

# CEVICHE

## SEAFOOD MEDLEY MARINATED IN LIME JUICE

In classic Maya cities, fish was a luxury reserved for the upper crust. The additional labor of salting, drying, smoking or pre-cooking added expense. The Incas, too, preserved their fish by salt curing, and they even developed methods for freeze-drying in the high altitudes of the Andes. But equally popular among the Incas was raw fish, plucked fresh from the warm currents on the Pacific coast of South America, accompanied only by *chiles*. In fact, the deliciously popular dish *ceviche* most likely originated in Peru where Spanish conquerors reported on this strange - and to them, repulsive - custom. The historical transition from raw fish to seafood “cooked” in citrus juice (the standard recipe for modern day *ceviche*) remains disputed among scholars. But one thing is certain: the Incas could not have created *ceviche* as we know it until the Spaniards brought to the New World their delicious limes, lemons, oranges and other citrus varieties. The dish was probably further refined in the early 20th century, when an influx of Japanese immigrants to Peru resulted in the opening of sushi restaurants manned by chefs skilled in the handling and preparation of raw fish. To the present, the standard recipe for *ceviche* reflects its early origins: raw or partially cooked seafood, *chile* and citrus. Beyond those chief ingredients, the sky is the limit: *ceviche* has evolved to include everything from onion and tomato, to popcorn and tequila! How did *ceviche* migrate to Yucatán? The history pages on this subject are sadly blank, but it is not illogical to presume that the recipe - along with citrus plants - accompanied the Spanish conquerors on their exploits throughout the New World. And now, from the sleepy beaches of Cozumel to the bustling streets of Manhattan, *ceviche* has become one of the world’s favorite ways of enjoying fresh seafood.

10 SERVINGS

- **1/2 pound (225g) octopus**

- **1/2 pound (225g) raw shrimp**, *peeled, heads and tails removed, deveined*
- **1/2 pound (225g) raw scallops**
- **1/2 pound (225g) white fish**, *cut into serving pieces*
- **10 - 12 limes**

- **3 Roma tomatoes**, *seeded and cut into 1/2 inch dice*
- **1 small white onion**, *quartered and thinly sliced*
- **1/4 cup (75ml) fresh cilantro**, *chopped*
- **1 tsp. (5ml) sea salt or to taste**
- **Ground black pepper to taste**

- **Bibb lettuce**, *separated into leaves*
- **1 ripe avocado**, *peeled, seeded and sliced or cut into 1/2 inch dice and coated with lime juice to avoid browning*
- **One recipe Salsa X'nipek**
- **One recipe Totopos**

### ❧ PREPARE THE OCTOPUS ❧

#### STEP 1 REMOVE BEAK AND EYES, DISCARD.

Place octopus between two pieces of waxed paper and hammer with a wooden mallet to soften. Boil for one hour in 8 cups (2 liters) water with 1 Tbs. (15ml) vinegar. Cool, then rinse under tap water to remove purple skin. Cut into serving pieces.

### ❧ MARINATE THE SEAFOOD ❧

#### STEP 2 SPREAD SEAFOOD AND OCTOPUS

in a glass or non-metallic container. Squeeze 8 - 10 of the limes; strain, and pour juice onto the seafood to cover completely. Cover dish with plastic wrap and refrigerate at least 8 hours, or overnight.

### ❧ FINISH SALAD ❧

#### STEP 3 DRAIN SEAFOOD TO REMOVE EXCESS JUICE.

Place seafood in a mixing bowl. Toss all other ingredients with seafood, adding salt and pepper to taste. Finish by squeezing juice of remaining limes onto the *ceviche*.

### ❧ SERVE ❧

#### STEP 4 LINE CHILLED COCKTAIL GLASSES

WITH LETTUCE LEAVES. Decorate with slices or cubes of avocado. Add *ceviche* and top with a spoonful of *Salsa X'nipek*. Serve with crispy *Totopos*.