


Photo: Chispas Snacks

STARTERS & SIDES

# Chamoy (sweet, sour and spicy fruit sauce)

By Sarra Sedghi · Rough Draft Atlanta, 5/23/2025

## Ingredients

- [ ] 1 cup dried hibiscus flowers
- [ ] 1/2 cup dehydrated apricots
- [ ] 1/2 cup prunes
- [ ] 1 dry chile de arbol
- [ ] 1/2 cup fresh fruit of your choice (optional)
- [ ] Juice from two limes
- [ ] Juice from one orange
- [ ] 2 oz white or apple cider vinegar
- [ ] 1/2 cup sugar
- [ ] 1/2 cup Tajin
- [ ] 1 tsp chili powder
- [ ] 1 tsp chipotle pepper powder
- [ ] 3 cups water

## Directions

1. Boil 3 cups of water, apricots, and prunes in a large pot. Add hibiscus (make sure to wash before using) and chile de arbol. (Optional: add fresh fruit of choice to enhance chamoy flavor.)
2. Boil for 10 minutes and then let cool.
3. Once cooled, blend ingredients to a smooth, puree-like consistency.
4. Transfer puree to a clean pot. Add sugar, Tajin, chili powder, chipotle pepper powder, orange juice, lime juice, and vinegar.
5. Bring ingredients to a simmer and taste, adjusting sweetness and consistency to personal preference. For a thinner sauce, add water.

## The story

Memorial Day marks the unofficial start of summer. For people who live to eat, it's also street food season.

Frutas locas, a zesty Mexican fruit snack, is especially popular during the summer, as many key ingredients, like stone fruits, melons, and cucumbers, peak this time of year. But you can't mention frutas locas without the street snack's spicy topping: chamoy.

Chamoy is a Mexican condiment made with fruit (apricots, prunes, mangoes, or plums), lime juice, and dried chiles. The result is a harmonious blend of sweet and tart flavors with a nice dose of heat. While it's popular in frutas locas, it's used as a dip for fruits and vegetables like jicama, a flavoring agent in savory dishes, and as a coating for candy. Chamoy is also used in tandem with chili-lime powder like Tajin.

Although chamoy is associated with Mesoamerica, its origins actually lie in Asia.

Chamoy may be a derivation of Cantonese see mui (crack fruit) or Japanese umeboshi (salted or pickled plum). The necessary fruits traveled to Mexico through human migration between the 16th and 19th centuries. (Apricots originally emerged in Central Asia, while mangoes are native to South and Southeast Asia and plums trace back to China, the Caucasus Mountains in the Middle East, and Eastern Europe.)

Like pastor meat, which was influenced by shawarma, the origin of chamoy illustrates the global food influences brought to Mexico by immigrants over the centuries.

Luis Enrique started Chispas Mobile Snack Cart back in 2023, because he missed the street food from a recent trip to Mexico. You can often find Chispas at coffee and snack bar Stroll; a silver Airstream parked at the corner of 10th Street and Monroe in Midtown.

"I fell in love with the street food, or just the street snack scene, whether they were having crazy sodas with fruit or just mixed food," he said. "And then I literally woke up one day and was like, man, I'm craving this."

At Chispas, people can customize their fruit snacks. For example, Enrique's frutas locas bar allows someone to choose their preferred fruit and candy. While the frutas locas and tostilocos (tortilla chips tossed with fruits and toppings) come with a choice of five sauces, including chamoy. Chispas also incorporates chamoy into the sandia paletas (watermelon stick pictured above).

Chamoy is available at most international grocery stores, but it's easy to make at home. Enrique sources his ingredients for chamoy at the Buford Highway Farmers Market. Check out Enrique's chamoy recipe served at Chispas below.

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