

LATIN EVOLUTION

BY JOSE GARCES

“Jose [Garces] has an incredible sense of what people really want to eat combined with a sense of what’s new...”

—Dana Cowin, *Food and Wine*

“He’s a one-in-a-million talent...”

—Chef Douglas Rodriguez

Chef Jose Garces is a key visionary in the movement to reinvigorate classic Latin cooking, traditions and flavors in ways that are modern and exciting while retaining their cultural authenticity. Through his unique reinterpretations, Garces has helped to redefine today’s Latin cuisine.

Known to diners in Philadelphia, Chicago, and beyond for his original and inspired Latin flavor combinations, Chef Jose Garces has been recognized by everyone from the *New York Times* to *Gourmet* magazine to the James Beard Foundation as one of the most inventive authorities on new Latin cooking. His dishes and food philosophy, now featured for the first time in a cookbook, challenge chefs, diners and home cooks alike. Garces does for Latin cuisine what Thomas Keller and *The French Laundry Cookbook* did for French.

Chef Jose Garces’ **LATIN EVOLUTION** (September 15, 2008, \$38.00/hardcover, Lake Isle Press) is an exciting debut collection of modern Spanish and Latin American cuisine from one of America’s most dynamic and innovative chefs. Through the recipes in this book, Chef Garces provides much-needed context for the newly ubiquitous flavors and cooking styles of Spain, Mexico and much of South America, exploring the history of these cuisines even as he shapes their future.

“As a chef,” he writes, “my constant challenge is to see the possibilities that new ingredients and techniques offer, while honoring what has come before. My mantra is simple: ‘authentic’ and ‘innovative’ are not contradictory. This recipe collection is a highly personal mix of my family history, culinary training and personal creativity. If you understand the basics of a dish, you can create new, exciting riffs on that tradition. That’s how my cuisine evolved, and it is how a shared cultural cuisine evolves as well.”

Born to Ecuadorian immigrant parents, Chef Garces grew up a first-generation American in Chicago. By the age of eight, he was cooking the family’s daily meals alongside his grandmother. It was here that he learned how to make such traditional Latin dishes as arepas, empanadas and mote (boiled corn with meat and spices). Chef Garces went on to

pursue his newfound passion by attending a local culinary school, after which he traveled to Marbella, Spain to intern at La Taberna del Alabardero restaurant where he started to explore Spanish cooking in-depth. Soon thereafter, he landed in New York and was hired by the pioneer of Nuevo Latino cooking, Douglas Rodriguez, to work in his restaurants Chicama and Pipa. It was under Rodriguez's tutelage that Chef Garces learned to apply classical training and modern techniques to traditional Latin dishes.

Chef Garces went on to experiment with different cuisines and his own cooking style in several different professional kitchens, eventually settling in Philadelphia. In 2005, he opened Amada, an authentic Andalusian tapas bar. Soon thereafter, Tinto debuted, a wine bar inspired by the Basque country of Spain and France, followed by Distrito, a high-energy restaurant that draws inspiration from Mexico City. All three restaurants opened to high critical acclaim, and continue to receive rave reviews. Chef Garces' venture outside of Philadelphia is in his hometown of Chicago, Mercat a La Planxa, a tapas-style restaurant that features Catalan-inspired cuisine. The critical and commercial success of all four restaurants fortified Chef Garces' standing as one of the country's most talented and inventive chefs and solidified his reputation as an ambassador of contemporary Latin cuisine.

LATIN EVOLUTION contains a wide variety of recipes spanning the globe, from the Basque region of Spain to the coast of Peru to city of Buenos Aires. Some dishes are inspired by Chef Garces' childhood, some developed and featured at his restaurants. Others are based on his far-reaching culinary imagination. His philosophy—that cuisine is constantly evolving—leads him to create dishes that are both authentic and innovative. To invigorate traditional recipes, he makes use of new ingredients and techniques, often producing surprising combinations. Behind these recipes are unexpected shapes, textures, colors and, of course, flavors.

The development this collection begins with a simple question: what is at the core of each dish? Chef Garces' challenge is "to improve the concept of the dish without changing its soul." His **Bluefin Tuna Tiradito** features spicy watermelon and black sesame seeds, while the classic Mexican dish **Turkey Mole** features sesame-seed praline and shavings of Valrhona chocolate. Chef Garces' version of basic South American shellfish ceviche uses traditional techniques while incorporating more avant garde ingredients black truffles, Meyer lemon and micro arugula. His adaptation of the **Arepas** that he learned to make as a child is corn cakes browned in sizzling vegetable oil (similar to those sold by Ecuadorian street vendors), topped with Caribbean-inspired oxtail ropa vieja and finished off with the addition of crisp bacon and tomatoes in a salute to North American flavors. The result is a dish that reflects both his heritage and his contemporary style.

The recipes in **LATIN EVOLUTION** are highly conceptualized, multi-element combinations that can be made in their entirety or broken down and served as individual components. For example, **Sous Vide Halibut** with chorizo croquettes and saffron emulsion can be served as described, for more advanced cooks, or without the side elements for novices. Those looking to challenge themselves in the kitchen will delight in such dishes as **Roasted Duck Breast and Duck Confit** with green rice, sweet pea sauce, and tomatillo-jalapeno marmalade or **Filet Mignon** with caramelized foie gras torchon and cabrales demi-glace. Simpler side components and single element items such as **Heirloom Tomato Gazpacho**, **Serrano Ham Croquettes**, **Caramelized Cipollini Onions**, **Roasted Red Pepper Puree**, **Salsa Verde**, **Pickled Habanero Chiles**, **Avocado "Pearls,"** **Ginger-Lime Granite**, **Crispy Lemon Rings**, **Marinated Artichokes** and **Spicy Watermelon Sauce** make for an inspiring

introduction to modern Latin cooking. All of these flavorful elements can be used to enhance the home cook's repertoire.

Covering a full range of recipes, **LATIN EVOLUTION** is organized into the following chapters: *Ceviche y Tiradito*, *Entradas* (Appetizers), *Pescados y Mariscos* (Fish and Shellfish), *Aves y Carnes* (Poultry and Meat) and *Postres* (Desserts). Also included is a *Basics* chapter and a helpful *Sources and Substitutions* section that defines what certain key ingredients are, explains where to find them and suggests appropriate substitutions. Dazzling color photos throughout the book complete this stunning package.

Chef Jose Garces has established himself as a leader in creating modern interpretations of Latin cuisines and has set a new standard for reinventing new and old world Spanish traditions. **LATIN EVOLUTION** is the brilliant culmination of his work to date. Professional chefs, adventurous home cooks and those looking to learn about New Latin culinary influences will find unlimited inspiration in this bold and comprehensive volume.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Chef Jose Garces is the 35-year-old executive chef and owner of acclaimed Philadelphia restaurants Amada (an Andalusian tapas bar), Tinto (a Basque-inspired wine bar) and distrito (a vibrant celebration of the cuisine and culture of Mexico City). He is also the executive chef of Mercat a La Planxa in Chicago. Chef Garces is a two-time nominee for "Best Chef Mid-Atlantic" by the James Beard Foundation, and he and his food have been featured in the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *Gourmet*, *Food & Wine*, *Esquire*, *Travel + Leisure*, and other national publications. He recently earned the title Iron Chef on the Food Network's hit show *The Next Iron Chef* and now appears regularly on *Iron Chef America*. Chef Garces resides in Philadelphia and Chicago.

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