



SYLLABUS

TITLE: Food in Latin American History

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Language of Instruction: English

UO Credits: 4

Contact Hours*: 40

Level: 200/300

Site: Costa Rica

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Imagine sipping on a cup of rich, aromatic coffee—a drink that originated in Ethiopia and has since woven itself into the fabric of daily life in Costa Rica and around the world. Or consider how chocolate, which began as a bitter concoction cherished by ancient Mesoamericans, has transformed into a universally beloved treat. Have you ever thought about why tomatoes, native to South America became a key ingredient in Italian cuisine? And how did gallo pinto, a dish that perfectly embodies Costa Rican cuisine, come to rely on ingredients like rice, which originated in China? These questions highlight the captivating journey of food through history, a journey that transcends borders and eras to reveal the intricate connections that influence what we eat today. If you're curious about these connections, then this course will be an exciting exploration of how our food practices are shaped by the past.

This course explores the history of food in Latin America (with an emphasis on Costa Rica) through the lens of the Columbian Exchange, the monumental transfer of plants, animals, people, and ideas between the Americas, Europe, Africa, and Asia following Christopher Columbus's voyages to the New World. We will use the Columbian Exchange as a framework to examine the deep historical roots of contemporary food practices and movements in Latin America spanning Indigenous nutrition, colonization, slavery, immigration, organic agriculture, food sovereignty, and urban farms.

By tracing the journey of foods like chocolate, sugar, coffee, bananas, pineapple, tomato, potato, corn, beans, wheat, and more, we will uncover the profound impacts of this global exchange on Latin American food systems, environment, and cultural identity.

Throughout the course, we will explore how the introduction of new crops and farming techniques during the Columbian Exchange influenced the development of Latin America's agricultural landscape. We will investigate the history and use of medicinal plants and the

recent rise of the organic agriculture movement in Costa Rica, examining how traditional practices and modern sustainability efforts intersect.

The concept of food sovereignty will be a key focus, as we delve into the struggles and successes of local communities in reclaiming control over their food systems. We will also explore the nutritional foundation of longevity in the Blue Zones.

Additionally, we will explore community-based farming initiatives that blend ancient wisdom with innovative practices to create sustainable, self-sufficient food networks in urban settings.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The major learning objectives of the program are:

- Understand the historical significance of the Columbian Exchange and its impact on Latin American and specifically Costa Rican food systems.
- Analyze the intersections between global food movements and local practices, including medicinal plants, organic agriculture, food sovereignty, and urban permaculture in Costa Rica.
- Explore the cultural, environmental, and economic factors that shape Latin American cuisine, focusing on key foods like chocolate, sugar, coffee, pineapple, bananas, potatoes, tomatoes, etc.
- Develop critical thinking and research skills by engaging with historical texts, contemporary studies, and hands-on projects related to food history and sustainability.

We are excited to embark on this journey together and look forward to your contributions to our exploration of Latin America's rich food history!

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY

Experiential Learning Experiences:

Throughout the program overlapping both Spanish class and this class.

Theme	Activity	Location
Medicinal Plants	The Ark Herb Farm Medicinal Plant Tour	Santa Barbara de Heredia
Local Markets & Tropical Fruit of Costa Rica	Heredia City Tour & Fruit Tasting	Heredia
African Palm Oil and Banana	Learn about Palm Oil and Bananas	Manuel Antonio
Cacao/Chocolate	BiciChocolate Experience	Heredia

Flour & Baking	Costa Rican Baking Class	Heredia
Coffee	Roble de Sabana Coffee Tour	Heredia
Food Sovereignty, Urban Permaculture, Organic Agriculture in Costa Rica	Urban Permaculture Farm (Molinos Verdes de Moringa)	San José

COURSE OUTLINE AND METHOD OF EVALUATION (GRADING)

Class Day	Topic	Learning Activities (in class)	Readings
1 Monday	<p>Introduction to History of Food in Latin America</p> <p>Syllabus, readings, assignments, quiz, exam, grading, 200 vs 300 level</p> <p>Geography and Scope Historical Overview Introduction to the Columbian Exchange</p> <p>Origin of Foods: Coffee in Costa Rica as an example (from Ethiopia)</p>	<p>Classroom: Latin American Food Map (matching foods to origin and destination)</p> <p>Watch <i>The Columbian Exchange: History of the World #4</i> [Video] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7g34q0iAE3o</p>	<p>Watch this video for the next day: <i>The Columbian Exchange: Crash Course World History #23</i> [Video] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HQPASoNpfM4</p> <p>Listen to this podcast for the next day: <i>Reclaiming culture on a plate: the roots and producers of Costa Rica's traditional cuisine</i> [Podcast] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HUbqBPuEqho</p>
2 Tuesday	<p>Indigenous Foods of Latin America and specifically Costa Rica</p> <p>Chocolate</p>	<p>History of cacao, social and environmental considerations</p>	<p><i>The Columbian Exchange</i></p>

	<p>Corn Potato Tomato Cajetas Turrone Frutas Ferments (Chicha) Wine Beverages</p> <p>Disease</p> <p>Kitchen Safety & Hygiene Procedures</p>	<p><i>The history of chocolate</i> [Video]</p>	<p>Read this article sections on: Tomatoes, Cacao, Improved Cultivation of Old World Foods in the New World, Sugar Cane</p> <p>Pages 163-164, 167-170,</p> <p>https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/nunn/files/nunn_qian_jep_2010.pdf</p>
<p>3 Wednesday</p>	<p>Colonization, Slavery, Immigration in Latin America & Costa Rica Mestizaje Indigenous, African, European, and Asian exchange</p> <p>Afro-Caribbean History Jamaica Costa Rican Railroad Bananas Sugar Cane Ginger Panamanian Chile</p>	<p>Gastronomy Kitchen:</p> <p>Assortment of Picadillos: Picadillo de Papa con carne Picadillo de Palmito Picadillo Cremoso de Plátano Verde Tortillas de Maiz Piononos de Queso y Frijoles Agua de Sapo (Afrocaribbean and Northeastern Costarican influences)</p> <p>Quiz 1</p>	<p>Read this article for the next day:</p> <p>Rhythm, Diversity, Collaboration: resilience in the garden</p> <p>https://elcolectivo506.com/rhythm-diversity-collaboration-resilience-in-the-garden/?lang=en [article]</p>
<p>4 Thursday</p>	<p>Globalization & Fruit History and Impact of</p>	<p>Discussion</p>	

	<p>United Fruit Company in Central America “Banana Republic” Pineapple Banana Plantations & the birth of the Costa Rican Labor Movement (Mamita Yunai)</p> <p>Modern-day Fruit Production for Export Environmental Impact Deforestation Agrochemicals Land Use</p> <p>Corporate globalization: Fast Food Processed Food Imported Food Genetically Modified Foods (Transgenic corn) Factory Farms Extinction Heirloom varieties</p>	<p>Tropical Fruit Tasting</p>	<p>Read this article for the next day:</p> <p><i>Harvesting history: The untold story of United Fruit in Costa Rica</i> https://revista.drclas.harvard.edu/harvesting-history-the-untold-story-of-united-fruit-in-costa-rica/</p>
<p>5 Friday</p>	<p>Costa Rican menus: typical ingredients and signature dishes. Basic principles of neuromarketing applied to restaurants. The Golden Triangle Theory in menu design. Color psychology in gastronomy. Basic strategies of food marketing.</p>	<p>Brief introduction to the gastronomic marketing principles. Group work: design a fictional restaurant (name, logo, theme, menu with Costa Rican dishes). (2 hours) Group project presentations and feedback (30 min).</p>	<p><i>Video Podcast: Costa Rican Food & More: A Culinary Journey Through Costa Rica:</i> https://youtu.be/oCmE6ZLj-E8?si=mMKf5jF3-WrLdWoD</p> <p><i>Sahin, E., & Yazicioglu, I. (2020). Menu Design Strategies: An Experimental Research Using Neuromarketing. In Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on Tourism and</i></p>

			<p><i>Entrepreneurship (ICTE 2020), pp. 997–1012.</i></p> <p>PDF VERSION HERE</p>
<p>6 Monday</p>	<p>Urban Permaculture & Organic Agriculture Movement</p> <p>Connection between soil health and human health</p> <p>Community-based solutions</p> <p>Local Food Sovereignty</p>	<p>Classroom: Quiz 2</p> <p>In-class project</p> <p>Latin American Menu</p>	<p>Read this article for the next day:</p> <p><i>The Big Pineapple Pesticide Problem</i></p> <p>https://www.vice.com/en/article/supermarket-pineapples-toxic-pesticides/</p>
<p>7 Tuesday</p>	<p>History of sugar cane in Latin America</p> <p>Slavery and colonization</p> <p>Desserts</p>	<p>Gastronomy Kitchen:</p> <p>Latin American Traditional Sweets & Desserts:</p> <p>Tres Leches (México)</p> <p>Picarones (Perú)</p> <p>Helados de Palito - Coco and Chocomaní (Costa Rica)</p> <p>Budín de Limón y Amapola (Argentina) (Usage of local and traditional produce for desserts)</p>	<p>Read this article for the next day:</p> <p><i>Nikkei and Chifa: Two Styles of Peruvian-Asian Fusion, With Two Different Trajectories</i></p> <p>https://academicworks.cuny.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1593&context=gj_etds</p>
<p>8 Wednesday</p>	<p>South American Fusion Foods that developed in the port cities</p> <p>Lemons & Limes</p> <p>Green Plantain</p> <p>Arroz Chaufa</p> <p>Japanese and Chinese influence</p>	<p>Recipe:</p> <p>Arroz Chaufa de Pollo y Vegetariano</p> <p>Ají de Gallina</p> <p>Papa Rellena</p> <p>Pinolillo (Peruvian and Mesoamerican influences)</p>	<p>No reading, study for final exam.</p>

<p>9 Thursday</p>	<p>Blue Zones, Longevity, and the Future of Food in Latin America</p> <p>Traditional diets Processed Foods The importance of cooking Resilience</p>	<p>Classroom: Final Exam</p> <p>Live to 100: Secrets of the Blue Zones</p> <p>Buettner, D. (Producer). (2023). <i>Live to 100: Secrets of the Blue Zones</i> [Documentary series]. Netflix. (Episode 3).</p>	<p>Read this article for the next day:</p> <p><i>Michael Pollan's simple rules for eating</i></p> <p>https://fs.blog/michael-pollan-simple-rules-eating/</p>
<p>10 Friday</p>	<p>Closing and conclusions</p> <p>Final Video Presentations</p>	<p>Classroom:</p> <p>Turn in: Food Journal</p> <p>Research Paper (300 level)</p> <p>Latin American Recipe and Analysis Final Video Presentations</p> <p>How cooking can change your life</p> <p>Final reflections</p>	<p>NA</p>

USE OF ELECTRONICS DURING CLASS

No electronics during practical class (Gastronomy classroom)

Bring notebook and pen or pencil to take notes

Appropriate use of computer, tablet and cell phones during (Academic classroom)

Limited WIFI connection available on campus

Assignments

Costa Rican Food Journal (20%)

Participation & Discussion Groups (5%)

Latin American Menu (5%)

Final Project & Presentation (Latin American Recipe & Analysis) (20%)

Reflection on Impact of Columbian Exchange (10%)

Final Exam (20%)

Written Research Paper (Latin American Recipe) (10%)*

*300 Level

Description of Assignments

Costa Rican Food Journal (20%)

Write 1-2 paragraphs per day describing and reflecting on the food you are eating in Costa Rica, the ingredients, where they are from, culinary techniques, and connection to class themes.

Latin American Menu (5%)

In small groups of (4 students per group), write and design a Latin American Menu for a restaurant or hotel. Final presentation is a digital format.

Final Project & Video Presentation (Latin American Recipe & Analysis) (20%)

In small groups with your homestay roommates, select a Latin American Recipe to cook at your homestay.

Make a 5 minute cooking video that includes: ingredients, where they come from, their history, culinary techniques, demonstrate proper hygiene and food handling practices.

You will present your video in class.

You are welcome to bring food samples to share with the class if you wish. (not required)

*300 level Research Paper

1500-2000 word-count research paper and analysis of a Latin American recipe or dish through the lens the Columbian Exchange and the history of food in Latin America

Analyze the recipe, dish or crop (ex. gallo pinto) with the following in mind:

- History of the Columbian Exchange: ethnic, cultural, societal and environmental factors
- Ingredients: analysis of factors such as Indigenous agriculture, food traditions, seasonal and native plants, migration
- Culinary techniques
- Impact on modern-day gastronomic culture in the Americas

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Course Level Changes

If you wish to change level between 300 or 200, this must be requested in writing to Arcos Abroad via email after the first day of class at the latest.

Academic Misconduct

[The University Student Conduct Code](#) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. By way of example, students should not give or receive (or attempt to give or receive) unauthorized help on assignments or examinations without express permission from the

instructor. Students should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorized by the instructor. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the students' obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before attempting an act. Additional information about a common form of academic misconduct, plagiarism, is available at researchguides.uoregon.edu/citing-plagiarism.

Prohibited Discrimination and Harassment Reporting

Any student who has experienced sexual assault, relationship violence, sex or gender-based bullying, stalking, and/or sexual harassment may seek resources and help at [Help for Victims and Survivors](#). To get help by phone, a student can also call either the UO's 24-hour confidential hotline at 541-346-7233 [SAFE], or the non-confidential Title IX Coordinator at 541-346-2204. From the SAFE website, students may also connect to [Callisto](#), a confidential, third-party reporting site that is not a part of the university.

Students experiencing any other form of prohibited discrimination or harassment can find information at [How to Get Support](#). You can contact [Investigations and Civil Rights Compliance](#) through this link and at 541-346-3123, or the [Dean of Students Office](#) at 541-346-3216 for help. As UO policy has different reporting requirements based on the nature of the reported harassment or discrimination, additional information about reporting requirements for discrimination or harassment unrelated to sexual assault, relationship violence, sex or gender based bullying, stalking, and/or sexual harassment is available at [Discrimination & Harassment](#).

The instructor of this class, as a Student Directed Employee, will direct students who disclose sexual harassment or sexual violence to resources that can help and will only report the information shared to the university administration when the student requests that the information be reported (unless someone is in imminent risk of serious harm or a minor). The instructor of this class is required to report all other forms of prohibited discrimination or harassment to the university administration. Specific details about confidentiality of information and reporting obligations of employees can be found at [Employee Reporting Responsibilities](#).

Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse

UO employees, including faculty, staff, and GEs, are mandatory reporters of child abuse. This statement is to advise you that your disclosure of information about child abuse to a UO employee may trigger the UO employee's duty to report that information to the designated authorities. Please refer to the following links for detailed information about mandatory reporting: [Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect](#).