LOCRO de PAPA  
(Ecuadorian Potato Soup)

Leona Pease, dedicated cat clinic volunteer and former Shrewsbury ACO, was given a once-in-a-lifetime trip to Ecuador and the Galapagos. She is pictured on North Seymour Island looking for blue-footed boobies. (note the tee-shirt she’s wearing.)

Ingredients:
- 10 medium sized russet potatoes, peeled and chopped into small pieces
- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- 1 white onion, diced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tsp cumin
- 1 tsp achiote powder (found with the Mexican foods in local supermarket)
- 7 cups of water (or veggie or chicken stock)
- 1 cup of milk or more
- 1 cup grated or crumbled cheese – quesillo, queso fresco, mozzarella or monterey jack
- 1 bunch of cilantro, leaves only, minced
- Salt to taste

Serve topped with:
- 1 cup of queso fresco, feta cheese, or grated mozzarella
- Maiz tostado – just like Corn Nuts – in Ecuador they frequently serve popcorn with soup
- Chopped scallions
- Avocados, sliced or diced
- Aji or hot sauce

Preparation:
1. Prepare a refrito or base for the soup by heating the canola oil over medium heat in a large soup pot; add the onions, garlic cloves, cumin, and achiote powder. Cook, stirring frequently, until the onions are tender, about 5 minutes.
2. Add the potatoes to the pot and mix until they are coated with the refrito. Continue cooking for about 5 minutes, stirring a every couple of minutes.
3. Add the water/stock and bring to boil, cook until the potatoes are very tender. Use a potato masher to mash the potatoes in the pot, don’t mash all of them, the consistency of the soup should be creamy with small tender chunks of potatoes.
4. Turn the heat to low, stir in the milk and cook for 5 more minutes. Add more milk if the soup is too thick.
5. Add salt to taste
6. Add the grated cheese and cilantro, mix well, and remove from the heat.
7. Serve warm with the avocados, scallions, feta cheese and aji or hot sauce.