

## LALO'S CACAHUATE BEANS WITH PICO DE GALLO

4 main-course or 8 side-dish servings

Mexico City chef Eduardo “Lalo” Garcia’s secret is to cook these beans very simply, for a very long time, until they’re super-soft, then to add his seasoning—a sofrito of onion, garlic, tomatoes, and dried chiles—and boil them for another half hour, simultaneously infusing them with flavor and concentrating their cooking liquid. These are some of the simplest and yet most complex beans I’ve ever tasted, let alone cooked. A straightforward pico de gallo adds a little freshness and crunch. Serve with tortillas.

1 white onion

1 pound dried cranberry / borlotti (aka cacahuate) beans, soaked overnight

2 garlic cloves

Water

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

2 large tomatoes, chopped

2 dried ancho or guajillo chiles, stemmed, seeded, and cut into strips

1 teaspoon kosher salt, plus more to taste

### PICO DE GALLO (MAKES ABOUT 2 CUPS)

2 Roma (plum) tomatoes, chopped

1/3 cup finely diced red onion

1/2 serrano chile, stemmed, seeded, and diced

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

1/4 cup fresh lime juice

1/2 cup lightly packed cilantro leaves

1/2 teaspoon kosher salt, plus more to taste

Cut the onion in half. Keep one half intact and throw it into a large pot. Chop the other half and reserve.

Add the beans and 1 of the garlic cloves to the pot, along with enough water to cover the beans by 3 inches, and turn the heat to high. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat as low as it will go, cover, and cook until the beans are tender, 60 to 90 minutes.

Chop the remaining garlic clove.

While the beans are cooking, make the sofrito: Pour the oil into a medium sauté pan over medium heat. Add the reserved chopped onion and the chopped garlic and cook until the onion softens, about 5 minutes. Add the tomatoes and chiles and cook until the tomatoes break down, release their liquid, and become very soft, and most of the liquid has evaporated, about 10 minutes. Remove from the heat.

When the beans are tender, stir in the sofrito, increase the heat to high, and cook, uncovered, until the beans are very soft and starting to break apart and the liquid has reduced by about one-third but the beans are still brothy, about 30 minutes. Stir in the salt, taste, and add more if needed.

While the beans are cooking, make the pico de gallo: In a mixing bowl, combine the tomatoes, onion, chile, olive oil, lime juice, cilantro, and salt. Taste and add more salt if needed.

When the beans are ready, divide them among shallow bowls and top each portion with some pico de gallo. Serve hot, with tortillas.

Cover and store in the refrigerator for up to 1 week or in the freezer for up to 3 months.