

The Meal

By Amber Gibson Photography by Carolyn Fong



Taste the Rainbow

At Parche, a new Colombian restaurant in Oakland, California, chef-owner Paul Iglesias serves dishes—including this Barranquilla vegan ceviche—that celebrate the South American country's environmental and cultural heterogeneity while also appealing to local customers' tastes. "While there is incredible biodiversity in Colombia and access to great ingredients for someone who is vegan," Iglesias says, "it's not part of the culture in the way that it is here in the States."

Most of the vegetables in the dish are grown locally; an exception is canned Colombian hearts of palm. "Palmitos are prevalent in Colombian cuisine," Iglesias says, "especially during Holy Week, when eating meat is not allowed."

Mushrooms and heirloom tomatoes are among the vegetables Iglesias rotates through the dish. "The constant," he notes, "is the ceviche marinade, which consists of baba ghanoush, citrus, leche de tigre, salt, and pepper."

Castelvetrano olives add a meaty texture and highlight the Arabic influence on Colombian cuisine. "The combination of olives, mushrooms, and hearts of palm makes for a hearty protein substitute," Iglesias says. "Perfect for vegetarians."

Crispy chickpeas pay homage to the Lebanese traders who taught Colombians how to make bread without using wheat and flour. "We fry them in high-heat oil and toss them in salt and pepper," Iglesias says. "They're plated last so they don't get soggy."

Parche's decor includes rainbow-colored woven furniture from Colombian design company Tucurinca. The pieces are a nod to Iglesias's stint at Canela Bistro & Wine Bar, in San Francisco's Castro District.