

## Costa Rican Cooking

### Queque de tres leches (the quick and easy way)

1 box white cake mix  
1 can sweetened condensed milk  
1 can evaporated milk  
Enough milk or cream to fill the evaporated milk can  
Frozen whipped topping

Optional toppings: toasted slivered almonds, toasted macadamias, strawberries

Bake the cake according to the box instructions in a 9 X 13" pan. While the cake is baking mix the "3 milks" well. When the cake is done, remove from the oven and poke holes in it with a toothpick. Pour the milks mixture over the cake. Allow to sit until just cool enough to refrigerate. It is best to let the cake sit, covered, overnight in the refrigerator. (It may also be frozen at this point.)

Cover the soaked cold cake with the frozen topping. Just before serving, sprinkle with the nuts or decorate each serving with the strawberries.

Note: a meringue can be substituted for the topping. Run the meringue under the broiler to lightly brown.

### Gallo Pinto (Costa Rica's National Dish)

2 c. cooked white rice  
Black beans (1 lb. dried or 2 cans already prepared)  
Onion  
Vegetable or olive oil  
Cilantro, chopped  
Green or red bell pepper, chopped  
Celery, chopped

Sauté the onions, peppers and celery in the oil (about 2 tbsp each – or to taste). Add the cooked black beans. Simmer together. Add the rice, stirring to mix well. Season with cilantro (to your taste) and salt and pepper. It may be served with Tabasco or Lizano sauce.

To serve: for breakfast, serve with fried eggs; for lunch or supper, serve with roasted chicken or fried sea bass.

Tip: the beans and rice may be prepared ahead and even frozen. The entire mixture may be prepared and refrigerated or frozen. This dish is really a use for leftovers!