

Latino History / Food History Resources



The National Museum of American History's **Food History Team** has assembled the following resources, which speak to and reflect the role of **food** in the migration, work, family, and community experiences of Latinos in the United States. Through objects, oral histories, archival materials, and public programs, the museum recognizes and honors the lives of Latinos and facilitates conversations on their critical contributions to food production and culinary innovations. For many individuals in the Latino diaspora, food work has provided an often-tenuous economic toehold in the United States. For many more, food has become a powerful way of connecting with communities and sharing cultural traditions from home with fellow Americans. These two historic threads, and many more themes, are reflected in the gathered resources on this list, shedding light on the resilience of Latino community members, past and present.

Exhibitions

Stories featuring the experiences of Latino community members within the context of food history can be found in several exhibitions at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. Here is a selection of highlights:

Exhibition: *FOOD: Transforming the American Table*

TV Chefs: These Latino chefs are among the TV chefs featured near Julia Child's kitchen in the exhibition:

- [José Andrés](#)
- [Pati Jinich](#)

[A System of Abundance](#): Explores the importance of migrant field labor such as the Bracero Program and the United Farm Workers union.

[Snack Nation](#): Highlights the importance and impact of the corn chip.

[The Migrants Table](#): explores stories of the impact of Latino foodways on how and what people eat in the United States.

- [Dine and Learn](#): Features Sandra Gutierrez's story and how she combines Latin American and U.S. Southern foodways.
- [New in Your Shopping Aisle](#): Highlights Goya Foods Inc.'s role in supplying Latino/Hispanic and then later the broader U.S. population with Caribbean and Latino foods.

[The Mexican Food Revolution](#): Highlights traditional and entrepreneurial impacts of Mexican and Tex Mex foodways in the United States.

- [Mexican Food Migrations](#): Features the Concha Sanchez family and their homemade tortillas.
- [Tortillas at the Supermarket](#): Details the history of Azteca Foods as well as the broader marketing and distribution of Latino foods in grocery stores.
- [The Tex-Mex Invasion](#): Explores the rise of the El Chico Tex-Mex restaurant chain and food empire that helped spread Tex-Mex food culture across the U.S.
- [Frozen Margaritas!](#): Highlights the frozen margarita machine from Mariano's Restaurant.

[Countercultures](#): In the 1960s and 1970s, food became a tool of resistance, consciousness-raising, and self-expression for some Americans, including Latinos.

- [Voting with Your Fork](#): Latino activists were among a diverse group of people who advocated for alternative food production and distribution systems to address food inequities.

[Wine for the Table](#): Looks at the rise of American wine culture in the second half of the 1900s, including the important role of Latinos.

- [Introducing Wine to the Table](#): Includes a California poster, commissioned by the Wine Advisory Board, with original artwork by Amado Gonzalez.

- [Innovations in the Vineyard](#) and the [Napa Vintner](#): Showcase the role of Mexican Americans in vineyards and wine cellars through a series of [videos](#).
- [La Familia](#): Highlights the history of Mexican American vineyard workers and their role as industry leaders. Featured individuals and families include: the Robledo family, Gustavo Brambila, the Llamas family, and the Ceja family.

Exhibition: *American Enterprise*

- [The Case of Luisa Moreno](#): Explores Moreno's work with food-related labor unions.
- Biographies:
 - [Cesar Chavez](#), co-leader of the United Farm Workers
 - [Dora Escobar](#), Salvadoran restaurateur
 - [Sara Sunshine](#), Cuban refugee and advertising industry leader

Exhibition: *Many Voices, One Nation*

- [Marching with Liberty](#): Features the Immokalee Statue of Liberty by Kat Rodriguez carried by The Coalition of Immokalee Workers

Exhibition:

Explores the migrant worker program that brought an estimated two million Mexican men to the United States on short-term labor contracts between 1942 and 1964.

Collections

The Smithsonian's National Museum of American History houses collections of artifacts, documents, books, ephemera, and digital materials that reflect and relate to the experiences of Latino communities and food history, broadly conceived. Here is a sampling of food history collections that reflect and represent the experiences of Latinos in the United States.

- Guide to the [Association of Hispanic Advertising Agencies Collection](#)
- Guide to the [El Chico Restaurant Collection](#)
- Guide to the Goya Foods, Inc. Coll
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- Guide to the Leonard Nadel Bracero History Collection
- Guide to the [Latino Winemakers Oral History Project](#)
- Guide to the [American Wine Documentation Project](#)

- Guide to Julia Child Award Winners Collection
 - See materials related to chefs [Rick Bayless](#), [José Andrés](#), and [Susan Feniger and Mary Sue Milliken](#)
- Guide to the [Teodoro Vidal Collection](#) and related [Object Group](#), which contains several food-related artifacts
- [Numerous objects relating to the United Farm Workers](#) including posters and pins.
- Objects relating to the Robledo Family Winery including this [bar stool](#)
- Objects relating to Ceja Vineyards including [these posters featuring Amelia Ceja's cooking demonstrations](#)
- [Chaz Bojorquez La Plata Wine Labels Art Portfolio](#)
- [Objects relating to the Concha Sanchez family](#)

Blog posts

Since 2009, staff, interns, and fellows at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History have written blog posts about the intersection of food history and Latino experiences in the United States. Relevant posts from the museum's blog, O Say Can You See, include:

September 10, 2009. L. Stephen Velasquez, "[Collecting bracero history](#)."

May 5, 2010. Rayna Green, "[A frozen margarita tale for Cinco de Mayo](#)."

February 21, 2013. L. Stephen Velasquez, "[Feeding America: the people and politics that bring food to our table](#)."

May 8, 2017. L. Stephen Velasquez, "[Deep Family Roots: Mexican American Stories from California Vineyards](#)."

December 19, 2018. Ashley Rose Young on Chef Jason Flores' "Cooking Up History" program, "[Bringing the outdoors in...one squirrel at a time](#)."

October 15, 2020. Luke Perez, "[Essential and expendable: The rise of agricultural labor and the United Farm Workers](#)."

Cooking Up History

Monthly, the American Food History Project invites a guest chef to appear on the Coulter Plaza at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History for a live cooking demonstration program called "Cooking Up History." Since 2015, the museum has hosted over 100 unique programs and shared over 200 recipes representing food cultures from across the United States

and the world. Below is a list of past and present programs (and recipes) that represent the diverse foodways and culinary knowledge of Latino communities in the U.S. and beyond.

Date: September 4, 2015

Title of Program: Hispanic-Heritage Month – Puerto Rico and the Bronx

Speaker: Alex Strong

Recipes (hyperlinks to PDFs):

- [Medallion de Pollo con Arbol de Pan \(Chicken Medallions with Mashed Breadfruit\)](#)
- [Mavi or Mabi \(Fermented Cold Tea from the Bark of the Mauby Tree\)](#)



Alex Strong during Cooking Up History

Courtesy of Smithsonian's National Museum of American History

Date: September 11, 2015

Title of Program: Hispanic-Heritage Month – Mexican Cuisine

Speaker: Ernesto Cadima

Recipes (hyperlinks to PDFs):

- [Roasted Cauliflower with Lime Dressing and Toasted Pepitas](#)
- [Guacamole](#)
- [Shrimp Tacos with Pico de Gallo and Lime Crema](#)



Ernesto Cadima during Cooking Up History

Courtesy of Smithsonian's National Museum of American History

Date: September 18, 2015

Title of Program: Hispanic-Heritage Month – South America and Spain

Speaker: Anna Norman

Recipes (hyperlinks to PDFs):

- [Argentinean Grilled Steak with Chimichurri Sauce](#)
- [Dulce de Leche Flan](#)



Anna Norman during Cooking Up History

Courtesy of Smithsonian's National Museum of American History

Date: September 25, 2015

Title of Program: Hispanic Heritage Month – Maize in the New World

Speaker: Angie Rosado

Recipe (hyperlink to PDF):

- [Sorullos con Carne \(Stuffed Corn Fritters\)](#)



Angie Rosado

Courtesy of Angie Rosado

Date: October 24, 2015

Title of Program: Innovating Salsas and Guacamole

Speaker: Pati Jinich

Recipe (hyperlink to PDF): not available



Pati Jinich during Food History Weekend

Courtesy of Smithsonian's National Museum of American History

Date: April 8, 2016

Title of Program: The Mexican-American Table

Speaker: Amelia Morán Ceja

Recipes (hyperlinks to PDFs):

- [Homemade Tortillas](#)
- [Salsa](#)
- [Chilaquiles](#)



Amelia Morán Ceja during Cooking Up History

Courtesy of Smithsonian's National Museum of American History

Date: September 17, 2016

Title of Program: Cuban-American Food Traditions

Speaker: Ana Sofia Peláez

Recipes (hyperlinks to PDFs):

- [Camarones Enchilados \(Creole Shrimp\)](#)
- [Merenguitos Dormidos \(Sleeping Meringues\)](#)
- [Mojito](#)



Ana Sofia Peláez during Cooking Up History

Courtesy of Smithsonian's National Museum of American History

Date: September 16, 2017

Title of Program: The New Southern-Latino Table

Speaker: Sandra Gutierrez

Recipes (hyperlinks to PDFs):

- [Avocado Soup](#)
- [Pork Rind Biscuits](#)
- [Pumpkin Seed Brittle](#)



Ashley Rose Young and Sandra Gutierrez during Cooking Up History
Courtesy of Smithsonian's National Museum of American History

Date: October 28, 2017

Title of Program: Peppers of the Americas

Speaker: Maricel Presilla

Recipe (hyperlink to PDF):

- [Mole Coloradito de Guajolote](#)



Maricel Presilla during Food History Weekend

Courtesy of Smithsonian's National Museum of American History

Date: October 6, 2018

Title of Program: Exploring Mexican Regional Cooking

Speaker: Zarela Martínez

Recipe (hyperlink to PDF):

- [Salpicon de Huachinango](#)



Zarela Martínez. Photo by Laurie Smith.

Date: November 3, 2018

Title of Program: Oklahoma – Bringing the Outdoors In

Speaker: Jason Flores

Recipes (hyperlinks to PDFs):

- [Buttermilk Fried Squirrel with Gravy](#)
- [Pimento and Cheddar Drop Biscuits](#)



Ashley Rose Young and Jason Flores during Food History Weekend

Courtesy of Smithsonian's National Museum of American History

Date: November 3, 2018

Title of Program: Mexican Regional Cuisine in the U.S.

Speaker: Aarón Sánchez

Recipe (hyperlink to PDF):

- [Manchamantel](#)



Aarón Sánchez during Food History Weekend

Courtesy of Smithsonian's National Museum of American History

Date: September 20, 2019

Title of Program: The Mexican Food Revolution

Speaker: Carlos Salgado

Recipe (hyperlink to PDF):

- [Nixtamalization and Corn Tortillas](#)



Carlos Salgado and Ashley Rose Young during Cooking Up History
Courtesy of Smithsonian's National Museum of American History

Date: October 12, 2019

Title of Program: Salsa con Salsa

Speaker: Daniela Hurtado

Recipes (hyperlinks to PDFs):

- [Lomo Saltado](#)
- [Papas a la Huancaína](#)
- [Mazamorra Morada](#)



Ashley Rose Young and Daniela Hurtado during Cooking Up History
Courtesy of Smithsonian's National Museum of American History

Date: November 9, 2019

Title of Program: Salvadoran Cuisine in the District

Speaker: Dora Escobar

Recipe (hyperlink to PDF): not available



Stephen Velasquez and Dora Escobar during Food History Weekend
Courtesy of Smithsonian's National Museum of American History

Date: November 9, 2020

Title of Program: La Vida Verde L.A.

Speaker: Jocelyn Ramirez

Recipe (hyperlink to PDF):

- [Las Tres Hermanas en Chipotle](#)

Recording: [Cooking Up History: La Vida Verde L.A. with Chef Jocelyn Ramirez](#)



Jocelyn Ramirez

Date: July 26, 2021

Title of Program: Pleibol and Eat Well! Latino Culinary Traditions and Américas' Game

Speaker: Dayanny De La Cruz

Recipes (hyperlinks to PDFs):

- [Domini-Cubano Sandwich](#)
- [Bull Pen Elote](#)
- [Pinchos de Watermelon and Tomatillo](#)



Dayanny De La Cruz

Date: February 22, 2022

Title of Program: Bakers Against Racism: The Power of Community Activism through Food

Speaker: Paola Velez

Recipes (hyperlinks to PDFs):

- [Fluffy Cashew Brittle](#)
- [Yaniqueque](#)



Paola Velez during virtual Cooking Up History Program

Courtesy of Smithsonian's National Museum of American History

Food History Weekend

Since 2015, the American Food History Project has hosted a multiday festival each fall to explore a key aspect in American history through the lens of food. During Food History Weekend, the museum invites chefs, home cooks, activists, practitioners, and the public to come together at Roundtables, Deep-Dish Dialogues, Cooking Up History demonstrations, film forums, gallery spaces, and more to share and learn from one another.

“The Politics of Farm Labor” Roundtable, featuring Carlos Castañeda of Castañeda & Sons, Inc., and Mission Labor Inc., Eliseo Medina of the Service Employees International Union, and Smithsonian curator Mireya Loza, among others, October 28, 2016

- Recording: [Food History Weekend 2016: Roundtables. Session 2: The Politics of Farm Labor](#)

“Migration Nation” Roundtable, featuring Professor Matt Garcia and culinary historian and chef Maricel Presilla, among others, October 27, 2017

- Recording: [Smithsonian Food History Weekend 2017: Roundtable Session 1](#)

“Help Wanted” Roundtable, featuring Jose Oliva, the co-director of the Food Chain Workers Alliance, among others, October 27, 2017

- Recording: [Smithsonian Food History Weekend 2017: Roundtables Session 2](#)

“Remixing the South” Roundtable, featuring cookbook author Sandra Gutierrez, among others, November 2, 2018

- Recording: [Smithsonian Food History Weekend 2018: Roundtable Session 4](#)

“Past, Present, and Place in Mexican Cuisine” Deep-Dish Dialogue, featuring Chef Aarón Sánchez in conversation with Smithsonian curator Stephen Velasquez, November 3, 2018

- Recording: not available

“Empowering Communities through Food” Roundtable, featuring chef Daniela Hurtado and entrepreneur Lourdez Gonzales, among others, November 8, 2019

- Recording: [Empowering Communities through Food \(Smithsonian Food History Weekend\)](#)

“A Better Deal for Food Workers” Deep-Dish Dialogue, featuring Lorena Quiroz-Lewis, executive director of the Immigrant Alliance for Justice and Equality, and Smithsonian curator Stephen Velasquez, November 9, 2020

- Recording: [Deep-Dish Dialogue: A Better Deal for Food Workers](#)

Other Programs and Digital Resources

“La Causa: The Delano Grape Strike, 1965–1970,” September 2005

- Recording: [La Causa: The Delano Grape Strike \(part 1\)](#)

“[Taco Nation/Planet Taco: How Mexican-American Food Conquered the World!](#)” February 9, 2013

- [Recording part 1](#)
- [Recording part 2](#)

“[Feeding America: Labor, Politics, and Food](#),” February 23, 2013

“Ask a Farmer: Latinos in Agriculture,” featuring Jesse Larios of Foster Feed Yard and Rudy Arredondo of the National Latino Farmers and Ranchers Trade Association, Summer 2016

- Recording: [Ask a Farmer: Latinos in Agriculture](#)

“Rooted in Family: Wine and Stories from Mexican American Winemakers,” May 2017

- Recording: not available

“Archiving Taste: A Roundtable on Food History at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History, American Historical Association, January 2018

- Recording: not available

“Arepas: The Power of Bread and Community,” featuring cookbook author Sandra Gutierrez, Summer 2020

- Recording: [Arepas: The Power of Bread and Community](#)