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A Meal to Remember — Cooking at Home With a Local in Peru



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Cooking isn't really my thing. At family holidays, I'm routinely kept out of the kitchen and relegated to setting the table.

However, when you travel to a country that's known for its fresh and innovative cuisine, even I'm willing to roll up my sleeves and whip something up.

During my last visit to Peru, my guide from [JourneYou](#) connected me with a local woman named Nemesia who has lived in Cusco for her entire life. She agreed to make me lunch as long as I helped — it was an offer I couldn't refuse.



Picking up supplies at the San Pedro Market. (Photo: Brittany Jones-Cooper)

The first stop on our cooking adventure was the San Pedro market to pick up supplies. Nemesia doesn't speak English, and my Spanish is shotty at best, so luckily my guide Fred was there to help us translate. She came armed with a shopping list, and I did my best to help her gather all of the ingredients.

We bought everything we needed — from chicken and vegetables to potatoes and grains. I even got to sample some fresh bread called Chuta from the South of Cusco.

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We planned to make a three course meal, starting with a quinoa soup, followed by a traditional Cusquenian chicken dish, and wrapping up with a flavorful dessert called Sachatomate.

Then it was back to Nemesia's home in the Las Joyas neighborhood of Cusco.



Nemesia preparing the Quinoa. (Photo: Brittany Jones-Cooper)

By the way I fumbled with my apron, she could tell that I was out of my element. To ease me in, she assigned me the simple task of chopping up the herbs needed for the dishes. Phew!

With the soup underway, Nemesia started to prepare the quinoa and showed me and my friend the correct way to peel potatoes.

Then I sat back as she expertly navigated her around around the kitchen.

Nemesia's daughter chipped in to help wash the dishes, and her two-year-old granddaughter watched her every move while occasionally peeking out from behind the corner.

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