



Photography Kenneth Theysen

Ceviche with Toasted Coconut and Coconut Foam

by Head Chef **Andrés Melo** of **Brutto Beach House**

If you ask Head Chef Andrés Melo how he ended up in Aruba, he'll tell you he followed the opportunities afforded to him.

Melo began his most recent journey toward Juan E. Irausquin Blvd. 374, Noord—where you can find *Brutto Beach House*, *Lucca Modern Trattoria*, and *The Office Night Club*—at *Brutto* in Panama, and ultimately was offered the chance to be a part of the team that shaped the restaurant hotspot in Aruba. “Why not?,” he offers as the reason why he made the move. “You have a sense of pride when you start a project and you build it from the bottom up,” Melo says.

Melo hails from Venezuela where he stumbled into cooking by picking up a business card that belonged to the dean of the culinary institute in his home country. “That was the beginning of it,” Melo says. “Then I went to see the facilities and all the stuff. But I said ‘No.’” Melo recalls that about an hour later, he changed his mind, went back, and enrolled in the program. If you ask him what changed his mind in that short time between touring the facilities and enrolling, he'll hit you with another “Why not?”

When asked why he chose to share this ceviche recipe, he'll tell you he chose it because, “It's refreshing. It's shareable,” and most importantly, “We're in the Caribbean, so why not?.” It's a bright, fragrant dish served with corn nuts and home-made chips, topped with a dollop of coconut foam.

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SERVES 2

→ CEVICHE

INGREDIENTS

- 200g **raw sea bass**
- 20g **passion fruit juice**
- 30g **lime juice**
- 50g julienned **red onion**
- 16g julienned **Aji Rojo pepper**
- 6g **cilantro**

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Cut the raw sea bass fillets into small cubes.
2. Add sea bass, red onion, Aji Rojo pepper, and cilantro to a small bowl. Mix gently until just combined.
3. Add passion fruit juice, lime juice, and salt to taste to mixture. Mix gently until the sea bass is coated in liquid.
4. Plate, garnish, and serve immediately.

→ COCONUT FOAM

INGREDIENTS

- 425ml **coconut cream**
- 2000ml **coconut milk**
- 500g **cream**
- 3 **gelatin sheets**

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Rehydrate gelatin sheets in cold water (or as per package instructions).
2. In a medium saucepan on low heat, mix gelatin, coconut cream, coconut milk, and cream.
3. Pour the mixture through a sieve into a large mixing bowl to remove any lumps. Let the mixture cool. Mix again with an electric mixer.
4. Pour liquid into a siphon to create culinary foam.

SERVE

1. Spoon ceviche mixture onto a serving dish.
2. Top with coconut foam and toasted coconut shavings.



✓ Chef's Tips

Chef Andrés Melo recommends serving ceviche immediately. "It's not going to taste as fresh if you leave the fish marinating in the juices for a long period of time," Melo says.

The coconut foam is optional since not every home cook has a siphon on hand. "The foam is pretty easy to make, but not everyone is willing to buy a siphon," Melo says. Don't be afraid of the cooking tool. Melo encourages home cooks to just "experiment with it." To adopt the spirit of Melo's philosophy: "Why not?"