



PERUVIAN-JAPANESE (NIKKEI) · MODERN LIMA · STARTER · RAW ·  
SHOWCASE · DINNER PARTY OPENER · LIGHT SECOND COURSE

# Tiradito de Pargo · Leche de Tigre · Ají Amarillo

Fresh red snapper sliced sashimi-thin, laid flat on a cold plate, bathed with yellow leche de tigre (rocoto swapped for ají amarillo for citrus-color brightness) and hit at the 90-second mark — before classical ceviche's 2-minute surface-denaturation window — so the fish reads as raw, not cured. The Peruvian-Nikkei flash-cure that lives in the narrow gap between sashimi (no acid) and ceviche (full cure). Plated in a spiral, finished with ají amarillo paste, red-onion slivers, cilantro leaves, and a whisper of white-corn kernels (canchita), it demonstrates what 60 seconds of difference produces at the molecular level.

Protein Wild red snapper (huachinango) or Peruvian pargo · 400 g skinless +

Serves 4 as starter · 100 g fish per portion

Difficulty Intermediate-Advanced (knife skills + timing precision)

Active 25 min (15 min leche de tigre + 10 min slice and plate)

Total 25 min (plus ideal 1 h leche de tigre rest)

## THE STORY

### The 90-Second Window

Tiradito is Peru's Japanese-immigrant gift to the ceviche tradition. In late-19th-century Lima, Japanese immigrants working in Peruvian fish markets noticed that the classical ceviche technique — cube the fish, douse in lime, wait 15 minutes — produced a fully acid-cured 'white' product. They preferred their fish RAW; their knife skills produced

sashimi-thin slices; they applied the lime just before eating, for only seconds of contact, creating a completely different preparation. This became tiradito: thin slices, flash-cure, served with Peruvian sauces instead of Japanese. Two cuisines merged into one dish that belongs to both and to neither — the founding move of what became the Nikkei tradition.

The technical difference between ceviche and tiradito is the 90-second window. Classical ceviche applies lime juice to cubed fish for 2+ minutes, allowing the citric acid (pH ~2.1) to denature myosin at the surface, producing the opaque-white 'cooked-by-acid' appearance. Tiradito slices the fish 2-3 mm thin, dresses it at 90 seconds — the half-cure point — where the surface has JUST begun to turn translucent-white but the fish reads as raw when eaten. It is the plating that captures the texture: laid flat on a cold plate, the slices are ready immediately; the leche de tigre pools underneath and partially cures from below while the top stays exposed. This asymmetric cure creates a unique mouthfeel that neither sashimi nor ceviche produces.

The ají amarillo (Peruvian yellow chile) is the signature flavor. A fresh ají amarillo is golden-yellow, fruity-hot, aromatic, with a citrus-forward bite. The paste from bottled Peruvian import is an acceptable substitute at 1 Tbsp in the leche de tigre. Rocoto (red pepper) gives a different flavor profile — redder, earthier, spicier — which is why rocoto-based leche de tigre is for ceviche (stays on the fish longer, develops heat) and ají amarillo version is for tiradito (brighter, more immediate, designed to be eaten within 60 seconds of plating).

This closes UMAMI-2 at 10/10 — hitting the category's 10-each goal AND completing the v2-slate 5/5 milestone. The library now teaches the full raw-no-cook spectrum: short cures (swordfish ceviche, corvina ceviche, tiradito), flash-cures (aguachile, tiradito), no-cures (tuna tartare, beef tartare, hamachi crudo, carpaccio de gambas rojas, watermelon-bottarga), and showcase plates (oysters three-dressings). Ten recipes; four different sub-traditions; one cold plate per technique family.

## Specs

<p><b>YIELD</b></p> <p><b>4 as starter · 100 g fish per portion</b></p>	<p><b>FISH</b></p> <p><b>Wild red snapper (huachinango) or Peruvian pargo</b></p>	<p><b>SLICE</b></p> <p>Sashimi-thin 2 - 3 mm, against the grain, 5 - 6 cm long</p>	<p><b>DRESSING WINDOW</b></p> <p>Apply leche de tigre 60 - 90 sec before eating</p>
<p><b>DIFFICULTY</b></p> <p><b>Intermediate- Advanced</b></p> <p>●●●●○</p>	<p><b>ACTIVE TIME</b></p> <p><b>25 min (plus 1 h optional leche rest)</b></p>	<p><b>COOK TIME</b></p> <p><b>Zero — flash- cure only</b></p>	<p><b>MAKE-AHEAD</b></p> <p><b>Leche de tigre 1-4 h; fish slice à la minute; apply at service</b></p>
<p><b>CARDINAL RULE</b></p> <p><b>Apply leche de tigre 60- 90 seconds before eating. Not earlier.</b></p>			

### UMAMI ADAPTATION

## What Changed & Why

Tiradito is a technique-timing-forward recipe. Substitutions: any sashimi-grade fish works (red snapper, wild striped bass, halibut, kanpachi, sea bass) — not farmed Atlantic salmon (texture wrong + parasite risk). Ají amarillo paste is the signature flavor; rocoto paste produces a different dish character (ceviche-adjacent) — if rocoto is all you have, it works but expect earthier-redder profile. Canchita is the standard crunch garnish; large-kernel cancha mote or plain toasted corn nuts (unseasoned) are acceptable substitutes. Peruvian sweet potato is the traditional side; standard orange-flesh sweet potato is the

everyday substitute. For vegetarian/pescatarian-free service: substitute with zucchini ribbons or persimmon slivers and use a veg-broth-based leche. For guests with shellfish allergies: tiradito is fish-only, no concerns. For egg-allergic Pisco Sour drinkers: serve the Chilcano instead (no egg).

CHANGE	ORIGINAL	UMAMI VERSION	WHY
v 1 . 0	Classical Peruvian-Nikkei tiradito de pargo	90-second flash-cure precision + ají amarillo yellow leche de tigre + pre-frozen plate + sashimi-grade pargo + tableside apply-and-serve discipline + shot-glass leftover tradition	Closes UMAMI-2 at 10/10 (v2-slate 5/5 AND 10-each goals complete); teaches cure-window pedagogy across the raw-fish family (sashimi/tiradito/ceviche timing continuum)

## What You Need

### ● Everyday

#### Everyday Tier — Miami-Local + Whole Foods

- Red snapper fillet (huachinango) — 400 g skinless + boneless from Casablanca Fish Market Miami or Whole Foods fish counter · sashimi-grade if available, check for freshness
- Alternate fish: wild striped bass, halibut, sea bass, black sea bass — all sashimi-grade suitable
- Fresh limes — 8-10 Persian or Key limes (200 ml juice yield)
- Fresh ginger — 1 thumb-sized piece (15 g peeled)
- Fresh garlic — 2 cloves peeled
- Cilantro — 1 bunch; stems for leche de tigre, leaves for garnish
- Celery — 1 stalk with leaves
- Ají amarillo paste (bottled Peruvian) — 2 Tbsp from La Tienda, Despaña, or Whole Foods Latin aisle
- Habanero or aji limo (fresh yellow chile, optional) — 1/2 small fruit for fresh-chile kick
- Red onion — 1 small, sliced very thin
- Kosher salt — 1 tsp for leche de tigre
- Fine sea salt — for finishing
- Ice cubes — 2 cubes for leche de tigre (critical for temperature)
- Canchita toasted Peruvian corn — 2 Tbsp from La Tienda or Whole Foods Latin specialty (optional but traditional)
- Aleppo chile flakes — pinch for optional finishing heat

## No Limits

### No-Limits Tier — Premium + Direct Sources

- Pargo (red snapper) from Honolulu Fish Co overnight air-freight · 400 g sashimi-grade skinless fillet · \$80-120 total · ordered day-of-service
- Alternate summit fish: wild striped bass from Casablanca premium line · Hawaiian kanpachi sashimi grade (UMAMI-2 sister recipe) · raw Pacific halibut from Honolulu Fish
- Key limes (Miami winter-early-spring) — Robert Is Here or Redland Farmers Market · 10 fresh-picked Key limes · juice yields 180 ml with rind aromatics · substitute Persian limes off-season
- Fresh ají amarillo (if sourced) — Kalustyan's NYC or Peruvian-specialty Miami source · 1 fresh pepper deseeded · 1 Tbsp paste backup in pantry
- Aji limo (fresh yellow chile) — Peruvian specialty Miami source · 1/2 fresh fruit for sharp-bright heat
- Fresh ginger — organic 1-inch thumb peeled · substantial pepper profile
- Single-clove purple garlic — Whole Foods specialty produce · 2 fresh cloves
- Cilantro — Glaser Organic Farms (Coconut Grove Saturday market) · stems + leaves separated · aromatic precision
- Celery — heirloom or organic with intact leaves
- Red onion — Whole Foods premium small red
- Canchita — La Tienda premium Peruvian toasted corn · 3 Tbsp for crunch layer
- Cancha mote giant corn kernels — La Tienda · alternative Peruvian garnish
- Sweet potato — camote amarillo Peruvian yellow sweet potato (premium Peruvian variety) · 1 small for side garnish · substitute orange sweet potato from Whole Foods
- Maldon flaky salt — Whole Foods · 1 tsp
- Arbequina — Oro Bailén DOP · 2 Tbsp finishing drizzle option
- Micro-cilantro or micro-herbs — Gourmet Greens Miami · small garnish scatter

### EQUIPMENT

## Your Kit

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Yanagi-ba sashimi knife OR very sharp chef's knife (ground thin)

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Cold cutting board (marble or pre-chilled wood)

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- High-speed blender (Vitamix or equivalent) for leche de tigre

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- Fine-mesh sieve

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- 4 shallow plates pre-frozen 30 min before plating

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- Slotted spoon + small ladle for leche pouring

#### MISE EN PLACE

## Before You Start

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- 1-4 hours ahead (ideal 1 h): Build leche de tigre. In high-speed blender: 200 ml fresh lime juice + 15 g ginger (peeled, sliced) + 2 garlic cloves + 1 celery stalk (chopped) + 10 cilantro stems + 2 Tbsp ají amarillo paste + 1/2 habanero if using + 1 tsp kosher salt + 2 ice cubes. Blend 45 seconds on high until smooth + milky.

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- Strain leche de tigre through fine-mesh sieve into a clean bowl or jar. Press gently with spoon. Discard solids. Refrigerate 1-4 hours; the rest integrates the flavors and mellows the lime sharpness slightly.

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- 30 min ahead: plates into freezer.

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- 15 min ahead: retrieve fish from refrigerator. Pat dry gently with paper towel. Inspect for any remaining pin bones; remove with fish tweezers.

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- 10 min ahead: cold cutting board ready. Slice fish against the grain into 2-3 mm sashimi-thin slices, 5-6 cm long. Use sharp pulling stroke (yanagi-ba technique: one smooth pull from heel to tip, no sawing). Yield 16-20 slices total across 4 plates.

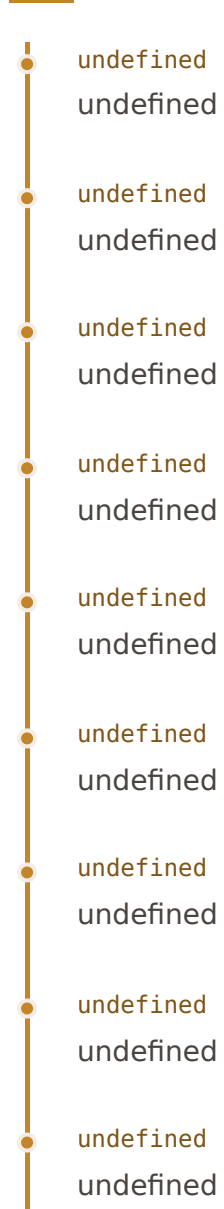
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- 5 min ahead: set out all garnishes — thin-sliced red onion, cilantro leaves, canchita, optional fresh chile slivers, Maldon salt.

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- At service (60-90 seconds before eating): pour cold leche de tigre over the plated fish; finish with garnishes; serve immediately.

# Timeline



## METHOD

# The Cook

### 1 Phase 1 · Leche de Tigre (15 min active + 1-4 h rest)

1. Juice 8-10 Persian or Key limes to yield 200 ml juice. Do this fresh; bottled lime juice is unsuitable (lacks aromatic oils + carries preservatives that clash with raw fish).
2. In a high-speed blender: combine 200 ml fresh lime juice + 15 g peeled ginger (sliced) + 2 peeled garlic cloves + 1 stalk celery (rough-chopped, leaves included) + 10 cilantro stems + 2 Tbsp ají amarillo paste + 1/2 habanero pepper (stem removed, seeded if preferred milder) + 1 tsp kosher salt + 2 ice cubes.
3. Blend 45 seconds on high. The mixture should turn velvety-milky with fine suspended solids.
4. Strain through fine-mesh sieve into a clean bowl. Press gently with a rubber spatula. Discard the solids (or save for soup stock).
5. Taste. Flavor should be bright-lime forward, with ginger + garlic + celery mid-palate, ají amarillo's fruity-warm finish on the back, and subtle salt. If flat: add 1 tsp more lime juice. If too sharp: add 1/2 tsp more salt.
6. Refrigerate covered. Rest 1-4 hours minimum for best flavor integration. The 1-hour rest is ideal; beyond 4 hours, the lime begins to cloud the sauce and slightly discolor.

#### WHY THIS WORKS

Leche de tigre is a stable emulsion. Fresh lime juice contains citrus pectins that emulsify with the 2 ice cubes (added as both temperature control and to contribute water-phase volume). The ginger + garlic + celery + cilantro-stem + ají amarillo puree suspends in the lime acid, creating a cohesive sauce rather than a vinaigrette. The ice is critical — it forces the blender to incorporate water into the emulsion, producing the milky 'tiger's milk' texture. Kosher salt (rather than fine salt) dissolves slowly during blending, providing controlled salinity across the rest period. The 1-hour rest lets volatile aromatics (ginger essential oils, garlic allicin) integrate with the acid phase.

## 2 Phase 2 · Fish Selection + Slicing (10 min, à la minute)

1. Retrieve fish fillet from refrigerator. Fish must be cold throughout — above 4 °C, the flesh softens and slicing becomes imprecise.
2. On a cold cutting board, place the fillet. Identify the grain direction (the lines of muscle fiber); you will slice AGAINST the grain.
3. Using a very sharp knife (yanagi-ba ideal, otherwise thin-ground chef's knife), begin slicing: place blade on fish at 30-45° angle, make one smooth pulling stroke from heel to tip. Do not saw back-and-forth. Do not press down. One smooth pull per slice.
4. Target slice thickness: 2-3 mm. Target slice length: 5-6 cm (trim to size as needed).
5. Lay each slice flat on the cutting board after slicing. Do not stack.
6. Yield target: 16-20 slices across 4 plates (4-5 slices per plate).
7. Work quickly: from start of slicing to plating on the cold plate, target 5 minutes total. Sliced fish oxidizes within 10 minutes of cutting; plate before the 10-minute mark.

### WHY THIS WORKS

Raw fish flesh is a structured protein matrix with elastic muscle fibers. Slicing against the grain shortens these fibers, producing a more tender bite. Slicing with the grain leaves long fibers that eat chewy. The 2-3 mm thickness is a calibrated target — thinner (sashimi-style at 1-1.5 mm) produces slices that curl + disappear under sauce; thicker (4-5 mm, sashi-style) fails to flash-cure in 90 seconds + tastes too raw. 2-3 mm is the sweet spot for tiradito. Sharp knife + single-pull stroke preserves tissue integrity; sawing or pressure damages the fish cells + produces ragged edges.

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### **Phase 3 · Plating + Flash-Cure Application (3 min at service)**

1. Retrieve pre-frozen plates from freezer — plates should be frost-cold.
2. On each plate, arrange 4-5 slices of fish in a casual spiral pattern (or a loose line). Let slices overlap slightly at the edges.
3. Prepare all garnishes at the service station: thin-sliced red onion (very thin — 1-2 mm), cilantro leaves, 1 Tbsp canchita per plate, 1 thin slice fresh chile per plate if using, Maldon salt.
4. **AT SERVICE, 60-90 SECONDS BEFORE EATING:** ladle ~30 ml cold leche de tigre per plate. Pour around and under the fish, not directly on top — the fish should be visible, with leche pooling in the gaps.
5. Immediately: scatter 1 Tbsp thin-sliced red onion, 4-5 cilantro leaves, 1 Tbsp canchita, optional thin slivers of fresh chile per plate.
6. Finish with 2-3 flakes Maldon salt directly on each fish slice.
7. Optional drizzle: 1 tsp good olive oil (Arbequina) on each plate if desired.
8. Carry plates immediately to table. Eat within 60 seconds.



#### **WHY THIS WORKS**

The 60-90 second flash-cure is the narrow window between sashimi (no lime contact) and ceviche (2+ min lime contact). At 60-90 seconds, the lime's pH 2.1 has JUST begun denaturing myosin on the bottom surface of the fish (where it's in contact with the leche) — producing a subtle white-opaque edge on the lower side while the top remains translucent-raw. This asymmetric cure creates a unique mouthfeel: the first taste is raw fish; the second taste (coming up from the bottom slice) is slightly-cured fish. In a single bite, you get both textures. Beyond 2 minutes, the entire slice cures through and the distinction is lost.

## 4 Phase 4 · Service Window + Traditional Accompaniments (5 min)

1. Eating window: 60-90 seconds after leche application. Beyond 2 minutes, the fish is fully cured and the dish becomes ceviche (still edible, different experience).
2. Each guest: slide fork + knife under fish slice, lift, dip lightly in leche-tigre pool beneath, eat in 1-2 bites per slice.
3. Traditional Peruvian accompaniments on the side (optional small bowls):
4. · Canchita in a small bowl for crunch
5. · Thin-sliced cancha mote (large corn kernels) as textural alternative
6. · Sweet potato slivers (camote amarillo or standard yellow-orange) as cooling pairing
7. · Thin-sliced Peruvian purple corn (if available)
8. Ají amarillo paste on the side: 1 tsp per guest in a tiny bowl, for those who want extra heat.
9. Second-serve from leftover leche: any remaining leche de tigre (should be 100 ml left from Phase 1) can be served in shot-glasses as the traditional 'shot' before dessert course — Peruvian ceremonial service that converts leftover sauce into a course of its own.

### WHY THIS WORKS

The traditional accompaniments serve distinct palate roles: canchita is crunch + toasted-starch register that contrasts the raw fish; cancha mote is soft + sweet for grounding; sweet potato is cooling + starchy to counter any remaining heat; ají amarillo paste on the side is 'for the brave.' All together they convert tiradito from a single plate into a ceviche-family meal. These accompaniments are also the standard in Peruvian tiradito service — the dish is not meant to stand alone.

### QUICK REFERENCE

## Timing Cheat Sheet

STEP	TIME	CUE
Leche de tigre built + refrigerated	T- 1 h (or earlier, up to 4 h)	Velvety texture, strained, cold

STEP	TIME	CUE
Plates chilled	T- 3 0 min	Plates at 4 °C
Fish sliced	T- 1 0 min	Sashimi-thin 2-3 mm, against grain, arranged on cutting board
Plate arrangement (fish only)	T- 2 min	Fish laid in spiral, plate carried to service station
Leche de tigre applied + garnish	T- 9 0 sec before eating	Leche pooled beneath fish; onion + canchita + cilantro scattered
Serve	T- 0	Each plate delivered to guest within 60 sec of leche application

#### TROUBLESHOOTING

## Emergency Protocols

 UNDEFINED

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# Technique Notes

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## The 90-Second Flash-Cure Window

### RAW-PREPARATION FUNDAMENTALS

Tiradito lives in a 90-second window between sashimi and ceviche. Under 60 seconds, the lime has no effect; over 2 minutes, full surface cure; 60-90 seconds = asymmetric cure where the bottom surface begins to denature while the top remains raw. This produces a unique mouthfeel in a single bite. Requires precision timing: the sauce applied BEFORE plate-to-table transit, NOT after. Cross-ref `corvina-ceviche-leche-tigre` (2-minute cure), `aguachile-verde` (3-minute cure), `swordfish-ceviche-bottarga` (2-minute cure) — four different cure windows, four different texture experiences.

## Leche de Tigre with Ají Amarillo (vs Rocoto)

### PERUVIAN FUNDAMENTALS

Two styles of leche de tigre exist: rocoto-based (red, earthier, spicier — designed for ceviche where sauce stays on fish 2+ min) and ají amarillo-based (yellow, brighter, more citrus-forward — designed for tiradito where sauce is applied and eaten within 90 sec). The ají amarillo version is 'younger' in flavor profile, designed for short contact with the fish. Rocoto version is more mature, designed for longer contact. Rule: for any short-cure application, use ají amarillo; for any long-cure application, use rocoto. Substitution is possible but produces a different dish character. Cross-ref `corvina-ceviche-leche-tigre` for rocoto-style base.

## Against-the-Grain Slicing for Raw Fish

### KNIFE SKILLS

Raw fish fillet has a grain direction — parallel muscle fibers running head-to-tail. Slicing AGAINST the grain (perpendicular to fiber direction) shortens these fibers, producing tender bites. Slicing WITH the grain leaves long fibers that eat chewy + rubbery. For tiradito + sashimi + any raw fish preparation, always against-the-grain. For fillets with a visible grain pattern, this is obvious; for unclear grains, test-slice a small piece + chew — if chewy, rotate 90° and re-slice. Cross-ref `hamachi-crudo-yuzu-kosho`, `carpaccio-gambas-rojas` (same principle for shrimp).

## Yanagi-Ba Single-Pull Stroke

### KNIFE TECHNIQUE

Japanese sashimi knives (yanagi-ba) are designed for single-direction pulling strokes — one smooth pull from heel to tip per slice, no sawing. The technique produces clean, even slices with minimal fish-cell damage. Home alternative: thin-ground chef's knife in sashimi mode. Key rule: never saw; never press down; let the knife's geometry do the cutting. A dull knife CANNOT produce tiradito-quality slices, regardless of cook's skill. If your knife doesn't pull smoothly through 2-3 mm, sharpen before attempting.

## Pre-Frozen Plate Discipline

### SERVICE CONTROL

Raw-fish preparations plated at room temperature warm within 2 minutes; warmed raw fish loses translucency, texture, and eating appeal. Pre-frozen plate (4 °C at service, entering -18 °C freezer for 30 min) buys the service window. Frozen plates also keep leche de tigre cold as it arrives at the fish — preventing accidental warm-cure. This technique is universal across raw-seafood service; cross-ref `corvina-ceviche-leche-tigre`, `swordfish-ceviche-bottarga`, `hamachi-crudo-yuzu-kosho`, `carpaccio-gambas-rojas`.

## Asymmetric Cure Presentation

### PLATING

Apply leche de tigre AROUND and UNDER fish slices (not on top). The fish should be visible, with the sauce pooling underneath. This produces the classic tiradito asymmetric cure: sauce contacts fish from below (starts light cure) while top stays exposed (stays raw). Eating picks up both textures in each bite. Do NOT pour sauce on top — that produces an even cure + an unappealing visual of sauce-hiding-fish.

## Leche de Tigre Shot Tradition

### CULTURAL SERVICE

Leftover leche de tigre is traditionally served as a shot-glass course — Peruvian ceremonial tradition. After tiradito service, pour remaining leche (~60 ml per guest) into small glasses. Guests drink it as a palate cleanser before dessert. This converts a leftover into a third course without extra kitchen labor. Especially effective when hosting — adds a traditional flourish that signals Peruvian authenticity. Cross-ref `corvina-ceviche-leche-tigre` (same shot tradition with rocoto-based leche).

### PAIRING

## What to Drink

### White

Albariño Rías Baixas — Pazo de Señorans or Paco & Lola

*Classic Spanish coastal white for raw fish; stone-fruit + salinity balances lime*

### White

Sauvignon Blanc — Sancerre (Henri Bourgeois) or Cloudy Bay NZ

*Grassy-citrus-mineral profile matches leche de tigre's bright acid-herb character*

### Cocktail

Pisco Sour — Peruvian Pisco + lime + simple syrup + egg white + Angostura

*National drink of Peru; traditional pairing for ceviche + tiradito · fruity-sour + eggy-silky*

### Cocktail

Chilcano — Pisco + ginger ale + lime + bitters

*Light Peruvian highball; cuts through richness + matches the aromatics in leche de tigre*

## **Beer**

Mexican Pilsener or Peruvian Cusqueña

*Crisp, dry, cuts heat from ají amarillo · everyday pairing for Peruvian tiradito*

## **Non-alc**

Chicha Morada — purple corn + cinnamon + lime + clove reduction

*Traditional Peruvian non-alc; ceremonial authenticity + digestion-aiding compound*

### CONTEXT

## **Menu Ideas**

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### **Opener**

Tiradito de Pargo (this recipe) or Oysters · Three Dressings (UMAMI-2 #8) — raw-seafood premium opener

### **Primo**

Arroz Caldoso con Bogavante (UMAMI-11) — Peruvian-inflected rice dish; continues seafood + cultural-bridge theme

### **Main**

Entraña Plancha con Chimichurri (UMAMI-4) — Argentine steak; South American pan-continental arc

### **Dessert**

Helado de Aceite de Oliva (UMAMI-5) — clean finish to a bright meal

YOUR NOTES

# Cook Log

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## Session Notes

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ · Serves: \_\_\_\_\_ · Rating: \_\_ / 5

*Use this space to record what you changed, what worked, and what you'd do differently next time. Your future self will thank you.*



Stop following recipes. Start understanding food.

