From the editor . . .

We get many questions and try to answer them within this publication or online. So, what exactly is Ash Wednesday?

Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent and occurs 46 days before Easter. It is a moveable feast, falling on a different date each year because it is dependent on the date of Easter, but of course, always on a Wednesday. It can occur as early as February 4 or as late as March 10. This year Ash Wednesday falls on March 1st.

Ash Wednesday derives its name from the practice of placing ashes on the foreheads of adherents as a sign of mourning and repentance to God. The ashes used are typically gathered after the palms from the previous year's Palm Sunday are burned.

The practice is observed by many Western Christians, including Anglicans, Lutherans, Methodists, Presbyterians, and Roman Catholics. According to the canonical gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, Jesus Christ spent 40 days fasting in the desert, where he endured temptation by Satan. Ash Wednesday is one of the most popular and important holy days in the liturgical calendar. Ash Wednesday opens Lent, a season of fasting and prayer.

Ash Wednesday comes from the ancient Jewish tradition of penance and fasting.

Siempre Boricua, Ivonne Figueroa

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MARCH 2017
Puerto Rican Women

Luce López-Baralt (1950)- Literary critic and investigator, specialized in Medieval, Islamite and Semitic Spanish literature during the Spanish Golden Age and Renaissance. Spanish and Comparative Literature professor at Universidad de Puerto Rico, Río Piedras Campus. Luce has received many honors and has been awarded by the Puerto Rico’s P.E.N. Club and the Instituto de Literatura Puertorriqueña. She’s a member of the Academia Puertorriqueña de la Lengua Española, correspondent with the Real Academia de la Lengua Española and the Academia Dominicana de la Lengua Española. Get a list of some of her works [here].

Janette Becerra (1965)- Poet, narrator, professor, and literary critic. She’s been awarded by Puerto Rico’s P.E.N. Club and Instituto de Literatura Puertorriqueña for her storybook *Doce versiones de soledad* (2011). Most of her stories have won various prizes and honorable mentions.

There are three Puerto Rico’s you need to learn about; the old, the new and the natural. Learn about our little terruño. Subscribe to EL BORICUA, a monthly cultural publication for Puerto Ricans.

EL BORICUA is a monthly cultural publication, established in 1995, that is Puerto Rican owned and operated. We are NOT sponsored by any club or organization. Our goal is to present and promote our “treasure” which is our Cultural Identity - “the Puerto Rican experience.” EL BORICUA is presented in English and is dedicated to the descendants of Puerto Ricans wherever they may be.
Most people go back to Puerto Rico to visit family. Most of the weekends will be busy with family events and visiting old friends and places you used to live, driving by your old school, etc, don’t be embarrassed everyone does this.

But what to do when everyone is working? You can fill your weekdays by hitting the tourist areas. I limit myself to visiting El Morro, El Yunque, and Luquillo every three years or so. There is so much more to do.

One of the wonders of Puerto Rico, are bioluminescent bays that magically transforms into a glowing bay at night. In 2008, Mosquito Bay entered the Guinness Book of World Records for brightest bio bay in the world. I visit these every few years. But I book kayaking tours so I can get right down in the water. No need to remind you this is a night event.

Since coffee is locally grown on the island, there are a number of fantastic coffee shops in Old San Juan. However, my favorite is Finca Cialitos located on Calle San Francisco in Old San Juan. It may not look like much on the outside, but the coffee is out of this world. The owner grows and roasts the 100% Arabica coffee that has a unique flavor due to Puerto Rico’s microclimates. The coffee is incredible and you can buy 8 oz. bags of ground or whole bean coffee to bring home. Finca Cialitos is a must stop for all coffee lovers.

Go snorkeling, diving or on a boat cruise. Puerto Rico is surrounded by the continental shelf that provides excellent snorkeling and diving opportunities when visiting the island. The best spots are located away from the busy city of San Juan.

However, there is one place I visit every time I visit, and I visit oftern during the year. I always go to ‘Guavate’ (la ruta del lechón) in the mountains of Cayey, and I always go on the weekend to hear the music. This is roast pig magic. I stay there at least 3 hours enjoying myself, eating fresh lechón en la varita, drinking all mavi, and having quesitos for desert with café con leche, all while listening to the best music in the world, Puerto Rican music.
**Tainos**

Zemí or cemí was the name the people gave to their physical representations of the gods, whether objects or drawings. They were made in many forms and materials and have been found in a variety of settings. The majority of zemís were crafted from wood but stone, bone, shell, pottery, and cotton were also used.

Zemí petroglyphs were carved on rocks in streams, ball courts, and on stalagmites in caves. Cemí pictographs were found on secular objects such as pottery, and on tattoos.

Yucahú, the god of cassava, was represented with a three-pointed zemí, which could be found in conucos to increase the yield of cassava.

Cemís are sometimes represented by toads, turtles, fishes, snakes, and various abstract and human-like faces.

Some zemís are accompanied by a small table or tray, which is believed to be a receptacle for hallucinogenic snuff cohoba, prepared from the beans of a species of Piptadenia tree. These trays have been found with ornately carved snuff tubes.

Before certain ceremonies, Tainos would purify themselves, either by inducing vomiting with a swallowing stick or by fasting. After communal bread was served, first to the zemí, then to the cacique, and then to the common people, the people would sing the village epic to the accompaniment of maraca and other instruments.

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**Gunnera manicata**

This is one of the largest leaved plants that you can possibly grow. Native to South America, the leaves of the giant ornamental rhubarb can grow as large as 11 ft in diameter given a wet summer. Cold tolerant.

The underside of the leaf (including the stalk) is covered in spikes. In early summer it bears tiny red-green flowers in conical branched panicles, followed by small, spherical fruit. However, if you allow the rather ugly flower spike to bloom the gunnera will stop producing leave until flowering is over. Removal of the flower spike at an early age will ensure further leaf production.

*Seeds and small plants available online.*

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**Don Guillo, the gardener . . . .**

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**Boricua Calendar**

- **March 2, 1917**: The Jones Act grants U.S. Citizenship to residents of Puerto Rico.
- **March 12, 1903**: The University of Puerto Rico is established.
- **March 22, 1873**: Slavery is abolished in Puerto Rico.
- **March 29, 1825**: Pirate Roberto Cofresí is executed.
Canarian Spanish (from the Spanish Canary Islands) made the major contribution to Puerto Rican Spanish, and can be considered the basis of the dialect and accent. Most Puerto Rican immigration in the early 19th century included many, many people from the Canary Islands, who, like Puerto Ricans, had inherited most of their linguistic traits from Andalusia.

Caribbean Spanish is a bit different than Spanish spoken in the rest of Latino America. This is mostly due to the fact that Canary Islanders founded most of the towns and villages in the Caribbean and especially Puerto Rico.

Our ‘funny’ or ‘strange’ colloquialisms, are in fact words that came with Canary Islanders during colonial times. ‘Guagua’ is a Canary Island word. Those of us who live outside the island and meet other Latinos know that our Spanish is a bit different, but yet similar only among Spanish Caribbean islanders.

The first wave of Canarian migration to Puerto Rico seems to be in 1695, followed by others in 1714, 1720, 1731, and 1797. The numbers of Canarians to Puerto Rico in its first three centuries is not known to any degree of precision. However, historians agree that they formed the bulk of the Jibaro or white peasant stock of the island. We know them as ‘los canarios’ but Canary Islanders refer to themselves as ‘isleños’ – no matter where they live.

Puerto Rican accent could be described as a reflection of Puerto Rico’s historical Euro-Ethnic cultures. To understand the concept of the Puerto Rican accent one must remember that every country in Hispanic America has different accents in this language, many of which are very similar.

In Puerto Rico’s case, Spaniards arrived from many regions within Spain and brought with them their own regional dialects/accents. However, the great majority of European immigrants to Puerto Rico throughout its history came from the Hispano-Arabic area of Spain known as Andalusia, and mostly from the Canaries.

When visiting Tenerife or Las Palmas (Islas Canarias, Spain), Puerto Ricans are usually taken at first hearing Canarians speak. It is the accents of these regions which served as the basis of the style of Spanish spoken in Puerto Rico.

To sum it all up, Puerto Ricans speak Canary Island Spanish, and that was subsequently influenced by Taíno and African vocabulary. Olé!

**Strange foods**

*Diego Matos Dupree, born in Bayamón, is a tavernero for a popular cruise line and lives on board most of the year. He gets to travel the world for free.*
Plátanos al caldero

Dominican caramelized ripe plantains

2 very ripe plantains (see note)
4 cinnamon sticks cut into 1" pieces
4 tablespoons oil
1 cup water
3 tablespoons brown sugar
4 tablespoons rum (optional)
¼ teaspoon of salt

Peel the plantains and cut into halves or slices.
Stick the cinnamon into the plantains.
In a caldero heat the oil over medium heat, add the plantains and fry and rotate until golden brown all around.
In a separate container mix water, sugar, rum, and salt.
Pour this mix into the pot (careful with splatters!).
Lower the heat and cook and rotate until the liquid turn into syrup left and ⅔ has evaporated.
Serve immediately.

NOTE
Your plantains MUST be very ripe for this to work. The peel should be almost black and the plantain a bit mushy when you squeeze it.

Monkey Jungle was founded by an expat who created a safe haven for squirrel monkeys. Monkeys are provided with care, food and water in an open enclosure where they have the freedom to come and go as they please.

What sets Monkey Jungle apart is its outstanding contribution to the local community in the form of medical and dental clinics. Proceeds from the Monkey Jungle and its neighboring zip lines go towards funding healthcare and the upkeep of the clinics.
Cocina Criolla – Cooking Hints
By: Anna María Vélez de Blas

Stuffed Amarillos

Fry very ripe plantains until golden, salt.

Cook some bacon until crispy and mince that, then lightly mash into the plantains.

Separate plantain into balls, shape each ball into a half circle and form a hollow the center. You can use a very small bowl or cup to gently shape the plantain cups, but don’t press too hard or the plantain will stick to your mold. I shape mine by hand.

Stuff with picadillo or minced pernil, or any other meat that is chopped small, etc. Serve warm.

These may be topped with shredded cheese and broiled until cheese melts or my favorite is to drizzle Salsa Rosa over each cup. Delicioso!

*Anna, born in Bayamón and raised in Aibonito, is a Recipe Tester for EL BORICUA, a staff writer, and is also a professional Chef. She lives in California with her husband, Joe and their three children.

Jaime in the Kitchen
A Food Blog

My daughter Mari just had a baby boy and named him Jaime, after her Daddy, me! I’m so happy!

Congratulations to Mari and husband Daniel and their daughter Maribel.

The following day after she brought Jaimito home from the hospital I went over to spend the day and help them in the kitchen and get a change to spend some time with my namesake. I have my own key, so I let myself in and made them a jibarito breakfast of baked and then grilled batatas.

First I clean the tubers, and baked in the oven, then I carefully sliced them and brushed butter mixed with Sazón over the tops. I let them sit for about 30 minutes and once they were up I grilled them on both sides until there were nice grill marks.

I served these with fried eggs, buttered and toasted French bread and café con leche.

Mari said, Papi these are so yummy and delicious!

The house soon became full of family coming over to bring gifts and even more food. I was glad to have made so many batatas because they seemed to be all hungry. Batatas asadas is not a common dish, but is traditional Puerto Rican food. None were left.

Batas asadas

*Jaime Garibay Rivera, Ph.D. is a retired college professor (Aerophysics), now living in Miami. He has three children and his family roots are in Mayagüez.
Guineitos verdes en escabeche

Pickled green bananas

When I make this dish I always serve it with salted cod onions, garlic, and some avocado and cilantro, of course. Sometimes I throw in some stuffed olives with their pimento.

Escabeche sauce:
2 cups of olive oil
1 cup of vinegar
12 peppercorns
1/2 teaspoon of salt
2 bay leaves
1-1/2 pounds onions, peeled and slices
2 cloves garlic, minced

10 green bananas (available in Latin grocery stores)

8 cups of water – 3 teaspoons salt

Instructions

In a heavy pot, mix sauce ingredients and cook over low heat for an hour. Allow to cool.

Trim ends of bananas and slit just the peel, lengthwise, on both sides, no need to peel.

Boil the bananas in a deep pot with salted water, bring to a boil. The water should the bananas. Cover the pot and boil over low heat for 15 minutes. Drain and the peel will practically slide off. Set aside.

Fill the pot again with 8 cups of fresh water and salt, bring rapidly to a boil. Add peeled bananas, cover and boil for 10 minutes. Add one cup of water and boil for another 5 minutes. Drain and allow to cool.

Cut bananas into one inch rounds. Place in a deep glass bowl, alternating with the escabeche sauce. Marinade for 24 hours in the refrigerator.
**Pound Cake**

Preheat your oven to 325 degrees F.

Generously grease a bundt pan with miracle pan release (equal parts flour, vegetable oil & shortening whisked together until smooth).

In a large bowl, beat together the butter and sugar until fluffy, about 2 minutes. Add the honey and beat together for 1 more minute.

Add the eggs one at a time, beating until just combined after each addition. Beat in the vanilla.

In a medium bowl, mix together the flour, baking powder, and salt. Add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients in two additions, mixing until just combined after each addition.

Pour the batter evenly around your prepared bundt pan. Bake for 40 to 45 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. (The center is halfway between the outer edge of the pan and the flute in the middle.)

Remove from the oven and place on a wire rack to cool.

**Glaze**

When the cake is about 10 minutes from being done, start your glaze.

In a medium saucepan over medium heat, melt the butter, and then add the sugar, water, rum, and vanilla. Whisk until combined. Cook, stirring occasionally until the sugar is dissolved and all the ingredients have melted together. Reduce the heat to medium-low and stir occasionally to prevent the glaze from forming a skin.

Once the cake is out of the oven, pour half of the glaze over the top of the cake (This will become the bottom of your cake later.)

Allow the cake to cool to room temperature. (Turn off the heat for your glaze while the cake cools.)

Once the cake is out of the pan, reheat the glaze until it is smooth again. Pour the remaining glaze all over the top of the cake and allow it to soak in. Serve immediately.

Store leftovers in an airtight container for 2-3 days.

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**RUM-SOAKED HONEY POUND CAKE**

**Ingredients**

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 cup unsalted butter, softened</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1⅓ cups sugar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¼ cup honey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 eggs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 teaspoon vanilla</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1⅓ cups all-purpose flour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 teaspoon baking powder</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>½ teaspoon salt</td>
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**Rum Glaze**

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>½ cup unsalted butter</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 cup sugar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¼ cup water</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>½ cup silver rum (Bacardi Superior)</td>
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<tr>
<td>½ teaspoon vanilla</td>
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**The Basics . . .**

**Sofrito**

1 large yellow onion (Spanish onion)
1 pimiento (Cubanelle) or substitute with green bell pepper
1 red bell pepper or 1 sm jar roasted red peppers
1 medium head of garlic (2 tbsp. minced garlic)
12 ajíes dulces (hard to find outside the island and may skip)
10 leaves of recao - (Eryngium) (hard to find may substitute with cilantro)
¼ cup Spanish olives, pitted
1 tbsp capers
2 tsps salt
1 tbsp black pepper
1 tbsp crushed oregano
½ cup olive oil

Wash, peel, seed, and chop everything. Run thru blender or food processor. Freeze some for later use in ice cube trays, once frozen drop into freezer bag. Refrigerate the rest.
Captain Hila Levy (born December 10, 1986) is an officer in the United States Air Force who was the first Puerto Rican to be awarded a Rhodes scholarship. She was honored with a plaque that has her name, squadron name and graduation date, which was placed in the ballroom balcony of the Academy's hall of honor. The plaque recognizes Levy as the top former CAP cadet in the Class of 2008.

Levy was born and raised in Guaynabo, Puerto Rico to a Puerto Rican father and an Israeli mother. She received both her primary and secondary education in the city of her birth. In 2004, Levy graduated from Saint John’s School in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Levy, who joined the Puerto Rico Wing of the Civil Air Patrol in 2000, reached the rank of Cadet Colonel and was the CAP’s National Cadet of the Year in 2004. According to her citation, she earned the award for her outstanding academic performance, strong leadership skills, well-rounded extracurricular activities, and positive community involvement. Levy has stated that her experiences in the Civil Air Patrol served as an influential factor on her decision to apply for an appointment to the United States Air Force Academy.

Levy received an appointment to attend the United States Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs in Colorado. As a Cadet 1st Class and member of Squadron 9, she was among 28 cadets named Dean's Aces and who were honored for their academic achievements in the Fall semester of 2005 at the academy. Levy, who earned a 4.0 grade point average that semester, was one of five cadets that year to be named an Ace three times.

In May 28, 2008, Levy earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Biology with 3 foreign language minors: Arabic, French and Spanish. She finished as the top graduate, earning the Outstanding Cadet in the Order of Graduation Award and a spot on the academy’s 100-year Honor Roll. She received her Second Lieutenant’s commission in the United States Air Force and awards from the Argentine Air Force and the Chilean Air Force for graduating first in her class during the US Air Force Academy Graduation and Commissioning Ceremony.

In 2007, Levy became the first Puerto Rican and the 35th Academy cadet to be awarded a Rhodes Scholarship. She was awarded the scholarship for the District 13 of Colorado. The Rhodes Scholarships were created in 1902 under the terms and conditions of the will of Cecil Rhodes, a British born African colonial pioneer.

Levy was planning on using the scholarship to obtain two master's degrees of one year each, the first a Master’s of Science in Global Health Science and the second a Master’s of Science in Medical Anthropology at the University of Oxford in the United Kingdom, however she was accepted to the Doctor of Philosophy (D.Phil.) in Public Health program (a 3-year degree which grants Oxford’s Ph.D. equivalent) starting September 2008, under Oxford’s Department of Public Health with Prof. Harold Jaffe as her supervisor.

Early in her first year at Oxford, she transferred to the History Faculty, where she obtained a Master of Studies in Historical Research in 2009 under military historian Dr. Robert Johnson, focusing on the formation of national armies in former French Equatorial Africa. Levy then obtained a Master of Science in Biology at Oxford, focusing on the population genetics of humans in southern Africa (under Dr. Cristian Capelli) and of penguins in the South Atlantic (under Dr. Tom Hart of the Institute of Zoology in London). Levy started her follow-on assignment in September 2010.

Levy joined two other Rhodes Scholarship winners from the United States Military Academy and the United States Naval Academy making it the second consecutive year that the military academies claimed three of only 32 recipients in the United States.

Levy is fluent in Italian, Portuguese, Hebrew, French and Spanish and has published numerous articles related to language in the military and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Levy was promoted to First Lieutenant in May 2010, and is now a Captain.

Wikipedia