

Luis Pous

Asia de Cuba's Chef



Asia de Cuba's Chef, Luis Pous, born and raised in Cuba, started his career training at the National School of Culinary Arts in Havana, where he cooked for numerous diplomats and foreign dignitaries. He lived in Havana until moving to Miami in 1997. Today, at Asia de Cuba, Chef Pous serves his interpretation of what Asian influenced Cuban food would have become today if Cuban chefs had been able to innovate and evolve their cuisine with the palate of global ingredients now available to the rest of the world. Chef Pous is taking this opportunity to showcase his heritage and experience, along with Jeffrey Chodorow's original vision for Asia de Cuba, through his unique cuisine.

What did you do before launching Asia de Cuba Abu Dhabi to ensure the restaurants success?

I tried to speak to as many people as I could to better understand the market. It's important to learn about peoples eating habits, what works well and what doesn't. However although listening to others is good it is also important to stay true to the concept, otherwise you may end up trying to be everything to everyone. Cuban cuisine is similar to Middle Eastern cuisine in many ways. We cook with a lot of grain, lentils, rice, saffron, lamb and cinnamon etc. So we always felt that Asia de Cuba would be a success in Abu Dhabi.

What have you learnt since launching Asia de Cuba Abu Dhabi?

I was surprised to learn that a lot of people have travelled to Cuba and recognise some of the Asian dishes on the menu. It just shows what Cuba can offer.

If someone was visiting Asia de Cuba for the first time what dishes would you recommend?

Firstly I would recommend they explore the menu, people recognise the ingredients so it's not foreign to them. We have so many great dishes it's hard to choose but, the ceviche is always popular. The chicken chicharrones were actually developed in Abu Dhabi with my Sous Chef, they are fantastic plus the shrimp churros they are very unique.

Also if they are visiting for the first time I would encourage them to participate in our ceviche masterclass. The class is great fun and it really gives you an appreciation for Cuban cuisine.

Do you think you have educated people about Cuban cuisine?

Like Italian cuisine, Cuban cuisine has developed overtime and Asia de Cuba cuisine cannot be categorised as Cuban cuisine, it's our interpretation of what Asian influenced Cuban food would have become today. As a chef I travel a lot so I get inspired by what I experience. When travelling this influences our creativity and therefore our dishes. I strive to set the global standard for Cuban cuisine and highlight everything Cuba has to offer.

What do your guests like most about Asia de Cuba Abu Dhabi?

Our guests love the food but equally they come back for the culture of Asia de Cuba. Culturally Cubans are happy go lucky people, we celebrate and enjoy life. This culture is evident at Asia de Cuba from a warm welcome to our friendly genuine service. We take what we do seriously not ourselves.

Is the food on the menu healthy?

Our menu is simple, my goal is to have three or less items on a plate, for example the ceviche consists of lime, fish and olive oil, simplicity is the key. People think the dish is complicated because they see a lot of colour but actually it's just fresh, simple ingredients. I lost 50lb myself from eating good, honest food like we serve at Asia de Cuba. I want people to enjoy their food and be able to go out and dance the night away on the terrace. You can eat light here. We don't use any butter or veal stock and when we fry our rice or noodles we always use a dry wok.

What inspires you to create a new dish?

Inspiration comes at any moment. I could be talking to you and something pops into my mind. We developed the shrimp churros on the New York subway. At the time we were working on another dish and jokingly I said this is like trying to make shrimp churros, from there the idea was born. Personally I don't like to read cook books, I like to have original ideas that are unique. The crazier the better.

Are you developing any new dishes for the menu?

We will be expanding our ceviche menu due to the great response. Most of the dishes you will see were originally on the first draft of the menu but we took them off before we launched as we wanted to wait and assess the response but it's been so good, guests have been asking for more options. I've also recently found a great supplier of Wagyu, which I will use to develop a selection of new appetizers.

What's next for Asia de Cuba?

Asia de Cuba is here to stay! We have been discussing a smaller Asia de Cuba outlet, something a bit more casual but that's only at the discussion stage. Doha and Dubai are our next focus, we would love to be able to recreate what we have done in Abu Dhabi. As you know New York recently opened so that is taking up most of our time.

For Abu Dhabi we have a great Cuban guy called Ernesto, he's in charge of the DJ and the music. Ernesto is also a dancer, so he is really working on showcasing the Cuban culture to our Abu Dhabi guests, he has a lot of things planned, watch this space.

On a personal note I'm very happy to be doing what I do. It's important for me to be able to represent Cuba on a global level. Our mission is to preserve and be



Asia de Cuba, the internationally renowned Chino-Latino restaurant, lounge and beach club has officially opened its doors in Abu Dhabi. Located at the St. Regis, Nation Towers Beachfront Asia de Cuba offers guests stunning views across the Corniche. Food aficionados are invited to step inside and be taken on a Chino-Latino culinary journey.

Asia de Cuba Abu Dhabi has been designed to blend a vibrant, upbeat atmosphere with an innovative menu featuring its signature modern Chino-Latino cuisine. Created by Cuban-born Asia de Cuba Executive Chef, Luis Pous, the menu is rooted in the Asian influence on Cuban food and culture from Havana's Chinatown; 'El Barrio Chino de la Habana', one of the oldest and largest in Latin America.

The enticing variety on offer represents intensely flavored and creatively prepared dishes. The menu welcomes new additions which include small plates of 'Dumplings de Enchilados de Cangrejo with seafood ponzu and shiso', 'Shrimp Churros with sesame and coconut curry', 'Wagyu Ropa Vieja' Empanadas with rocoto sweet & sour sauce', Chicken Chicharrones served either traditional or with honey soy glaze' and an Asia de Cuba classic, revisited, the signature 'Tuna Pica on crispy wontons'.



Abu Dhabi's discerning crowds can also expect to see new favourites from the Ceviche Bar like 'Tuna & Seared Foie Gras Ceviche with orange, Asian pear and melange chips', 'Flute Sashimi with sofrito crudo and mojo Amarillo' and 'Mushroom Ceviche with ginger, jalapeño and snow peas'. Beautiful saled creations on offer include 'Crispy Calamari with banana, cashews, chayote and fresh hearts of palm', 'Icy Hot Shrimp with sesame, watermelon and Napa cabbage' and 'King Crab & Asian Pear with roasted coriander vinaigrette, orange and ancho chili'.

Delicious wok preparations are highlighted by the 'Chino Latino Stir Fried Rice with braised lamb, sprouts, egg with tamaril and 'Spicy Lobster Sofrito with udon noodles, Thai chili and gai choy' while signature entrees include 'Cumin Roasted Lamb Leg with maduros, yuca, black beans, chimichurri' and 'Rocoto Miso Glazed Blech Cod with vegetable escabeche and avocado poblano puree'.

For those with a sweet tooth we highly recommend that you save some space for the delicious 'Guava Whipped Cheesecake' which is sure not to disappoint.

Asia de Cuba has created an environment unlike any other in the UAE's capital. Designed by Ian Bailey, the multifaceted space spread over a lounge, restaurant, terrace bar and beach-side cabanas is fun and playful while still maintaining an elegance that suits the city's in-crowd. Mixing touches of Cuban décor, beautiful Italian furniture and quirky lighting features brings something unique and different to Abu Dhabi. Boasting an idyllic outdoor terrace and cabana area, guests can enjoy leisurely lunch dates or warm evenings with unparalleled views of the Arabic Gulf.

Asia De Cuba
Corniche Road
St Regis Hotel, Nation Riviera Beach Club
Abu Dhabi
Tel: +971 2 699 3333