

Ruben, if you could only eat one food for the rest of your life, what would it be?

Being originally from Argentina, I love grilled beef.

The dining hall in the Salt Lake City Olympic Village had a case filled with steaks. You could pick any steak and the chef would grill it for you. The first 10 days I was there I had steak for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Thirty consecutive steak meals.

On the eleventh day I decided to try something different to mix it up. But after that meal I ended up going back to the steaks.



I enjoy grilling Argentine style, burning oak wood to make embers and using the embers to cook. This picture is of some short ribs, Italian sausage, and chicken I grilled for some friends. You always have to have homemade chimichurri!

Ruben's Chimichurri Recipe

Traditionally served with grilled steaks, chicken, sausages and empanadas in Argentina instead of BBQ sauce. Great as a bruschetta topping too.

Two to four cloves of fresh garlic chopped finely, not the tasteless stuff they sell in jars. A bunch of Italian parsley finely chopped. Some oregano, red pepper flakes, cayenne pepper, rosemary, salt, virgin olive oil and a bit of red wine vinegar.



Put it in the fridge for a day. That's pretty traditional. But you can "gourmet" it up by adding a bit of white wine or lemon, onion powder, thyme, or other spices. Put some on your steak after you plate it, and some in a small bowl on the table. Don't forget the red wine, a good Argentine Cabernet or Malbec.

Ruben's Salsa Criolla Recipe

Salsa Criolla is also served with grilled meats in Argentina. It compliments chimichurri beautifully. This is not a salsa for dipping chips. It's for beef, chicken, sausages, etc.

The Criollos were the Spanish settlers in South America - kind of like the pioneers.

Chopped tomatoes (without the seeds, just the outside part so it's not too watery), green and red peppers, onion, oil, red wine vinegar, salt, pepper.

So, what? What's the big deal? Just make it and you'll be amazed at what it does to meat. Especially if you have chimi* around as well.

You can put garlic, parsley, cilantro, jalapeños if you like. But the basic one is very simple.

Every country has different versions. In Chile, it's more like a pico de gallo with oil and vinegar. Peru had a different one.



***Argentina Slang** - They shorten words in Argentine slang. Chimi instead of chimichurri, Feliz cumple. Instead of Feliz cumpleaños, etc.