

Discovering yuca

Brown-hued root provides health benefits, cherished moments

By LUIS SANCHEZ

Picture yourself driving along the picturesque roads of Brattleboro, where the brilliant shades of red and orange leaves flutter in the gentle breeze, and picturesque lakes shimmer in the sunlight.

The rolling hills and stunning landscapes invite you to explore their natural beauty. As you drive, signs for local farmers markets line the roadside. On a whim, you decide to stop at the next one, drawn by the idea of fresh, organic ingredients perfect for culinary adventures.

Upon entering, the market unfolds before you like a tapestry of unimaginable culinary possibilities, thanks to the freshness of the products.

Your mind races with ideas for aromatic, flavorful dishes. As you walk through the stalls, the scents of fragrant rosemary, homemade delicacies, and rare chilies stir your culinary imagination. Among these treasures, your eye catches a curious sight — a tuberous, brown-hued root of intriguing length and form.

Intrigued, you ask the market owner, "What is this? A vegetable or a potato?" With a knowing smile, he replies, "It's yuca." Astonished, you ask with a confused expression, "What is yuca?"

"Today, we delve into the many facets of yuca — exploring its health benefits, culinary potential and why it deserves a place in your kitchen."

Yuca, also known as cassava, is a starchy root vegetable that grows underground. Although yuca thrives in tropical and subtropical climates, you can still find it in some local markets, as it can be imported from farms in warmer regions. They are also available at your favorite supermarket.

Stay with us as we unveil Amaru Gourmet's signature recipe, which embodies our philosophy of bringing the freshest market offerings to your table — infused with "a pinch of love."

THE ENERGY BOOST: A FAMILY GATHERING AND ANTI-INFLAMMATORY

It's a Sunday afternoon where your family has gathered for a joyful reunion. After days of preparation, among all the details, your aunt presents her famous yuca fries — golden and crispy — served with Amaru's secret sauce that enhances the flavor with every bite.

As yuca is not a common dish, you'll be showing off your culinary creativity by offering this unique treat, especially with that special sauce! As you take your first bite, the light, fluffy interior perfectly complements the crunchy exterior. This dish is truly a labor of love.

With each bite of yuca, you experience a delightful surge of energy.

Rich in carbohydrates, yuca provides a reliable source of fuel for those cherished moments spent reconnecting with loved ones or engaging in spirited games.

It's the ideal sustenance for laughter and bonding, keeping you active and engaged throughout the day. As stories are shared



PHOTO PROVIDED BY DAVE MAZOR

Yuca is celebrated not only for its culinary versatility, but also for its impressive health benefits.

and games unfold, yuca lifts your spirits and energizes the atmosphere, creating an unforgettable celebration filled with vitality.

DIGESTIVE HEALTH: A COMFORT AT HOME

As winter prepares to show its presence on a week-end evening, the wind rages outside while you curl up in a cozy blanket. You've just made your favorite comfort food — a warm "sancochado," a Peruvian soup featuring boiled yuca seasoned with spices and vegetables.

As you enjoy this heart-warming dish, the soothing warmth envelops your entire being.

The comforting sancochado-yuca soup not only warms you up, but supports your digestive health. Rich in dietary fiber, yuca promotes regular bowel movements and prevents discomfort.

As you savor each spoonful, you realize that this dish not only brings you comfort, but also encourages a healthy digestive system. It's a gentle reminder that food can nourish you from the inside out, enhancing your well-being and making your time at home that much sweeter.

HEALTH BENEFITS OF YUCA: ANTI-INFLAMMATORY AND GLUTEN-FREE

Yuca is celebrated not only for its culinary versatility, but also for its impressive health benefits.

As a gluten-free option, yuca provides a safe alternative for those with gluten sensitivities, while still delivering satisfying, hearty flavors. Additionally, yuca possesses natural anti-inflammatory properties, which can help reduce inflammation in the body and alleviate discomfort associated with various chronic conditions.

Rich in carbohydrates and essential vitamins, yuca promotes overall health and well-being, making it a valuable dietary addition. Its nutritional profile enhances digestive health and supports a balanced, health-conscious lifestyle.

Yuca's versatility allows it to blend seamlessly into diverse dishes, making it a favorite among home cooks and professional chefs alike. Its ability to absorb flavors and adapt to various cooking methods opens endless possibilities. You might craft crispy yuca fritters or prepare a comforting yuca rellena enriched with vegetables and savory seasoning.

COGNITIVE FUNCTION: SUNDAY BRUNCH GATHERING

You host a delightful Sunday brunch with close friends, with the sun streaming through the windows and illuminating the cheerful atmosphere.

The centerpiece of your spread? A delicious and innovative "yuca hash" (instead of the classic brown hash), beautifully sautéed and tossed with colorful bell peppers, onions and a hint of spices.

As your friends arrive, they are greeted by the scrumptious aroma that fills the air, igniting their curiosity.

As everyone settles in with their mimosas, you share the story behind the dish, particularly highlighting yuca — not just as a culinary delight, but also as a root vegetable rich in vitamins and minerals that support cognitive function. Your friends listen intently, intrigued by how this hearty ingredient can enhance mental clarity and focus.

As the brunch progresses, laughter and conversation flow freely.

Each bite of the yuca hash sparks enthusiasm as your friends express delight over its texture and robust flavor. You realize that this gathering is about more than just food; it's about creating a nourishing environment that fosters connections and stimulates conversation.

With every sip of their drinks and every forkful of yuca, your friends feel energized, their minds sharp and engaged. This brunch isn't just a meal; it's an experience that bolsters cognitive

well-being while strengthening the bonds of friendship. As the gathering draws to a close, your friends express their appreciation, leaving not only with satisfied appetites but also with invigorated minds — a testament to the power of deliciously nourishing meals shared in good company.

WEIGHT MANAGEMENT: A GUILT-FREE INDULGENCE

Now, envision a day of sports with your friends. After the game, you all gather for a picnic. You pull out a colorful spread that includes refreshing salads topped with roasted yuca, whose crispy texture adds a delightful crunch. Yuca, low in calories yet filling, provides the ideal balance for those watching their weight. As you enjoy this guilt-free dish, laughter and camaraderie flow among friends. With yuca, you can indulge in bold flavors without the heavy calorie count.

CULINARY VERSATILITY: A CULTURAL JOURNEY

Imagine a vibrant kitchen filled with laughter and chatter from friends of diverse cultures as you embark on a culinary adventure. The atmosphere buzzes with excitement as you explore a variety of flavors, experimenting with yuca in dishes that reflect global cuisines. Perhaps you whip up a Peruvian yuca causa, beautifully layered with creamy avocado and a zesty yellow chili sauce, topped with shrimp cocktail sauce that tantalizes the taste buds.

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As friends gather and engage in lively discussions about their culinary traditions, the kitchen transforms into a melting pot of cultures and ideas, with everyone inspired by the dishes created together.

Conversations flow as they share ways to use yuca, swapping family recipes and introducing each other to traditional flavors.

This collaborative cooking session is about more than just food; it's about forging connections and building memories while discovering the joy of cooking as a shared passion. Each dish showcases yuca's ability to elevate simple meals into extraordinary experiences, bridging cultural gaps and allowing everyone to savor faraway flavors from the comfort of home.

At Amaru Gourmet, we invite you to discover new dishes made from yuca. Feel free to contact us — we're here to help you explore the endless possibilities that yuca offers and assist you in pushing the boundaries of creativity in your cooking.

CONCLUSION

In exploring the many facets of yuca, we discover not only its impressive health benefits, but its remarkable ability to bring people together. Whether through energizing family gatherings, comforting winter meals, engaging brunches, or exciting culinary adventures, yuca serves as a delicious and nutritious ingredient that enhances our dining experiences.

As you embrace the versatility of yuca in your kitchen, remember the connections it fosters and the joy it brings to mealtime.

From its role in promot-

ing digestive health to its contributions to cognitive function and weight management, yuca is more than just a food item; it's a bridge to flourishing relationships and cherished memories.

Plus, it's also gluten-free, making it an excellent choice for those with dietary restrictions.

At Amaru Gourmet, we celebrate yuca and invite you to discover its wonderful potential. Known as one of our top appetizers, yuca fries have captured the hearts and palates of our guests, who love them to perfection.

We'll teach you how to prepare these delicious yuca fries paired with a homemade sauce that elevates the dish to new heights.

Let yuca be your guide to a world of delightful, nourishing flavors that enrich your table and warm your heart.

Yuca with homemade sauce

This delightful appetizer perfectly complements a meal or can be enjoyed alongside drinks. To showcase the versatility of yuca, here is a wonderful recipe for yuca with salsa, a popular Peruvian dish.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 large yuca roots
- Water (for boiling)
- 1 cup queso fresco
- ½ cup evaporated milk
- 1 to 2 red bell peppers, chopped
- 1 red onion, chopped
- 1 clove of garlic, minced
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Fresh parsley (for garnish)
- 1 to 2 small red chilies (optional, for spice)
- 1 package of crackers

METHOD

PREPARE THE YUCA:

- Peel the yuca roots and cut them into large chunks.
- Place them in a pot of water and bring to a boil.
- Cook until tender, about 20 to 25 minutes. Drain and set aside. When ready to serve, fry them for 2 to 4 minutes, turning occasionally until all sides are golden brown.

MAKE THE SAUCE:

- In a pan, sauté the garlic, red onion, and chopped bell peppers with a pinch of salt and, more importantly, "a pinch of love," until softened and fragrant. If you want the sauce to be spicy, add the chilies during this step; do not add them after blending.
- Transfer the sautéed mixture to a blender, then add the queso fresco and evaporated milk and the crackers. Blend until smooth, adjusting the seasoning with additional salt as needed.

SERVE:

- Arrange the crispy yuca on a serving dish and serve it separately from the sauce, allowing guests to mix the yuca themselves and dip it into the sauce.
- Garnish with a single sprig of fresh parsley placed inside the sauce for decoration.
- Enjoy it!

Luis Sanchez is the owner of Amaru Gourmet in Brattleboro.