



# Praznična miza v Venezueli – hallaca

Besedilo in fotografije: **Gal Kušar**

**Pestrost dežele, njena zgodovina in bogastvo tradicije se zrcalijo v šegah in običajih, jeziku, ljudski glasbi, pesmih in plesih ter seveda v kulinariki. Ta pride do izraza v času praznovanj, ko na mizo radi postavimo nekaj posebnega, dobrega in okusnega. Venezuela v tem ni nobena izjema.**

**N**a praznični božično-novoletni mizi v Venezueli ne smejo manjkati štiri jedi. To so *hallaca*, *pan de jamón*, *ensalada de gallina* in *pernil de cochino*. Hallaca (izg. ajaka) so v bananine liste zaviti kuhani žepki iz koruznega testa, nadevani z različnimi vrstami mesa in zelenjave. Pan de jamón je pečen zavitek s šunko, slanino, olivami in rozinami, ki zelo spominja na našo potico (ocvirkovko). Ensalada de gallina je solata iz kurjega ali piščančjega mesa, zelo podobna ruski solati. Pernil de cochino pa je prešpikano, marinirano in pečeno svinjsko stegno. K prazničnim jedem postrežejo vino, whisky, domač rum in vodo. Pojedino zaključijo s sladkimi: *dulce de lechoza* (kandirana papaja), *cabello de ángel con piña* (sladkorni laski na ananasu) in *torto negro* (čokoladna torta s sadjem). V prazničnem času radi srknejo *ponche crema* (sladki, jajčno-mlečni kremasti liker z rumom). Za prigrizek ocvrejo *tequeños*, majhne zavitke z različnimi mesnimi in zelenjavnimi nadevi. Jedi pripravijo

v večjih količinah, tako da v decembrskih prazničnih dneh ne izgubljajo časa s kuhanjem, ampak raje uživajo v obiskih, druženju in na plažah.

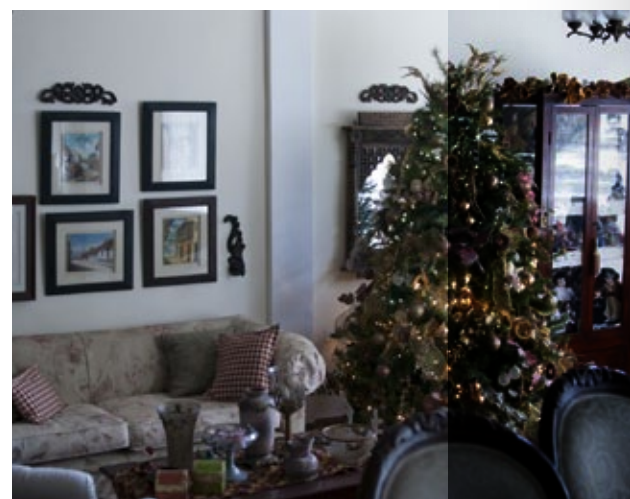
Hallaca je tradicionalna božična venezuelska jed, priljubljena tudi v sosednjih Kolumbiji in Ekvadorju, na karibskih otokih Aruba, Bonaire in Curazao ter tudi na bolj oddaljenih Kanarskih otokih in v Španiji. Izvira iz kolonialnih časov, ko so *indigeni* (prvotni prebivalci Amerike) skuhali obaro iz divjih živali, obrano meso obdali s koruznim testom in nato vse skupaj zavito v bananinih listih skuhali. Ta jed se je imenovala *hayaco iritari*, od koder naj bi po eni od teorij izviral sedanje ime *hallaca*. Po drugi razlagi izvira iz jezika *guaraní*, iz besed *ayúa* in *ayuar*, ki pomenita mešati ali zaviti. Po tretji razlagi pa je izvor v enem od jezikov plemen z zahoda dežele in pomeni zavijati ali zapakirati. Izvor hallace je nedvomno v predkolumbovski dobi, prihod Špancev je le dopolnil listo sestavin in začimb. Recept za hallaco je nespremenjen od sredine





18. stoletja. Zanimivo je, da sestavine hallace dobro ponazarjajo rasno mešanico današnje Venezuele. Bananini listi predstavljajo afriško raso, koruzno testo indígene, nadev s piščancem, svinjino, (govedino), olivami in rozinami pa predstavlja Evropejce. Širše gledano pa hallaca povezuje antiko (oljke), arabski svet (kapre in mandeljni), Španijo (meso), indígene kulture Amerike (koruza) in Afrike (bananini listi). V dobri hallaci se mora harmonično združiti pet okusov: pekoč, sladek, slan, kisel in okus po mesu (umami).

Vse potrebno za pripravo prazničnih jedi nakupujejo zaradi slabe ekonomske situacije v Venezueli na zalogo že od novembra, brž ko se kakšna pojavi na policah trgovin. Ker velja rek: »*La mejor hallaca es la que hace mi mamá* (najboljša je mamina hallaca)«, tradicionalno pripravljajo hallace doma, ko se družinski člani sredi decembra zberejo v hiši staršev. Priprava hallac je v vsaki družini tradicionalen obred z družinskimi posebnostmi, ki poveže družine v predbožičnem času. Postopek priprave, ki traja več dni, lahko strnemo v en stavek, dolg stavek: Vzamemo hlebček koruznega testa, ga položimo na bananin list, razvaljamo, napolnimo z nadevom in pokrijemo s testom, zavijemo v list, trdno povežemo z vrvcio v paketek in ga skuhamo v kropu; skuhamo hallaco položimo na krožnik, odrežemo vrstico in odvijemo bananin list. •



## Festive food in Venezuela – Hallaca

Text and photography: Gal Kušar



The diversity of a country, its history and the richness of its traditions are reflected in its ways and customs, language, folk music, songs and dances ... and of course in its cuisine. This last element takes centre stage during festivities, when people like to serve traditional seasonal specialities. Venezuela is no exception to this rule.

No Christmas or New Year's celebration in Venezuela would be complete without four special dishes. These are *hallaca*, *pan de jamón*, *ensalada de gallina* and *pernil de cochino*. Hallaca (also spelt "hayaca") is a dish made of cornmeal dough filled with various types of meat and vegetables and wrapped in plantain leaves. Pan de jamón is a kind of bread filled with ham, bacon, olives and raisins, very reminiscent of the potica eaten in Slovenia (at least the version made with crackling). Ensalada de gallina is a chicken salad very similar to Russian salad.

Pernil de cochino is a larded, marinated and baked ham. These festive dishes are accompanied by wine, whisky, rum or water. The meal ends with desserts: *dulce de lechoza* (candied papaya), *cabello de ángel con piña* (threads of jam made from angel's hair pumpkin served with pineapple) and *torta negra* (chocolate cake with fruit). The popular drink during this season is *ponche crema* (eggnog with rum). *Tequeños*, fried dough parcels with various meat and vegetable fillings, are served as snacks. Dishes are prepared in large quantities so as not to waste time cooking during the rest of the holidays themselves, when people prefer to visit friends and family, socialise or go to the beach.

Hallaca is a traditional Christmas dish in Venezuela that is also popular in neighbouring Colombia and Ecuador, on the Caribbean islands of Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao, and also in the more remote Canary Islands and other parts of Spain. It derives from colonial times, when the *indígenas* (the aboriginal inhabitants of America) would make a stew from the meat of wild animals, surround the meat with cornmeal dough, wrap the whole thing in plan-

tain leaves and cook it. This dish was known as *hayaco iritari*, which some believe is the origin of the current name hallaca. Another explanation is that the name derives from the Guaraní language, from the words *ayúa* and *ayuar*, meaning to mix or wrap. A third explanation is that the name has its origin in one of the languages of the tribes in the west of the country and means to wrap or pack. The hallaca certainly derives from the pre-Columbian period, and the arrival of the Spanish merely added more ingredients and seasonings to the list. The recipe for hallaca has remained unchanged since the middle of the eighteenth century. Interestingly, the ingredients of hallaca are a good illustration of the racial mix of today's Venezuela. The plantain leaves represent the African peoples, the cornmeal dough represents the indigenous peoples, and the filling of chicken, pork (or beef), olives and raisins represents the Europeans. Viewed even more broadly, the hallaca connects Antiquity (olives), the Arab world (capers and almonds), Spain (meat) and the indigenous cultures of America (cornmeal) and Africa (plantain leaves). A good hallaca should harmoniously combine five flavours: spicy, sweet, salty and sour, and the flavour of the meat (umami).

The difficult economic situation in Venezuela forces people to start stocking up on all the ingredients needed to prepare festive dishes in as early as November, as soon as they appear on the shelves of shops. Since "*la mejor hallaca es la que hace mi mamá*" (my mothers hallaca is the best), as the saying goes, hallacas are traditionally prepared at home, when in mid-December the various members of the family gather at their parents' house. Making hallacas is a traditional ritual in every family, with special family variants and traditions that bring them together in the run-up to Christmas. The process of preparing hallacas, which lasts several days, can be summed up in a single long sentence: Take a lump of cornmeal dough, place it on a plantain leaf, roll it out, stuff it with the filling and cover it with dough, roll it up in the leaf, tie it tightly with string to form a small parcel and cook it in boiling salted water; once cooked place it on a plate, cut the string and unroll the plantain leaf. •



# Recept za pripravo hallac

(prirejen po receptu Don Armanda Scannoneja)

## Sestavine (za 60 hallac)

### Obara

200 g koruzne moke (harina de maíz precocida)  
 3 kg svinjskega stegna brez maščobe, narezanega na kocke (1–2 cm)  
 2 kokoši, skupaj približno 4 kg; skuhana kokošja jušna osnova;  
 meso oberemo in narežemo na koščke  
 1 skodelica olja  
 1½ kg drobno zrezane čebule  
 400 g pora (samo beli del), zrezanega na drobne koleščke  
 200 g mlade čebule (scallions), zrezane na koleščke  
 ¾ skodelice strokov česna, strtih skupaj s ½ skodelice manjših kaper  
 in ½ skodelice kokošje jušne osnove  
 1 kg na drobno zrezane rdeče paprike brez semen  
 2 kg drobno zrezanega olupljenega paradižnika brez semen  
 4 sesekljani sladki feferoni  
 30 kapljic pikantne omake Tabasco  
 270-gramski kozarec mešane zelenjave Piccalilli Chow Chow,  
 vložene v gorčico  
 2 skodelici sladkega vina muškata  
 1 skodelica kisa  
 ⅔ skodelice worchesterske omake Lea & Perrins  
 550 g rjavega sladkorja  
 1½ žličke mlete sladke paprike  
 1 žlička mletega črnega popra  
 5 žličk soli  
 2 skodelici kokošje jušne osnove  
 ¾ skodelice gorčice

### Testo

5 skodelic svinjske masti  
 5 kg koruzne moke (harina de maíz precocida)  
 3 skodelice kokošje jušne osnove  
 5 žličk soli  
 6 žličk semen anata (tudi onoto, achiote; semena drevesa bixa  
 orellana, ki dajo hrani rumenooranžno barvo)

### Nadev

1 kg rdeče (lahko tudi zelene paprike), popečene, zrezane na palčke  
 3 žličke olja  
 ½ kg šunke, narezane na trakove ½ cm x 5 cm  
 ½ kg čebule, po možnosti drobne, zrezane na koleščke, ali 2½  
 skodelice vložene šalotke  
 ⅔ skodelice kaper  
 2 ½ skodelice zelenih oliv, polnjenih s papriko  
 2 ¼ skodelice rozin  
 ½ skodelice zrezane mešane zelenjave, vložene v kisu  
 150 g mandljev (po okusu)

### Listi

7 kg bananinih listov, pripravljenih za izdelavo hallac  
 1 skodelica svinjske masti, obarvane z anatom  
 vrvice za zavezovanje

## Postopek:

1. Priprava obare: v velik lonec (12 l) damo olje, čebulo, por, mlado čebulo, česen, kapre, papriko, paradižnik, feferone, 30 kapljic Tabaska, kozarec vložene zelenjave, 2 skodelici vina, skodelico kisa, ⅔ skodelice worchesterske omake, 1½ žličke mlete paprike, 1 žličko mletega črnega popra, 5 žličk soli in ¾ skodelice gorčice. Zavremo in pustimo vreti 10 minut. Dodamo sladkor in dobro premešamo.
2. Dodamo na kocke zrezano, na hitro pokuhano svinjino in kuhamo 40 minut. Iz ohlajene kokošje jušne osnove vzamemo kokoši, odstranimo kožo, oberemo meso in koščke mesa dodamo v obaro. Kuhamo še 40 minut.
3. Zmešamo koruzno moko z 1½ skodelice kokošje jušne osnove in vlijemo v obaro. Na majhnem ognju kuhamo še 30 minut oziroma toliko časa, da se obara zgosti. Odstavimo z ognja. Ohlajeno obaro shranimo v hladilniku do naslednjega dne.
4. Priprava testa: skupaj zamesimo koruzno moko, 5 skodelic svinjske masti, 5 žličk soli in 6 žličk semen anato. Med mesenjem postopoma dolivamo 3 skodelice kokošje jušne osnove in 1½ skodelice vode.
5. Mesimo toliko časa, da je testo homogeno, gladko in enakomerno obarvano. Nato ga oblikujemo v za drobno pest velike kepe in pustimo počivati.
6. Izdelava hallac: očistimo bananine liste (speremo pod tekočo vodo, obrišemo z mokro in suho krpo) ter jih razrežemo na primerne kose. Večje (30 x 30 cm) bomo uporabili spodaj, z manjšimi (20 x 20 cm) bomo pokrili testo.
7. Bananin list namastimo z obarvano raztopljeno svinjsko mastjo, nanj položimo kepo testa in jo s prsti sploščimo v ½ cm debel krog.
8. Na testo naložimo obaro in nadev (papriko, šunko, kapre, čebulo/šalotke, olive, rozine, koščke v kisu vložene zelenjave, mandlje ...).
9. Zavijemo testo z dveh nasprotnih strani, tako da pokrije nadev, robova stisnemo skupaj in zapognemo. Nato naredimo enako s preostalima stranema, da dobimo pravokotni 'paketek'.
10. Testo pokrijemo z bananinim listom, tesno zavijemo v paketek in ga prevezemo z vrvice, tako da gremo čez eno stran dvakrat, čez drugo pa trikrat.
11. Izdelamo vseh 60 hallac.
12. Kuhanje: zavremo slan krop in v njem kuhamo hallace 2 uri. Vzamemo jih iz kroga in pustimo, da se odcedijo in ohladijo. Shranimo jih v hladilnik. Hallace so najboljše čez 3 do 4 dni, ko se okusi dobro prepojijo med sabo.
13. Hallace pogrejemo v kropu vrele vode (20 minut), razvezemo paketek in uživamo v harmoniji okusov.

Za konec le še buen provecho ob praznični hrani in feliz Navidad y prospero Año Nuevo 2015!

# Hallaca recipe

(adapted from the recipe of Don Armando Scannone)



## Ingredients (for 60 hallacas)

### Filling

200 g cornmeal (harina de maíz precocida)  
 3 kg ham with the fat removed, cut into cubes (1–2 cm)  
 2 hens together weighing about 4 kg; hen broth;  
 remove the meat from the bone and cut into cubes  
 1 cup oil  
 1½ kg diced onion  
 400 g leek (white part only), thinly sliced  
 200 g spring onions (scallions), sliced  
 ¾ cup crushed garlic cloves together with ½ cup small capers  
 in ½ cup hen broth  
 1 kg diced red peppers without seeds  
 2 kg diced peeled tomatoes without seeds  
 4 chopped sweet chillies  
 30 drops of Tabasco  
 270 g jar Chow Chow piccalilli (pickled vegetable relish with mustard)  
 2 cups muscatel (dessert wine)  
 1 cup vinegar  
 ⅔ cup Lea & Perrins Worcestershire sauce  
 550 g brown sugar  
 1½ tsp ground sweet paprika  
 1 tsp ground black pepper  
 5 tsp salt  
 2 cups hen broth  
 ¾ cup mustard

### Dough

5 cups lard  
 5 kg cornmeal (harina de maíz precocida)  
 3 cups chicken broth  
 5 tsp salt  
 6 tsp annatto seeds (also known as onoto, achiote; seeds of the tree  
 Bixa orellana, which give food a yellow-orange colour)

### Garnish

1 kg red (or green) peppers, roasted and cut into strips  
 3 tsp oil  
 ½ kg ham cut into strips (½ cm x 5 cm)  
 ½ kg onion, preferably small, sliced, or 2½ cups pickled shallots  
 ⅔ cup capers  
 2½ cups green olives stuffed with peppers  
 2¼ cups raisins  
 ½ cup pickled vegetables, cut into pieces  
 150 g almonds (optional)

### Leaves

7 kg plantain leaves, ready to make hallacas  
 1 cup lard coloured with annatto seeds  
 string for tying the hallacas

## Method:

1. To make the stew: Put the oil, onion, leek, spring onion, garlic, capers, peppers, tomatoes, chillies, 30 drops of Tabasco, a jar of pickled vegetables, 2 cups of wine, a cup of vinegar, ⅔ of a cup of Worcestershire sauce, 1½ tsp ground paprika, 1 tsp ground black pepper, 5 tsp salt and ¾ of a cup of mustard into a large pan (holding 12 litres). Bring to the boil and leave to simmer for 10 minutes. Add sugar and stir well.
2. Add cubes of pork (after boiling quickly) and cook for 40 minutes. Remove the hens from the cold hens stock, remove the skin, separate the meat, cut into cubes and add to the stew. Cook for a further 40 minutes.
3. Mix the cornmeal with 1½ cups chicken stock and pour into the stew. Cook over a low flame for a further 30 minutes or until the stew thickens. Remove from the heat. Keep the cooled stew in the fridge until the next day.
4. To make the dough: knead the cornmeal together with 5 cups of lard, 5 tsp of salt and 6 tsp of annatto seeds. While kneading, slowly add 3 cups of hen broth and 1½ cups of water.
5. Knead until the dough is homogeneous, smooth and uniformly coloured. Form into small fist-sized lumps and leave to rest.
6. To make the hallacas: clean the plantain leaves (rinse under running water and wipe with damp and dry cloths) and cut into pieces of a suitable size. The larger pieces (30 x 30 cm) will form the bottom of the hallaca, while the smaller pieces (20 x 20 cm) will cover the dough.
7. Grease the plantain leaf with the coloured melted lard, place a lump of dough on it and using the fingers flatten into a 0.5 cm thick circle.
8. Spoon the filling and garnish (peppers, ham, capers, onion/shallots, olives, raisins, pieces of pickled vegetables, almonds, etc.) onto the dough.
9. Fold the dough from two opposite sides so that it covers the filling, press the edges together and fold over. Then, do the same with the other two sides, so as to form a rectangular parcel.
10. Cover the dough with a plantain leaf, wrapped into a tight parcel and tie with string, passing the string twice round one side and three times round the other.
11. Make all 60 hallacas.
12. Cooking: boil a pan of salted water and cook the hallacas in it for 2 hours. Remove from the water and leave to drain and cool. Store in the fridge. Hallacas are best after 3 to 4 days, when the flavours have blended together.
13. Heat the hallacas in boiling salted water for 20 minutes, undo the parcel and enjoy the harmony of flavours.

All that remains is to say Buen provecho as you enjoy your festive meal. And of course Feliz Navidad y prospero Año Nuevo 2015!