

I recently engaged someone, another foodie, on the Holy Trinity of Cuban food. I said onion, garlic and cumin. They said onion, garlic and green pepper. I even underscored my argument by saying that J. Lo's executive chef, Don Rolando, agrees with my version of "La Trinidad." My interview with him reinforced so many things I already knew about our cuisine. You can read it [here](#).

After 20 minutes of back and forth and using examples, I decided that there certainly had to be an agreeable meeting place, even though I'm convinced I'm right.

If you don't walk away from my blog learning how to use the pressure cooker or make hundreds of different flavored flans (well, really only 40 for now), please take the time to at least learn all the wonderful things about *sofrito*! It'll end every argument you may have regarding the basic flavoring methods!

Growing up, there were two things my mother reiterated: stay out of the kitchen when I'm cooking beans in the pressure cooker and don't forget to make the *sofrito*!

Sofrito is like the *mire poix* of creole and Cajun cuisine. How do I put it... it's the *ish that makes Cuban and Latin food so flavorful and robust. It's the basis, the essence, the foundation to tasty eats. Respectfully and basically speaking, **sofrito** consists of sautéing diced vegetables and spices/herbs in canola or vegetable oil on medium to high heat and used to season certain dishes. Your *sofrito* is done before the garlic starts to brown and the onions are translucent.

Sofrito is the toothpaste on the brush, the sexy shoe on the foot, the sugar in pecan pie.

It is *that* thing!

Now that we know what *sofrito* is, let's address the different ways of using it. Every dish requiring un **sofrito**, will dictate what kind of vegetables and seasonings I use. I mention earlier how the holy trinity of Cuban cuisine is onion, garlic and cumin. However, the **sofrito** is the early point in cooking where you can improvise and establish your holy trinity. For me, the basic **sofrito** will always consist of onion, garlic, green pepper, cumin, oregano and a packet of Sazon Goya, *sin achiote* (that little orange packet of seasonings we all rave about). **EVERYTHING** is better with garlic!

Most of my beans also use this basic recipe, however using red bell peppers will add nice color to a

batch of black *frijoles*. Most of our rice dishes also call for **sofrito**. The only time I don't incorporate it is for plain white or brown rice. It's definitely a must in the ever-popular yellow saffron rice. In this single case, I do use the packet of Sazon Goya *con achiote* (coloring and flavor agent/seasoning).

In addition to beans and rice dishes, there are meat, poultry and sauces that will call for a **sofrito**. It all depends on how you are preparing each. There are times when certain vegetables are eliminated or others are included. One case would be in making the *mojo* for *yuca hervida*. Though the onion and garlic sauce that is deliciously poured over perfectly salted and boiled yucca, is the *mojo*, the process of sautéing it in vegetable oil makes it a **sofrito**, of sorts.

Some will dispute when and how **sofrito** should be added to the pot of food. For instance, when making **picadillo**, I just throw the veggies and spices/herbs at the same time as the meat. No need to sauté my goodies ahead of time because *picadillo* generally takes a very short time to cook (**SEE NEW VID UNDER FLANBOYANT TV!**). I have been challenged on this! I've been making *picadillo* for 15 years and am quite confident my hodge-podge method works just fine! (*verdad*, Mami!?!?)

However, when cooking dry or canned beans, it is important to know that the **sofrito** goes in after the beans have been pressurized and softened (generally about 20 minutes). Before the 2nd set of applied pressure, the **sofrito** is added to the beans and cooked uncovered, for 5 minutes, to allow full infusion into the beans. Side note, it is imperative you make a **sofrito** to doctor up even seasoned canned beans! I mean, come on, who likes eating bland ass beans straight from the can, simply because they're already cooked! Take a few minutes and make a basic **sofrito** for them. It'll be your redemption for not using dry ones (and your friends won't talk about you)!

Ultimately, the purpose of **sofrito** is to offer a flavorful foundation to food. When added at the right time and allowed to infuse properly, **sofrito** will take your food to another level! Think of how great it is to add quick flavor to simple spaghetti by making a **sofrito** with some diced tomato! Instantly, you have a light tomato sauce in lieu of a time consuming homemade heavy one! (look [here](#) for an example of one I made Monaco).

(this sofrito was one I made today for some coconut arroz congri; I used red onion cuz it was already partially cut up!)

So go and practice making **sofrito**. It is utter robust flavor, guaranteed, **every.single.time**.

Below is an edited list I created, of dishes for which you should make a **sofrito**. If you are interested, email me and I will send you a more elaborate chart! Go for it!

** (edit: you may have noticed no mention of salt in the sofrito. That's because I add my salt either directly to the food while cooking (to taste) or will have seasoned my meats with a rub. Very seldom do I add salt to the sofrito.)*

**(edit no. 2: in a later post, I will address the use of Sazon Goya vs. real saffron. For the purpose of this post, I did not touch on it, since the majority of sofritos do not require any coloring agents, seasoning)*

****What's in YOUR Sofrito??****

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AND SOME HUUUUUUUUUGE NEWS TO SHARE!!! IF YOU FOLLOW ME ON TWITTER OR FACEBOOK, YOU MAY ALREADY KNOW. IF NOT, YOU'LL FIND OUT IN THE NEXT POST!!

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