

# Monterey County Taste

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TAMMY LJUNGBLAD/Kansas City Star  
**A soy marinade goes great with grilled salmon salad.**

## The magic of marinade in grilled salmon salad

By JILL WENDHOLT SILVA  
Kansas City Star

Chefs use marinades to make foods tender and infuse them with flavor. But scientists have discovered marinades also act as a barrier to potentially carcinogenic substances that are created when meat and fish are cooked over flames. Using a marinade before grilling reduces HCA (heterocyclic amines) by 92 percent to 99 percent, according to the American Institute for Cancer Research (aicr.org).

Our recipe for grilled salmon salad features an Asian-inspired soy marinade that gives the heart-healthy salmon a moist, delicious flavor. The fish is paired with a complement of fresh vegetables, including pea pods, asparagus and tomatoes. A final sprinkling of sesame seeds supplies loads of flavor and phytonutrients.

**Cooking tips:** The salmon for this recipe can be fresh or thawed. Frozen salmon may be smaller, and if so, cook 4-ounce fillets in similar fashion, reducing cooking time if necessary. Be sure not to overcook the fish.

Snap ends from asparagus and, if desired, remove scales with a vegetable peeler.

Trim ends from pea pods and remove strings before cooking.

To toast sesame seeds, bake at 350 degrees 4 to 5 minutes or until just golden. Watch closely so they don't burn.

### Grilled salmon salad

(Makes 4 servings)

- 2 salmon fillets, about 8 oz. each
- 8 asparagus spears
- ½ cup freshly squeezed lime juice
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon sesame oil
- 2 tablespoons reduced-sodium soy sauce
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 teaspoons grated fresh ginger
- 1 tablespoon seasoned rice vinegar
- ½ cups fresh snow pea pods, trimmed
- 6 cups torn salad greens
- 1 tablespoon sesame seeds, toasted
- 2 Roma tomatoes, sliced

**Steps:** Place salmon fillets in zip-top bag. Trim asparagus spears and place in another zip-top bag. Combine lime juice, brown sugar, sesame oil, soy sauce, garlic and ginger; stir well to combine. Drizzle 2 T. lime juice mixture over salmon; seal bag. Drizzle 1 T. lime juice mixture over asparagus; seal bag. Turn bags to coat evenly, then refrigerate about 30 minutes. Stir vinegar into remaining lime juice mixture; cover and refrigerate.

Preheat grill or allow coals to burn down to white ash. Spray grate with nonstick spray coating or lightly oil it.

Remove salmon from bag; drain and discard marinade. Grill salmon 4 to 5 minutes per side, or until fish flakes easily with a fork.

Remove asparagus from bag; drain and discard marinade. Grill asparagus until just fork tender, 5 to 7 minutes, turning to cook evenly. Meanwhile, heat a small amount of water to a boil in a covered saucepan. Once water boils, add pea pods, cover and cook about 2 minutes or until hot but still crisp. Drain pea pods and plunge into ice water.

Arrange salad greens on 4 individual plates. Top each salad with ½ of a hot, cooked salmon fillet. (If salmon fillets have skin, remove before serving.) Sprinkle sesame seeds evenly over salmon. Arrange asparagus spears, pea pods and sliced tomatoes on each salad. Drizzle with reserved lime juice mixture.

Per serving: 257 calories (30 percent from fat), 9 grams total fat (1 gram saturated), 59 milligrams cholesterol, 19 grams carbohydrates, 28 grams protein, 357 milligrams sodium, 5 grams dietary fiber.

—Recipes created for the Kansas City Star by professional home economists Kathryn Moore and Roxanne Wyss.



A man leads his sheep to market in a small town in the Andes of Southern Ecuador.

JULIO RAMIREZ/Special to The Herald

## SPINE OF THE ANDES

### CULINARY ADVENTURES IN SOUTHERN ECUADOR

By MARIE PERUGGA-RAMIREZ and JULIO RAMIREZ  
Herald Correspondents

The church towers were shimmering in the bright mountain sun as we drove out of Cuenca that day. Colorful flower stalls rimmed the church plaza, women with baskets of roses were selling bouquets, and produce vendors were offering fruits, vegetables and verdant bundles of alfalfa; down the broad stone stairway to the river, women were washing

clothes in the icy water, spreading their colorful laundry to dry in the brilliant sun high in the Andes of Southern Ecuador.

Armed with a map, we planned to return to Quito, the capital, by driving along the crest of the Andes. We took a detour to see the ruins at Ingapirca, an ancient Inca site of worship and astronomy; the map had made it look easy. But the road to Ingapirca turned out to be a rocky surprise: We hadn't expected it to be so damaged by the recent rains of El Niño.

Ingapirca, however, was enchanting. We hiked among the ruins — enjoying the mountain views, watching the herdsmen tending their flocks and the shepherd girls spinning yarn with the spindles dangling from their hands — until Julio pointed out that the sun was setting. It had taken us longer to get to Ingapirca over that rutted road than we'd anticipated and, now, with the sun low on the horizon, we needed to find a place to spend the night.

We started out for the closest town on the map but that "town" turned out to be a collection of herdsmen's huts,

Please see Ecuador page D5



JULIO RAMIREZ/Special to The Herald  
**A woman offers chiles and tree tomatoes in her market stall.**



Fruits and vegetables grow oversize in the Andes because of the intense sunshine on the equator at 10,000 feet.

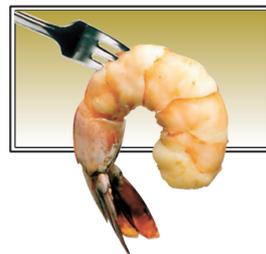
### About the authors

Julio Ramirez and Marie Perucca-Ramirez, creators of the Fishwife Seafood Restaurants and Turtle Bay Taquerias on the Monterey Peninsula, sold their restaurants last year to start The Food Wranglers Inc., a restaurant consultant group. Julio is certified as an executive chef by the American Culinary Federation and in 1999 was inducted into the prestigious American Academy of Chefs. Marie is a writer with a degree in history and sociology and a master's in applied linguistics. The couple have always enjoyed traveling the back roads of the world; they are interested in seeing what other ethnic groups grow, what they eat, how they prepare their food — what their various cultures "taste like." During their travels they have met many remarkable individuals, had a number of unusual experiences, eaten a variety of unfamiliar foods — and collected some great recipes they have adapted for home use. Once a month they will share their experiences — through words and photos — with Herald readers. Write to them at marie@foodwranglers.com. Next month: Thailand.



## Good to know

What's cooking?



### Quick fix

#### Mussels in white wine

(Serves 2)

- 1 T. butter
- 1 med. onion, sliced (about 2 cups)
- 1 large carrot, sliced (about 1 cup)
- 1 celery rib, sliced (about 1 cup)
- ½ cup dry white wine
- Freshly ground pepper
- 4 lbs. mussels
- ¼ cup chopped parsley
- ½ French baguette, sliced

**Steps:** Melt the butter in a large saucepan over medium heat. Sauté the onion, carrot and celery until they begin to shrink but not color, about 10 minutes. Add the wine and some pepper. Add the mussels and cover the pan tightly. Raise the heat and boil just until mussels open, about 3 minutes. Do not overcook. With a slotted spoon, transfer mussels to two bowls, discarding any unopened ones. Bring pan liquid back to a boil. Cook about 1 minute to reduce, and set aside. Sprinkle mussels with parsley, and serve. When finished, serve vegetables and broth (leave about ¼ inch in pan as it may be gritty) with baguette slices.

**Per serving:** 490 calories (21 percent from fat), 11.5 g fat (4.7 g saturated, 3.2 g monounsaturated), 64 mg cholesterol, 28.1 g protein, 60.8 g carbohydrates, 7.3 g fiber, 900 mg sodium.

Linda Gassenheimer is the author of 14 cookbooks including her newest, "The Portion Plan" and "Prevention's Fit and Fast Meals in Minutes." Visit Linda on her Web page at [www.DinnerInMinutes.com](http://www.DinnerInMinutes.com).



MCT

## On the shelf

### It can take the heat

Williams-Sonoma's Mesh Grill-Top Frying Pan (above) sizzled on our grills, cooking fish and veggies to perfection. We admired the 12-inch skillet's sturdy, stainless-steel construction, as well as its ability to fit onto our smallest gas grill. A tiny caveat: The shiny metal turns dull after one visit to the grill. It's dishwasher-safe and costs \$30 by mail at [williams-sonoma.com](http://williams-sonoma.com) (or call 877-812-6235).

## Good to know

### Speed roast

Love the sweet flavor of roasted garlic, but don't want to wait the 30, 45, or 60 minutes it takes to roast it in the oven? Try this speedy skillet roasting method picked up from that great authority on Mexican cooking, Rick Bayless: Place a dry skillet over medium heat. Add unpeeled garlic cloves. Cook 10 to 15 minutes, or until soft — time will vary depending on size of the cloves — shaking pan occasionally to avoid scorching. Allow cloves to cool, and then slip them out of their skins. Presto! Roasted garlic ready for duty. It's a great companion to root vegetables, can be spread on toasted bread for bruschetta, or added to salad dressings. Its uses are limited only by your imagination.

## GO! out

**70th annual Carmel Bach Festival.** With music director Bruno Weil and concertmaster Elizabeth Wallfisch. With music, dinners and lectures. Tickets start at \$20. 624-2046, [www.bachfestival.org](http://www.bachfestival.org).

## All about wine

Our online wine expert George Edwards of WineMarket in Pacific Grove writes about a wine called Torrontes. Read all of Edwards' columns or ask him a wine-related question of your own. Go to [www.montereyherald.com](http://www.montereyherald.com), click on columnists and find "All About Wine."



# 10 things to make with fresh mint

By CATHY THOMAS  
Orange County Register

The shiny pizzazz of fresh mint is turning up in more and more dishes on restaurant menus and in recipes found in cookbooks and food magazines.

There's leafy-green mint in pesto and potato salads. Mint in fruit salsas, dressings and sauces. Mint in chocolate confections and atop sliced fruit.

I think a cocktail called a mojito is fueling the fresh-mint trend. The Cuban libation teams oodles of fresh mint with rum, sugar and lime juice. Over the past few years, it has become a must-have concoction in watering holes from coast to coast.

"Mojitos are extremely, extremely popular," said Nicole Aloni, author of "The Backyard Bartender: 55 Cool Summer Cocktails" (Clarkson Potter, \$16.95).

"When you see a major company like Bacardi making auxiliary products like mojito kits and muddlers (devices for crushing mint and sugar into a paste), you

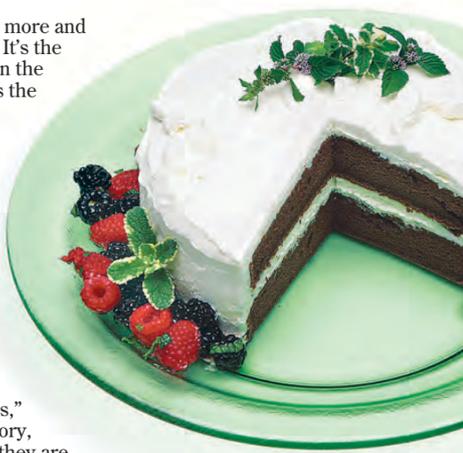
know it's a commodity. And now more and more variations are being made. It's the only cocktail that can be placed in the same category popularity-wise as the margarita.

"You can probably order a mojito in Des Moines. You can get one off the menu at chain eateries, the benchmark for proving that they aren't the least bit unusual anymore."

I contend that mint's spunky taste plays a starring role in reeling drinkers in. That signature flavor makes folks eager to spread their culinary wings and give mint a try in other dishes.

"I think they love the freshness," Aloni said, agreeing with my theory, adding that consumers feel as if they are eating fresh food when mint is included, whether it's in a cocktail or something else.

Please see Mint page D6



NICK KOON/Orange County Register

**Make this easy chocolate cake with mint whipped cream frosting garnished with fresh berries and chopped fresh mint.**

**TASTE**

**Ecuador**

From page D1

so we drove on. By now, it was not only dark, but a dense fog had settled in. We bumped along over the deep ruts, our small car hugging the mountain-side of the road — the other side being a sheer drop off into the valley below.

Periodically, out of the darkness, a huge gasoline truck would roar by us, the two vehicles barely able to pass each on the narrow road. Then rain began falling — and then falling harder. The potholes were filling with rain; some looked like small lakes in our headlights. It was risky crossing them — if we got stuck in the mud, we would be there all night, sitting ducks for the gasoline trucks. If we left our headlights on to warn approaching vehicles, we'd soon kill the car battery; if we didn't leave them on, the next gasoline truck coming around the bend would cream us as we sat mired in the mud. It was terrifying. Since the road had no shoulder to pull off onto, we had no choice but to continue on.

Finally we came to a town with a small hotel. By now we were exhausted, cold and hungry — we felt like we were in a Stephen King novel. The hotel turned out to be memorable not only for the bedding that inspired us to sleep with our clothes on, but for the bathrooms that were so small we couldn't close the doors because our knees stuck out. Nevertheless, it was late and we were grateful for a place to stop and get off of the road.

The next morning, we headed out early, planning to stop and eat somewhere down the road. Then we noticed pickup trucks full of animals and country people wearing the colorful dress of the tribes of that area. They all seemed to be heading in the same direction off of the main road. They were going to market!

We followed the trucks to a good-size town — or it was good size now because the throng of marketgoers filled every open space. Julio and I looked at each other smiling: We had found food heaven!

People were selling every type of fruit and vegetable imaginable — and large! The intense sun shining down on the Andes at 10,000 feet elevation on the equator produces prodigious cabbages, melons and squash. There were kumquats, lichees, avocados, peanuts, tomatoes, potatoes, grains . . . and livestock. People were bartering for sheep, pigs, llamas and cuyes (guinea pigs, a favorite Andean food). The marketplace was a riot of noise, jostling, animal smells and colors. Vendors were bartering, hawking and greeting friends as farmers and herdsman made deals, and trussed animals awaited their fates in multicolored trucks.

There were pastries, meats, stews and soups offered from food stands. Pigs and guinea pigs were roasting; the air was filled with the scent of toasting corn and wood fires. And we were hungry. We had the best chicken (ever!) in this market town — freshly killed, spice rubbed, deep fried in a large caldron and served hot, wrapped in paper.



JULIO RAMIREZ/Special to The Herald

**Marketgoers bargain for guinea pigs, a favorite dish in the Andes.**

Later that day the road took us into Baños — a town nestled against the side of Tunguragua, an active volcano. The volcano provides the thermal waters for the town's mineral baths, an attraction that draws many Ecuadorian vacationers here. The town is full of fine little restaurants, small hotels, artisans' and craftsmen's shops.

We quickly found lodging in a comfortable inn and went out to explore the busy streets bustling with vendors selling balloons, toys and sugar cane confections. We stopped at one of the many shops offering whole, spit-roasted, guinea pigs — Julio just had to have one (it tastes like duck) — then spent the rest of the day talking to gregarious shop owners, one of whom urged us to try a bowl of his sister's creamy avocado soup (delicious!).

The next morning found us up early in the chilly predawn hours, sitting in a pool of Tunguragua's hot sulfurous water, chatting with fellow bathers, while we watched the sun rise over the Andes. Another beautiful day was dawning.

**Avocado cream soup**  
(Serves 4)

This chilled soup has a delicate taste and beautiful presentation—perfect for a luncheon course or to enjoy on a hot afternoon.

4 med. Hass avocados (for full flavor use California or Mexican grown)



JULIO RAMIREZ/Special to The Herald

**Even small children enjoy treats from the food stalls at the marketplace.**

2 cups chicken stock (use homemade or the boxed stocks)  
2 T. fresh lime juice  
¼ tsp. Worcestershire sauce  
2 tsp. salt (or more to taste)  
¼ tsp. pepper  
1 cup half-and-half  
Garnish (optional): 1 avocado, 1 small tomato

**Steps:** Purée all of the ingredients, except the garnish and the half-and-half, in a blender or food processor. Add the half-and-half and purée again. Refrigerate in a nonreactive container. Serve chilled. (Can be served hot, but heat it gently; don't boil!)

**To garnish:** Serve the soup in four bowls. Cut 16 thin slices from the remaining avocado; arrange the slices in a pinwheel around the center of the soup, four slices to a bowl, and put 1 tsp. of diced tomatoes in the center.

**Andean market chicken**  
(Serves 4)

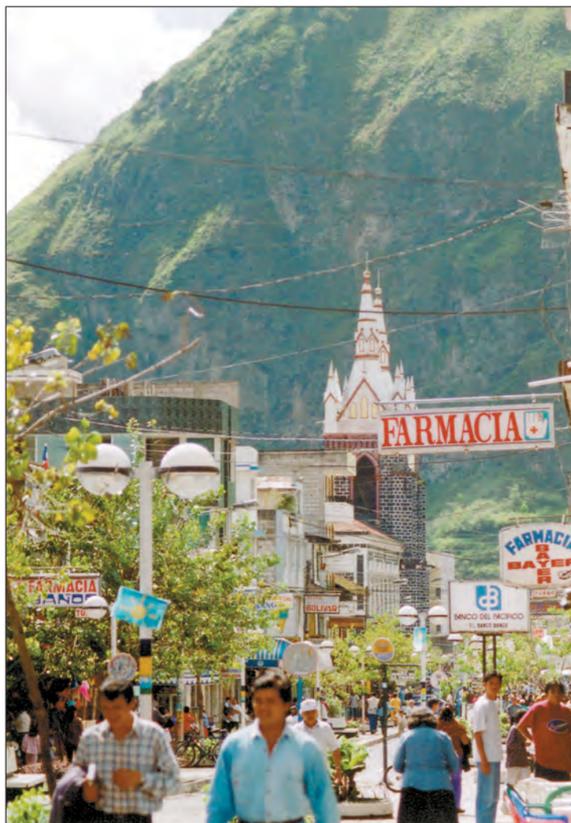
This chicken is good hot or cold. While we had it deep-fried in lard, this adaptation is equally tasty.

14-lb. chicken  
6 to 8 garlic cloves, chopped  
½ onion, chopped  
¼ red bell pepper, chopped  
1 tsp. black pepper  
1 T. salt  
1 T. sugar

2 T. achiote paste (Note: this signature South American and Central American seasoning of crushed annatto seeds and spices is sold in small bricks; it's widely available in Latin markets, e.g. Mi Tierra in Seaside, Mi Pueblo in Salinas)

**Steps:** Cut the chicken into pieces — legs, thighs, wings, etc. Set aside. Purée the rest of the ingredients in a blender: yield 1½ cups of recado rojo. Place the chicken pieces and the recado rojo in a plastic bag; marinate in the refrigerator for 4 hours

**To roast:** Cook uncovered, in 425 oven for 20 minutes, then cook another 20 minutes at 300. Let rest



JULIO RAMIREZ/Special to The Herald

**The town of Baños is nestled in the shoulder of Tunguragua, an active volcano.**

5 minutes before serving.

To grill: Turning frequently, cook a total of 15 minutes on each side (30 minutes in all).

Serve accompanied with quinoa (recipe follows) and a green salad.

**Quinoa**  
(Serves 4)

Quinoa, a grain originally domesticated thousands of years ago in the Andes, is becoming more well-known in the U.S. as people discover that it's tasty, versatile and offers complete protein. Quinoa, with its nutty flavor, can be used as a starch, such as rice — and leftovers can be the base for a great summer salad (just add lemon juice, a little olive oil and diced tomatoes, onions, cucumbers, bell peppers, chopped cilantro or basil, and mix).

1 cup quinoa (available at Trader Joe's, Safeway, Whole Foods)  
1 T. olive oil  
½ cup minced onion  
1½ tsp. minced garlic  
1 cup water  
1½ tsp. salt  
½ tsp. freshly ground black pepper

**Steps:** Rinse the quinoa three times; set aside. Heat the oil in a skillet over medium heat; sauté until the onions and garlic are translucent, about 2 minutes. Add the quinoa, water, salt and pepper. Bring to a boil, cover and cook over low heat for 15 minutes. Let rest for 15 minutes.

Serve as accompaniment to stews, short ribs, roasted chicken.

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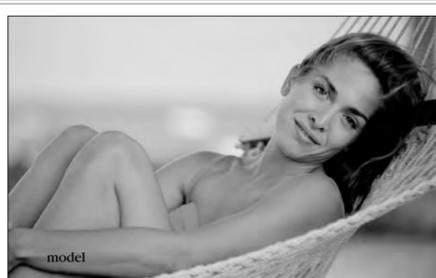


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