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FRIED PLANTAIN CHIPS (MARQUITAS) WITH MOJO

SERVES 3 OR 4 AS A SNACK OR SIDE

Vegetable oil for deep-frying

4 green plantains, peeled

Salt

Mojo, *recipe follows*

Heat at least 4 inches of oil in a large heavy pot over medium- high heat until it reaches 375° F.

Using a mandoline or a very sharp knife, slice the plantains lengthwise into slices 1/8 to 1/16 inch thick. Immediately drop the slices into the hot oil and fry for about 3 minutes, until golden brown.

Remove the plantains from the oil using a slotted spoon, and transfer them to paper towels to drain. Sprinkle the plantains with salt while they are still hot. Serve warm with mojo for dipping.

MOJO

Mojo is one of the primary flavoring ingredients in Cuba. At its most basic it's composed of garlic, citrus juice, oregano, and oil. Bottled sour orange juice is common throughout the Caribbean, but if you have trouble sourcing it, regular orange juice with added lime juice is a good substitute. Sunflower oil is the most common fat in Cuba, aside from lard and butter, but in this recipe we're using olive oil to further enhance the flavor of mojo-dressed recipes such as baked fish, fried plantains, and grilled chicken

MAKES ABOUT 3/4 CUP

12 cloves garlic, peeled

1 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon cumin seeds

1/2 teaspoon dried oregano

1/2 cup bottled sour orange juice, or 1/3 cup freshly squeezed orange juice mixed with 3 tablespoons freshly squeezed lime juice

1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil



Crush the garlic, salt, and spices into a paste using a mortar and pestle. Alternatively, add the garlic cloves one at a time to a food processor with the motor running. Stop the processor and add the salt and spices, then pulse to combine. Add the juice and mix well.

Pour the mixture into a small heatproof bowl or measuring cup. Heat the oil in a small pan over medium heat until nearly smoking. Carefully pour the hot oil into the garlic mixture (it may hiss and spatter) and stir to combine. Let the sauce cool and transfer it to an airtight container. It will keep in the refrigerator for 3 to 4 days.

