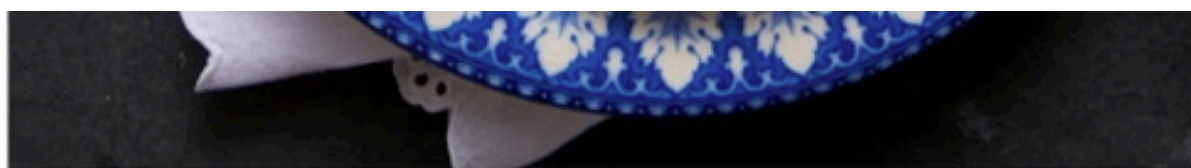
Colombian arepas (cornmeal cakes)

"Arepas are like a tortilla in Mexico, or bread here," Dinho says. "If I don't have arepas, it's like I don't have anything in the house. These are different from Venezuelan arepas, which are a little bit fatter." Colombians serve arepas plain, as in this version, and they also serve them stuffed or with everything on top, like a tostada.

The key to these arepas, Dinho says, is masarepa, a kind of pre-cooked corn flour you'll find in the Latin aisle of larger supermarkets, or online. "That's one of the questions I get the most: Can I use cornmeal, or the corn flour used for tortillas? No. This is also corn flour, but it's pre-cooked."

Classic Colombian Arepas





Classic Colombian Arepas by Whirlpool Brand



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Ajiaco (chicken, corn, and potato soup)

This is a deeply flavorful chicken soup, made with three kinds of potatoes and corn on the cob. "Ajiaco is very popular in Colombia, one of the soups people love the most," Dinho says. "As a kid I used to fight my mom about eating my soup, but now it's my favorite food. I eat soup when it's 100 degrees outside."

She makes the soup with two special Colombian ingredients. The first is an herb called guascas, which is in the daisy family and which some people compare to the flavor of artichokes. "You can't find guascas fresh in the United States, but they sell it dry," Dinho explains. "I buy it online, and Latin stores usually have it. You can't replace that taste exactly — it's a special flavor. But if you can't find it, you can just omit it. If you're not Colombian, you won't know it's missing. Ajiaco is really good, even without the herb."

The other special ingredient is papa criolla, a potato native to Colombia. You won't find them here fresh, but Dinho buys them frozen and in jars at Latin markets. If you don't have access to them, Dinho recommends replacing them with very small, waxy yellow potatoes.

Ajiaco (Chicken, Corn, and Potato Soup)





Ajiaco (Chicken, Corn, and Potato Soup) by Whirlpool Brand



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Cumin-roasted cassava with avocado sauce

"Yuca is one of the most popular ingredients in Colombia. We fry, boil, or roast it in the oven, like a potato," Dinho says. Her roasted cassava recipe with avocado sauce goes well with any protein, and you can serve it as an appetizer or snack. She coats it in simple pantry seasonings, but feel free to experiment with other herbs and spices.

If you've never shopped for cassava before, Dinho has some advice. "You can buy it fresh here everywhere now, but I buy frozen. It's easier and I find it tastes better." Fresh yuca looks like a big root covered in brown bark, and requires a fair amount of prep work. Plus, Dinho explains, "Sometimes you buy it fresh and cut through the thick skin and find out that the yuca's not good — you can't see it when you're buying." Buying frozen ensures this mild, starchy tuber is at its best.

Cumin-Roasted Cassava with Avocado Sauce



Cumin-Roasted Cassava with Avocado Sauce by Whirlpool Brand



Carimañolas (cassava fritters)

These baked croquettes are made from mashed cassava. "This is an appetizer from the Caribbean part of Colombia," Dinho says. "They sell them in the streets in that part of the country, deep-fried." In this lighter version, Dinho bakes them in the oven.

Sometimes carimañolas are stuffed with cheese, but for this recipe, Dinho uses beef and vegetables. Try them as an appetizer or a light meal, with a salad. Don't forget the aji, a fresh Colombian hot sauce made with cilantro, onion, and hot habanero chili that she includes in the recipe. You can find the frozen cassava at Latin markets.

Carimañolas (Baked Cassava Stuffed with Beef and Vegetables)



Carimañolas (Baked Cassava Stuffed with Beef and Vegetables) by Whirlpool Brand



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Marinated carrot and beet salad

"This is my mom's favorite salad, one of the most popular in Colombia," says Dinho. "I don't like beets, but in this salad, I love them," she notes.

"I added hearts of palm and corn, which are also traditional in Colombian salads. It's very light and super-easy. Plus, you can make it a day ahead of time and it'll taste even better, almost a little pickled. If you don't like hearts of palm, you can just leave them off."

Colombian Marinated Carrot and Beet Salad



Colombian Marinated Carrot and Beet Salad by Whirlpool Brand



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Salpicón de frutas (Colombian fruit cocktail)

Salpicón de frutas (Colombian fruit cocktail)

This light, refreshing treat couldn't be simpler: Just combine a variety of diced fruits with fresh watermelon juice, then chill, and serve. "Salpicón is one of the most popular desserts in Colombia. Stores all over sell it ready-made and you can buy it from street vendors, in fancy restaurants, or make it at home," Dinho says.

In Colombia, salpicón may be made with soda and served with ice cream on top, or sweetened condensed milk. "For my kids, I make it with watermelon juice or strawberry juice, because it's healthier," says Dinho. "It's so refreshing, and you can use any fruits you have."

Colombian Salpicón de Frutas (Watermelon and Fresh Fruit Cocktail)



Colombian Salpicón de Frutas (Watermelon and Fresh Fruit Cocktail) by Whirlpool Brand



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