

First Sin: Rosero Quitaño in Ecuador

By Karen Catchpole - March 26, 2014



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Quito, Ecuador, the world's first **UNESCO World Heritage Site city**, is a cultural treasure trove where Ecuador's Spanish and indigenous heritages come together in an eye-popping mix. Elaborate Colonial-era churches are adorned with Last Supper paintings featuring *cuy* (traditional guinea pig) on the table, and museums burst with European religious art and indigenous artifacts.

That cultural mix is also responsible for a beloved beverage called *rosero Quitaño*. Documented as far back as the 1700s, *rosero Quitaño* is made from a base of water infused with lemongrass, cinnamon, pineapple rind, clove, and *panela*. This base is enriched with finely chopped cooked *mote* (a type of corn that forms the basis of much **indigenous cooking in Ecuador**) and finely chopped *babaco* (a less pushy type of papaya), strawberries, pineapple, and other tropical fruits.

Invented in Quito, *rosero* was once sold to eager school children and thirsty workers by street vendors who served up a non-alcoholic version. Adults soon realized that old *rosero* developed mildly alcoholic properties, and thus began aging *rosero* on purpose. The street hawkers have since disappeared, but *rosero* is being preserved as a cocktail in places like the **Plaza Grande Hotel**. This luxury hotel, the long ago residence of Spanish conquistador Francisco Pizarro located on Independence Plaza in the heart of Quito's historic center, makes a pitch-perfect setting for an afternoon *rosero*.

Served in a tall glass or beer mug, freshly made *rosero* is chilled then spiked with white wine and served with a spoon. The luscious fruit salad and chewy chopped *mote* sinks to the bottom to form a grown up fruit cocktail, while the spices and wine combine to give a mulled quality to the liquid. It was difficult to choose between sipping and spooning *myrosero*, which was light and refreshing as a drink and as a snack. With its festive rose color and unexpected ingredients, *rosero* makes a great punch bowl filler and is fantastic spiked with sparkling wine as well.

Want to make your own? Try our recipe for a classic *rosero*.

Rosero Quitaño

- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1/4 cup panela or brown sugar
- 3 ounces cinnamon sticks
- 3 ounces star anise pods
- 3 ounces whole cloves
- 2 ounces lemongrass

[Get the full recipe.](#)