

Chef Adán Medrano Reimagines a Traditional Mexican Beverage with Moringa

Chef Adán Medrano blends history and nutrition in a new agua fresca recipe featuring moringa, a plant with roots in colonization.

SAN ANTONIO, TX, UNITED STATES, July 7, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A centuries-old plant with roots in India and deep culinary ties to southern Mexico is

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getting a refreshing twist in a new recipe developed by [Chef Adán Medrano](#). Known for his work exploring and preserving Texas Mexican cuisine, Medrano has introduced a Cucumber and Moringa Agua Fresca that connects historical foodways with contemporary flavor and nutrition.

Moringa, a [leafy tree native to India](#), arrived in Mexico in the late 1500s via the Manila–Acapulco galleon trade. It

was among the products brought to the Americas during colonization and conquest. It first took hold in Pacific coastal regions such as Guerrero and Oaxaca, where it gradually became part of regional diets. Though rarely found in mainstream U.S. Mexican cooking, moringa has long been used in dishes across central and southern Mexico, often alongside other wild greens known as quelites.

A 2021 study published in Food Frontiers documented how women in rural Jalisco have traditionally incorporated fresh moringa leaves into their home cooking. From tamales and stews to tortillas and quesadillas, moringa is prized not only for its earthy flavor but also for its nutritional value—particularly its antioxidant and digestive benefits.

While it is not generally used in Texas Mexican kitchens, moringa is starting to appear more frequently in community gardens and local markets. Chef Medrano sees this as an opportunity. “Including moringa in this agua fresca offers both a culinary connection to our shared food history and a practical, everyday use for a deeply nutritious plant,” Medrano said.

The drink pairs fresh moringa leaves with cucumber, lime, mint, and honey. It’s a cooling beverage that Medrano keeps on hand as a flavorful alternative to iced tea, especially during South Texas summers.

Cucumber and Moringa Agua Fresca

Recipe by Chef Adán Medrano

Ingredients (yields 6 cups):

2 cups cucumber, peeled and coarsely chopped

½ cup fresh moringa leaves, tightly packed (or 1 Tbsp moringa powder)

½ cup fresh lime juice (about 3–4 limes)

6–8 fresh mint leaves

4 cups cold water

4 Tbsp honey (or to taste)

Method:

In a blender, combine cucumber, moringa, lime juice, and mint. Blend until smooth.

Add the cold water and blend again to mix thoroughly.

Refrigerate for at least one hour to allow the flavors to meld.

Stir well before serving. Pour over ice in tall glasses.



Cucumber Moringa Agua Fresca pairs fresh moringa leaves with cucumber, lime, mint, and honey.

By adapting moringa into a familiar format like agua fresca, Medrano hopes to encourage more cooks to link food to history—and to consider that Texas Mexican dishes and traditions are more than just food—they are living stories of travel, commerce, and human interaction, shaped by both peaceful exchange and violent struggle.

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