

JUNE, THE MONTH OF PUERTO RICAN GASTRONOMY



In June we officially receive the summer, usually we look for where to eat and have a gastronomic experience either to share with family or after a day at the beach. Our cuisine is a mix of Taíno, African and Spanish influences that are part of our cultural identity. Many of our traditional dishes can be part of a healthy diet when prepared with proper cooking techniques and consumed in **balanced portions**.

For example, foods such as banana (panapen), yautía, yucca, ñame, malanga and sweet potato are excellent sources of energy, fiber, vitamins and minerals. Prefer them boiled, roasted, steamed. in soups and stews, instead of fried.

Pigeon peas, beans and chickpeas are also used for the creation of Puerto Rican dishes. These legumes provide plant-based protein, fiber and essential nutrients that support digestive health, help control blood sugar levels, and promote satiety.

If you do not have allergies to fish and seafood, you can also select them as a source of protein, use them to benefit from their contribution of high-quality protein and healthy fats. You can also order your dishes with poultry meats such as chicken or turkey. Select the cooking method: grilled, baked or grilled. With summer come the highest temperatures and for that, what better than to eat our tropical fruits such as papaya, guava, mango, passion fruit, sousop, pineapple and acerola. All these fruits are rich in vitamins, antioxidants and fiber. Do not exceed one cup per serving and do not consume more than three times a day. Ask your drink to be water if you are going to consume fruit as a dessert, avoid desserts with high sugar content. If you want, you can also order a small frappé without added sugar, especially if they don't have fresh fruit, but make sure that the frappé is made with fruits and not processed ingredients.

There are other traditional foods that we should enjoy in moderation because they contain higher amounts of fat and calories. Some examples of these foods are fried foods such as alcapurrias, cod, corn fritters, potato fillings, among others. A good recommendation is that you prepare them at home so that you select better ingredients, for example: alcapurrias can be filled with lean meat (over 90%) prepared in the "air fryer", among other ideas you may have to improve your food selection.

Remember: You don't have to remove everything; what matters is the portion and frequency.

LET'S CELEBRATE THIS MONTH OF PUERTO RICAN CUISINE BY HONORING OUR ROOTS AND PROMOTING HEALTHY HABITS FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY.

Source: Blog of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, Chapter of Puerto Rico, 2024



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