



*AFRICAN
INFLUENCES ON
PUERTO RICAN'S
CULTURE*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Beauty by Sory Bah 1-13
- Cuisine by Amoy Grenade-Lewis 14-34
- Music and Dance by Julian Thompson 36

HISTORY

- **Puerto Rico is a land of rhythm and flavor, where its people move to the beat of salsa, reggaeton, and bomba while savoring the delicious taste of mofongo, arroz con gandules, and coquito. Beyond the food and dance, Puerto Rico's beauty shines through its warm and welcoming citizens. Afro-Latinos has a huge impact on beauty and fashion brands. They proudly showcase the island's vibrant culture which includes the influences of the Tainos, African and Spanish, with every step, every dish, and every smile.**

BEAUTY

- **Web link**

- <https://www.allure.com/story/afro-latinx-beauty-owners-influencers-antiblackness>

A collage of diverse Black women, including a woman with glasses on the left and a woman with a large afro on the right, surrounded by large pink and white lilies. The word "BEAUTY" is centered in a white box.

BEAUTY

Makeup

We rarely saw Afro-Latinx people on television, in film, or magazine. The Spanish colonizers' Eurocentric standard of beauty is an imprint on the Latinx community. Black Latinxs are literally all over Latin America — the Dominican Republic, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, Honduras, Panama, Colombia, Brazil, Mexico, the list goes on.

Fortunately, we're living in a time where people from the Afro-Latinx community are not just celebrating that they're Black and proud but they're also creating spaces, brands, and content to address their unique beauty needs

Afro-Latinxs are just as much a part of the African diaspora, but America's misconceptions of race and ethnicity also often excluded them from dialogues surrounding Blackness and beauty.

perceptions are changing and Afro-Latinxs are finally finding their place in the beauty world, catering to people like themselves, and using their platforms to combat the anti-Blackness and internalized racism that still very much exists in the communities

BEAUTY

Glory Scent Beauty

Rafaela Gonzalez is the founder of Glory Scent Beauty. This brand provide potent antioxidant protection for deeper skin tones. This brand help to protect your skin and relieve any damage from the sun or air pollution with gentle, high-performing natural formulations.





BEAUTY

- **MicMas ReMix**

- This brand formulates products intentionally made to nourish coily and coarse tresses through fair-trade and Non-GMO ingredients. They also help aid youth in Puerto Rico through Backpack Operation, where essential school supplies are provided for communities. This is created by Adassa Ramirez.

BEAUTY

- **Midas Cosmetics**

- This brand create more space for beauty content creators of all backgrounds. This indie beauty brand provides different textures and earthy colors from glitters, bronzers, and eyeshadow pallets. This brand is founded by Rocio Nuñez.



BEAUTY

Sun Kiss Organics

This brand confronts the severe pain of red, itchy, and dry skin by formulating products to hydrate and heal the discomfort from eczema. Using familiar ingredients we love, like turmeric, jojoba oil, and shea butter, this brand makes sure to provide affordable and nourishing products for BIPOC women dealing with flaky, irritated skin.



BEAUTY

- **Babe Comets**

- Babe Comets is a Brooklyn-based earring company started by an Afro-Latina designer. The beautiful colors and landscapes of Merida inspired Joan De Jesus to begin Babe Comets. The earrings, which are made for pierced and unpierced ears, are colorful and lightweight.



A background image featuring three women. The woman on the left has a large, dark afro hairstyle and is wearing a dark, sleeveless top. The woman in the center has long, straight black hair and is wearing a light-colored top with a floral pattern. The woman on the right is wearing a silver, beaded headpiece and a dark, patterned top. The entire image is framed by a light gray border.

FASHION

FASHION

Fashion is very important to the Puerto Rico culture. There is a lot of afro- latina fashion brand. Here are very popular Afro-Latina fashion brand.



FASHION

- **Breenache**

- Afrochapiñaca Breena Nuñez Peralta sells zines that explore what it's like growing up a curly-haired woman in a Central American family and one that's dedicated to queer, femme, and Central American women who never get to see their stories.



CUISINE

Mofongo- main ingredient: green plantains

Pasteles- main ingredient: green plantains

Bacalaitos- main ingredient: salted codfish

Alcapurrias- main ingredient: green bananas

Morcilla- main ingredients: pork blood and rice

Sancocho- main ingredients: meat, vegetables and tubers

CUISINE

- *Interview with Professor Nelson Diaz-Marcano*

1. Can you name a few traditional Puerto Rican dishes that are influenced by African culture?

Sancocho, Alcapurrias, Mandinga, Morcilla just to name a few.

2. Some of the dishes that you've named, can you please explain how they're influence by African culture?

Most of our food comes from African culture. Puerto Ricans wouldn't exist without African culture. When the Tainos were wiped out by the Spaniards. It was the African slaves that took upon themselves to keep the Taino culture alive while also infusing it with the culture they have brought from their homeland.

CUISINE

- *Interview with Professor Nelson Diaz-Marcano cont'd*

3. Is it the way it is prepared; the ingredients or the way and setting in which it is consumed?

Many of the ingredients were brought from Africa into our lands and now they are part of our everyday cuisine.

CUISINE

Interview with Professor Nelson Diaz-Marcano cont'd

4. How widespread is awareness of these influences?

Puerto Ricans are very aware of their African heritage

5. Is it something that's celebrated widely or looked down upon, in respect to colorism and racism?

CUISINE

- *Interview with Professor Nelson Diaz-Marcano cont'd*

There is rampant colorism going on in Puerto Rico. But when it comes to racism, this is a loaded question. Puerto Ricans are not racist in the violent aggressive way North Americans are, but you can see the racism in the little things they do. Having said that, the food of African heritage is the most liked and celebrated by Puerto Ricans

CUISINE

Interview with Professor Nelson Diaz-Marcano cont'd

6. Do you feel knowing about and practicing these influences are a part of who you are?

Absolutely. I am Afro-Caribbean myself, even though it's hard to tell. I practiced not only with food, but with spiritual rituals as well as with BOMBA music.

CUISINE

- *Mofongo*
- **Main Ingredient:** Plantains
- **Origin:** Southeast Asia

One of the key methods to preparing Mofongo is to fry or boil plantains and smash it in a mortar and pestle which is called a pilon. Enslaved Africans brought with them to the island of Puerto Rico, fufu which is made from boiling yams, cassava or plantains and then pounded in a mortar and pestle. As time went by, the flavors from the Spanish and Tainos were mixed in with fufu and Mofongo was born.

MOFONGO



CUISINE

Plantain is native to Southeast Asia but made its way to the new world through trade, slavery, and colonization. “Spanish and African slave traders brought the delicious fruit/vegetable with them to the Caribbean on slave ships and it proved to be a cheap, satisfying, and essential commodity for the men and women that were enslaved” (Loisa, July 2021). From there various dishes evolved from the simple beginnings of the plantain. “Plantains have also been key crops and commodities that have played a powerful role in the forging of ethnic and class discrimination identities” (Sanabria, pg. 258).

CUISINE

- ***Pasteles***
- **Main ingredients:** Green plantains, Green bananas, calabazas(pumpkin) and Yautia
- **Origin:** Southeast Asia (plantains)

Usually consumed around Christmas, pasteles is a beloved dish among the Puerto Rican people. The grated dough/masa made from the main ingredients is filled with meat of choice, spices and achiote oil, wrapped in banana leaves, tied with strings and cooked in boiling water.

Although believed to have been created by the Tainos—the indigenous people of Puerto Rico, pasteles beginnings can be traced back to enslaved Africans on the Island whose influence comes from the use of root and starchy vegetables such as yuca and plantains as a substitute for the starchy foods they were used in their home countries.



PASTELES

Like mofongo, the use of the grated dough/masa is believed to be inspired by fufu, an African dish which is made by boiling and pounding starchy root vegetables into a dough-like consistency.

CUISINE

- ***Bacalaitos***
- **Main Ingredient:** Salted Codfish
- **Origin:** Newfoundland

Salted fish has been around for a very long time, however, it was with John Cabot's rediscovery of Newfoundland in the late 1490's that salted cod made its appearance. Because of its popularity and demand, new fishing stations were established along the New England's coast, and this was the beginning of the salted cod's journey to the Caribbean and the island of Puerto Rico.

CUISINE

- **Bacalaitos** is a dish made of shredded, salted cod fried in seasoned, spiced batter which came about from a marriage of different cultures. In the case of bacalaitos, Spanish, West Africans and the indigenous population the Tainos all furnished the evolution of this dish. The notion of shredded cod fried in batter appears to come from a universal archetype which looks like a West African fritter called accara.
- Once a very valuable commodity, salted cod got converted into an economic sensation in the late 17th century, thanks to the rapidly growing sugar production in the Caribbean at that time. Plantation owners had to provide nourishment for the enslaved Africans on the plantations and salted cod proved to be easily accessible and inexpensive. They were only concerned with feeding the slaves cheaply and not of the quality of cod they were receiving. From there the many dishes that were derived from the introduction of salted cod in the Caribbean grew. Today, bacalaitos is considered to be in the top dishes of African influence in Puerto Rico.

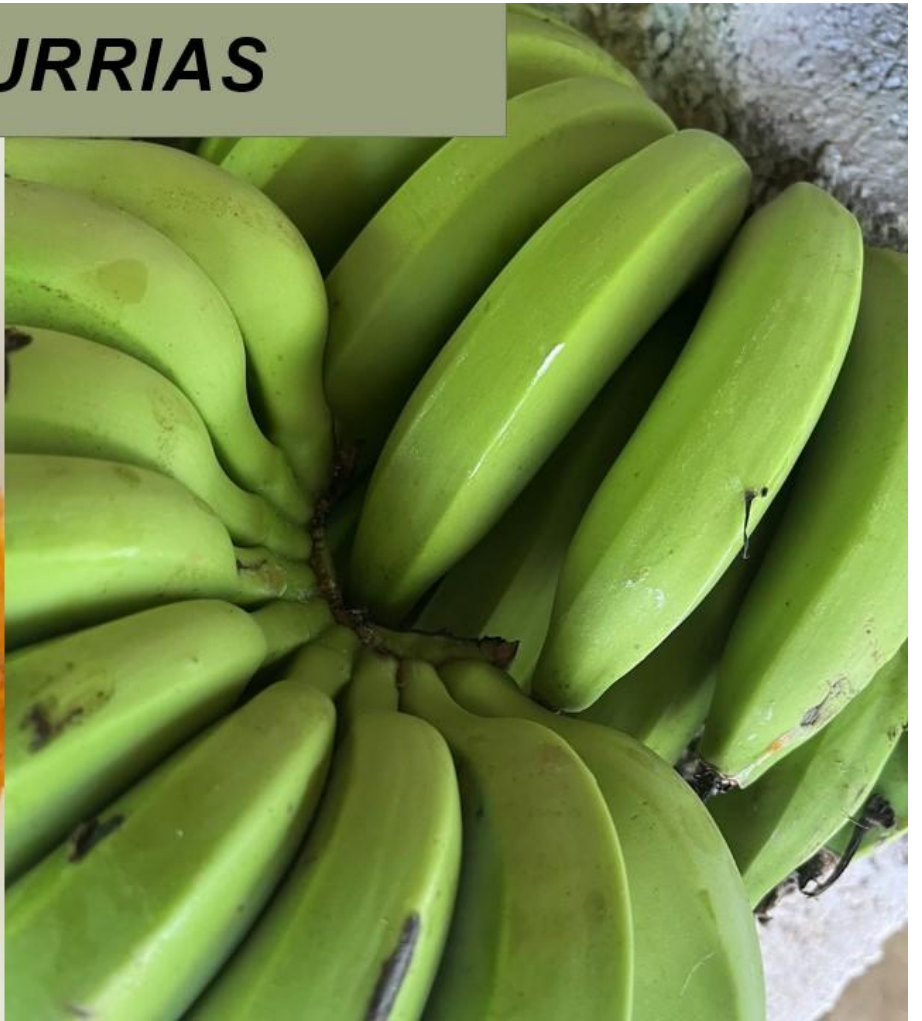
BACALAITOS



CUISINE

- *Alcapurrias*
- **Main Ingredient:** Green Bananas
- **Origin:** Southeast Asia
- **Alcapurria is a fried fritter made with green bananas, taro root also known as yautia or tania and filled with picadillo (a meat filling). Traditionally, ground beef has been used but any meat can be substituted depending on preference.**
- **The African influences in alcapurrias are the ingredients; bananas, taro and the method which is deep frying. While bananas did not originate from Africa, they at least passed through there on its way to the Caribbean, it was brought with the purpose of feeding enslaved people and they made wonderful inventions of novel dishes that has had a profound impact on the culture and cuisine to this day.**

ALCAPURRIAS



CUISINE

- ***Morcilla***
- **Main ingredient:** Pig's blood and rice
- **Origin:** Spain

Morcilla is a type of blood sausage made with pig's blood, rice, and spices. Originated in Spain, morcilla made its way to Puerto Rico during colonization. Puerto Rican morcilla usually contains rice, onions, cumin, oregano, and annatto which gives it a very distinct flavor, one that is different from its Spanish counterpart which uses more common spices such as garlic and paprika. Some of these spices were used by enslaved Africans to flavor their food, and over time they became integrated into Puerto Rican cuisine fusing the cultures of Tainos, Africans and Spanish people which maintains a strong presence in Puerto Rican homes today.



MORCILLA

CUISINE

- *Sancocho*
- **Main Ingredients:** Meat, vegetables and tubers
- **Origin:** Canary Islands

Sancocho, which comes from the spanish word “sancochar” means to parboil. It is a traditional, hearty stew or soup that is made by simmering meats and vegetables for a long time till the flavors fuse together and the ingredients are tender and delicious. It is considered to be a comfort food and is regularly enjoyed during family gatherings and holidays. Sancocho is said to have originated in the Canary Islands and was brought to Latin America by Spanish colonizers.



SANCOCHO

Sancocho embodies a multitude of influences and can be compared to “Yoruba ọbẹ orişirişi, Haitian bouillon, Brazilian feijoada, Trinidadian Callaloo, Carolina Hoppin’ John, and Louisiana gumbo and jambalaya” which covers the African influence. With the addition of the root vegetables, wild game and some preparation techniques, the Tainos influences are also very prominent in this dish. Sancocho is a very important part of the cultural heritage of Puerto Rico and serves as a link to their pre-colonial past.

CUISINE



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND](#) Trinidadian Callaloo



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-SA-NC](#) Brazilian Feijoasa



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-SA](#) Yoruba Obe Orisirisi

CUISINE



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND](#) Louisiana's Gumbo



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY](#) Carolina Hoppin' John

CUISINE

Just by virtue of eating, we express something about the cultures, histories, and places that have made a claim on who we are in relation to our past”

–Meredith E. Abarca

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MUSIC AND DANCE

- *Story Map*
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