

FREE SAMPLE • THE FIRST PAGES

The Honduran Kitchen Cabinet

60 Drinks My Mother Made Instead of Buying Them



60
DRINKS

by Doña Dilcia

THE HONDURAN WAY

THE HONDURAN KITCHEN CABINET · FREE SAMPLE

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About the storyteller. Doña Dilcia is the AI-generated storyteller character of The Honduran Way channel. She is not a real person. The drinks, recipes and household methods in these pages are real Honduran home traditions, gathered and written for American kitchens, with an honest grade on each one.

PLEASE READ

This book shares traditional Honduran home drink recipes for educational and cultural purposes only. It is not medical advice and is not intended to diagnose, prevent or manage any disease or condition. Always consult a qualified health professional before changing your diet or drinking habits, especially if you are pregnant, nursing, taking medication, or living with a health condition, and never stop or replace prescribed medicine. Fermented drinks in this book contain alcohol, which increases the longer they ferment; they are not suitable for children, during pregnancy or breastfeeding, or for anyone avoiding alcohol. Follow food-safety guidance for all recipes. The publisher and author are not liable for any outcome arising from the use or misuse of the information in this book.

PRICES

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Mija, sit down

Mija, mijo, whoever you are, holding this book:

My name is Dilcia. I was born in a village outside Comayagua, in the middle of Honduras, in a house with a tin roof that sang when it rained. I have lived in Houston for about thirty years. I have grandchildren who speak English better than me and Spanish worse than me, and I love them anyway.



My mother sold chicha and baleadas at the Sunday market. She had one table, one olla de barro (clay pot) and a wooden box for the money. Every Saturday night our kitchen was full of pineapple peels, rapadura (whole cane sugar block) melting in water, and corn soaking for the week. She did not have much, but she never once paid a company for something her own kitchen could make. Coffee, fresco (fruit drink), chicha, the cup for a bad stomach, the ponche for Christmas: all of it came from the same two burners and the same stubborn woman.

When I came to this country, many things surprised me. The highways. The air conditioning in church. But what surprised me most was how much money people spend on drinks. An energy drink every morning. Kombucha at five dollars a bottle. Little boxes of tea that promise to fix your whole life. Powders in giant tubs. A cold coffee that costs more than my mother made in a day at the market.

So this book is my mother's drinks, sixty of them, written the way she made them, with measurements for an American kitchen: everyday frescos and teas, morning cups, living fermented drinks, cups for sick days, and drinks for the fiesta.

Now let me tell you what this book is not. It is not medicine. I am a grandmother, not a doctor, and nothing in here makes a sickness go away. When a drink is for a sick day, I tell you plainly when to stop making cups and go see a doctor. Never stop a medicine your doctor gave you because of something you read in a book, especially this one.

And I will be honest with you. Every drink has a grade. Some get an A, where science and my mother agree. Many get a C, which means make it because it is delicious and cheap, not because it does anything special. I would rather tell you the truth than sell you a miracle.

Here is my promise. If you make even five of these drinks regularly, you will stop paying companies for water, sugar and a pretty label. Your kitchen already knows how. It only needs somebody to turn on the stove.

With love, and a pot of coffee on,
Doña Dilcia

How to read my grades

Every drink in this book has a grade, like school. I give them because I am tired of labels that promise everything. Here is what they mean.

A means science and public-health guidance agree with my mother. The suero casero for diarrhea is an A. So is a caffeine-free corn coffee when you want a warm cup at night. When you see an A, you can trust the drink to do the modest thing I say it does, and nothing more.

B means plausible and comforting. There is some evidence, but it is not settled. Warm broth when you are sick, honey in hot water for a scratchy throat, a calm cup of warm milk before bed: these are B. They help some people some of the time, and they will not hurt most people.

C means pure tradition. Make it because it is delicious, pleasant or cheap, not because it does anything special for your body. Most of this book is C, and I am proud of that. A good fresco does not need to be medicine to be worth making.

No drink in this book gets a grade for fixing any illness. That is your doctor's job.



Science agrees with abuela

Public-health guidance and good evidence back this one up.



Plausible and comforting

There is some reason to think it helps, but it is not settled. Enjoy it without expecting miracles.



Pure tradition

Make it because it is delicious, cheap or pleasant — not because it does anything special.

The money

My mother never needed a table like this. She just never bought the thing. But you asked, so here it is.

THE AMERICAN HABIT	PER YEAR	ABUELA'S SWAP	PER YEAR
A daily energy drink, about \$3	about \$1,100	Café con rapadura from your own pot, about \$0.20 a cup	about \$75
A coffee-shop coffee drink 5 days a week, about \$6	about \$1,550	Café con canela or café helado from your own pot, about \$0.25 a cup	about \$65
Two sodas a day, about \$1.25 each	about \$900	A pitcher of fresco de rosa de jamaica or tamarindo, about \$0.15 a glass	about \$110
Bottled kombucha 3 times a week, about \$4.50	about \$700	Chicha de piña from pineapple peels (adults only), about \$0.25 a glass	about \$40
Store iced coffee or bottled cold brew 3 times a week, about \$5	about \$780	Café helado con rapadura from a jar in the fridge, about \$0.25 a glass	about \$40
Bottled flavored or sparkling water every day, about \$1.50	about \$550	Tap water in a pitcher with lime slices or fruit, about \$0.10 a day	about \$35
A tub of greens or superfood powder every month, about \$45	about \$540	Real fruit in a fresco de mango or piña, 4 days a week, about \$0.50 a glass	about \$100
A sports drink 4 days a week, about \$2.50	about \$520	Fresco de vinagre in a reusable bottle, about \$0.15 a bottle	about \$30
A bottle of sleep gummies every month, about \$20	about \$240	Leche con canela at bedtime, about \$0.30 a cup	about \$110
Two boxes of specialty wellness tea a month, about \$8 each	about \$190	Agua caliente con limón or a garden tea, about \$0.15 a cup	about \$55

All figures are rounded, approximate 2026 US prices and will vary by city, store and how much you drink.

Chicha de piña

Pineapple peel chicha

INSTEAD OF about \$4-5 a bottle of store kombucha

MAKES

about 8 cups (2 liters)

TIME

15 minutes to make, then 2 to 3 days to ferment

COST

about \$1.50 (the peel is free)

This is the drink that paid for my school shoes. My mother scrubbed the pineapple cáscaras (peels) in the pila (concrete wash basin), packed them into the clay pot with rapadura and water, tied a cloth over the top and waited. By the second day it whispered when you stirred it. On day two or three it was sweet and a little sour, the chicha for the family lunch. By day five it was feria chicha, strong enough that the men got loud at the fair. In the village even the cipotes (kids) got a small cup of the young one. Today I know better.

YOU NEED

- Peel and core of 1 ripe pineapple, scrubbed well before peeling
- 8 ounces (225 g) rapadura, chopped, or 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 8 cups (about 2 liters) water, filtered or boiled and cooled
- 1 cinnamon stick and 3 or 4 whole cloves (optional)

HOW TO MAKE IT

- 1 Scrub the whole pineapple with a brush and water before you cut it. Cut off the peel in thick strips and save the core. Eat the fruit.
- 2 Dissolve the rapadura in 2 cups of warm water, then let it cool to room temperature.
- 3 Put the peel, core and spices in a clean 3-quart (3-liter) glass jar or clay pot. Add the rapadura water and the rest of the water.
- 4 Keep the peels under the liquid with a small clean plate or a zip bag filled with water.
- 5 Cover with a clean cloth and a rubber band. Leave on the counter out of direct sun, ideally 68-80°F (20-27°C).
- 6 Stir once a day with a clean spoon. Starting on day 2, taste a spoonful every day.
- 7 When it is lightly fizzy and pleasantly sweet-sour (usually day 2 or 3, sooner in a hot kitchen), strain it through a cloth into bottles, leaving some room at the top, and refrigerate. Open the bottles once a day to let the gas out, and drink within about a week.
- 8 If you let it go to day 5 or longer, it becomes the strong feria chicha, with clearly more alcohol. After that it turns toward vinegar (see Vinagre de piña).

ABUELA'S TIP

Buy the pineapple that smells sweet at the bottom. A good-smelling pineapple makes a good-smelling chicha, and a sad one makes a sad one.



HONEST GRADE • PURE TRADITION

Make it because it tastes wonderful and turns trash into a drink. Home ferments do carry live microbes, but whether a glass of chicha does anything for your gut is not settled, and it always contains some alcohol.

BEFORE YOU START

- Contains alcohol, and the amount rises every day it ferments. Not for children, pregnant or breastfeeding women, anyone avoiding alcohol, or anyone taking medicine that should not be mixed with alcohol.
- Fuzzy mold (spots of white, green, blue, black or pink fuzz) means throw out the whole batch, liquid and all. Do not scoop it off and keep going.
- Never seal a jar tight at room temperature; the gas can build up and crack the glass. In the fridge, open the bottles once a day.
- Do not drive after drinking the older, stronger chicha.
- It is sweet; count it as a sugary drink.



Chicha de piña • Pineapple peel chicha

Horchata de morro

Morro seed horchata

INSTEAD OF about \$4-6 for a carton of horchata or a jar of concentrate

MAKES

about 8 cups (2 liters), 8 glasses

TIME

25 minutes active, plus 2 hours soaking

COST

about \$3-4 per batch

My tía Chayito made the horchata for every vela (wake) and every baptism in the village, and she guarded her mix like a bank. Toast the morro seeds, the rice, the sesame, a little cacao, then off to the corner mill where one man ground everybody's corn. The whole street smelled like cinnamon. The cartons here taste only of sugar and vanilla. The real one tastes nutty and a little smoky, and nobody needs to add gums to make it thick. It is more work than opening a carton, I admit. So toast a double batch and keep the powder in a jar.

YOU NEED

- 1/2 cup (70 g) morro seeds (semilla de morro), or raw hulled pumpkin seeds as a substitute
- 1/2 cup (95 g) long-grain white rice
- 2 tablespoons sesame seeds
- 2 tablespoons raw peanuts (optional)
- 1 cinnamon stick, broken in pieces
- 3 whole allspice berries (optional)
- 1 tablespoon cacao nibs, or 1 teaspoon unsweetened cocoa powder
- 6 cups (1.5 liters) water, divided
- 2 cups (475 ml) cold milk, or more water
- 1/3 cup sugar, to taste
- Ice, to serve

HOW TO MAKE IT

- 1 Toast the morro seeds, rice, sesame, peanuts, cinnamon and allspice in a dry skillet over medium-low heat, stirring constantly, until the rice is light gold and everything smells nutty, about 8-10 minutes.
- 2 Let the mix cool, then grind it with the cacao to a fine powder in a spice grinder or blender, in batches.
- 3 Soak the powder in 3 cups (750 ml) of warm water for at least 2 hours, or overnight in the refrigerator.
- 4 Blend the soaked mixture on high for 2 minutes, then strain through a clean cloth or very fine strainer into a pitcher, squeezing well.
- 5 Stir in the remaining 3 cups (750 ml) of water, the milk and the sugar, tasting as you go.
- 6 Serve very cold over ice, stirring before each pour because it settles.

ABUELA'S TIP

Look for semilla de morro in small bags near the spices at Salvadoran and Honduran groceries. Grind a big batch of the toasted powder and keep it in the freezer in a sealed jar; then a pitcher is only soaking and blending.



HONEST GRADE • PURE TRADITION

Horchata is a celebration drink. The seeds bring a little protein and fat, but with 1/3 cup of sugar it is still about 2 teaspoons of sugar a glass, and it has no special powers.

BEFORE YOU START

- Contains sesame, and peanuts if you use them; leave either out for allergies and tell your guests.
- Most grocery cinnamon is cassia, which is fine in food amounts like this; don't take it by the spoonful every day.
- Refrigerate right away and finish within 2 days; homemade horchata sours quickly.



Horchata de morro · Morro seed horchata

THERE ARE 58 MORE

The rest of my kitchen cabinet

That was two of sixty, mija.

The Honduran Kitchen Cabinet has fifty-eight more, written the same way, with the same honest grades and the same plain safety notes: the everyday frescos and patio teas, the morning cups like corn coffee and hot chocolate from cacao tablets, the living drinks like corn chicha and homemade pineapple vinegar, the sick-day cups with clear signs for when to see a doctor, and the drinks we made for Nochebuena and every fiesta.

It also has the Honduran pantry (where to find each thing in an American store), the rules for living drinks, and a printable four-week plan to swap one store habit at a time.



The Honduran Kitchen Cabinet

60 drinks · honest grades · printable 30-day swap plan

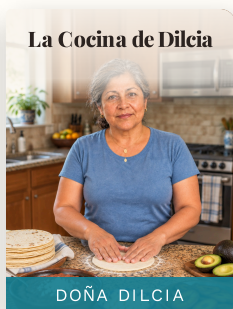
Every recipe has US measurements, a yield, a time, an approximate cost, and an honest A, B or C grade. It is not a medical book, and it says so.

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The Honduran Way bundle



The Doña Dilcia bundle gathers three books from The Honduran Way. The Honduran Kitchen Cabinet has sixty home drinks with honest grades. La Casa Catracha has forty traditional methods for keeping a house comfortable against heat, rain and bugs, the way Honduran families have done it for generations. La Cocina de Dilcia has forty Honduran home recipes to go with the drinks. The three books share the same voice, the same honest approach and the same idea: stop paying companies for what your own kitchen and house can already do.

\$74.99 for all three (instead of \$119.97 bought separately)

[See the bundle at thehonduranway.com](http://thehonduranway.com)

P.S. Start the chicha on a Friday. By Sunday afternoon you will know if my mother was right.

— Dilcia