



SECOND HARVEST
of SILICON VALLEY



Recipes and Stories that Nurture Community Connection

Inspiring recipes created using food commonly
found at our free grocery markets.

For more delicious recipes visit shfb.org/nutrition

A Message from Second Harvest

Nourishment is essential for good health. At Second Harvest of Silicon Valley, we find inspiration and joy in the nourishing foods and culturally diverse cuisines enjoyed by neighbors and communities. The stories in this cookbook from our wonderful clients Livier and Colette, along with our incredible partners Tadashi of Recovery Café and Bella Terra Apartments, exemplify our philosophy of empowering the community we serve to embrace nutritious food and foster a love for cooking. Celebrating different cultures and unique identities is central to the work that we do. We hope this cookbook will inspire you and bring joy to your cooking, enabling you to prepare meals that you love!

Colette's Story

A Peruvian Single Mother with Dreams of a Better Future



Colette arrived to the Bay Area in the early 2000s from her native Lima, Peru with two young children, a modest amount of luggage and a heart full of dreams, characteristic of those who leave everything behind in hopes of a better future. In the beginning the culture shock was overwhelming, but she quickly began to make friends who provided a great support network, the comfort of welcoming smiles and a place around the table.

Many of these new friends were of Mexican origin. They helped Colette and her children navigate the complexities of a new environment and exposed them to new traditions and tastes that she quickly learned to integrate into her Peruvian cuisine. Colette instinctively started creating recipes in which she fused ingredients, methods, and flavors from both cultures to create delicious dishes. At Colette's table, it is common to savor burritos and tacos with Peruvian ingredients such as aji panca or aji mirasol.



“The yellow chili is an Andean tradition and for me it is important that my children recognize these traditional flavors”

“The yellow chili is an Andean tradition and for me it is important that my children recognize these traditional flavors,” Colette says.

Being a single mother has brought unexpected challenges and many expenses. That is why for eight years Colette has visited the pantries offered by Second Harvest of Silicon Valley. She affirms that the food she has received from Second Harvest allows her to provide a nutritious and varied menu to her family. Each month, Colette receives boxes with fruits, vegetables, legumes, dairy, and grains. She carefully sorts the food and puts it in her fridge and freezer to make it last longer.

“The food that I’ve received from Second Harvest has supplemented my pantry for many years, especially during the times when my children were little and now that everything is so expensive.” Colette explains.

From what she receives in the Second Harvest box, Colette prepares the traditional aji de gallina, lomo saltado, and a favorite dish passed down from her grandmother, causa limeña. Colette also uses the recipes given to her at

free grocery sites and has attended cooking demonstrations that have inspired her to cook with what she receives from the food bank.

“Many times I use the free groceries from Second Harvest to connect with my childhood and culture.”, Colette explains.

For Colette, Peruvian dishes are a direct connection to her childhood and her grandparents, who had a major influence on her upbringing and her love for traditional Peruvian cuisine. Colette left many things behind when she came to live in the United States. It has been a process of adaptation and growth, and she feels very proud of having managed to transmit to her grown children the flavors and traditions of a culture that, despite the distance, will always have a place in her kitchen and her heart.

“Seeing my daughter, who is vegan, cooking dishes inspired by Peruvian cuisine is priceless,” Colette says. “I am happy to know that at the end of the day my children and I gather around the table to talk about what happened during our day and to share time together while we enjoy delicious, healthy food.”

Colette's Peruvian Causa Rellena



Peruvian Causa Rellena

Servings: 4
Prep time: 40 min
Cook time: 20 min
Total time: 60 min

Ingredients

Potato Layer

8 starchy potatoes
1/4 cup of olive oil
2 aji amarillo chili peppers, finely chopped or 2 Tbsp aji amarillo paste
2 limes, juiced
1 Tbsp finely chopped fresh parsley
Salt and pepper to taste

Filling:

1 can of tuna, drained
1/2 red onion, chopped
1/2 cup frozen peas and carrots thawed
2 tbsp of mayonnaise
1/2 avocado, sliced

Garnishes (optional):

2 hardboiled eggs
4 black olives

Directions

1. Place the unpeeled potatoes in a large pot of cold, salted water. Bring to a boil and cook until they are very tender and cooked through. Drain and set aside to cool.
2. When the potatoes are cool enough to handle, remove the skin. Mash the potatoes very well using a potato ricer or masher until a smooth fluffy “dough” is achieved. Add the olive oil, aji amarillo, lime juice, parsley, salt and pepper to taste. Mix the ingredients until they are all combined, and the potato dough has a smooth consistency and an even color.
3. In a separate bowl, add the tuna, red onion, peas, carrots, and mayonnaise. Mix well to combine and set aside.
4. Use a round cookie cutter to assemble the layers – you may need to lift the cutter along the way as you form each layer. First, add a layer of the potato dough, about 1 inch high, and press down with a spoon. Next, add a layer of the avocado slices on top. Now add a layer of the tuna filling and gently press down with a spoon to create an even surface. Finish off with another layer of potato dough and gently press down with a spoon again. Carefully remove the cookie cutter and repeat this process with the rest of the ingredients.
5. You can garnish the causa with an egg slice, a sprig of parsley, and an olive. Enjoy!

Author: Colette, Second Harvest Client

Livier's Story

Cooking with Kindness and Self compassion

Every day, Livier gets up at 5 a.m., prepares her coffee and immediately sends a loving and encouraging group message to her 14 younger siblings who live in Mexico and the United States. She has spent 32 years living in the Bay Area, far from her native Jalisco, Mexico, but she is still connected to her roots.

While sipping a comforting cafe de la olla, Livier begins preparing breakfasts and packing lunches for her six children and her husband. For her, preparing food daily and offering her children homemade meals combines her life's purpose with her altruistic nature. Livier and her husband discovered that her passion for cooking was only one part of feeding their family. In times of need, allowing others to take care of her is also an act of kindness and self-compassion. She started visiting distribution sites from Second Harvest of Silicon



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Valley and was overjoyed when she received plenty of fruits, vegetables, grains, dairy and other nutritious food.

“One of the dishes that I prepare using the food that I receive from Second Harvest is Machaca. The dish has a very special meaning to me because every time I cook it, it brings me back to my mom’s kitchen. I only cook machaca for special occasions. When I do it, I make a big batch, so I can freeze some of it and use it later for dinner or breakfast.” Livier says.

Livier realized her passion for cooking when she was only 7 years old. She remembers that with the help of a stool, she was able to reach the kitchen counter, where she spent hours watching her mother work with traditional Mexican ingredients and utensils. That’s how she learned to make tortillas. It’s also where she started her culinary journey, preparing food for her 14 siblings, her parents and the occasional guest. Since childhood, Livier has known that she has a special relationship with food which makes her feel alive and connected to those she loves.

Years later and with six children to take care of, “I take advantage of everything that I receive in the distribution,” explains Livier.

This support has allowed her to continue preparing the meals that she loves. Each month, when she receives food from the pantry, Livier reflects about the cycle of generosity; for her,

good food enables her to cook for her family through the loving act of kindness.

We met Livier at one of our month-long nutrition workshops at a local library.

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Every day when her husband goes to work, and her children go to their activities, Livier dedicates her time to being active, gardening, and getting involved in her community. These activities recharge her so she’s ready to prepare a new feast. At the end of the day, when everyone comes home after their busy schedules, the family gathers around the table, ready to enjoy a carefully planned meal. Dedication, patience and devotion are always the main ingredients.

“We all have our own special interests and purpose – that thing that moves us and motivates us. To me, it is the ability to feed my family that lets them know that I love them and care about them. It is easy for me to accomplish this through food. I pour my heart and soul into each meal that I prepare for them, and my family knows it. They love my cooking. There is no better reward for me than seeing their satisfaction as they savor the dishes that I prepare for them every day.”

Livier's Machaca con Huevo



Savory Mexican Machaca con Huevo

(Traditional Shredded Beef Dish)

Servings: 4

Prep time: 15 minutes

Cook time: 60 minutes

Total Time: 2 hours
(includes cooling time)

Ingredients

2 lbs of flank steak

1 garlic clove

6 medium tomatoes, diced small

1 small onion, chopped

1 lb fresh gueros chili peppers (Santa Fe yellow peppers), diced

1 lb Anaheim peppers or green chiles (for extra spice), deseeded and grilled in strips

2 Tbsp cooking oil

2-3 eggs

Salt and pepper, to taste

Directions

1. In a large pot, add the flank steak, garlic clove, and salt. Add enough water to cover the entire steak. Boil/simmer the meat until it is cooked through.
2. Once done, remove from pot, let the steak cool and shred it with a fork.
3. In a large skillet, heat the cooking oil. Add the shredded meat and cook for about 20 minutes.
4. Season with salt and pepper.
5. Once the meat is heated through, add the tomatoes, onions, and chili peppers.
6. Carefully mix the vegetables and meat together and cook until the tomatoes start releasing their juices.
7. Crack 2-3 eggs on top of the shredded meat with vegetables and scramble everything together.
8. Serve warm.

Tip: Serve this dish with rice, beans or tortillas and enjoy it for breakfast, lunch, or dinner.

Author: Livier Hernández, Second Harvest Client

Tadashi's Story

Recovery Café, a Place Where Love and Nutritious Food Abound



Tadashi's early memories in his native Tokyo and later in the Bay Area often revolve around food. Cooking with his mom, using Japanese staple ingredients like fava beans and mackerel, and smelling the inviting aromas from broths, herbs and spices are part of his fond recollections.

Tadashi and his family moved to the Bay Area when he was four years old. The move presented a big change for the family, but Japanese food served as an anchor to their roots and helped ease the transition.

"When I moved to college, I started gaining a lot of weight because I adopted the standard American diet. I had little time, so I ate mainly processed/ pre-made foods with no nutritional value," Tadashi said. "Later, my Japanese roots and my studies in western medicine helped me to reconnect with

Tadashi has noticed a difference in how members are now more conscious about eating for health. Some of the members have even reported positive health outcomes as they have carried the teachings and new concepts to their homes.



my love for natural foods. I realized that there is not enough emphasis on raising awareness of the importance of nourishing foods and how they can help with optimal health. My experience inspired me to focus my career on nutrition and later I obtained my certification as a health coach.”

Tadashi’s Journey to Recovery Café

Tadashi’s connection with the Cafe started as a volunteer when he was invited to teach nutrition and cooking classes to its members. The organization’s commitment to help people who have been traumatized by addiction, homelessness and mental health challenges resonated with Tadashi’s values and sense of purpose. When he found out that providing resources to help members reach stability and healing as part of the journey to recovery was core to the Café’s mission, he wanted to be part of it. Shortly after starting as a volunteer, he was asked to join the team as the Culinary and Nutrition Manager.

As a staff member, he continued teaching classes while also providing healthy brunches and lunches for the Cafe members five times a week - all prepared from scratch in the Café’s commercial kitchen. As a believer that food can play a role in preventing and reversing chronic diseases, Tadashi’s makes sure to include fruits, whole grains, lean meats, and lots of vegetables when he plans the menu for the week.

Members also started participating in his Culinary and Nutrition Training Program which opened a new world of possibilities. With

continued support from Second Harvest and new partnerships with local, organic farms, Tadashi has noticed a difference in how members are now more conscious about eating for health. Some members have even reported positive health outcomes as they embraced his teachings and incorporated the concepts into their own homes.

“In the beginning, members were hesitant to try brown rice, but I started making it as a side dish regularly and clients got used to it. Now, some of them ask for brown rice as they prefer it over other side dishes,” explains Tadashi.

Second Harvest provides approximately 85% of the food that Café Recovery offers to its members. Every week, Kitchen Manager Chris Caruso picks up food from Second Harvest’s Curtner location, where he finds fresh produce, grains, animal and vegetable protein and other items to make delicious meals for a population that greatly benefits from love, care, nourishment and lots of positive reinforcement. The meals served at Recovery Cafe provide an inviting ambiance where members feel dignified and acknowledged with the understanding that food brings the community together.

For Tadashi, cooking continues to be an expression of love, art and creativity.

Our partner agency, Recovery Café, dedicates its efforts to creating a welcoming and nurturing environment for those who have been traumatized by addiction, homelessness and mental health issues. Currently Recovery Café serves breakfast and lunch five days a week and distributes food bags provided by Second Harvest on Friday mornings.

Tadashi's Chawanmushi



Chawanmushi

(Savory Steamed Egg Custard)

Servings: 6
Prep time: 10 min
Cook time: 25 min
Total time: 35 min

Ingredients

3 medium eggs
1.5 tbsp soy sauce
¼ tsp salt
1 tsp sugar
2 cups of low-sodium vegetable broth
2 pieces of skinless, boneless chicken thigh cut into bite-sized pieces
4 mini bella or white button mushrooms, thinly sliced
½ cup of frozen peas

Equipment

Bowl
Whisk, fork or chopstick
6 small cups
Flat-bottomed pot and lid big enough to hold the small cups
Foil

Directions

1. In a medium bowl, crack the eggs, add the soy sauce, salt, and sugar. Whisk/mix gently to avoid air bubbles. Add the vegetable broth into the mixture and gently stir until uniform.
2. Distribute the chicken, mushrooms and frozen peas equally between the 6 cups.
3. Pour the egg mixture equally into the cups. Cover each cup tightly with foil.
4. Fill your pot with 2 inches of water and bring to a boil with the lid on. Gently place the cups into the pot and close the lid to steam.
5. Steam on high for two minutes. While steaming, avoid opening the lid. You should see active, rumbling bubbles during this time.
6. Turn down the heat to low and steam for 12 minutes. You should see small, periodic bubbles during this time.
7. Turn off heat and let it sit for five minutes.
8. Carefully take out the cups as they will be very hot.
9. Garnish the chawan mushi with cooked peas and serve it warm with a spoon.

Author: Tadashi Oguchi, Recovery Café

Bella Terra Apartments Residents' Story

Building Community and Friendships Around Food

Bella Terra Apartments is an affordable community, through EAH Housing, for active adults 55 and older located in Morgan Hill, the residential community focuses on providing a nurturing environment that helps residents stay physically and mentally active and food secured; key partnerships are crucial to achieving these goals. One of these collaborations is with Second Harvest. Every month, Bella Terra hosts a food pantry for its residents where they participate as volunteers and receive food, which they occasionally use to make dishes to share with fellow residents.

"I was appointed by other residents to be the chef of this community, and I love



“I don't like living my life following restrictive diets, I enjoy food and when I eat, I don't feel guilty. I try to follow my doctor's advice, but I also honor my preferences.”

—Mary Villa, Bella Terra Apartments Resident

cooking for them,” Mary Villa said. “Before the pandemic, I used the food that I received at the distribution to cook for other residents. We are currently getting back to gatherings, and I plan to keep cooking for them. Some of the dishes that I cook are vegetable lasagna, enchiladas, tortillas and even the turkey for Thanksgiving. Sometimes I don’t want to cook just for myself, so my neighbor Linda or someone else in the community cooks for me and that makes me feel taken care of.”

One of the realities that seniors face regularly is cooking for themselves and having to eat meals alone. But as Bella Terra residents insightfully explain, being alone is not the same as being lonely. They have created an environment where they feel supported by each other and where food is central to their interactions. Residents get together to enjoy fun conversations around food, participate in events organized by management and often cook for each other.

“When loved ones are no longer around and life has settled down, the comfort of a strong community carries you through,” said Rosalinda Gamez, a Bella Terra Resident.

Many of the dishes that they prepare are highly influenced by their childhood experiences. For Mary, her Indigenous heritage and her close relationship with her paternal grandmother allowed her to enjoy food without guilt and minimize food waste.

“I don’t like living my life following restrictive diets,” Mary said. “I enjoy food and when I eat, I don’t feel guilty. I try to follow my doctor’s advice, but I also honor my preferences.”

The Bella Terra residents’ points of view are as diverse as their unique upbringings. For Maria Núñez, who grew up in Mexico, healthy eating is a very important pillar of her life.

“After being sick five years ago, I said NO MORE, and I changed my dietary habits and I feel great now,” Maria said. “I come to the nutrition classes offered by Second Harvest and want to learn more about nutrients and eating for health. I take pictures of the food that I cook, and I share it with my daughter. I think that the healthy food that I prepare is very tasty. Cooking keeps me busy and with a positive outlook. My motto is ‘Food is Medicine.’”

For Linda Gomez helping others gives her a strong sense of purpose.

“I get the food from Second Harvest and from the Christian Church,” Linda said. “I take a portion of the box and I share it with neighbors and churchgoers. I also occasionally cook for others in this community. I like cooking enchiladas, spaghetti, or potato salads. I also cook for the unhoused in Gilroy. I have lived alone for 20 years, but I don’t feel lonely. I live in gratitude. My dad used to say, ‘Don’t waste food because you don’t know if you will have food on the table tomorrow.’”

Regardless of their perspectives toward life and food, residents at Bella Terra rely on each other to stay active and connected. They plan to keep nurturing a welcoming environment highlighted by a strong sense of community and great friendships.

Homemade Chili con Carne



Homemade Chili con Carne

Servings: 8

Prep time: 10 min

Cook time: 35 min

Total time: 45 min

Ingredients

1 Tbsp cooking oil
1/2 large onion, chopped
3 garlic cloves, minced
2 Tbsp tomato paste
1 lbs ground beef
1 tsp ground cumin
1 tsp garlic powder
1 tsp of dried oregano
1 tsp paprika
1 tsp of chili powder (optional)
Salt and pepper to taste
1 bell pepper, diced
1 can of kidney beans
1 can of diced tomatoes
2 cups of vegetable broth

Garnish

Chopped cilantro
Green onions
Cheddar Cheese
Sour Cream

Directions

1. Heat the oil in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat, add the onion and cook stirring occasionally, until translucent. About 2 minutes.
2. Stir in the garlic and cook for about 2 minutes. Add the tomato puree and cook for 1 minute, stir constantly.
3. Add the ground beef and break it with a wooden spoon into small chunks until no longer pink, 8 to 10 minutes.
4. Add the cumin, garlic powder, oregano, paprika and chili powder (if using), salt and pepper. Stir all the spices.
5. Add the bell peppers, kidney beans and tomatoes and the broth, bring to boil over high heat.
6. Reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer for 20 minutes. Taste the chili and add salt and pepper, if necessary.
7. Serve the chili in bowls and garnish with freshly chopped cilantro, grated cheddar cheese, sour cream and/ or green onions.

Author: Diana Garcia, Second Harvest staff, Recipe adapted from: <https://healthyfitnessmeals.com/homemade-beef-chili/>

A message from the project lead



As the project lead for this digital cookbook, I am grateful for the opportunity to engage in meaningful conversations with clients about their food choices. Hearing about their childhood memories around the table and how these experiences have shaped their roles as parents, friends, and community leaders has been truly rewarding. I am also appreciative of our clients and partners for sharing their wisdom and compelling stories with us. These recollections have inspired our nutrition department to connect with clients in a way that honors and respects their cultures and individual preferences and encourages them to enjoy the foods they love.

Sincerely,

Diana Garcia

Nutrition Education Manager
Santa Clara County