



Sharsheret in the Kitchen
Cooking with The Cuban Reuben,
Jennifer Stempel

National Webinar Transcript

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Sharsheret in the Kitchen – Cooking with The Cuban Reuben

Jessica Jablon: Welcome, everyone. We're so excited to have you join us today, for Sharsheret in the Kitchen, cooking with The Cuban Reuben, Jennifer Stempel. Hope you enjoyed the fun music entry that you had as you came into the program today. I'm Jessica Jablon. I'm the California Program Coordinator at Sharsheret. For those of you who don't know about Sharsheret, we help women and families facing breast and ovarian cancer, as well as those who are at elevated genetic risk, through free, confidential, and personalized support and resources. We also provide health education throughout the country. One of our goals during COVID is to make sure that we are offering healthy living and cancer prevention information to you during this time, and giving you what support you need. In addition to our virtual services that can be found on our website or by emailing us, you can also access prior webinars on a range of cancer-related topics, as well as access our calendar of upcoming virtual programs through our website. And the link for that is in the chat.

Jessica Jablon: Before we begin, a few housekeeping items. This webinar is being recorded and will be posted on Sharsheret's website, along with the transcript. Participants' names and faces will not be in the recording as long as you remain muted. If you would like to remain private, you can turn off your video and rename yourself, or you can call into the webinar. Instructions for how to do that are both in the chat box. You may have noticed, all participants were muted upon entry. Please keep yourself on mute throughout the call. If you have questions for Jenny, put them in the chat box either publicly, or click on Sharsheret in the chat box to submit a private question, and we will ask them throughout the program. We will send out a follow up email with tips and recommendations from today's webinar with the recording in the next week or so.

Jessica Jablon: We are very excited to be continuing our Sharsheret in the Kitchen series. It's an initiative in partnership with Cedars-Sinai here in Los Angeles, to empower those of us at risk for breast and ovarian cancer, to make healthier diet choices. We've had some really wonderful guests for this healthier cooking series, and we invite you to check out our prior Sharsheret in the Kitchen webinars on our website at the link in the chat. You should have received the recipes for today's program in advance, but my colleague is going to put the link in the chat box so that you can download it and print it, or see it on your screen. Today's program is also supported by the greater Miami Jewish Federation. Thanks to their generosity, we were able to send out Sazón Tropical, to everyone who has registered for today's program. We hope you received your special spice in the mail, along with our Know the Facts informational brochure that has information, as well as signs and symptoms of breast and ovarian cancer. Our fulfillment team is still busy sending them out, so keep a lookout if you haven't received yours yet.

Jessica Jablon: We also want to thank our additional sponsors, Cedars-Sinai, the cooperative agreement, DP19-1906, from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, DHE Sanchio, GSK, and Merck. It is because of their generous support that we have been able to continue to provide our

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series of webinars throughout the pandemic. We wanted to let you know about an amazing free service that we have here at Sharsheret; meeting with our staff genetic counselor. As you may know, one in 40 Ashkenazi Jews, both men and women, carries a BRCA gene mutation, as compared to one in 400 in the general population. There is a 50% chance of passing this mutation onto the next generation. And having a mutation increases your risk for breast ovarian, male breast, melanoma, prostate and pancreatic cancers.

Jessica Jablon: In addition to BRCA 1 and 2, there are many additional mutations linked to breast and ovarian cancer, including CHEK2, PALB2, ATM and mutations associated with Lynch syndrome. These mutations increase the risk, not only for breast and ovarian cancer, but for male breast, colon, prostate, pancreatic, melanoma and uterine cancers. If you have a strong family history of cancer, have considered genetic counseling for yourself or your children, or have opted for genetic testing, we can help. You can speak one on one with our experienced genetic counselor about your family history, concerns about cancer risk and the implications of genetics for you and your family. You can even arrange for a family conference call with multiple members of your family, sharing and learning together from our genetic counselor at the same time. And we are grateful to the sponsors of our genetic work, Basser Center for BRCA, and the Max and Anna Baran, Ben and Sarah Baran and Milton Baran Endowment Fund of the Jewish Community Foundation of Los Angeles.

Jessica Jablon: If you are interested in finding out more about Sharsheret's free, confidential, and personalized services, please email us at clinicalstaff@sharsheret.org, or visit our website at sharsheret.org. And now, before we meet Jenny, I want to introduce Debbie, who will be sharing her story with us.

Debbie: Hi. My name is Debbie. So on December, 2020, while on vacation with my family, I felt a lump on my breast. And in January of last year, just a month later, I was diagnosed with breast cancer. Between March and May, I had my first two surgeries: double mastectomy and lymph node removal. I decided to go back to work as fast as I could, as a way to ignore what I was going through and move forward faster. Not feeling the anxiety of the next steps. Shortly after the lymph node removal surgery, I attended a Sharsheret webinar that was educating psychotherapists as myself, about breast and ovarian cancer and the resources available to the community. Little did I know that I would switch from a clinician listener to a patient.

Debbie: Tears during the presentation made me realize and connect that I had to take emotional care of myself too, not just of others. So I sent an email to the presenter right away, who immediately contacted me with a clinical team. During all this journey that ended only four months ago, there was always someone asking about my wellbeing, sending emails, a care package, or the pillow for my arm. At the time of diagnosis, I found out that it is very common to enter a shock mode, and not know what to do. It

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is okay to ask for help. Sharsheret is there to provide it. Even though I had a great support from family and friends, I called without knowing why I was calling, or what to say. I received the support I needed and keep telling others in and out of my practice about that support.

Debbie: Since then, I tried to attend all the art therapy webinars, the cooking classes offered, the holler bakings and... those are my favorites. And then some educational when I can too. I'm really grateful for everybody around me that was there in some way in person, or virtually. It does make this journey easier.

Jessica Jablon: Thank you, Debbie. It's so impactful to hear from you, and I'm so glad that you're here today to share your story with us and help so many people by sharing your experience. So thank you for being here today with us.

Debbie: Sure.

Jessica Jablon: Now I'm excited to introduce Jenny Stempel, The Cuban Reuben. A Los Angeles native, Jennifer is a St. Louis based storyteller, whose work has been featured by Women's Day, Rachel Ray Every Day, Pop Sugar, NBC Latino, PJ Library, the Nasher, myjewishlearning.com, the Holashon, Jewish Daily Forward and Relativity Media's Coin. You can follow her on instagram, @thecubanreuben, and on her website, at jenniferstempel.com. Welcome Sharsheret in the Kitchen, Jenny. I'll turn it over to you. Thank you so much for being here.

Jennifer Stempel: Thank you so much, Jessica. And thank you, Debbie, for sharing your experience with us. That's very profound. And I have goosebumps. And I'm just really excited to be part of your story and the story of anyone else who's joining us today. So today, we are making some Cuban food, and we're making it healthy and delicious. The good news is that we don't even have to make so many adjustments to it, because this food is healthy and delicious.

Jennifer Stempel: So we are starting out. Let's get started. We are starting out with a turkey and vegetable picadillo. Picadillo translates... to those of us who don't speak Spanish, picadillo literally means thing that is chopped. Thing that is ground into small little pieces. So it's really the Cuban version of chili, or bolognese. It's a meat sauce, basically. And traditionally, it's made with beef and pretty much anything you have in your kitchen. Today, we're going to be making it with ground turkey. You can use ground turkey breast if you'd like. I personally like to use just regular ground turkey. I think that a little bit of extra fat helps with flavor, but totally fine to use ground turkey breast.

Jennifer Stempel: So in my heavy pot here, my cast iron pot, I just added some olive oil. And I'm going to add some finally diced sweet onion. I like using sweet onion in my recipes, because I think the sugars, the natural sugars in them develop and caramelize and it just provides just a beautiful flavor. So that's finely diced sweet onion, and some finely diced red bell pepper.

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You can use any color you'd like; yellow, orange... I don't like using green bell pepper, because I find it to be more bitter than the other colors. But red, orange, yellow, they all pretty much taste the same.

Jennifer Stempel: And what I'm doing here, eventually... Sorry, let use this one. Eventually, I am making what we call in Cuban cuisine, a sofrito. Sofrito is the base of a dish. In some cultures, they call it the trinity. They do onions, bell pepper and celery. Some do like a mirepoix; onions, celery and carrots. In Cuban cuisine, ours is called a sofrito, and it is onions, peppers, and you probably guessed it, garlic. We love our garlic in Cuban food. So here, I have some finely minced garlic. I find that the best way to do this by the way, is I use a microplane grater. And I just grate it in and it just melts right in there. What I'm doing though, is I'm cooking my onions and peppers a little bit to soften them, before I add my garlic, because I don't want my garlic to burn. Burnt garlic is really bitter. Cooked garlic is beautifully, naturally sweet.

Jennifer Stempel: So we don't want that bitter flavor. We want that wonderful sweetness with a hint of kick that regular beautifully cooked garlic provides us. All right, so you'll know that your onions and peppers are ready for the garlic to be added in, when your onions become translucent. They don't need to be browned. They just need to be translucent. And so now I'm going to add in my garlic that I grated earlier. Don't be afraid. You won't have garlic [inaudible 00:12:17] into it, I promise. If you are sweating garlic out your pores, you did it wrong, my friends.

Jessica Jablon: Wait, there's such a thing as too much garlic?

Jennifer Stempel: I don't think so. Some people are afraid, but if a recipe calls for two cloves of garlic, I use double. But that's my personal taste. All right. So now I have my trinity here. I've got my sofrito going. And that is really the base, like I said, of most Cuban cooking. Next, I'm going to add my ground turkey. This is a pound of ground turkey. You can sub in any ground meat you want for this, in a picadillo. You can use ground chicken, you can use ground beef. You can use whatever feels right to you. My recipe is ground turkey. It's what my family loves. And that's what I'm using. Now, when this hits the pan, I have this on high heat. It's going to cook really quickly.

Jennifer Stempel: And as you can see, it comes to us kind of in strands like that. I don't like those strands in my end dish. So I work really quickly with my wooden spoon that has a flat edge, that you can see here to break up those strands. I'm using it. I'm using that wooden spoon to really mash it in, break it up. Let's get rid of that and continue.

Jessica Jablon: Jenny, would it work with like soy crumbles or some of the plant-based meats?

Jennifer Stempel: [inaudible 00:13:56]. That's really good question. I would do it in a bit of a separate order. The reason is, plant-based proteins tend to break down much quicker than animal-based proteins. And this is a dish that's going

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to simmer for quite a while, and we don't really want it to turn to mush. I would do basically all the steps except adding in the protein, until pretty much the very end, which is totally fine. You can absolutely do that. So I'm breaking down my turkey, really getting it mashed in there. I don't want those little strands.

Jennifer Stempel: They sell this product. I have one, but I prefer my wooden spoon, where you can... it almost looks like an X, and put it down in your pot and helps you break down ground meat, but I'm old school. What can I say? I like wooden spoon, the flat wooden spoon, to really break it down. All right. So this cooks up truly in no time. So it's almost all cooked. If you're using poultry like turkey or chicken, you really need to make sure that all of the pink is gone before you move forward. That means that it's cooked through. If you're using beef, you can make sure that most of the pink is gone. But this is cooked through. Okay. So now we're going to start flavoring it. So we are going to add my favorite. This is Sazón Tropical. I don't work for Badia. I don't, but I love Sazón. Sazón is basically the Latin season salt. This particular one is Sazón Tropical, but Sazón comes in a variety of varieties.

Jennifer Stempel: I like this one, mostly because it has two ingredients that I think are so vital in Cuban cooking. One is achiote, which in English we know is annatto, which adds this gorgeous orange-yellow color, just brightens any dish that you put it into. And the other is culantro, which is second cousins to cilantro. And if you ever see a recipe that calls for culantro and you can't find it at your store, you can sub in some cilantro and nobody will notice. Anyway, so we're going to add about a tablespoon of this. I'm eyeballing it, and I'm going to use about a palm full, or maybe a little more because I like it.

Jennifer Stempel: And we are going to add a tablespoon of dried oregano. You can use fresh oregano if you have it. We're going to use a tablespoon of ground cumin. The cumin adds warmth without adding heat. So Cuban food has a lot of flavor. We are not short on flavor, but we don't do heat. We don't do like jalapeno, pepper, that kind of stuff. But we do a lot of flavor, just no heat. That cumin helps add that depth of flavor, that warmth, that smokiness, without adding the heat. So that's a really common flavor in Cuban cuisine. All right. So we've got our cumin, we've got our Sazón, we have our oregano. I'm going to add two dry bay leaves. This is a wimpy one. Let's get a good one in there. There's one. And there's two.

Jennifer Stempel: And I'm going to put in my 15 ounce can of crushed tomato. Sometimes it's hard to find the little crushed tomato cans. I often find them in these large cans. That's okay. You can get that and just use half of it, and then refrigerate the other half for another dish some time. That's totally fine. So I'm going to stir all of that in.

Jessica Jablon: Jenny, there were a couple of questions that came in. One was, when you're making it with plant-based protein, how late in the recipe do you want to add it?

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Jennifer Stempel: When we are at that point, while I'm making it, I will clue you in. I'll let you know. We're not...

Jessica Jablon: We're not even there yet. That's-

Jennifer Stempel: We're not even there yet. [inaudible 00:19:01] a little bit, because I want to show you the next part. Okay. So here is what makes it my turkey veggie picadillo. This is how I get my kids to eat their veggies. They love this dish and have no idea how chockful of nutrients it is. So I finely grate an entire zucchini. I just use my box grater, and it goes really quickly. And because they're so finely grated, it almost melts into the dish when it's done. They don't even see that it's in there. It just looks like seasoning. But if you have a picky, picky eater, who won't eat anything that's green, you can peel the zucchini if you want. You'll still get plenty of nutrients, but my kids don't seem to notice or care. They gobble it up pretty quickly. Okay. I've just grated very quickly one entire zucchini, and that zucchini is going into my dish. I'm popping this over here. Stirring that right in.

Jennifer Stempel: And truly, again, it's just going to melt in there. As soon as this simmers a little bit, you won't even see it. But it's in there. You'll know. You'll know. The next thing I like to put in is a deep green, dark green leafy vegetable. In this case, I'm using spinach, but you can very easily sub any green leafy in here. You can use kale. Chard is good in here. Really, whatever you can find, whatever is in your fridge that's about go, throw it in here. And I like chop it really small, so that it incorporates well, and it just looks like part of the ground concoction that you're making. There's nothing sticking out. So I'm chopping it really nicely here. But again, kale works in here. If you're going to use kale, take out the big ribs that you're just using the leaves. Same thing with chard. Sometimes I'll use... I know stores sell super greens, which is just a marketing tool really, but it's a few different greens mixed together. That works too. They're providing slightly different things for you in terms of nutrients, but mostly the same goodness.

Jessica Jablon: Could you use frozen chopped spinach?

Jennifer Stempel: I would not use frozen chopped spinach because it releases too much liquid. I would use fresh. You don't want... this is more akin to a stew or a chili. If you use frozen chopped spinach, you're going simmering some time to get it down to what you want. All right. So this works for me. And I'm going to just put it straight in my pot. This is going to cook down. Spinach almost disappears when you cook down. That big pile of spinach is going like a bite of food when it cooks down. So this is going in the pot. Okay. And we're stirring it in. Then, my kids don't know it's leafy greens, because the next ingredient, they're pretty familiar with and they know is in quite a lot of my cooking, and that is fresh cilantro.

Jennifer Stempel: Now I know that cilantro is a very polarizing ingredient. I know that some of us are genetically dispositioned to think that cilantro tastes like soap, or like dirt. I'm looking at you, Lisa. But for those of us like me, who can't imagine a world without cilantro, go big or go home with this one. If you

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are one of those people who just can't stand the taste of cilantro, feel free to sub in some Italian parsley, flat leaf Italian parsley. It's not going to be the same, but we're really looking for that herbiness, that fresh cilantro provides. So I chop it really fine, just like I did my spinach. And when my kids see specs of green in this dish, they assume it's the cilantro that they know and love. Which it is, but it's also the spinach, and it's also the...

- Jessica Jablon: It's very funny. I think I didn't realize until I started working on the Sharsheret in the Kitchen series, just how divisive a spice cilantro is. I actually did receive texts from somebody saying, "Oh, cilantro?" So I'm glad that you substituted that.
- Jennifer Stempel: It's a polarizing ingredient.
- Jessica Jablon: Yeah. It's very funny.
- Jennifer Stempel: I am pro-cilantro camp, but I have a sub for you, for those of you who just are not so into it. It's a-okay with me. I won't tell anyone. I won't let any Cuban hold it against you too loudly. Okay. So this is chopped enough, and in it goes.
- Jessica Jablon: Jenny, there was a question about whether or not it's possible to this in a pressure cooker.
- Jennifer Stempel: You can, except that you need to break up your meat. You need to cook your meat ahead of time, because otherwise, you'll end up with just a block of meat. So, just like any other ground meat recipe that you make in a pressure cooker, you have to cook the meat ahead of time, so that it breaks up.
- Jessica Jablon: And then if Sazón Tropical is not available, is there a combination of spices that you might use as a substitution?
- Jennifer Stempel: So regular Sazón, which I think I have in my cupboard here... Yeah. Okay. Regular Sazón is pretty readily available. The one that has the coriander and the annatto, culantro and achiote. Sazón Tropical is sometimes harder to find. You can find it online. Maybe one of our admins can post ingredients so that people can make their own, if they can't find it. But it's readily available online. If you don't find it at your local international grocer, you would find it online. Okay. So that's going. The next ingredient happens to be my children's favorite ingredient. Another polarizing ingredient; green olives.
- Jennifer Stempel: This is really a nod to the Spanish influence in Cuban cuisine. We use Manzanilla olives here in our house, which are Spanish olives. And I say in my recipe to use a quarter cup of them, but measure with your heart, my friends. If this is your thing, go to town. We add not only the olives, but also the brine that they are soaking in here. It adds a nice salty bite in here. I like to have them, because then a little goes a little bit longer. And they're still jewelizing the dish, but you can see them in more places. So I'm

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pouring them out in my hand. Careful to catch the brine in the actual dish. And I'm going to have them over here, before I put them in.

Jennifer Stempel: But yeah, you can leave them whole. Totally fine.

Jessica Jablon: Jenny, what kind of knife are you using? There were some compliments on the knife and how great it looks. It just so smooth and sharp.

Jennifer Stempel: Well, the knife is a Santoku knife. The brand of knife, I couldn't tell you, because one of my very good friends brought it back to me from a trip she took to Japan. And the Japanese are actually known for making amazing chefs knives. So she brought it back for me from there. I can't tell you the brand, because it has rubbed off in the years that I've had it, but it's a Santoku knife. That's the type that it is.

Jessica Jablon: It's like it's brand new. It's cutting so easily.

Jennifer Stempel: It's a beautiful, wonderful knife that I love and use every single day. Okay. So I am mixing in my olives. At this point, technically, it's cooked. Okay? So the way that I taste it for salt and pepper to taste is I run my finger against the back of the spoon. And that's what I taste. I think for my personal taste, it needs some salt and pepper. So I'm going put some pepper in first, and then I'm going to add a pinch of kosher salt. When a recipe calls for a pinch of anything, you should know that they mean a three-finger pinch. So whatever you can pick up with three fingers, that is a pinch. So I'm going to add my pinch of kosher salt. And I'm going to stir it up, lower the heat and simmer it. Cover it and simmer it. So I'll show you... I should get... here we go.

Jennifer Stempel: Right now, everything looks very green and fresh. This is going to simmer and cook down. You can eat this like this. You can eat this like this, and that's okay. But the true picadillo is something that looks like you've been slaving all day to make, even if you haven't really, you saw how quickly it came together. And I made one earlier that my family ate promptly ate for dinner. But when it's cooked down, it looks more like this. So the flavors have really married, have really gotten together, have done their thing. And it's just a flavor explosion. It's so intensely flavored. So richly decadent, and it feels that way at least. But you saw it's chockful of vegetables. It's chockful of the lean protein. I forgot to tell you, this is where you add your... what is it? Plant-based protein, if you're going to use a plant-based protein, right before you simmer it, because otherwise, it's just going crumble and dissolve into mush, which you don't want.

Jessica Jablon: Could you make this with like lentils, or? Somebody had asked about other types of plant-based options, whether lentils would work, or impossible beef kind of protein.

Jennifer Stempel: So impossible beef type of protein is the one that I'm thinking of, that would just dissolve. So that's why I would only add it towards the end when you're just simmering.

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Jessica Jablon: Okay.

Jennifer Stempel: If you add in cooked lentils, you would add that in when you add in the meat. In fact, lentils would be a delicious addition to this recipe with turkey. There you go. All right, so now, we're going to transition to our next recipe, while the picadillo does its thing and simmers.

Jessica Jablon: How long do you normally simmer it?

Jennifer Stempel: Not long, actually. It simmers about 20 minutes, covered. And then I serve it... traditionally, it's served over white rice, but you can certainly serve it with any sort of very basic dish that could use a flavor enhancer to kick it up, basically. So mashed potatoes, my American husband loves picadillos with mashed potatoes, but traditionally it's served with white rice. You could use brown rice, you could use cous-cous, pasta, rice cauliflower, anything that's sort of asking for a flavor boost.

Jessica Jablon: Quinoa.

Jennifer Stempel: [inaudible 00:32:47] for your picadillo.

Jennifer Stempel: Okay. Let's move on to our next dish, because I got to watch our clock here. And we are going to make Cuban black beans, but we are going to make them vegetarian. Traditionally, beans are cooked with some sort of animal fat, animal protein even. Like a ham hock, or a smoked turkey leg. My version is completely 100% vegetarian, and it is just really tasty. I can't... So it's a process, and it's a big time commitment, but it makes such a large portion, that what I end up doing is I make a big pot of beans. I commit to doing it, and then I freeze individual portions, and it lasts me months, before I have to do it again. So that's what I recommend doing.

Jennifer Stempel: So the very first thing that you do when you make black beans, you start with a dry bean. I saw someone earlier asked if you can make this with canned beans. You technically can. It will not produce the same results. It just won't. It will be delicious, but not as delicious as if you make them from scratch. It's like the equivalent of using a store-bought pie dough, versus a homemade one. That store-bought pie dough is delicious in its own right, but there's nothing that tops a homemade crust. Right? All right. So same thing. You can use canned beans. I personally don't recommend it, because I think this just tastes so infinitely better. It's a lot of time. It's not a lot of work, a lot of time. And I think that it produces results that are worth it.

Jennifer Stempel: So let's get started. The first thing you do, you get your dry beans. You put them in a big bowl, and you cover them with water, and you leave them there overnight. Okay? Next morning, you will drain the water from those beans. That water has done its job, and you will put your now softened beans into your instant pot, or your pressure cooker. If you don't have a pressure cooker, that's totally fine. You can do this on the stove, it

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just takes a little bit longer. To that pressure cooker, you are going to add in big chunks, because you're going eventually take them out, you're going to add one red bell pepper that you've halved and seeded. Keep them in the big halves. Don't chop it.

Jennifer Stempel: One sweet onion that you've peeled. Leave it in big chunks, again. Don't chop it. An entire head of garlic, you know how you feel about garlic, that you've peeled. But again, you've left the cloves whole. You've got two bay leaves, and you have a heaping tablespoon of consomme. I like Osem Brand. Again, I don't work for them. I just like the way that it tastes. It is a vegetarian dish, or a component rather, but it gives that all day cooked chicken soup flavor. And then you're going to cover it with water, leaves it about two inches above the beans. Okay? You're going to set your instant pot to the bean setting. If your pressure cooker doesn't have a bean setting, just put it on high setting for 20 minutes.

Jennifer Stempel: Now, if you forgot to soak your beans, don't fret. It's okay. It'll still work in your pressure cooker. You'll just have to cook it a little bit longer. I did all of those steps ahead of time. And now, we're joining in for the live part. I'm putting my big cast iron here, my cast iron skillet, enameled cast iron. I'm heating up some olive oil. While that's heating up, I'm going to show you what my instant pot did. Oh. I have the big one, but it's okay if you have the little one. All right. So in here, I have technically cooked beans with those aromatics that we threw in there, but we're done with those aromatics. They did their job. So I'm taking out my bay leaves. I am taking out the onion, and it's easy to do because you left it in big chunks. We're taking all of that out.

Jennifer Stempel: Here's my bell pepper. That's one half. Here's the other half. Taking out more onion. In fact, the onion, I left the root on because it helps hold it together, and it's easier to take out. So I cut it in half and I peeled it, but I left the root on, so it was still pretty intact. And it's coming out much easier this time than when I made it earlier.

Jessica Jablon: I just want to point out that, because there's some action happening in the chat box. You can make this without a pressure cooker if you don't have one. The recipes say that you can put it in a regular soup pot for three plus hours until the beans are soft. So the instructions are right there for you. And that way, you have them. Also, a question came in whether or not a crockpot could be used for that as well.

Jennifer Stempel: Yeah. You can totally do this in a crockpot. It'll take the all day crockpot situation, but you can absolutely do this in a crock pot. This is one of the reasons why I like my pressure cooker. So I got all of the aromatics that I put in there for that initial cook. I've got them out. And I'm going use my handy-dandy potato masher, to mash these beans. Now I don't want to mash completely. I don't want to puree them. I like to some of them whole, so we know what we're eating, but by mashing it, at least a little bit, you're creating a creaminess that can otherwise only be created with actual cream. But there's no dairy, there's no cream in this recipe, but this

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is thickening it without a thickener. This is making it creamy without cream. Making it decadent but keeping it simple. Okay.

Jennifer Stempel: So now [inaudible 00:40:21]. I'm setting this aside.

Jessica Jablon: Jenny, can we see what it looks like inside the pot?

Jennifer Stempel: You absolutely can. Give me one second to get this stuff prepared. Inside the pan... here we go. You can see... can you see this?

Jessica Jablon: Yeah. Yes.

Jennifer Stempel: Yeah. So it's not watery. It's pretty thick already. That's a good thing. It's pretty thick and creamy. If you go to a Cuban restaurant that's serving you watery beans, guys, go somewhere else. Your beans should not be watery. They should be decadent and delicious.

Jessica Jablon: Did you drain out any water?

Jennifer Stempel: I did not. From the instant pot, I did not drain out a single bit of water. All I took out was those aromatics. Okay? So let's move forward. I have my enameled cast iron here. I have my oil heating up, and again, I'm going add my trinity, my sofrito. I have my chopped sweet onion. That's going in there first. My bell pepper is yellow-orange, but not green. Don't use green. We don't like green pepper. Sorry, green peppers of the world, it's not my thing. And I'm going to sweat this down, and then I'm going add my garlic. My fresh garlic here. It's going in. Again, I grated it with the Microplane zester grater, to get it really nice and fine. That's what we want.

Jennifer Stempel: All right. So, this is just going to continue to sweat down until those onions are translucent. Once they are translucent, all of this goes in here. We're basically finishing off the beans. The aromatics that cooked with them in the pressure cooker, they did their job. All the flavors have been taken out of them. Those are not the vegetables you want in your finished product. You want those fresh tastes, those fresh flavors. So we're just adding another layer of flavor to this dish.

Jennifer Stempel: Okay. So, in my pot goes everything in here. It's a little messy, it's going to splash some. This is why I wear an apron. But literally everything... I'm scraping the bowl here. I mashed in some beans that are sticking. I don't want them to stick, I want them in my pot. Okay. So I stir this, get everything in there incorporated. All right, so now we're going to season them. Okay, we are going season with... we've got our cumin. We have two tablespoons of cumin, okay? So again, I'm eyeballing, I'm using just the palm of my hand. There's one, two. It's okay to measure with your heart here. We're not baking. It's not an accurate science here. It's an art.

Jessica Jablon: I love that.

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Jennifer Stempel: Right? We're going to use... actually, I'll wait for that. We'll use our finely minced oregano. In this recipe, I prefer using fresh oregano as opposed to dried. But if you don't have fresh oregano, it's absolutely 100% okay to use the dried one. I just think it adds another depth of flavor that I personally really like. So that's why I use it.

Jessica Jablon: And a question came in; could you keep them in the instant pop at switch to cooking on sauté at this point, rather than transferring to a different pot?

Jennifer Stempel: That's a really good question. No. And the reason is, because I have sweated the veggies by themselves before I added the beans again. And you can't do that if the beans are already in there. So it does need to be a separate step. Next, this is a very controversial ingredient as well, but it is necessary. And I add in to every pot of beans that I make, and you can see, this is a lot of beans, guys. I add in one tablespoon of sugar. You don't have to use actual sugar. You can use a sugar substitute. I've used agave before. I've used stevia before. The reason is, these ingredients and these beans, black beans, tend to have a slightly bitter taste when they're cooked, and this sort of evens out that tone. So I'm adding in that... and it's not a lot of sugar, frankly, for this giant pot of beans.

Jennifer Stempel: But if sugar is not your thing, if you can't have any sugar, I totally get it, and just use your sugar substitute of choice. That is the equivalent of a tablespoon of real sugar. Okay. So I stir that in. Next, again, with our olives and brine, but this time it's a little bit different. I'm putting in the brine, but instead of leaving them whole or halved, I slice them. Yes, you can buy sliced green olives, but since I was making the picadillo already, I bought whole ones that I'm going slice at home. Again, this is a nod to the Spanish influence in Cuban cooking. You see a lot of Spanish, African and indigenous flavors in Cuban cuisine.

Jennifer Stempel: That is generally speaking where the Cubans came from. Although now they come from all over the world. But in fact, I know some Chinese Cubans, but in terms of cuisine, the biggest influences are Spanish, African, and indigenous, and you really see that in Cuban dishes. So you see a lot of citrus, like Valencia oranges, and you see olives. Manzanilla olives. You see in of African cooking, you see a lot of like root vegetables, like yuca and malanga. These are all part of the influence there.

Jessica Jablon: There was someone who had asked about the picadillo, whether or not there was a substitute for the green olives. Would you just go without, would you do something else?

Jennifer Stempel: Salt. Just use salt in terms of the brine. You can use a little vinegar or something acidic, but if you can tolerate them, they really make a big difference in the dish. So I'm going to stir that in. Did I already put in my Sazón Tropical here? No, I didn't.

Jessica Jablon: Not in this one.

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Jennifer Stempel: Okay. So we've got to salt this. You can either use your kosher salt, or your Sazón Tropical. And if I have an excuse to use my Sazón Tropical, I use it, but this is not my Sazón Tropical. This is my regular Sazón. Let me get my Sazón Tropical. So it's about a tablespoon of it, and you stir it. And these beans are done. They just need to simmer and thicken. All right? So I'm going to put the lid on these.

Jessica Jablon: Real quickly Jenny, if there's a pepper allergy, is there a substitute for the red pepper?

Jennifer Stempel: Ooh. That's a very good question. I haven't heard of that. I haven't faced that question before, to be honest. The bell pepper really adds a very distinct flavor to the dish. It's very hard to make this particular dish, these particular dishes, I should say, without them. But if you have an allergy, definitely just omit it. Maybe tomato, you can get a similar, though not the same, but similar flavor to it. Okay. So our picadillo is going, our beans are going. The beans I like simmer actually, with a lid on, but slightly ajar, because I want some of that liquid to evaporate. I really want it to thicken even more. So while we're waiting for that to thicken, I'm going to very quickly show you our last dish. Very quickly.

Jennifer Stempel: And it's an impressive one. It's one I love to make and impress all my friends. Let's get our ingredients over here. This is a Cuban avocado layer salad. Oh, I didn't put my... I didn't bring my dressing out. Let me get my vinegar. One second, friends. Live working kitchen here. Okay. Of course, you're getting stuck. We'll deal with that. All right. So the first thing in the avocado layer salad is we start with a bit of green as our base layer. I like to use arugula, because it has a peppery bite to it. And everything else is very bright and briny and acidic. So this helps to counterbalance it. Use a platter that's flat. I'm not making the salad in a bowl, and it's for a reason.

Jennifer Stempel: The next thing I do is I add my cucumber. I'm using because my platter is not so big, half of an English cucumber, and this is what we do to decorate it. I run my fork along the sides, and it creates ridges in the skin. The skin on an English cucumber, see this cucumber, is edible, sweet and delicious. Excuse me. There's no reason not to use it. So now, I just cut it in rounds. Pretty thin. And you can see that it looks textured a bit. I like to call them my cucumber flowers. You can see the texture. And you just add a layer of them onto your arugula base. I'm going to continue to chop in here.

Jennifer Stempel: You want to get them really... I'm chopping quickly here, but you want to get them as thin as you can. The thinner, the better. And it's a very simple salad, but always impresses some guests. They always ask me about the dressing, how I made it, all of it. Okay. So next, I use a big tomato. In this case, I'm using a beefsteak. You are going to slice it very thinly. We don't want big chunks of tomato here. We want really thin slices. Almost paper thin, if you can make it. The thinner, the better. That's what you want. And it goes right on top of... look at that. You can see right through it. That's

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how thin it is. Right on top of that cucumber. Goes right in there. And lastly, avocado.

Jennifer Stempel: So we are going to slice this avocado in really thin slices. And you sort of jewel the top with the avocado. You can make a design if you'd like. I kind of like it messier the better. You know what's in it. You can see all the ingredients, but yeah, let's use the other half here. And I'm spooning out the meat of this avocado, so that I can easily slice it. Usually, don't tell my mom, I would slice it in my hand, but it's probably safer to do that on a board. But again, just like the others, we're doing really thin slices. And we're jewelizing the top with that. Okay?

Jennifer Stempel: Now next, our veggies don't come to us seasoned, so we have to season the salad. And the dressing is made right on top of it. So the first thing we do is open... my seasoned rice vinegar doesn't want to open properly, but here we go. Let's open it. Ah, okay. So we drizzle it with vinegar. This is seasoned rice vinegar. You can also use red wine vinegar. It's another good one for this, but this is my favorite type. I do a pinch of kosher salt. Remember that three fingers from high above, so that it's evenly distributed. Some freshly ground black pepper. And then you hit it with a drizzle of olive oil. And guess what, my friend, that is the whole salad.

Jennifer Stempel: It is acidic, it's briny, it's delicious. It's decadent with the avocado. You can add pickled red onions. You can add raw sweet onions, really thinly sliced on this, or just leave it as is. And this is my favorite salad really. Now we're done with the other dishes. I just want you to see what it looks like. Again, traditionally, we serve all of this with plain white rice. So I've made some white rice earlier, so that you can see. But then so I'm going to put... now the beans, Cubans eat rice and beans like Americans eat mashed potato and gravy. So it's not really like its own dish. It's like you make a little well in your side and you put it on top of the beans. That's the real way to eat your black beans.

Jennifer Stempel: Now our black beans are still simmering and they're thickening, but I made some earlier, so that you can see. When they're done, they're really nice and thick here. We don't want a watery gravy for our dish. We want a thick bean, okay? That's what it's going to turn into when it's done. So I'm going to fill the well that I've made with my beans just like that. Our picadillo that we made is absolutely beautiful and ready. And guess what, guys, I don't take the bay leaves out, because in my family, we have a tradition; if you are served the plate of picadillo that has the bay leaves, and you find it, it's good luck. So you can convince your family the same. All right, so we're going to put our picadillo right next to that rice and beans. Oh, I got the bay leaves.

Jessica Jablon: I think it's good luck for everybody here.

Jennifer Stempel: So there you go. So this is what it looks like when it's done, guys. We've got our rice, our beans, our turkey and veggie picadillo, and our avocado layer salad. And that is it, my friends. This is a Cuban feast made healthy.

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- Jessica Jablon: Oh, that's amazing, Jenny. Thank you so much. There were a couple of questions that came in, if I could ask real quickly. One is, do you have any tips for picking the avocados?
- Jennifer Stempel: Hmm. Well, first of all, I'm going to taste my concoction. It smells amazing in here.
- Jessica Jablon: I know, I'm in Los Angeles, so it's dinner time almost, and I'm starving watching this.
- Jennifer Stempel: The picadillo, guys, it is so intensely flavored and comes together so quickly. You have to try that. It's so good. Okay. Your question was how to pick an avocado. So an avocado, I don't like to pick them ripe. Actually, I pick them under ripe and let them ripen at home. But that means that it takes some forethought. You have to know that you're going to cook or use avocado in a recipe ahead of time. But if you're looking for an avocado that you can use that night at the store, you hold it in your hands and you give it just a very gentle squeeze and it should give you some gains. It should be able to squeeze just a little bit. If it's too mushy, then it's overripe. If it's too hard, it's under-ripe. It should give just a little bit. And that's how you know that it's ready. Again, I like to buy them a little under-ripe, and I just set them on my counter for a couple days until they rippen. Once they rippen, I put them on my fridge and they last a long time.
- Jessica Jablon: Great. And then, you had mentioned freezing a couple of the dishes.
- Jennifer Stempel: Yes. In fact, I freeze all of these dishes except the salad doesn't freeze. Salad, you got to eat. So basically to freeze them, I let them cool. In fact, I end up cooling them overnight in the refrigerator. Completely cool, before I put them in freezer bags, and I flatten them and I freeze them that way. But yeah, the beans freeze marvelously. The picadillo freezes marvelously. The picadillo, here's an tip, it only gets better with time. So if you make this today and eat it tomorrow, it's even more over the top, because the flavors have really had a chance to marry and just do their thing. So, you can freeze the beans. You can freeze the picadillo, not the salad, but you can eat that right away. And it's easy to make, you saw. So it comes together really quickly. Use freezer bags, lay them flat, and then pull out your individual portions as you want them.
- Jessica Jablon: So amazing. Well, thank you so much for being here. We have been taking notes throughout the presentation. My colleague has been taking notes. So we're going to send out that with the recording in the next week or so. So be on the lookout for that. Thank you so much, Jenny, for being here tonight and for sharing these delicious recipes. I know I can't wait to make them. They look amazing. I also want to thank Debbie for sharing her inspirational story with us before. I also wanted to take a moment to ask you to please fill out our brief evaluation survey. It's linked in the chat now. Evaluations really do inform our future programming, so thank you for taking a minute to fill out. I promise it's very quick. Please never forget

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that our social workers and genetic counselor are here for you and your loved ones.

Jessica Jablon: Sharsheret provides emotional support, mental health counseling, and other programs designed to help you navigate you through the cancer experience. All are free, completely private, one on one. Our number is 866-474-2774. You can also email us at clinicalstaff@sharsheret.org. Finally, I want to share a couple of the exciting webinars we have planned over the next few weeks. The next one is on Monday, May 16th at 5:00 Pacific, 8:00 Eastern. Sharsheret's national book club, *My Wife Said You May Want To Marry Me*, a conversation with author, Jason B. Rosenthal. The link to that is going into the chat. On Monday, May 23rd at 5:00 PM, Pacific, 8:00 PM Eastern. Join us for exercise to fight osteoporosis and protect your bones. To learn the latest information through exercise with Rebekah Rotstein, founder of Buff Bones.

Jessica Jablon: And finally, save the date for our next Sharsheret in the Kitchen, Finding Umami with Jamie Wei, who will be sharing some incredible healthy Asian recipes on Thursday, June 16th at 11:00 AM, 2:00 PM Eastern. Please check out our website regularly to see what topics are coming up. All of these links are in the chat, and you can also access the recordings and transcripts of all of our past webinars on our website. From all of us at Sharsheret, thank you so much for joining us today, and we hope to see you virtually soon.

About Sharsheret

Sharsheret, Hebrew for “chain”, is a national non-profit organization, improves the lives of Jewish women and families living with or at increased genetic risk for breast or ovarian cancer through personalized support and saves lives through educational outreach.

With four offices (California, Florida, Illinois, and New Jersey), Sharsheret serves 150,000 women, families, health care professionals, community leaders, and students, in all 50 states. Sharsheret creates a safe community for women facing breast cancer and ovarian cancer and their families at every stage of life and at every stage of cancer - from before diagnosis, during treatment and into the survivorship years. While our expertise is focused on young women and Jewish families, more than 15% of those we serve are not Jewish. All Sharsheret programs serve all women and men.

As a premier organization for psychosocial support, Sharsheret's Executive Director chairs the Federal Advisory Committee on Breast Cancer in Young Women, Sharsheret works closely with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and participates in psychosocial research studies and evaluations with major cancer centers, including Georgetown University Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center. Sharsheret is accredited by the Better Business Bureau and has earned a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator for four consecutive years.

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Sharsheret offers the following national programs:

The Link Program

Peer Support Network, connecting women newly diagnosed or at high risk of developing breast cancer one-on-one with others who share similar diagnoses and experiences

- Embrace™, supporting women living with advanced breast cancer • Genetics for Life®, addressing hereditary breast and ovarian cancer
- Thriving Again®, providing individualized support, education, and survivorship plans for young breast cancer survivors
- Busy Box®, for young parents facing breast cancer
- Best Face Forward®, addressing the cosmetic side effects of treatment
- Family Focus®, providing resources and support for caregivers and family members
- Ovarian Cancer Program, tailored resources and support for young Jewish women and families facing ovarian cancer
- Sharsheret Supports™, developing local support groups and programs

Education and Outreach Programs

- Health Care Symposia, on issues unique to younger women facing breast cancer
- Sharsheret on Campus, outreach and education to students on campus
- Sharsheret Educational Resource Booklet Series, culturally-relevant publications for Jewish women and their families and healthcare Professionals

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