



FOOD, FUN, 4-H TAKES FLIGHT

DESTINATION: CUBA



We've traveled the globe together, and now it's time for our final destination! No packing required just bring your excitement, your creativity and your love for good food. For this last stop in Food, Fun, 4-H Takes Flight, we're heading to the vibrant and flavorful island of Cuba!

Cuban cuisine is full of bold flavors, rich traditions and meals made to be shared. Many dishes are built around simple, hearty ingredients like rice, beans, citrus, spices and slow-cooked meats. Cuban food often tells a story, blending influences from Spanish, African and Caribbean cultures into meals that are comforting, colorful and full of life. From savory dishes to sweet tropical treats, every bite brings a taste of island culture.

This final stop is all about celebrating what you've learned, trying new flavors and making lasting memories together. So, gather your family, turn up the music and enjoy the rhythm and flavor of your last destination. Cuba awaits!

WHAT'S INCLUDED

Explore & Discover: Learn about Cuba's culture, traditions and how food plays an important role in everyday life, plus simple nutrition tips.

Create in the Kitchen: Prepare a Cuban-inspired meal with easy-to-follow recipes and a complete shopping list — perfect for the whole family to join in.

Connect & Celebrate: Enjoy a fun family activity and meaningful conversation around the table as you share your meal.



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LEARN ABOUT CUBA

Location: Cuba is the largest island country of the West Indies Archipelago. Cuba was claimed for Spain by Christopher Columbus in 1492. Cuba is in the Atlantic Ocean just to the east of Mexico and directly south of Florida. Cuba sits just south of the Bahamian Islands and northwest of Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

Distance from Oklahoma City: If you traveled from Oklahoma City (Oklahoma's State Capitol) to Havana (Cuba's Capitol), you would fly 1,251 miles and travel over parts of the southern United States. When flying, a stop in Florida is typically required.

Major Landmark: Cuba was the home to American author Ernest Hemingway for over 20 years. One of the largest collections of Hemingway memorabilia is located at his Havana home, Finca Vigía (translation: Lookout House). In Finca Vigía, you can find original furniture, artwork and a vast collection of more than 9,000 books.

Holiday Celebration: Día de la Independencia, Cuba's Independence Day, is celebrated every year on Oct. 10. This day marks Cuba's independence from Spanish colonial rule in 1868. Many Cubans celebrate the day in Havana, which features parades, fireworks, cultural performances and traditional Cuban foods. There are also remembrance ceremonies all over the country for those who died fighting for Cuba's freedom.

Languages Spoken: Spanish is the official language of Cuba. The Cuban Spanish dialect is a variant of Caribbean Spanish featuring a fast rhythmic tone and inflection. Many Cuban Spanish speakers drop the "s" sound if at the end of a word. Haitian Creole is spoken by many of the Haitian immigrants in Cuba. English is also spoken by many young people and those in the tourism industry.



Flag of Cuba



Finca Vigía



Havana, Cuba



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SHOPPING LIST

PRODUCE

- 1 tablespoon lime juice, freshly squeezed
- 5 zucchinis, quartered vertically
- ¼ cup cilantro chopped (optional)
- 2 cups of pineapple chunks, fresh or canned, drained (for pudding and milkshake)
- 2 slices pineapple for milkshake (optional)
- 1 large sweet onion
- 1 large red bell pepper
- 1/4 cup chopped parsley

PANTRY

- ¾ cup sugar
- ½ tablespoon paprika
- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- ½ tablespoon cumin
- Salt
- Black pepper
- 1 cup white rice
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 1 ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- 2 cups long-grain rice
- 3 ½ cups chicken broth
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- ½ teaspoon ground turmeric

DAIRY

- 4 ¾ cup milk
- 4 tablespoons butter
- ¼ cup queso fresco or cotija crumbled or grated, optional
- ½ cup orange juice

MEAT

- 4 pounds bone-in chicken pieces (thighs and legs)

SEASONING OPTION

Use 3 tablespoons of Sazon Completa "Cuban Complete Seasoning" or make your own:

- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 teaspoon dried cilantro
- ½ teaspoon ground coriander
- ½ teaspoon ground turmeric



CUBAN ARROZ CON POLLO

Nutrition per serving:

Calories: 652 kcal | Carbohydrates: 60g | Protein: 35g | Fat: 29g | Sodium: 1,000mg | Calcium: 55mg

INGREDIENTS

- 4 pounds bone-in chicken pieces (thighs and legs)
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 large sweet onion, peeled and chopped
- 1 large red bell pepper, seeded and chopped
- 2 cups long-grain rice
- 3 ½ cups chicken broth
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- ¼ cup chopped parsley

SEASONING OPTION

Use 3 tablespoons of Sazon Completa “Cuban Complete Seasoning” or make your own:

- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 teaspoon dried cilantro
- ½ teaspoon ground coriander
- ½ teaspoon ground turmeric

PREP TIME

10 MIN

COOK TIME

35 MIN

SERVINGS

6



DIRECTIONS



1. In a large bowl, add the flour and 1 ½ tablespoons Sazon Completa to the bowl. Mix well. Then toss the chicken pieces in the flour mixture to fully coat.



2. Set a large sauté pan (or dutch oven) over medium heat. Add the oil. Once hot, place chicken pieces into pan. Brown the chicken on all sides, rotating every 2-3 minutes (about 10 minutes total). Then remove the chicken and set aside.



3. Place the chopped onions and peppers in the pan. Sauté for 2 minutes. Then add in the rice and remaining 1 ½ tablespoons Sazon Completa. Stir and sauté the rice for 2 more minutes.



4. Stir in the chicken broth and tomato paste. Place the chicken pieces on top of the rice. Cover the pan with a heavy lid and bring to a boil.



5. Once the broth is boiling, turn the heat down to medium-low and continue simmering for 20-23 minutes, until the rice is tender (keep the pot covered). Fluff the rice and stir in the chopped cilantro.



Learn more at 4h.okstate.edu



Grab the family, take a photo of your dish and share your culinary masterpiece on social media with **#FoodFun4H**



CUBAN GRILLED ZUCCHINI

Nutrition per serving:

Calories: 45 cal | Total Fat: 3g | Sodium: 300mg | Carbohydrates: 5g | Protein: 2g | Dietary Fiber: 1g

INGREDIENTS

- 5 zucchinis, quartered vertically
- 4 tablespoons butter
- ½ tablespoon paprika
- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- ½ tablespoon cumin
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- ¼ cup queso fresco or cotija crumbled or grated, optional
- ¼ cup cilantro chopped, optional

PREP TIME

5 MIN

COOK TIME

10 MIN

SERVINGS

4-6



DIRECTIONS



1. Cut zucchinis into quarters vertically, creating spears.



2. In a small saucepan melt butter with paprika, chili powder, cumin, salt and pepper.



3. Brush butter mixture over zucchini spears to coat, and grill zucchini for about 5 to 10 minutes until tender.



4. Once you've pulled the zucchini from the grill, brush again with leftover sauce.



5. Top with queso fresco and cilantro, and serve.



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CREAMY PINEAPPLE RICE PUDDING

Nutrition per serving:

Calories: 457 kcal | Fat: 8g | Sodium: 241mg | Carbohydrates: 84g | Sugar: 47g | Calcium: 318mg

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup white rice
- 4 cups whole milk or 2%
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup pineapple chunks, fresh or canned, drained
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar, for pineapple
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract, for pineapple

NOTES

- Rice: For the creamiest texture, use short-grain rice.
- Milk: Whole milk provides the richest flavor, but you can substitute with lower-fat milk if preferred.
- Pineapple: If using canned pineapple, make sure to drain it well before cooking.

PREP TIME

10 MIN

COOK TIME

50 MIN

SERVINGS

4



DIRECTIONS



1. In a medium pan add pineapple chunks, 2 tablespoons granulated sugar, and ½ teaspoon vanilla extract. Cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until caramelized and golden, about 10 minutes. Set aside.



2. Combine the rice, milk, ½ cup of granulated sugar and salt in a large saucepan. Bring to a gentle boil over medium heat, then reduce the heat to low.



3. Simmer, stirring frequently to prevent sticking, until the rice is tender and the mixture has thickened, about 40-45 minutes.
4. Once the pudding has thickened, remove from heat and stir in the 1 teaspoon of vanilla extract. Let it cool slightly. Spoon the rice pudding into serving bowls, then top with the caramelized pineapple chunks. Serve warm or chilled, depending on your preference. This pudding can be made ahead and stored in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.



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CUBAN BATIDO (FRUIT MILKSHAKE)

Ready in 10 minutes.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 ½ cups pineapple, fresh cubed
- 1 cup ice
- ¾ cup milk
- ½ cup orange juice
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- 1 tablespoon lime juice, freshly squeezed
- 2 slices pineapple (optional)

SERVINGS

2



DIRECTIONS



1. Combine pineapple, ice, milk, orange juice, sugar and lime juice in blender.



2. Puree in blender until texture is smooth.



3. Pour mixture into glasses. Garnish with pineapple slices.



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RHYTHM & MOVE CHALLENGE

In Cuba, music and dance are a part of everyday life. Moving to the rhythm is a fun way to stay active and celebrate time together.

Your challenge: Have a family dance session!

How it works:

- Play upbeat music and dance for 5–10 minutes
- Try different movements:
 - Fast feet
 - Clapping to the beat
 - Twisting or spinning
 - Freestyle moves
- Keep it fun — there's no “right” way to dance!

Mini Challenges:

- Create your own family dance move
- Dance in slow motion, then super-fast
- Take turns being the “dance leader”

Bonus challenge:

Create a short family routine and perform it together as a family!

FAIR EXHIBIT IDEAS

Many Cubans ride bicycles to get around due to bicycles being a cost-efficient mode of transportation, and it is a good form of physical fitness. Learn about bicycle safety, bicycling as a part of healthy living or how to care for a bicycle. Make a poster and enter it at the county fair in Section 308 Class 28 for Juniors (grades 3–5), Class 30 for Intermediates (grades 6–8) and Class 32 for Seniors (grades 9–12).

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IDEAS

One of the most popular volunteer opportunities in Cuba is to help improve the schools. This could mean painting, prepping a new garden or collecting supplies.

Here are some ideas for helping a school in your area:

- Start a school supply drive in your community. Collect pencils, paper, notebooks, markers, crayons and other popular school supplies.
- Ask the principal or other school officials if there is anything that you can do to help get the school ready or clean up for the new school year.
- Provide small tokens of appreciation or snacks for teachers in teacher preparation days before school starts.



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EDUCATIONAL SPOTLIGHT

Cuba is the largest island in the Caribbean, located just 90 miles south of Florida. With warm tropical weather, rich farmland and a long coastline, Cuba has a strong connection to agriculture, fishing and family meals. Spanish, African, Caribbean and Indigenous Taíno traditions have all influenced Cuban culture, creating a unique blend of music, art, celebrations and delicious foods.

Meals are often enjoyed with family and friends, and many traditional recipes have been passed down through generations. Fresh ingredients, simple cooking methods and flavorful herbs are key parts of Cuban cuisine.

Fun Facts

- Rice and beans are considered Cuba's most famous everyday food and are often served together at lunch or dinner.
- Plantains are a staple food. They look like bananas but are usually cooked by frying, baking or boiling.
- Cubans use flavorful herbs and spices like garlic, oregano, cumin, onions and cilantro instead of making foods very spicy.
- Fresh tropical fruits such as mangoes, guavas, pineapples, papayas and coconuts grow well in Cuba's warm climate.
- One popular Cuban sandwich includes roasted pork, ham, Swiss cheese, pickles and mustard pressed on Cuban bread.

Connection to Real Life

Food is an important part of Cuban family life. Families often gather around the table to celebrate holidays, birthdays and special occasions. Cooking together helps preserve family traditions while teaching younger generations valuable cooking skills. Healthy eating habits in Cuban cooking often include fresh fruits, vegetables, beans and home-cooked meals. Learning about foods from other cultures helps us appreciate different traditions while discovering nutritious ingredients we can enjoy.

Geography and Agriculture

Cuba's tropical climate and fertile soil make it ideal for growing crops throughout much of the year. Important agricultural products include:

- Sugarcane
- Rice
- Citrus fruits
- Coffee
- Tropical fruits
- Vegetables

The island's surrounding waters also provide fish and seafood, which are important parts of many traditional meals.



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CONVERSATION STARTERS

- What is something kind someone did for you recently?
- How can we show kindness to someone tomorrow?
- When something feels hard, what helps you keep going?
- What is the best gift you have ever received and given to someone?

REPORTING INFORMATION

Submit participation through ZSuite at the end of each month. Include a photo of you preparing the recipe, a photo of you enjoying the meal with family or friends, and your reflection responses:

- **I tried ...** (New recipe, ingredient or skill)
- **I improved ...** (Something you got better at)
- **I'm proud of ...** (Your favorite part of the experience)

TABLE-SETTING ACTIVITY

In Cuba, meals are typically served family-style, meaning large serving dishes are placed in the center of the table and everyone serves themselves. After preparing the meal, set up a Cuban-style family table instead of serving cafeteria-style.

- Cover the table with a colorful tablecloth.
- Arrange the food in serving bowls and platters.
- Add a small vase with tropical flowers or greenery.
- Place a bowl of fresh fruit in the center.
- Play Cuban music while everyone shares the meal.

45-60 MINUTE CUBAN MUSIC PLAYLIST

This mix provides a balance of upbeat rhythms for food preparation and calmer music while everyone enjoys the meal.

- Guantanamera – Celia Cruz
- Chan Chan – Buena Vista Social Club
- El Cuarto de Tula – Buena Vista Social Club
- Instrumental Cuban Salsa Mix
- Instrumental Cha-Cha-Chá Mix
- Quizás, Quizás, Quizás – Omara Portuondo
- This mix provides a balance of upbeat rhythms for food preparation and calmer music while everyone enjoys the meal.

Extension Tip: If using music in a public setting like an OSU Extension program, consider streaming from a licensed service (Spotify, Apple Music or YouTube Music) through your institution's account.