

bon appétit

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THE FRESHEST FISH OF THE DAY

"This restaurant is always a party, a happy place," the prolific Peruvian chef Gastón Acurio said while lunching at La Mar, his lively, crazily popular ceviche restaurant in Lima that has spawned outposts in San Francisco and New York. La Mar's menu reads as a kind of encyclopedia of the citrusy cured seafood, with dozens of iterations of this national dish. One taste of the tangy, salty, *rocoto* pepper-spiked stuff and it's easy to see why this quickly prepared, dead-

simple dish of acid-kissed fish is so enduring.

"There are two thousand *cevicherias* in Lima," Acurio told me. "But we want to show the world what a true Peruvian ceviche is." **The beauty is in the balance: not too sour, not too salty.** "Never squeeze the limes completely: The pith will lend a bitterness. And **never let the ceviche marinate for more than two minutes.**" The other requirements? "The best-quality ingredients, generosity, and intensity." —ADAM SACHS



{ Peruvian Ceviche }

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Peruvian Ceviche

4–6 SERVINGS *Blending ice cubes into the marinade helps to keep the fish and marinade ice-cold while you're preparing and serving.*

LECHE DE TIGRE

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup fresh lime juice
- 2 garlic cloves, smashed
- 1 Tbsp. (packed) chopped fresh cilantro leaves
- $\frac{1}{2}$ aji limo or habanero chile, seeded
- $\frac{1}{2}$ small red onion, chopped
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup bottled clam juice (optional)
- Kosher salt

CEVICHE

- 1 small sweet potato (about 8 oz.)
- 1 ear of corn, husked
- 1 aji limo or habanero chile, seeded, halved lengthwise
- 1 lb. fluke, flounder, or sole, cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ " cubes
- 1 small red onion, quartered and thinly sliced, divided
- Kosher salt
- Cilantro leaves

INGREDIENT INFO: Aji limo chiles are sold at Latin markets; look for habanero chiles at some supermarkets and at Latin markets.

LECHE DE TIGRE Set a fine-mesh sieve over a small bowl. Purée first 4 ingredients and 4 large ice cubes in a blender until smooth. Add onion; pulse 3–4 times. Strain liquid into a medium bowl. Stir in clam juice, if desired; season with salt. Cover and chill.

CEVICHE Pour water into a large pot fitted with a steamer basket to a depth of 1"; bring to a boil. Add sweet potato, cover, and cook until just fork-tender, about 30 minutes. Transfer to a plate; let cool.

Meanwhile, add more water to same pot, if needed, to measure 1"; bring to a boil. Add ear of corn to pot and steam until crisp-tender, 2–3 minutes. Transfer to a plate; let cool completely.

Halve potato lengthwise. Using a small melon baller, scoop out potato balls and place them in a small bowl; set aside. Cut kernels from cob. Reserve $\frac{1}{3}$ cup kernels (save extra kernels for another use).

Rub a large bowl with cut sides of chile; discard. Place fluke, $\frac{2}{3}$ of onion, leche de tigre, and 4 large ice cubes in bowl; stir well. Let marinate for 2 minutes; remove ice. Fold in potato and corn; season with salt.

Using a slotted spoon, divide ceviche into small bowls or onto plates. Drizzle ceviche with leche de tigre from bowl; garnish with remaining onion and cilantro.