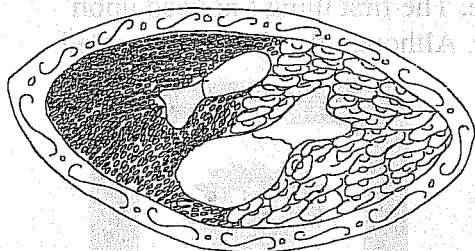


# Sizzling Sofrito

By Jose Gonzalez

As I tiptoed into Sofrito restaurant, I heard the sound of the maracas in the Puerto Rican music just making me want to get a girl to start dancing, but at the same time, I just focused on the food because the aromas made me lose my mind. I just wanted to start munching. As I waited in line smelling the tasty food, I turned around and stared at the wall. I was blinded by the bright yellow walls looking like the shiny sun. On these walls hung some paintings that represented the Puerto Rican culture and some pictures of the owner when he was younger, so that makes Sofrito very unique because no other restaurant has pictures of the owner when he was younger. The pictures were black and white and framed and showed the owner of the restaurant and his wife when they got married. At my table, colorful flowers sat on the side and next to them, a Tapatio and some other spices. The people eating in the restaurant were mostly Puerto Rican people. There were only a couple of African Americans, and I was the only Mexican there.

Sofrito just opened on November 21, 2005 to be exact. Before the restaurant got started, the two owners used to work for Whole Foods Market. They got tired of working for other people, so they decided to start their own restaurant so they wouldn't have to work for anybody but themselves. The way they got the name Sofrito was because in Puerto Rico, Sofrito means a whole bunch of spices and aromas together. They called it Sofrito because Puerto Ricans are always together, and the name really matched the restaurant.



Although Puerto Rican is somewhat similar to both Spanish and Mexican cuisine, Puerto Rican food comes from a unique tasty blend of Spanish, African, Taino and American influence, using indigenous seasonings and ingredients such as coriander, papaya, cacao, nispero, apio, plantains and yamplée. The people in Puerto Rico made soups very popular. There is a debate about whether one of the best known soups, frijoles negros, is Cuban or Puerto Rican in origin.

The restaurant offers a variety of different dishes you could choose from, but it all depends on what day of the week you go. I went on Wednesday, so the savory menu for Wednesdays is bistec encebollado (steak with onion), arroz con pollo (chicken with rice), and ensalada de bacalao (fish and root salad). All the dishes looked delicious, but the one that most grabbed my attention was arroz con pollo.

As the girl came up to me with green eyes like a bright apple and with the plate on her hand, I saw the yellowish, brownish spicy rice as if the rice was looking for somewhere to hide. With the delectable chicken it just made my mouth watery, and it made me want to eat it all. As I got closer to the food, I smelled all their aromatic spices mixed with some peppers. As I took the first bite of the warm crunchy chicken with rice, I felt as if I had just bitten a grape because the chef made the chicken so juicy. The brown beans made my dish even more delicious because the beans were soft and easy to eat.

Run, jump, march, tip-toe—I don't care how, but come to Sofrito. If you are trying to have a delectable meal with the sound of the maracas that makes you feel like you are in Puerto Rico, wait no more.

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Sofrito Authentic Puertican Cuisine  
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