



Ajiáca (Colombian Chicken and Potato Soup)

SERVES 8-10

Ajiáca is a hearty soup featuring potatoes, which is popular in Cuba, Peru, and Colombia. The soup is different in each place, but I experienced it in Bogota where it is best known. Made with three different types of potatoes, ajiáca in Bogota is cooked with chicken and the bitter green herb, guascas which can be purchased online or in a Colombian market. My first taste of ajiáca was at La Puerta de la Catedral Restaurant in the historic district of Bogota. It was midday and families were seated at large tables all over the dining room where each member was enjoying a steaming bowl of ajiáca. Of course, I ordered one of my own and it became one of my favorite dishes on my Colombian tour. The potato varieties that are used in Bogota aren't readily available in the US, so I've used 3 varieties that are most common where I live. The first time I served it, my friends' faces lit up after the first bite since they couldn't believe how good it was. Be sure to get a taste of cream and capers in every bite and save the corn for last.

INGREDIENTS

2-pounds Russet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1/2" chunks	4 large scallions, root ends trimmed
1-pound Gold potatoes, unpeeled and cut into 1/2 chunks	3 large garlic cloves, peeled and minced
1-pound Red potatoes, peeled and cut into 1/2" chunks	3 cilantro stems
3-pounds bone-in chicken breasts	5 ears of corn, silks and husks removed
2 teaspoons kosher salt	3 ounces dried guascas
1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper	1 cup sour cream or Mexican crema
1 large onion, chopped	3/4 cup capers
	3 avocados, peeled and cut into wedges

PROCESS:

Place all potatoes, chicken breasts, salt, pepper, onion, scallions, garlic cloves, and cilantro stems in a large pot. Bring to a boil and reduce heat to a simmer over medium heat.

Cook for 1 hour, skimming foam off the top every 20 minutes. Using tongs, remove the chicken to a plate and let cool for 10 minutes.

Remove the scallions and cilantro from the soup and discard. Shred the chicken and reserve in a bowl. In a medium pot, fill with water 3/4 full and bring to a boil. Add the corn and reduce heat to a simmer.



Cook for 8 minutes and remove corn from water and set aside. About 10 minutes before serving, add the guascas to the soup and bring to a simmer.

Taste to see if more salt is needed, then ladle soup into bowls and serve with a dollop of sour cream, capers, corn, and avocado wedges.