

CREAMY PLANTAIN MADUROS SOUP

Serves 6

- nonstick vegetable cooking spray
- 3 ripe plantains, peeled and cut into 1½-inch pieces
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 small yellow onion, roughly chopped
- 1 carrot, roughly chopped
- 1 celery stalk, roughly chopped
- 2 small yellow summer squash, trimmed and thinly sliced
- 3 cups Chicken Stock (page 211) or store-bought chicken broth
- 1 tablespoon kosher salt, plus more to taste
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, plus more to taste
- 2 cups low-fat milk
- ¼ cup fresh cilantro leaves
- store-bought plantain chips (optional)

Sweet Plantains Maduros (page 206) is a traditional South American side dish of ripe plantains sliced into bite-size pieces and panfried until golden brown, honey sweet, and creamy tender. Rich with just a hint of caramel-y sweetness, I tap the flavor of fried maduros in this signature creamy (but cream-less) soup. I first served it at my Miami restaurant Food Café. Plantains look like large bananas. When they are underripe, they are green and have a savory potatolike texture and flavor that hints of banana. As they ripen, they become very yellow, and then start to blacken. This is how you know they are sweet and sticky under the thick peel.

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line a rimmed baking sheet with aluminum foil and lightly grease it using nonstick vegetable cooking spray.
2. Place the plantains on the aluminum foil. Bake until golden brown, about 40 minutes. Remove from the oven and set aside to cool.
3. Heat the olive oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add the onions, carrots, and celery and cook, stirring once or twice, until they're beginning to soften, about 2 minutes. Stir in the squash and cook until tender, stirring occasionally, about 3 minutes longer. Pour in the chicken stock and add the salt and pepper. Increase the heat to high, bring the broth to a boil, reduce the heat to medium-low, and gently simmer until all of the vegetables are very soft, about 10 minutes. Turn off the heat and let the soup cool for 10 minutes.
4. Place one-half of the cooked plantains into a blender jar. Use a slotted spoon to add about one-half of the squash mix-

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