

Ecuador

Latin America

Menu

1. *Sopa de albondigas, chayote y choclo* (meatball, chayote and corn soup)

Ingredients:

For meatballs:

- 3/4 lb. ground beef chuck
- 3 Tbsp. plain, dry breadcrumbs
- 1/3 cup long-grain rice
- 1 egg white, beaten
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 Tbsp. ice water

For soup:

- 5 medium tomatoes, blanched, peeled and chopped
- 1/4 cup chopped onion
- 2 Tbsp. chopped green chilies
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 2 Tbsp. tomato paste
- 1 cup water
- 1 Tbsp. annatto oil
- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- 7 cups chicken stock
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 large chayote, peeled, cored and cut
- 2 cups corn kernels
- 1/2 lime, juiced
- Pinch of sugar
- Red onion, thinly sliced
- Cilantro leaves

Directions:

To make the meatballs, combine all the meatball ingredients and set aside. To make the soup, blend tomatoes, chilies, garlic, onion, tomato paste and water in a blender. In a large stockpot, heat the annatto oil over medium-low heat. Add the cumin and stir for 1 minute. Add the pureed tomato mix and cook, stirring for 5 minutes. Add the stock and bring to a simmer. Season with salt and pepper. Shape the meatball mix into balls 1-1/2 in. in diameter. Lower meatballs into the simmering liquid. Skim the foam that rises to the surface. Add the chayote, cover and simmer for 20 minutes. Add the corn and simmer for 5 minutes. Add the lime juice and sugar to the soup and serve garnished with red onion and cilantro.

Consumption comparisons

Percentage of children underweight

United States of America: 1%

Ecuador: 17%

Life in Ecuador

Approximately 60 percent of Ecuador's people are *mestizo*, mixed Indian and European ancestry. Another 30 percent are native and the remaining 10 percent descends from a variety of cultures. Spanish is Ecuador's official language and is used by most residents, although 17 percent speak the native Quisha dialect. Ninety-five percent of the people are Christian. Approximately one-third of the labor force is engaged in agriculture. Growing grain and raising livestock are the key activities. The inhabitants of Ecuador have worked hard to improve the quality of their lives, particularly in the areas of health care and disease prevention.

Typical meal

A typical meal consists of *Gallo Pinto*, which is red beans and rice with sauce.

Nursery children



These sponsored children are in the nursery of the Calerita Yumi community.

References:

Bremzen, Anya Von. *Fiesta: A Celebration of Latin Hospitality*. 1997. Doubleday: New York.