

Peruvian chicken creates fast-food frenzy:[METRO Edition]

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Abstract (Summary)

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Full Text

(225 words)

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WASHINGTON - Inside his gleaming suburban fast-food restaurant, Victor Solano had to giggle as he watched Internet pioneers with Palm Pilots toss their ties over their starched shirts, Central American immigrants plop their children on their laps and federal workers remove their identification badges.

They were all preparing to dive, barehanded, into Solano's succulent, charbroiled chicken: his homeland's pollo a la brasa. This is the same kind of chicken Solano ate as a child in Peru, inside tiny straw huts with makeshift coal ovens.

The kind that's marinated for 24 hours and rubbed with salt, pepper and lime juice.

Through the efforts of dozens of Hispanic business owners, the staple dish of Peruvian peasants has become a fast-food craze in the Washington region.

"It's really unbelievable," said Solano, looking at the customers lined up out of El Pollo Rico and onto Washington Boulevard in suburban Arlington, Va. "You make it inexpensive and fast, and Americans love it."

Solano's restaurant is one of about 20 in the Washington area that serves pollo a la brasa in the style of fast food.

"This is capitalism at its best," said Psyche Williams-Forson, a doctoral candidate at the University of Maryland, who has studied the way food from other cultures is marketed in America. "They are cooking their own food and making minor modifications."

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