



A Cookbook of Mexican Ranch Cooking

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Cocina Ranchera



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“Creacionnes”

A Cookbook of Mexican Ranch Cooking

**Written and Researched by
Bill Moran**

**Cover:
Quality By Design
Mulvane, Kansas**

**Ebook Design:
Veronica Ortegon
Austin, Texas**

2003

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ABOUT THE AREA

When Texas Americans declared independence from Mexico, the area involved was the Mexican states of Coahuila y Tejas and Nuevo Santander (today's state of Tamaulipas). When Texas Americans won the war in 1836, Mexico claimed only the sub-state of Tejas was involved since that was where nearly all Americans had settled. In 1845 the area that was called the State of Nuevo Santander was disputed because Mexico said only Tejas was given independence and the South border of Tejas was the Nueces River. Americans said the annexed State of Texas' border was the Rio Grande. The winning of the war gave the U.S. all of Nuevo Santander, Tejas and the part of Coahuila north of the Rio Grande plus other Mexican areas.

The town of San Diego, Texas, where this book is being written, is in the disputed area between the Nueces River and the Rio Grande River. This "filet" of land was called by Americans "The Wild Horse Desert". Several huge Spanish land grants made up most of the area and were owned by absentee grantees living in towns like Mier, Mexico. Very few people lived in the Wild Horse Desert. Most were employee cowboys working for absentee landlords. Before 1836, Mexico made attempts to settle the area by giving the land grants and moving in people from Coahuila. The strip of land and its occupiers were Spanish Mexicans and 80% of the people here now are Mexican-Americans. Mexican then Mexican-American ranchers live in this area now and this background reflects in the cooking in the area and in this book.

San Diego is surrounded by ranches of from 3,000 acres to 90,000 acres. This is ranch country and this cookbook is Cocina Ranchera (Ranch Kitchen). Recipes of 300 years development are in this book. Only the heat source is different — ranch camp fire to fireplace to wood stoves to gas and electric stoves. Cooking methods have been changed only by the heat source and a few modern cooking gadgets. Grilling over open grills is prominent and popular.

Grills are lit up on weekends and the “barbacoa” becomes a family affair with friends and neighbors gathered for socializing and eating. Some of the things cooked at a *barbacoa* are: *machitos*, intestines of kid goat wound around the liver, heart, and pieces of meat; *mollejas*, sweatbreads of pig or goat; *tripas*, intestines of beef; and the big favorite - *fajitas*, flank steak sliced thin and served on flour tortillas, with onions, chile strips, and salsa.

ABOUT THIS COOKBOOK

I began to think about writing a cookbook about ranch cooking in the early 90s. When I retired from the Food Brokerage business, I wanted to move from Houston to a small town in ranch country to get background for the book. What I had in mind was a cookbook based on chuck wagon cooking. Then I heard about San Diego, Texas, a town in the middle of Mexican ranches. Most of these ranches are “descendants” of Spanish land grants. Why not a cookbook based on Mexican ranch cooking?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bill Moran is a retired Food Service Food Broker from Houston. While in Houston he started assembling recipes from family members and from restaurants he visited while in business during a period of 20 years. About a third of the recipes are his own creations. This collection ended up in his first cookbook, Texas Chef.

Before retiring, he decided to write a cookbook about ranch cooking (chuck wagon style) and began to look around for a place to live and do research for the proposed cookbook. Ending up in San Diego, Texas, in the middle of Mexican ranch country, he began this cookbook, Cocina Ranchera.

Other books by the author are Texas Chef, Texas Chef Bakes, and A Selection of Good Things To Eat.



Part One - Traditional

Corn, Masa, & Tortillas

Tortilla & Masa Dishes

Meat Dishes

Poultry & Egg Dishes

Breads

Desserts & Beverages

Sweets

Seafood

Seasonings & Sauces

Vegetables & Soups

Corn Masa and Tortillas

ABOUT MASA

Masa is the Mexican word for corn dough. When the Spanish came they brought wheat and with wheat they made bread. So in Mexico you find the traditional *masa*, which even without describing it, means it was made from corn. The Mexicans in ranch country along with the Spanish began producing wheat masa which was/is similar to European bread especially the dough for pita bread and the dough for *chipatis* of India.

Once you have the masa (dough) you can make a whole variety of dishes from tortillas, tamales, gorditas, fajitas, etc., etc. Without masa, and especially masa harina, there would no Mexican cooking as we know it. With the coming of wheat, Mexicans were quick to make use of it starting with masa harina de trigo (wheat dough).

This section will describe how to make masa starting from dry corn and *masa de trigo* from wheat flour. Then it will describe how to make tortillas de maiz (corn tortillas) and tortillas de harina (flour tortillas). In the recipe section of this book these masas will be used to make other dishes like tamales, gorditas, etc.

The Use Of Corn — The Mexican Grain

Without corn we would have no Mexican food as we know it today. Without corn many countries of the world would be lacking a great food source. The US uses 80% of it's tremendous crop as feed for cattle which we then consume as beef, pork, and poultry. China consumes more corn than any other country. Corn is the “real” gold which the Spanish missed at the time but brought to the rest of the world. The type of corn we use in the US is a hybrid classified as *dent*. We also use popcorn. In Mexico, except along the border, the preferred corn is called *maiz cacahuazincle* which has dry, starchy grains the size of nickels. *Maiz cacahuazincle* is not available in the US, yet. All masa harina in the US is made with our *dent* corn.

Corn is used in this book to make a whole assortment of dishes. Native Mexicans and Native Americans dried green (unripened) corn so that it could be stored for future use. Of course they also stored ripe mature corn. Even today, in New Mexico, corn is dried and called *chicos*. *Chicos* are then used to make dishes favored mostly by people in New Mexico. Ranch cooking uses corn processed into *masa* which is used to make a variety of dishes.

This section of COCINA RANCHERA will tell how to make *chicos*, *masa*, *corn tortillas*, and *atole*, a gruel-type drink that is very popular in Mexico.

HOW TO MAKE MASA

Masa is the Spanish word for dough. In Mexico and in this book the word masa means corn dough unless otherwise specified, such as, *masa harina trigo* which is dough made with wheat flour (trigo meaning wheat and harina meaning flour). The process for making masa is unique and part of that process is the process used in this country for making hominy. The processed corn ready to be ground into masa is called *nixtamal* from the Nahuatl language of Central Mexico.

Here's how to make masa from scratch:

For 2 lbs. corn, mix one large teaspoon of lime with 1 cup cold water. Stir well until dissolved. The lime and water should fizz. Allow to set until lime residue settles to the bottom of the container. Cover the 2 lbs. corn with water 2 inches above the corn. Bring the water and corn to a simmer, then add the lime solution. Simmer the corn for about 20 minutes. If the corn is cooked too long, the masa will be “pasty”. Allow the corn to cool overnight in the water in which it is cooked.

The next morning drain the corn and rinse in cold water both to remove the lime taste and to remove the skins from the kernels. Rinse in new water if necessary to remove the lime taste (for me, a little of the lime taste is part of the “flavor of tortillas” — some do not like strong lime flavor).

A note in passing: It has been learned that the lime processing of corn increases the niacin content of corn, therefore, the protein of a highly vegetarian diet of ancient Mexicans was increased.

After the corn is prepared, all that remains to be done is to grind the corn to make masa. In Mexico this was/is done on a metate, a specially designed basalt stone with a basalt rolling pin looking “pestle” called a *mano*. Modern factories use equipment designed for the purpose to grind the corn. Many people like the corn ground very fine for tortillas and coarse for tamales. On the US side of the border, I would say most people buy tortillas ready-made and if they wish to make tamales they can even buy *masa*. Quaker makes flours for making both wheat masa and corn masa. It is very good, just follow the instructions on the package.

Masa cannot be made from cornmeal. Cornmeal is ground, mature dry corn. Masa is made from ground hominy-like kernels of corn.

TORTILLAS DE MAIZ

Corn Tortillas

How long Mexicans have making corn tortillas and consuming them, no one knows. But it has been a long, long time. The process of making corn into masa and then tortillas or the many other food products in Mexico is amazing. In this section of this book the process of making masa is described. This is the tortilla recipe. I will use masa harina de maiz mix in this recipe since many people using this book will not be able to buy fresh masa. Quaker makes the best masa harina de maiz available. Most big stores have it. Most recipes don't use lard — I feel it gives a better texture and taste.

1lb. Masa Harina de Maiz Mix
Hot Tap Water
1/2 to 1 Tablespoon Lard

Mix the masa harina de maiz and lard together; then add hot water until you get the consistency of cookie dough. Wrap the dough in plastic wrap and allow to rest for 30 minutes.

Form the dough into golf ball size balls. Then either press the balls out flat by hand then pat them into tortillas about 6 or 7 inches in diameter, or press the balls in a tortilla press. When using a press, cut the sides of a quart-size zip lock bag, then put the ball between the two sides of the bag and onto the press. Press, then remove the flattened tortilla from the press and bake them on a hot griddle for about 30 seconds on each side. The tortillas should show some spots of browning.

This baking is very similar to preparing pancakes (the Spanish word for omelet is tortilla. I believe the Spanish thought the tortillas looked like Spanish omelets). Corn tortillas are at their very best when hot off the griddle.

ATOLE

Atole is a Mexican “drink” which was consumed probably before Columbus was even born. I say “drink” because it is more of a gruel. Mexicans were drinking this porridge-like fruit or honey sweetened meal when Columbus arrived. As far as I can tell, crushed fruit was thinned with water then thickened with masa to a consistency preferred by the individual. They also made atole mixed with crushed cocoa beans and sweetened with honey, since they had no sugar. The drink was beaten to a froth.

Americans in the US mostly feel atole is an acquired taste. In Mexico, especially in Maya and Aztec country, atole is a thick drink for breakfast with tamales. I have seen atole mixes in most stores in Mexico. They come in packages like Kool-Aid and are available in several flavors.

The most popular flavors from scratch are blackberry (atole de zarzamora) and chocolate flavored (atole champurrado). Since, in most cases, only masa harina is available in the US, I will use it in this book. Before the Spanish brought milk, only water was used, however, now milk is used by some. I'll use milk.

1 or 2 oz. Mexican Chocolate Tablets, crumbled
2 TBS. Brown Sugar
1 Tsp. Granulated sugar
Vanilla, if desired
1/2 C. Masa Harina mixed with 1/2 C. Cold Water
2 C. Water mixed with 1 C. Milk, warmed

In a saucepan heat the masa harina/water mix stirring to mix well. Just as it begins to thicken gradually stir in one-half of the water/milk mixture. As all of this heats up, stir in the tablet and the sugar. Allow to thicken as you prefer - some like it thick as milk shakes, I prefer it a little thinner. Now add the balance of the water/milk mixture. Bring up to heat.

Most recipes I've seen don't use vanilla, but since vanilla originated in Mexico, I can't imagine the Maya not using vanilla.

For Atole Zarzamora:

2 TBS. Brown Sugar

1 Tsp. Granulated Sugar

1/2 C. Masa Harina mixed with 1 C. Cold Water

1 or 2 lbs. Fresh Blackberries (or use frozen)

Blend the blackberries in a blender, then strain out the seeds. In a saucepan heat the masa harina/water mix until it begins to thicken. Add the blackberry puree and the sugar and continue to stir. If the atole becomes too thick, thin with hot water. If too thin, mix a little masa harina with cold water and stir into the atole. Adjust sugar.

Note: Atole begs for experimenting. Try any fruit or melon you like, adjusting the water when using fruits with a lot of water content. Raspberry is the "in" fruit these days; try them. Coffee flavor should suit Americans — use instant coffee.

CHICOS Dried Corn

Late in the depression of the 1930's, my Mother made dried corn as a method to preserve food for the coming winter. Roasting ears from field corn straight from the field was used. She canned everything in the garden, too. In New Mexico where dried corn is called "chicos" the method is different from the method my Mother used. I'll describe the New Mexico method at the end.

10 Ears of Fresh Field Corn
Water

Remove the shucks from the corn and clean away all the silks. Cut a small section from each end. Fill a stock pot large enough to hold the 10 ears of corn and blanch the corn in boiling water for about 2 minutes. Check the corn by piercing a kernel to see if the "milk" flows. It's done if none does.

Cut all the kernels from the cobs and spread on baking sheets one layer deep. Place in oven with just the pilot light on. Dry overnight. Check to see if kernels are dry like dried fruit - just a little chewy. Mom spread the kernels on a bed sheet laid out on the roof of the porch. The summer sun dried them very well. Store in air tight container until used. Mom would cook dried corn in milk with a little sugar for us to eat. Dried corn is naturally sweet so no sugar is really needed.

New Mexico version:

The corn shucks are pulled back but not removed and bushels of the corn is sealed in a "horno" the bee hive outside ovens used in New Mexico. The opening of the horno is sealed and the corn is "cooked" overnight. Then it is removed and hung by the shucks under the eaves of houses to be used later when needed. A huge fire is made in the horno and when embers are developed, the embers are removed to make room for the corn. The hot horno does the rest.

TORTILLAS DE HARINA DE TRIGO

Wheat Flour Tortillas

A better descriptive name for flour tortillas would be “tortillas de masa harina de trigo” (tortillas from wheat flour dough). Trigo indicates wheat. Mexicans had no wheat until the Spanish brought it. Wheat is grown best in Northern Mexico, so flour tortillas are a Northern Mexico product. Most people now days either use harina de trigo mix to make their flour tortillas or they use store-bought tortillas. Store-bought tortillas, either corn or flour, are readily available nearly everywhere and very good. In this recipe, I’ll use a store bought flour tortilla mix which includes the flour, lard, baking powder, etc. Sorta like a biscuit mix.

2 C. Flour Tortilla Mix
Cold Water

Mix enough water into the tortilla mix to get a medium dough — climate will make a difference how much water will be necessary. Use an electric mixer to make it easier unless you are the type who likes to “feel” the dough. Knead for about five minutes. Form dough into a ball, put the ball into a bowl and cover with a damp cloth. Allow to rest for 15 or 20 minutes.

Form the dough into golf ball-size balls. Then flatten them and then roll out with a rolling pin into 6 or 7 inch circles.

Cook on a hot griddle until brown spots appear on both sides. The tortillas should puff some if mixed right. Eat ‘em while they are hot.

Tortilla and Masa Dishes

TAQUITOS

Taquitos are not “little tacos” as the name implies. The term is used to distinguish between the crisp tortillas of fast food places and the soft tortilla tacos usually associated with breakfast along the border. In fast food restaurants taquitos are called “breakfast tacos”. Flour tortillas or corn tortillas may be used. Usually when you order a breakfast taco or a taquito they are made with flour tortillas, but you can specify corn tortillas if you prefer. Taquitos have almost as many fillings as people can dream. Following are some of the more common ones:

Bacon & Egg

Potato & Egg

Egg & Breakfast Sausage

Bean & Egg

Bacon & Potato

Egg & Chorizo

Tomatillo & Chicharonnes

Bean with Bacon

In most cases the bacon or sausage is fried then scrambled with egg. The bean taquitos are refried beans mixed with scrambled eggs, fried bacon or fried sausage. A recipe for Tomatillo and Chicharonnes is in this book. The fillings are put inside a heated flour tortilla and a flavorful salsa, like pico de gallo or salsa picante, is applied. The tortilla is folded over and the taquito is eaten.

BORDER TAMALES

Tamales are a staple along the border and in all of Mexico. There is a wide variety of both fillings and wrappings: corn shucks most everywhere, banana leaves, *hoja santa** leaves along the Gulf coast. Fillings may include seafood along the coasts and vegetables in Mayan country. Border tamales are basically very simply filled and wrapped.

1 C. Lard or Vegetable Shortening
2 TBS. Chile Powder
1-3/4 C. Water

2-1/2 C. Masa de Harina**
1 Tsp. Salt
Corn Shucks for Wrapping

*Hoya Santa is a large leaf with a flavor similar to anise or fennel.

**Quaker makes both corn and flour harina. Quaker is the best masa de harina available in most supermarkets.

Make tamale dough by beating masa with shortening until light and fluffy. Add chile powder, salt, and water. Beat dough until fully aerated and a spoonful floats on water. Unless the dough is aerated nicely, the tamales will be tough. THIS IS IMPORTANT TO MAKING GOOD TAMALES.

Prepare corn shucks by soaking them in warm water for an hour or so. Clean the silks from the shucks and leave the shucks in the water until you are ready to spread the masa. Lay out the corn shucks flat on a work surface and spread on the masa like making a peanut butter sandwich. Place about a tablespoon of filling on the masa. Roll the tamale by folding the corn shucks over from the bottom about 1/2"- 3/4", then roll from sides like a jelly roll.

Place the rolled tamales vertical, open end up, in colander. Put the colander of tamales in a pan of boiling water, cover, and allow to steam about one hour. If masa peels away from the shuck easily, the tamales are done.

Serve with enchilada sauce poured over tamales or I like them just plain with a good salsa or pico de gallo. Served with salsa ranchero, tamales are delicious!

ENCHILADAS DEL NORTE

Enchiladas Northern Mexico Style

This is one of my favorite dishes whether in a Tex-Mex restaurant or home-made. The word *enchilada* itself means in chile or in chile sauce. Like cooks in the US say, “chicken in cream sauce”, Mexicans say, “in chile sauce”. This recipe is Northern Mexico style because in the North most cooks make a simple sauce from chile ancho, the dried chile Poblano. The filling can be almost anything, but the tortilla coating is the same — the chile sauce.

This recipe uses beef for the filling. -Chicken is usually used to make chicken enchiladas which have a green sauce like tomatillo sauce, but I’ll use beef with the traditional red sauce. This red sauce will be more of a “chile gravy” than the simple chile and water sauce used in Mexican enchiladas.

12 Corn Tortillas
1 lb. Ground Beef
1 Medium Onion, chopped
1 Medium Bell Pepper, chopped
3 or 4 Cloves Garlic, minced
1 Tsp. Whole Comino Seeds
10 Peppercorns
3 Dry Chiles Anchos
1 TBS. Flour
1 TBS. Oil
1/2 C. Chicken Broth

Place the ground beef in a large skillet with 1/2 C. water. Simmer the beef until nearly all the water is gone. Drain. Return beef to skillet and add chick broth, onions, and bell pepper. Heat until vegetables are limp.

In a mortar, grind the comino, peppercorns, and garlic until it is a paste. Add a couple tablespoons of chicken broth to make a slurry. Add the slurry to the ground beef and mix well. Add the chicken broth and simmer until beef is not “soupy”. Reserve the meat and wipe out the skillet. Reconstitute the chiles anchos in hot water for about 10 minutes. Remove from water and reserve chile water. Remove stems and seeds from chiles anchos. Tear up and puree in blender.

In the skillet make a roux with the flour and oil. Add the chicken broth and stir until the “gravy” begins to thicken. Stir in the chiles anchos puree and mix thoroughly. This is the sauce for dipping and coating the tortillas.

Place 6 of the tortillas in the sauce and coat well. Remove to a cookie sheet covered with foil to facilitate cleaning. Place about 1-1/2 TBS. of the cooked meat on a tortilla and roll up like a jelly roll. Repeat for the balance of the tortillas. Line up all the rolls on the cookie sheet. Cover with the chile sauce and bake in oven until heated through. If you wish, place a little cheese in the rolls with the meat and heat until the cheese melts. Place all the enchiladas on a serving platter and pour sauce over to prevent tortillas from drying out. Serve with a dollop of crema or sour cream.

Note: To make chicken enchiladas, cook chicken breasts like the beef and when done shred the chicken. Place the chicken meat in the tortilla which has been coated with Creamy Tomatillo Sauce. When serving, pour the Creamy Tomatillo Sauce over the top.

GORDITAS

Gorditas means “little fat ones”. This is one of the many, many products made from masa along with tortillas, etc. Gorditas are street food and/or appetizers. Street vendors in Mexico and vendors at flea markets in Texas serve gorditas with a variety of fillings. When fried first on a griddle, then deep fried they puff up like little balloons thus the name “little fat ones”. Split open a pocket in the side and fill it with one of the many fillings — picadillo, taco filling, tomato, cheese, chicharones, carnitas, etc. With a good salsa — MUY RICO!!

Use this recipe or follow the instructions on the Masa Harina bag (Quaker Oats) for dough. Masa Harina is always corn unless specified otherwise, like: Masa Harina Trigo, which is wheat.

3-1/2 C. Masa Harina de Maiz
Appr. 2-1/4 C. Water
Salt to Taste
2 Tsp. Baking Powder

Mix all ingredients together to make dough with consistency of cookie dough. Knead four or five times.

Heat a griddle over medium heat and heat 1 inch of oil in a deep skillet to 375 degrees (similar to heat for frying French fries).

Form dough into 1-1/2 inch balls. Flatten into patties 1/4 inch thick to 3/8 inch thick and fry on both sides on hot griddle. Set aside until all are baked.

Fry each in hot oil until they puff and are brown. It takes a little practice, so persevere. Then when cool enough to handle, slit a pocket in the side and fill with your choice of fillings. One thing I have tried is the filling for Greek gyros - delicious!!

MIGAS

Spanish for “small pieces”

Migas is usually served for breakfast in ranch country, however, they are delicious any time of the day. It is the ranch way of using left-over corn tortillas much as Creoles in New Orleans use left-over French bread to make bread pudding.

4 Corn Tortillas
1/2 Medium Onion, chopped coarse
2 Eggs, beaten
1 Tomato, chopped
1/2 Chile Jalapeño, chopped
3 Strips Bacon, cut into 1 inch pieces

Tear corn tortillas into roughly one-inch squares. Sauté bacon in 10” skillet until a little brown; retain bacon drippings in skillet. Add onions and sauté them a little, then add tortilla pieces and stir to coat them. Add all other ingredients except eggs and cook a short time to warm thoroughly. Add eggs and scramble with other ingredients. Serve hot just as you would scrambled eggs.

Serve with side dishes of Salsa Rio (see pg. 74) and Requeson (see Appendix -B Cheese, pg. 141).

PAPADZUELA

Boiled Egg Enchilada with Pepita Sauce

This is a Yucatan dish; a type of enchilada even though enchilada means “in chile sauce”. The sauce in this case is pepita (green squash seeds) sauce. Not a ranch dish, it drifted in from the Yucatan over the centuries and shows up in the Eastern fringes of our area.

- 8 to 10 Corn Tortillas
- 6 Hard Boiled Eggs, peeled & chopped
- 1 Small Onion, chopped, sautéed
- 2 Large Tomatoes, peeled & chopped
- 2 C. Chicken Broth
- 2 TBS. Oil or Lard
- 4 Leaves Epazote or 3 Tsp. Dry Epazote*
- 1 Chile Habanero, stemmed & seeded
- 1 C. Green Squash Seeds, toasted & finely ground

*Epazote is a herb readily available in stores in Mexico but pretty scarce in the U.S. Dry epazote is available in Mexican communities in large American cities. It is noticed by its absence from dishes more than its presence.

Sprinkle the ground squash seeds with about 1/4 C. hot broth made by simmering epazote in chicken broth (see below). On a concave plate knead the squash seed mixture and oil will begin to exude. Prop up the plate and the green oil will collect at the lower side. Makes about 4 TBS. of oil. Add the remaining squash paste to the broth in a blender and blend until smooth. Transfer to saucepan and simmer until it thickened to the consistency of heavy cream. **Don't boil - it will curdle.**

Dip the corn tortillas in the warm sauce to coat and soften them. Sprinkle on the chopped egg, roll up, and place on a platter. Pour the remaining sauce over all. Drizzle the papazuclas with the green squash oil to decorate. Use all of the oil. Some places make a Ranchero Sauce (pg. 73) then decorate with the green oil. Heat in microwave or under the broiler if the papadzuclas become too cool while plating. Make a broth of the chicken broth, chiles, onions, tomatoes, and epazote.

QUESADILLAS

Quesadilla means “cheesecake” in Spanish, however, the Mexican version is similar to grilled cheese sandwiches in the US. The difference being flour tortillas are used rather than bread. Also, quesadillas can and do come with many different fillings. The simple version follows but I will give one more recipe using another filling (see pg. 46).

12 Flour Tortillas
12 Slices of Cheese*

*Use the Mexican cheese Queso Oaxaca if available, if not, use Monterey Jack.

Brown a flour tortilla on both sides then put a slice of cheese on the tortilla and fold it in half. Allow to heat until the cheese begins to melt. Repeat on the remaining tortillas.

TACOS WITH CHICHARONNES AND TOMATILLO FILLING

I got the idea for this recipe from a place in Nuevo Laredo, Mexico called La Palapa. I believe I improved it. Chicharonnnes are what Americans call fried pork skins, but the home-made chicharonnnes are produced the same as Carnitas (see pg. 41) and mostly when rendering pork fat. When I make chicharonnnes, I leave a little lean meat on the bits of fat. We buy carnitas meat at butchers here.

- 1 C. Chicharonnnes (or bacon cooked very crisp and crumbled-don't pack the measure)
- 10 or 12 Fresh Tomatillos (or one 13 oz. Canned Tomatillos, drained*)
- 2 Chiles Serranos (or Chiles Jalapeño, stemmed, seeded, and coarsely cut)
- 1/2 C. Chicken Broth
- 1 Medium Onion, chopped
- 5 Sprigs Fresh Cilantro
- 3 Sprigs Epazote, if available
- 1 Clove Garlic, mashed
- 1 TBS. Oil
- 10 to 12 Corn Tortillas

*If you use fresh tomatillos, remove husks and wash sticky stuff off each one, then simmer until tender in broth. If you use canned tomatillos, simmering is not necessary.

Place prepared tomatillos, chiles, onion, cilantro and epazote in food processor or blender and puree. Sauté garlic in oil until aroma begins (don't burn). Pour tomatillo puree in with garlic and "fry" until reduced to catsup consistency. Add broth and reduce again. Sauce should be fairly thick. Add chicharonnnes to tomatillo sauce and barely heat. Drain off grease, if any. Salt to taste.

Toast tortillas on griddle to soften them and make tacos using the filling. Sprinkle with queso fresco or requeson. Requeson is a cheese similar to American dry cottage cheese used as a sprinkle topping for many, many dishes. Especially good on this one!

Meat Dishes

CABRITO AL PASTOR

Kid Goat Over Coals

Lots of goats are raised in ranch country because some of the land is marginal crop-wise and beef-wise. Goats survive in arid country where cattle find foraging pretty tough. Hardly a week-end goes by without a kid goat being slaughtered and roasted over hot coals — usually mesquite. It is especially popular around Easter. “Al Pastor” is the method where the whole kid is spread flat and impaled on steel rods and the rods stuck in the ground at about a 60 degree angle close enough to the heat to cook. Serve with bowls of salsa, chopped onions, chopped radishes, beans, and lots of flour tortillas.

Mix salt, lime juice, and ground black pepper together. Maybe a little crushed comino. Rub the cabrito thoroughly with the seasonings. Allow to rest for 30 minutes.

Prepare as mentioned above and roast until done. Cut into 6 to 8 pieces and enjoy with flour tortillas and the condiments. Be sure to include cilantro in your salsa because cabrito and cilantro have “simpatico”.

Other ways to cook cabrito are cabrito in gravy (cabrito guisado), and cabrito cooked in its own blood (cabrito en sangre). Since blood isn't available in the US, no recipe is included here, although, on ranches and even in towns *cabrito en sangre* is sometimes cooked at home.

GLORIA'S SAVORY PICADILLO

There are two basic picadillos, sweet and savory. The sweet type is Mexico City style with raisins, nuts, etc. The fruit and nuts are probably a carry-over from the Moor days of Spain. The more popular ranch type is not sweet and is eaten many ways - in tortillas, stuffing for chiles relleno using chiles Poblano, and in the Yucatan to stuff Edam cheese. Very tasty!!

- 1 lb. Ground Lean Beef
- 2 Medium Potatoes, diced
- 1/2 Green Bell Pepper, diced
- 1/2 Red Bell Pepper, diced
- 2 Garlic Cloves
- 1 TBS. Black Peppercorns
- 1 TBS. Whole Comino
- 2 Medium Tomatoes, chopped
- 1 Medium Onion, chopped
- 2 Chiles Jalapeños, fresh chopped
- 1 C. Chicken Broth
- 1 C. Tomato Juice
- 1 TBS. Oil

Simmer ground beef in water or broth until all red color is gone. Drain well. Sauté green and red bell peppers, onion, and tomato in oil until slightly tender.

In a mini-food processor process garlic, peppercorns, and comino into a paste. Add a couple tablespoons of broth to the paste to make a slurry. Add slurry to meat, seasonings, potatoes, jalapeños, tomato juice, and balance of chicken broth and bring to boil. Reduce to simmer and cook until potatoes are tender. Good with hot corn tortillas and salsa fresca.

Texas Chef **ASADO DE PUERCO EN MOLE COLORADO**
and
POLLO EN MOLE COLORADO

These two dishes are prepared basically the same using *Texas Chef* Mole Colorado (see pg. 71).

For Asado de Puerco (pork simmered in mole colorado), dice lean pork (pork chops or loin) into 1/2 inch or 3/4 inch dice. Brown thoroughly; drain off fat and add to Mole Colorado which you should have simmering in another pot. Simmer for 15 minutes or until pork is very tender. Use one pound pork after trimming fat.

For Pollo en Mole Colorado dice 1 pound boneless/skinless breasts or boneless/skinless chicken thighs into 1/2 inch or 3/4 inch dice. Brown chicken until slightly brown (don't overcook or chicken will be tough). Then simmer browned chicken in mole colorado until chicken is tender.

Serve both or either over cooked rice.

Viva! CHORIZO

Chorizo originally came to Mexico with the Spanish who also brought pork. Mexicans have livened it up with chiles. Almost every meat packer in Texas South of San Antonio makes chorizo and in Mexico, stores have big mounds of it in the market where you buy by the kilo. As with other sausages of the world some are better than others. In the area where this book is written, Guerra's Brand Chorizo de San Manuel is the best. It is made at San Manuel, Texas. Usually home-made chorizo is made from Boston Butt. I make it with pork chops to reduce fat. When I cook it I fry it in olive oil or corn oil to put the necessary fat back in.

1 lb. Pork Butt	1 Tsp. Salt
2 TBS. Ground Chile Ancho (not chile powder)	1/4 Tsp. Ground Cloves
1 Tsp. Ground Comino	1TBS. Spanish Paprika
2 Cloves Garlic, crushed	1 Tsp. Ground Black Pepper
1 Tsp. Crushed Dehydrated Oregano	1/2 Tsp. Ground Cinnamon
2 TBS. Tequila (or water)	3 TBS. Apple Cider Vinegar
Crushed ice cubes to cool meat while grinding	

Grind meat through 3/8 inch grinder plate or chop coarsely in food processor, adding ice to keep meat cool. Avoid over grinding in food processor since meat must be ground again. Season ground meat with all dry ingredients. Run seasoned meat through grinder again keeping meat cool with crushed ice.

Mix all liquid ingredients with ground meat. Roll chorizo into rolls like Chinese egg rolls about 6 inches long. Lay chorizo links out on a cookie sheet, cover loosely with paper towels, and refrigerate overnight (don't freeze). This is to dry the chorizo by dehydration. If not dry enough, refrigerate another 6 to 8 hours. (This process is done in packing plants by stuffing in casings and hanging to air dry). Wrap each chorizo roll in Saran Wrap; place in freezer bags and store in freezer

FAJITA

Marinated and Grilled Flank Steak

Although fajitas have become so popular the past 10 years, they are not an invention of Tex-Mex or fast food restaurants. Mexicans have been making “sandwiches” of tortillas and all sorts of fillings for centuries. Since the Spanish brought wheat and cattle to Mexico and the Norteno is the wheat and beef country of ranches, that makes fajitas a Northern Mexico creation. The vast Northern regions made ranching and wheat growing a possibility economically. Here is my version of the original fajitas using flank steak as the meat. Marinating is the key because flank steak is a tough cut of meat.

- 1 lb. Skirt Steak or Flank Steak
- 1/4 C. Key Lime Juice
- Salt and Pepper to Taste
- 1 Tsp. Ground Comino
- 1 TBS. Ground Chile Ancho (not chili powder)

Trim meat of all membrane and silvery tissue. Mix the salt and pepper, ground chile, key lime juice, and ground comino and pour in one gallon zip lock bag with the meat. Refrigerate for 2 hours. While meat is marinating, make the mesquite coals in your grill.

After you get good embers, put the meat on the grill and cook until done (don't overcook - it toughens meat). Fajitas should cook fast and hot to keep from overcooking and toughening. Flank steak is a tough cut of meat and if overcooked, it will be like leather. No need to cover, after all open fires on the range didn't have covers.

Grill chile strips, onions, and tomatoes. Cut meat into thin strips. Place the fillings in flour tortilla, add your favorite salsa, the grilled vegetables and you have FAJITAS. Be creative but keep the cooking simple. Many people use garlic in the marinade. Chicken, cooked simply, makes good fajitas too.

PAPAS y CHORIZO con ENCHILADA GRAVY Potatoes and Chorizo

This is a dish I came up with in 1995. A short while after I finished writing the recipe and testing it, I saw Papas y Chorizo on a menu in Laredo, Texas. The only difference was it didn't have the enchilada sauce. The key to success with this recipe is using separate skillets to cook so that the final dish isn't too greasy.

1 lb. Potatoes, peeled and diced	1 lb. Chorizo*
3 TBS. Chopped Onion	1 TBS. Flour
1TBS. Ground Chile Ancho or Chile Paste	2 to 3 TBS. Oil
1 Tsp. Whole Comino	2 Small Cloves Garlic
8 to 10 Black Peppercorns	Salt to Taste
2 TBS.0 Oil for Frying Potatoes	2 C. Water or Broth

*San Manuel Brand chorizo-the best in this area; shop for your favorite.

Using two skillets, fry potatoes until brown in one and fry onion and chorizo in the other. Break up chorizo as you fry so uniform hamburger meat texture is attained. Drain off excess grease from chorizo. Remove chorizo from skillet and wipe skillet clean with paper towels.

Make a roux in the chorizo skillet using flour and 2 TBS. oil. Make paste of comino, peppercorns, and garlic in a mortar. Add 1/2 C. broth to paste to make slurry. Stir balance of 2 C. broth into roux. Then add the comino slurry to gravy stirring thoroughly. Simmer the sauce a couple minutes then add the ground chile ancho or the chile paste; continue simmering and stirring, until gravy thickens.

Mix potatoes and chorizo together and serve with gravy on side to be used by guests as they choose. Serve with hot corn tortillas and a side dish of Salsa Rio (see pg. 74).

BORDER PICADILLO

Picadillo in Spanish means little pieces or bits. Picadillo, the dish, is made with little bits of meat (ground beef) and other little bits of ingredients like bell pepper, diced potatoes, tomatoes, etc. Picadillo is used as a stuffing for many dishes like Chiles Relleno and Stuffed Chicken Breasts. There are many versions of it and this is one that is popular along the Texas/Mexico border.

1 pound Ground Beef	1 (15 oz.) Can Crushed Tomatoes
3-4 Cloves Garlic	1 medium Onion, chopped
1 Tsp. Black Peppercorns	1 Tsp. Whole Cominos
1 Large Potato, diced (1/2")	1 Tsp. Salt
3-4 TBS. Corn Oil	1/2 Quart Chicken Broth (or water)
1 Whole Bell Pepper, chopped (or Chile Poblano)	

Brown the ground beef in a large pot (5-7 Qts.) using the corn oil. Grind the garlic, peppercorns, and comino in a spice grinder or a molcajete. Add a little water and make a slurry: then add the slurry to the browned beef. Add the diced potatoes and the chopped poblanos or bell peppers.

Allow to cook a short time then add the chicken broth. If 1/2 quart of chicken stock is not enough add water to make a thick stew-like mixture.

Cook until the potatoes are tender.

Serve with a ranchero sauce or a good home-made picante sauce. Put a dish of Queso Blanco or Requeson on the table for guests to sprinkle on the picadillo if it is served as an entrée.

POZOLE

Pork & Hominy Stew

Pozole is primarily a Western Mexico dish, however, it is served along the border and is popular in New Mexico with the New Mexico chiles. As with most border dishes, it is very simple to prepare with a minimum of ingredients (although some people use a formidable list of ingredients). It is served with four or five side garnish dishes.

1 lb. Boneless Pork Shoulder
2 - 28 oz. Cans White Hominy
5 C. Water
2 Chiles Serranos
1 Large Onion, chopped
Salt and Pepper To Taste

Cut the pork into 1 inch cubes. Dust the pork with flour and brown in a little lard. Place pork, hominy, chiles, and onion in a stock pot with the 5 cups of water. Simmer until pork is done. Season with salt and pepper.

GARNISHES:

1. Soak ten chiles de arbol in hot water until soft. Remove stem and seeds. Blend in blender with enough of the chiles broth to make a catsup-like sauce.
2. Finely chop 2 medium onions.
3. Slice 10 or 12 radishes.
4. Cut 6 or 8 Key limes into quarters.
5. Grind up a hand full of dry chiles pequins.

Place pozole in a large tureen in the center of the table and surround it with small bowls of the garnishes. Each person can serve himself and use the garnish he or she desires. Usually served with lots of ground chiles — hot ones.

GUIISO DE CALABAZA CON PUERCO

Squash and Pork Stew

This stew is savored along both sides of the border. The squash preferred is Calabaza Tatuma or Calabaza Mexicana, the latter being large (3 to 10 lbs.), green or gray/green, and having a goose-neck. The method of preparing pork described here is the Mexican simmer/fry style .

1-1/2 to 2 lbs. Boston Butt
1 or 2 Large Cloves Garlic
1 TBS. Each Whole Comino & Black Peppercorns
1-1/2 lb. Green Squash*
Salt to Taste

Trim pork of fat and cut into dice of 1 inch. Peel calabaza, cut open, remove seeds and cut into 1 inch cubes. Place meat in deep 12 inch skillet and add about 1 cup water. Bring to boil then reduce heat to simmer and cook until nearly all the water has evaporated. Drain. Put meat back into skillet and continue to fry until pork is browned on all sides.

Make a paste of the garlic, comino, and peppercorns in a mortar or mini-food processor. Add 1/2 C. water or broth to make a slurry. Add slurry to browned meat. Add calabaza to pork, barely cover with water and simmer until calabaza is tender. Salt to taste. Sprinkle in some fresh chopped cilantro, too, if desired.

CARNITAS

Small Meat Bits

Makes approximately 1 Cup

Carnitas (small meat bits) are little tidbits of pork fat cut into cubes and rendered in a saucepan or skillet until they are crisp. The pork fat should have some lean meat attached to make the carnitas tasty. Carnita meat is not cured or smoked (like bacon or ham) but comes from the same part of the hog as bacon. It can be purchased in nearly all meat markets where there is a Spanish or Chinese speaking population.

2 lbs. Carnitas Meat

Cut meat into cubes about 1/2 inch thick. Render in saucepan or deep skillet until the pieces are crisp. Drain through sieve to remove as much of the lard as possible.

Good for taco fillings, gordita filling, with eggs for breakfast, and with migas. Serve a little salsa on the side.

The remaining lard is very pure, with no salt or smoke flavor, and very flavorful for frying and some seasoning. Use with masa dough when making tamales. In some markets in Mexico, rendered pork fat is displayed in big mounds and you buy by the kilo.

CHICHARONNES

Fried Pork Skins

Chicharonnes are what Anglos call fried pork skins only they are much different than the commercial type. Chicharonnes are available along the border packaged (sometimes) big sheets as much as a foot square in paper bags. Home-made are better. They are prepared the same way as carnitas (see pg. 41) except that you purchase chicharonnes pork skins by the pound (or kilo) and cut them up into squares approximately 1 inch and render.

Use the same way as carnitas or use the recipes in this book. Although, corn is Mexican, cornbread isn't, but along the border you will find Mexican cornbread prepared with chiles Jalapeños and chicharonnes (or carnitas).

Poultry and Egg Dishes

CODORNIZ AL PASTOR Quail Shepherd Style

In ranch country on both sides of the border, game is abundant — pheasant, javelin, white-wing dove, deer - and quail. Most ranchers are hunters; in old days partly from necessity and for a change in diet from beef. Here is a quail recipe which is ranch simple and delicious.

12 Quails, dressed	Oil
Juice of 2 Oranges, 2 limes, 2 Lemons*	1 TBS. Ground Chile Ancho
1 Tsp. Grapefruit Zest*	1 Tsp. Ground Comino
1 TBS. Grapefruit Juice*	1/2 Tsp. Dry Oregano
1 TBS. Chopped Cilantro	1 Tsp. Salt
1/2 Tsp. Ground cayenne or Chile Pequin	3 Cloves Garlic, chopped
1 Chile Serrano, sliced thin	

* All ingredients marked with the asterisk are those used to make Substitute Bitter Orange Juice (see pg. 94).

Prepare grill by lighting mesquite wood and allow to burn completely down to embers. Combine all ingredients except quail and oil. Split each quail down the breast bone and flatten spread-eagle style. Place in 9"X13"X3" pan and pour citrus marinade over. Cover with Saran wrap and refrigerate for a minimum of 30 minutes turning quail so all are marinated.

When embers are completely burned down, remove quail from marinade, brush with oil, and place on grill 6 inches from coals. Quail should be cooked fast so watch closely and make sure fire is not too hot. Cook until done on both sides, checking to see no liquids run red. Grill corn per the recipe on page 130. Serve quail with corn and olla beans (see pg. 81).

POLLO EN PIPIAN VERDE

Chicken in Pipian Sauce

Pipian Verde is a green sauce similar to mole which is made green by spinach, green squash seeds, and cilantro. The sauce (pipian) is used for simmering chicken and the results are superb! The word pipian comes from pepita, Spanish for seed(s).

- 1-1/2 lbs. Skinless & Boneless Chicken Breasts
- 1 lb. Fresh Tomatillos (or 15 oz. can of Canned Tomatillos, (drained and rinsed)
- 1/4 lb. Hulled Green Squash Seeds (unroasted)
- 1 Whole Chile Serrano or Chile Jalapeño, seeded stemmed, chopped
- 1 Medium Onion, chopped
- 2 TBS. Fresh Cilantro Leaves
- 3 Fresh Spinach Leaves, chopped
- 2 TBS. Oil
- Salt To Taste

Brown chicken breasts in small amount of oil. Set aside.

Place balance of ingredients in blender or food processor and puree. Add 2 TBS. oil to oil used to brown chicken and “fry” blender contents until reduced slightly. Adjust flavor. Add chicken breasts and simmer until chicken breasts are very tender and have absorbed flavor.

Serve with assortments of crudités and/or fresh salsa of your choice. Very good over cooked rice.

QUESADILLAS DE POLLO CON CHILES

Chicken Quesadillas with Chiles

These quesadillas are made with my favorite filling — chicken spiced up with three types of dry chiles. Start out by preparing just like you are making regular quesadillas; then go for it with the chiles!

12 Flour Tortillas
12 Slices Cheese*
2 Each Chiles Guajillo, Chiles Anchos, and Chiles Pasillas
1/2 Boneless/Skinless Chicken Breasts or Filets
2 TBS. Oil

*Monterrey Jack Cheese

Prepare the chicken by frying in the oil until half done. Remove from the heat and shred using two forks.

Toast all the chiles on a griddle until aroma begins. Remove from heat and cool. Then remove the stems and the seeds and tear chiles into pieces. Grind the chile pieces in a spice grinder or mortar until fairly fine.

Return chicken to skillet with the oil used to cook them. Sprinkle the ground chiles over the chicken and stir to blend and fry over medium heat until done.

In another skillet dry toast a tortilla, put on a slice of cheese and a tablespoon of chicken, and fold tortilla over filling. Continue to grill until cheese begins to melt. Repeat the process for the remaining tortillas. For a little accent, sprinkle chopped fresh cilantro over filling before folding tortilla over it.

HUEVOS MEXICANOS

Mexican Style Eggs

Huevos Mexicanos is a recipe from another cookbook I wrote in the '80s, *Texas Chef*. This is what I had to say then, "Now and then I used to stay overnight in Laredo, Texas. Regardless of where I stayed, I had breakfast at the Alexander Hotel's little coffee shop, just because it's Huevos Mexicanos and Fluffy Refried Beans were so great! Here's the way the recipe was explained to me. This dish is not to be confused with Huevos Rancheros."

3 Eggs, beaten lightly
2 Chiles Serranos, slice crosswise
3 TBS Onion, chopped
1 TBS. Milk
1 Small Fresh Tomato, chopped
Salt & Pepper to Taste
1TBS. Each Butter & Oil

Sauté onions and chiles in butter/oil combination until onions are clear. Add tomatoes and saute until **tomatoes are just heated**. (For tomatoes with some texture, don't cook too much.)

Mix beaten eggs, milk, salt and pepper and beat until frothy. Add egg/milk mixture to vegetable mix and scramble.

Huevos Mexicanos, Fluffy Refried Beans and Mexican Rolls (Bolillos) make a great meal.

HUEVOS RANCHEROS

Ranch Style Eggs

Huevos Rancheros is definitely a border ranch style dish. It is simple to make and the ingredients are simple, too, typical for ranch cooking.

Eggs, Use 2 eggs per person.
Viva! Salsa Ranchera, (see pg. 73)

If you are preparing more than four eggs you will need to double the recipe for the Ranchero Sauce. Most people like lots of sauce so prepare plenty.

Prepare the sauce per the recipe. Break the eggs into a small bowl (two per bowl) and when sauce is simmering (not boiling), ease the eggs into the sauce and “poach” the eggs in the sauce. When done to order, remove eggs to a warm plate and keep warm. Repeat the process until all the eggs are cooked.

Some places serve the eggs atop a heated corn tortilla and top both eggs and tortillas with the sauce. Serve with warmed corn tortillas and hot Mexican chocolate.

Breads

BOLILLOS

(pronounced: bo-lee-yos)
Mexican Hard Rolls

The Spanish didn't bring wheat to Mexico until 1530, nearly 40 years after "discovery". I assume it took that long to discover ranch and wheat country in the North of Mexico. Very soon wheat was adopted and flour tortillas, pastries, bolillos, etc. appeared. Some of the best bread anywhere is available in Mexico even though there isn't much variety. But bolillos are very good and available along the border on both sides of the Rio Grande.

6 C. All Purpose Flour, sifted	1 Pkg. Dry Yeast
1 Tsp. Salt	1 to 1-1/2 Tsp. Sugar
2 C. Water, lukewarm	

Mix yeast and sugar in a mixing bowl then dissolve in lukewarm water. Allow to set 10-12 minutes. Add salt. Then begin adding flour, with mixer on slow, 2 C. at a time adjusting mixer speed to handle dough. When four cups of flour have been mixed, begin adding flour a couple tablespoons at a time until dough is stiff.

Turn dough onto board and knead until smooth. Place in lightly greased bowl, making sure all surfaces of the dough are coated with oil. Cover with damp towel and allow to rise to double in size. Punch down and allow to rise again to double in size. Form rolls (rope like) 2 inches in diameter and cut rolls into 3 to 4 inch pieces. Twist the ends and pull slightly to form oval shaped rolls (don't overwork the dough at this time because the crust will become too thick and hard). Place on baking sheet allowing room to rise while baking without touching. Slash the tops lengthwise with razor blade.

Cover with towel and allow to rise about 20 minutes. Brush tops a little with oil and bake in preheated 400 degree oven for 30 to 40 minutes. To make more crusty rolls place an empty pan in bottom of oven when pre-heating and just as you place rolls in oven to bake, quickly add 1 cup water to pan and close oven door quickly to retain resulting steam.

PAN DE CAMPO

Camp Bread

The name pan de campo means “camp bread” and comes from the bread made in camp at cattle round-ups where there were no ovens. A special cast iron baker was developed called an “acero”. It is a sort of Dutch oven with a concave lid to hold hot coals from the campfire. The “acero” was/is buried in the hot coals, the bread put in, the lid put on, and the lid was filled with coals.

San Diego, Texas, where this book is being written, has an annual *Pan de Campo Festival* the first week-end in August. The winner of the *Pan de Campo* baking contest gets \$500.

3 C. All-Purpose Flour
4 Tsp. Salt
1/2 C. Milk

2/3 C. Shortening
4 Tsp. Baking Powder

Mix all ingredients, kneading the dough for a couple minutes. Set the dough aside to rest for 20-30 minutes. If dough feels dry, add water. If sticky, add flour.

Shape dough into three equal-sized balls and set two aside. Roll the other into a circle measuring about the size of your deep cast-iron skillet (try to make a close fit). Place the disc of dough into the skillet.

Cover and bake in 375 degree oven for about 5 minutes; turn over and bake 5 minutes on other side until brown. Bread should be baked through (not doughy inside). Repeat for other two balls of dough. For best results wipe inside of skillet with grease before baking.

Experiment: Mix chopped cilantro or chopped chiles in dry ingredients before adding liquids.

Desserts and Beverages

MOLLETES

Sweet Bread

There are a lot of bakeries in the towns along both sides of the border. Even small towns may have two or even three bakeries. This pastry is in every one, along with empanadas, pan de huevo, pan dulce, compechanas, and bolillos among others. These have a sugary coating with little patterns cut in them.

3/4 C. All-purpose Flour
1 C. Milk
1/4 C. Shortening
2 Eggs

1 Pkg. Dry Yeast
1/4 C. Sugar
1 Tsp. Salt

Topping: 2/3 C. Flour 1/2 C. Sugar 2 Egg Yolks
1/4 C. Margarine 1/2 Tsp. Vanilla

Combine 2 C. flour and the yeast in a large mixing bowl. Set aside. Place milk, sugar, shortening, and salt in a saucepan and heat until warm and shortening is melted, stirring constantly. Add milk mixture to the yeast mixture plus the slightly beaten eggs. Beat on electric mixer slowly until mixtures are blended, one-half to one minute, then beat 2 to 3 minutes on high speed.

Remove bowl from mixer and stir in as much flour as possible with a wooden spoon. Turn out onto a floured counter and knead for 8 to 10 minutes kneading as much of the remaining flour in as possible and the dough is stiff, smooth, and elastic. Form dough ball, coat very slightly with oil; place in a large bowl, cover with a moist towel and allow to rise for 1 to 1-1/4 hours. Punch down the dough and form 15 smooth dough balls. Place 2 inches apart on a baking sheet.

Roll each ball into 3 inch circles. Rub each with some of the topping which has been mixed. Slash the tops with a razor blade making designs of your choice (cross hatch, shell, circles, etc.). Cover and allow to rise until double, 30 minutes, then bake at 375 degrees for 17 to 18 minutes. The topping will be slightly browned and the designs will be emphasized. Excellent with Mexican hot chocolate!

BEBIDAS

Drinks

Drinks are a big thing along the border. Mexicans and Mexican/Americans don't drink carbonated drinks so much as Anglos, although the later generations are becoming more "Americanized". Nearly all drinks are fresh, especially on the Mexican side. The places where drinks are sold are called Jugo/Liquado (juices and mixed liquids).

Sangrita is drink made from fresh juices used as a chaser with tequila — a shot of tequila, a shot of sangrita. Some think sangrita is alcoholic- it is not. Sangrita is a mixture of orange juice, jalapeno juice, lime juice, tomato juice, and other ingredients. I find sangrita is delicious by itself and I use it for cooking (see Sangrita Pasta Sauce pg. 101). Sangrita means "little blood". Here are a couple of my recipes for sangrita, however, it can be purchased in Mexican liquor stores. My favorite brand is Vivda de Sanchez.

SANGRITA (RECIPE #1)

2 Pts. Fresh Orange Juice	1 C. Tomato Juice
1 Chile Jalapeno (or more)	1/2 C. Key Lime Juice
1/2 Tsp. Ground Celery Seed	1 Clove Garlic

Place all the ingredients in a blender and blend long enough to puree garlic. Allow to rest 1 to 2 hours. Strain and refrigerate. Add Tabasco if more heat is desired.

(RECIPE #2)

Blend one 46 oz. can orange juice with 1 C. Snappy Tom and add 1/4 C. Key Lime Juice. Recipe #2 is close but not as authentic as recipe #1

Note: (1997) Since I wrote this recipe, I have experimented more with Sangrita and have learned it makes a very good marinade especially for pork. Mix a tablespoon of real Oriental soy sauce with 8 oz. Sangrita plus a little minced garlic and marinate 1-1/2 lb. pork for 1 hour.

See Other Recipes For Drinks On Following Pages

LIQUADO DE LECHE Y FRUTA Blended Milk and Fruit Drink

In Mexican cities there are many stores call “So-and-So’s Jugo y Liquado”. These places serve agua frescas. Drinks made from fresh fruits. Some recipes are given in this book. They also serve *liquados*, drinks made by blending fresh fruits with milk or crema. Fruits used are strawberries, cantaloupe, watermelon, banana, papaya, or guava - or any combination. They are very refreshing.

The following recipe is common and the type of fruit doesn’t matter.

1 C. Milk
4 to 6 oz. Any Fruit
Sugar if desired

Place milk and fruit in blender and blend until thoroughly mixed. Add a little sugar if desired or if using melon, you may add a little sprinkle of nutmeg to complement the flavor.

HORCHATA
(pronounced ore-chata)
Rice and Cinnamon Drink

Horchata is one of many refreshing beverages served up by street vendors and “jugo/liquada” places. I use rice flour available in Indian and Chinese stores but in Mexico they pound the rice to pulverize it fine. Mixed with cinnamon, sugar, and maybe a pinch of salt and served over lots of ice — COOL!

1/3 to 1/2 C. Sugar (to taste)
1/3 C. Rice Flour
1/2 to 3/4 Tsp. Ground Cinnamon (to taste)
10 C. Water

Measure dry ingredients into big ice-tea pitcher. Fill pitcher with the water. Whip mixture with whisk until all dry ingredients are dissolved. Allow to steep for short time (some ingredients will settle). Stir and serve over lots of ice for cool refreshing drink! Before refilling, stir again.

AGUA FRESCA DE FLOR DE JAMAICA

Jamaica Flower Water

Jamaica flowers are the blossoms of a plant related to the hibiscus. The dried blossoms are available at stores which carry Mexican and Caribbean foods. Some health food stores have them under the label “sorrel”. The drink is astringent so be sure to prepare it in an earthenware or glass container, like a glass pitcher. The color of the blossoms makes a pretty drink.

3/4 C. Jamaica Flower Petals
1 or 2 C. Water
1/4 to 1/3 C. Sugar

Boil the flowers, sugar and water for 3 or 4 minutes to extract the flavor and dissolve the sugar.

Strain the concentrate in a pitcher containing at least a quart of water and add more sugar if desired. Stir well to dissolve the sugar.

Increase the flower and sugar if you wish to fill a one gallon pitcher. Pour drink into tall glasses filled with ice and garnish with a sprig of mint and a thin slice of lime.

AGUA DE TAMARINDO

Tamarind Water

In Mexican and Caribbean markets you will notice long, brown, bean-like pods about 1/2 inch thick. When opened, these beans have a sticky paste surrounding the seeds. This paste is what is used for the flavor of this drink. The paste is available packaged in jars or in blocks. If you use the pods, it takes 8 or 10 to make flavor for a quart of drink.

If using the paste, place a little in a glass bowl with a little water and dissolve. Add the paste to water in a pitcher until you get the strength you wish. Dissolve about 1/2 C. sugar in some water and heat until the sugar dissolves. Add the sugar syrup to the pitcher of tamarind flavored water.

Fill tall glasses with ice and pour the drink over. Garnish with lime slices.

Sweets

CAMOTES

Sweet Potato Candy

This candy can be found sold by street vendors in Mexico. Also, in malls. It is very sweet as preferred by the Mexican people.

- 2 lbs. Sweet Potatoes
- 4 C. Sugar
- 1 C. Water
- 5 Drops Lemon Flavoring
- 1 Drop Yellow Food Coloring
- 5 Drops Orange Food Flavoring
- 1 Drop Orange Food Coloring
- 1 C. Sugar for Coating

Put sweet potatoes in boiling water and cook until they are soft, about 30 minutes. Remove from water, cool, and peel. Slice into 1-1/2" to 2" slices or chunks".

Place all the other ingredients in a saucepan and cook until it is syrupy. Add the sweet potato chunks and simmer until the syrup is very thick and sticky.

Note: if you wish different colors, make separate batches with a food color in each batch - one yellow, one orange, etc. Only use one color if you wish all to be the same color.

Spread the candied slices on a baking sheet and refrigerate. Remove from refrigerator when thoroughly cool and roll each slice in granulated white sugar; then set aside until all are finished and dry.

LECHE QUEMADA

Burnt Milk Candy

Mexicans got their taste for very sweet desserts and candies from the Spanish who got it from the Moors who occupied Spain for 300 years. The Spanish also got sugar from the Moors. Leche Quemada is sold in malls and by street vendors in Mexico.

On the American side of the border, in restaurants, these candies are located next to the cash register or by the mints. Here's how to make.

3 C. Dark Brown Sugar
1 C. Evaporated Milk
3/4 C. Pecan Halves
1 Tsp. Vanilla
1 Tsp. Margarine*
Water

* Use real margarine not spread.

Bring sugar and milk up to "soft ball" stage on candy thermometer over medium heat. Allow to cool to 98 degrees. Add vanilla, then beat or whip as much as possible to aerate.

Pour onto buttered cookie sheet. Allow to cool then cut into squares. Dot each square with pecan half. Chill in refrigerator. Enjoy with a piece of white cheddar or some camembert. Makes about 30 pieces.

DULCES DE NARANJAS

Orange Candy (Fudge)

Along the border, and most of Mexico, very sweet desserts and candies are preferred - a carry-over from the Spanish who got it from the Arabs (Moors). Fruit and citrus flavors are favorites.

3 C. Sugar
1/4 C. Orange Juice
1 C. Evaporated Milk
2 Tsp. Fresh Orange Zest
Nuts, toasted, chopped*
Pinch Salt

*Nuts along the border usually means pecans, however, any nut you prefer works, altho peanuts can become a little chewy.

Caramelize one cup of the sugar, add orange juice; cook over low-heat until sugar dissolves.

Add remaining sugar, evaporated milk, and salt. Cook like fudge. Remove from heat and thoroughly stir in nuts. Pour mixture onto a cookie sheet. When cool, cut into fudge-like squares.

Seafood

PESCADO AL MOJO DE AJO

Fish in Toasted Garlic

I enjoyed this dish very much at Restaurante René in Nuevo Progreso, Mexico in the state of Tamaulipas. When I went back to get the recipe, on another visit, it wasn't on the menu, so here is my version. At Restaurante René the menu read Trucha al Mojo de Ajo, however, perch, catfish, red snapper, or other similar fish may be used. "Trucha" means trout.

4 Catfish Filets, 4 to 6oz. each
6 to 8 Large Cloves Garlic, coarsely chopped
3 to 4 TBS. Oil
1 TBS. Butter or Margarine
1 to 2 TBS. Cilantro, chopped
2 to 3 TBS. Fresh Lime Juice
Salt to Taste
1/2 C. Flour
1/2 C. Corn Flour

Rub fish filets with lime juice coating thoroughly. Cover and refrigerate for 30 minutes. Remove fish from refrigerator, dry with a paper towel, and dredge with the flour/corn flour mixture. Heat oil and butter in medium hot skillet.

Add garlic and sauté 30 or 40 seconds then add fish and fry until brown on both sides. Place cooked fish on platter and keep warm. Remove garlic from oil, add lime juice and cilantro and cook until cilantro is wilted.

Pour lime juice, cilantro, and oil over fish filets and serve. Good with a tomatillo salsa on the side.

CAMARONES CON RANCHERO SAUCE

Shrimp with Ranchero Sauce

Seafood is/was not readily available in ranch country, however, on the fringes (the coasts) it is plentiful and gets inland when the transportation is there. On the American side, seafood is plentiful. Where it is, everyone takes advantage with dishes like this.

Make a Ranchera Sauce (see p. 73). Make recipe quantity to fit amount of shrimp you have.

1 to 1-1/2 lbs. Medium Shrimp (40-50 Count), peeled and deveined
1 TBS. Oil
1 TBS. Butter
Lime Juice from One Key Lime

“Wash” shrimp in lime juice. Drain and sauté for about 1 minute on each side in butter and oil.

Remove shrimp from skillet and add to the ranchero sauce. Simmer for 3 to 4 minutes.

DO NOT OVERCOOK SHRIMP - THEY WILL BE TOUGH.

Serve garnished with cilantro leaves and lime slices.

COCTEL DE CAMARON A LA NUEVO LAREDO

Shrimp Cocktail Nuevo Laredo Style

Recipe for individual serving

This is a dish I have enjoyed many times on the streets in Nuevo Laredo. The vendors have developed elaborate carts equipped with block ice, cooked cocktail shrimp, pieces of marinated octopus, catsup, orange soda, chopped cilantro — everything they need including dishes and water to wash them. The vendors are very efficient and many people make a meal at the vendor's stand including American tourists. This is my version:

- 1/2 C. Frozen, Cooked Cocktail Shrimp, thawed and rinsed
- 1/2 C. Cocktail Sauce (see below)
- 1 TBS. Diced Avocado
- 1 TBS. Onion, minced
- 1 Tsp. Fresh Cilantro, chopped
- Squeeze of Key Lime Juice

Shrimp Cocktail Sauce:

- 1 C. Good Quality Catsup
- Juice of 1/2 Key Lime
- 1/4 C. Canned or Bottled Orange Soda

Mix sauce ingredients and allow to rest while preparing shrimp. Wash shrimp thoroughly to remove stray legs and salt. Drain and chill. Place chilled shrimp in parfait glass. Pour sauce over shrimp and sprinkle with a little avocado, onion, and the chopped cilantro. Squeeze the lime juice over all.

In Mexico, a small amount of green Habanero sauce or Salsa de Chile de Arbol is splashed on top. Best served with crispy soda crackers.

SHRIMP IN TEQUILA CREAM SAUCE

This recipe uses four of Mexico's favored ingredients: tequila, crema agria, shrimp, and vermicelli (Fideo).

5 - 5 oz. Packages Fideo
1/4 C. Oil
16 Jumbo Peeled and Deveined Shrimp (10 to 15 per lb.)
2 Cloves Garlic, minced
2 TBS. Basil, finely chopped
1 C. Crema Agria*
Salt and Pepper To Taste
2 TBS. Tequila
Cayenne

*Use commercial sour cream if crema is not available. If you use American sour cream, mix it with equal amounts of milk or half & half.

Heat large skillet until very hot. Heat oil in hot skillet and sauté shrimp for 2 minutes (don't overcook). Remove shrimp from skillet and keep warm

Reduce heat, add garlic and sauté for moment then add basil and sauté it. Remove from heat and stir in crema and bring to light boil; return to heat and reduce about 5 minutes. Remove from heat and season with salt and pepper, then stir in tequila.

Cook fideo according to instructions, drain and place on hot serving platter. Spread shrimp and sauce over fideo and decorate with sprinkle of cayenne.

Seasonings and Sauces

CREMA

Crema is the Mexican version of Creme Fraiche in France and Clotted Cream in England. It is not readily available in the U.S. because of our dairy processing laws regarding the use of raw milk. Some stores where there is a large Mexican population carry a U.S. version made by companies in Chicago and Los Angeles. These U.S. versions are expensive (\$2.99 for a half pint vs. \$.60 for a quarter liter in Mexico (1996) and are not especially authentic and no better than home-made. Here are two recipes for home-made crema:

Crema Espesa (espesa from the Spanish word for to thicken): not sharply sour but thick and creamy and used mainly for desserts like Crema de Tuna (see pg. 114). More like thick, thick cream than sour cream.

1 C. Whipping Cream
1 to 2 TBS. Buttermilk

Heat cream to 90 degrees, stir in the buttermilk mixing well to disperse the buttermilk evenly. Place in a glass jar, cover with cheese cloth and set on kitchen counter overnight. In the morning, cream should be very thick — if not, allow to set another 2 to 4 hours. Stir well and refrigerate for 2 hours. Delicious!!!

Crema Agria: Agria means sour in Spanish. This is similar to our sour cream only much creamier. Process the same as crema espesa only use the following ingredients:

1 C. Whipping Cream
1 to 2 TBS. Key Lime Juice, fresh

Note: Following is my substitute when I can't wait overnight:
Mix equal parts of U.S. sour cream (without gelatin) with light cream or half & half and mix until very smooth. If too thin, whip a little sour cream and mix into crema.

PIPIAN ROJO

Red Sauce from Seeds

Pipian is usually a sauce very much like mole. It is called pipian because the thickener is seeds (pepitas). The culinary words mole and pipian seem to be interchangeable, when describing sauces, depending on the region of Mexico. On the border the term mole seems prominent. This pipian is a “base”. When cooking broth is usually added to fit the recipe. It is delicious!!

1/4 C. Ground Chile Ancho (not chile powder)	1/3 Tsp. Ground Allspice
3 TBS. Oil	1/3 C. Red-Skin Peanuts, roasted
1/2 Medium Onion, sliced top-to-bottom	3/4 Tsp. Sugar
1/8 Tsp. Ground Cloves	1/2 Tsp. Ground Cinnamon
1/4 Tsp. Ground Thyme	1-1/2 C. Chicken Broth, approx.
2 Cloves Garlic, smashed	Salt to Taste
1/3 C. Unseasoned Bread Crumbs	
1/3 Tsp. Ground Black Pepper	
1/3 C. Green Squash Seeds, hulled toasted	

Mix all dry ingredients except sugar, and seeds in a small bowl. Add 1 C. broth. Place peanuts, seeds, and 1/2 C. chicken broth in a blender or food processor (in Mexico this would probably be done in a molcajete). Blend, adding chicken broth if necessary, making a puree. If puree is “grainy”, that’s OK.

Heat oil over medium heat in large saucepan. Pour blender contents into saucepan, add dry ingredients, and cook for 3 or 4 minutes. Sauce will begin to thicken. Add balance of chicken broth; mix and simmer until it has consistency of thick cream. Adjust with stock if too thick. Season with sugar and/or salt to taste.

Alternative: Add toasted sesame seeds when blending. Or, 1 Tsp. cocoa when cooking. When stewing chicken or pork in pipian, thin with 1-1/2 C. more broth.

Texas Chef MOLE COLORADO

This is a recipe I came up with after trying a mole I bought in Nuevo Laredo where it is sold in bulk by the kilo. If you wish a little “heat”, add cayenne to taste.

4 to 5 TBS. Ground Chile Ancho or Ground New Mexico Chiles (Chile Molido)
1 Clove Garlic, chopped
1/2 Medium onion, chopped
1 Tsp. Dry Oregano
1 Tsp. Ground Comino
1-1/2 TBS. Corn Oil
2 TBS. Bread Crumbs
Dash Nutmeg
2 TBS. Sesame Seed, toasted
1 C. Water or Chicken Broth

Sauté onions and garlic in oil until clear. Add dry spices, stir; then add water or broth and simmer for 5 minutes. If too thick, add more water or broth. If too thin, thicken with bread crumbs. Mole should have consistency of heavy cream. When you buy it in Mexico, it is as thick as peanut butter and you dilute it to your needs.

This mole is used to make Asado de Puerco and/or Pollo en Mole Colorado (see pg. 34). It can be served over cooked rice or pasta.

CHILE PASTE

Chile paste is used as seasoning for many border dishes. The chile types may vary, but the technique is the same. Only dried chiles are used. Along the border, chile ancho is the chile preference. Chiles anchos are dried chiles poblanos.

5 or 6 Chiles Ancho
Water

Clean the dust off the chiles with a damp cloth. Toast chiles on comal or griddle on both sides until aroma begins (don't scorch). After chiles cool, remove seeds and stems and tear chiles into pieces.

Place torn chiles in saucepan with enough water to cover. Simmer 3 to 4 minutes or just soak in hot water for 10 minutes. Remove chiles to blender with enough of the water to puree into a paste about like thickness of honey or even peanut butter.

Store in small jar with screw-on lid and cover with oil to prevent deterioration. Use as seasoning as required in individual recipes or mix with garlic paste and ground comino to make seasoning for Chile con Carne.

Viva! **SALSA RANCHERA**
Ranch Style Sauce

Salsa Ranchera is an all-purpose sauce primarily made fresh each time used. Its most popular use is with Huevos Rancheros (Ranch Style Eggs) (see recipe pg. 48); very popular for breakfast with refried beans and hot tortillas - flour or corn.

- 3 Medium-size Ripe Tomatoes, chopped, reserving juice
- or
- 1-15 oz. Can Whole Peeled Tomatoes, drained, reserving juice
- 1 Yellow Onion, chopped chunky
- 1/2 C. Fresh Cilantro, chopped coarse
- 1 Large Chile Jalapeño*
- 2 Cloves Garlic, smashed then cut-up a little
- 2 TBS. Oil

*cut jalapeño in half length-wise and seeds removed from one half, then chopped

Heat large skillet over high heat. Reduce heat to medium and sauté onions, garlic, and jalapeño until onions are slightly brown - not burned. Add tomatoes with their juice to onion mixture and simmer until sauce thickens a little. If tomatoes don't have enough juice, add a little tomato sauce if available - if not, add water.

At the last minute add cilantro and mix into salsa. Delicious with Huevos Rancheros and many other dishes - experiment!

Viva! SALSA RIO

Viva! Salsa Rio is my version of Salsa Picante the widely popular red sauce available about everywhere now in stores. Fresh ingredients makes it better!

1-15 oz. Can Whole Tomatoes, drained
1/2 Medium Onion, chopped
1 Chile Jalapeño
1/2 C. Fresh Cilantro, chopped
1 to 3 Tsp. Mexican Lime Juice (Key Lime)

Remove seeds from the chile jalapeño. Mix jalapeños, onion, cilantro, and lime juice in a small bowl.

After draining the tomatoes, mash them up in you hands to reduce the size of the pieces to approximately the size of the chopped onions. This also removes excess tomato juice. Mix tomatoes in with other ingredients and blend well.

Note: Add more chile jalapeños for more picante. Salt if you prefer. For those who love garlic — go ahead and put it in.

TOMATILLO SALSA VERDE COCIDA

Cooked Tomatillo Green Salsa

Tomatillos, the tart little “Mexican Gooseberry”, which look like small green tomatoes with husks (sometimes called “husk tomatoes” also “tomate verde”) make a delicious salsa for use with chicken dishes and on chilaquiles. Tomatillos are not little green tomatoes and are not interchangeable.

Salsa Verde with tomatillos (there are other salsa verdes) has an affinity for pork and chicken. Especially good with Tacitos con Chicharrones (see recipe pg. 30). Experiment! You will be pleasantly surprised.

10 to 12 Tomatillos, husked and washed
1 C. Onion, chopped
2-3 Cloves Garlic, chopped
1/2 C. Fresh Cilantro
1or 2 Chiles Serrano, stemmed and seeded
3/4 C. Water
4 to 6 TBS. Oil
1 TBS. Key Lime Juice

Place all ingredients except the oil in a food processor or blender and pulse. Ingredients only need to be finely chopped - not pureed. Heat the oil in a saucepan and add the contents of the food processor. Simmer for 8 minutes.

One Use: Brown boneless/skinless chicken breasts. Cover with above salsa and simmer, covered until chicken breasts are tender (don't overcook). Serve hot, garnished with cilantro leaves over a bed of cooked rice.

Or: Place fish filets in baking pan, cover with tomatillo salsa verde and bake short time (until fish flakes). Take dried shrimp and drop in hot oil. They will “puff” and turn pink. Use them to garnish baked fish.

PICO DE GALLO

Pico de Gallo is probably the most popular salsa in the US and also Mexico. It is a simple salsa made up fresh every time it is served. It became popular in the US with the advent and popularity of fajitas. Freshness is the key.

1 Large Tomato
1 Large Onion
1 Medium Chile Jalapeño
2 TBS. Chopped Fresh Cilantro
1 TBS. Key Lime Juice
Pinch Ground Comino

Dice the tomato, onion, and chile jalapeño into coarse dice (1/4 inch dice). Place all in a non-corrosive dish and add the chopped cilantro.

Add the Key Lime Juice (fresh squeezed if possible) and the comino and toss the whole mixture thoroughly.

To double: use two tomatoes, two onions, another 1/2 chile jalapeño, and another tablespoon lime juice.

Adjust ingredients to taste.

Vegetables and Soups

CALDO DE COLA

Mexican Style Ox-Tail Soup

1 lb. Ox-Tail
2 Large Russet Potatoes or 6 Red Potatoes
1 Gal. Water
1- 8 oz. Package Mini-Corn on Cob
4 Carrots
1 - 15 oz. Can Chunky Mixed Vegetables
3 Zucchini
1/4 C. Fresh Cilantro, chopped
3 Yellow Squash
1 TBS. Comino Seeds
1/2 Head Cabbage
1 TBS. Black Peppercorns
1 Bell Pepper
3 Medium Cloves Garlic, smashed
1 Onion
Salt & Pepper To Taste

Place water and ox-tail in 8 Qt. stock pot over medium heat. Simmer while you are preparing vegetables. Cut all vegetables into approximately 1 inch chunks. Add all vegetables to pot of simmering oxtail.

Prepare seasonings by grinding comino, peppercorns, and garlic in mortar (molcajete). Add a couple tablespoons of the ox-tail broth to make a slurry. Add the slurry to the soup.

Cook until carrots are tender, then adjust seasonings with salt and pepper. At the time you turn off the heat, stir in the cilantro.

NOPALITOS

Cooked Cactus Leaves

Cactus “pads”, “leaves”, “paddles” are cooked widely in South Texas and in Mexico where cactus grows profusely. Cactus paddles are highly seasonal because they grow fast and the paddles must be young and tender and about 2 to three inches in diameter. Any bigger and they will be tough and fibrous.

Vendors on the streets in Mexican towns sell cactus leaves with needles removed and some times already diced ready to cook. Cactus paddles, when diced, are mucousy (like okra) but the mucous is removed by boiling.

8 or 10 Young, Tender Cactus Leaves, needles removed
2 TBS. Chile Powder
3 TBS. Flour
3 TBS. Corn Oil
2 Eggs, beaten
Salt if Chile Powder is salt free
1/4 C. Grated Cheddar

Prepare the cactus paddles by removing the needles and dicing into 1/4 to 3/8 inch pieces. Put them in a medium saucepan with plenty of water and boil for about 15 minutes or until *al dente*. Drain well - they should be very dry to avoid stewing when cooking.

Make a medium roux with the flour and the corn oil. When the right color, add the chile powder and the salt if used. Stir thoroughly to mix flavors. Add the cooked and drained cactus. Stir thoroughly; add the beaten eggs and mix well. Add the grated cheese and cook just long enough to melt the cheese. Great for breakfast or serve as a vegetable side dish like green beans.

FLOR de PITA

Flower of the Yucca

If you have ever driven through arid country like South Texas, Mexico, or New Mexico in the Spring, you probably have seen the many yucca plants blooming. The big, bee-hive appearing blossoms are striking and hard to miss. The Mexican people, ever ingenious as to what to cook, cook these flowers. They make a good breakfast dish or a vegetable side dish.

Prepare the flowers by removing the petals from the stem and cleaning out all the dust and insects which are attracted to the blooms. Wash in plenty of water like washing spinach. Drain **very well** so they don't stew and become soggy through cooking.

Using about 6 cups of the cleaned blossoms, prepare just like Nopalitos (see pg. 79). Or just sauté in olive oil with a little salt to bring out the flavor. Many people add a beaten egg to each batch of flowers. Cook just until *al dente*.

FRIJOLES DE OLLA

Beans Cooked in Earthenware Pot

Olla is the Spanish word for cooking pot. Along the border, and the rest of Mexico, that cooking pot is traditionally from terra cotta and must have been invented for beans! Pottery ollas are still available but more and more cooks are going to metal. The pottery pots give beans a better flavor, though. Olla beans are brothy and flavorful and make good refried beans. Black beans are used in the interior more than pintos.

3 C. Pinto Beans, Rocks removed and washed thoroughly
1 or 2 cloves garlic, smashed
1 or 2 tomatoes
1 or 2 fresh green chiles of your choice (jalapeños or serranos)
Pork (or pieces of ham or ham bone)

Cover beans with enough water to be 1-1/2 inches over them.. Bring slowly to boil. As beans heat up, add 1 or 2 cloves garlic, smashed, 1 or 2 tomatoes, 1 or 2 fresh green chiles of your choice (jalapeños or serranos) and some fat-back pork or pieces of ham or ham bone — but no salt.

Simmer beans covered for about 3 hours. At the 2 hr.- 45 minute point add 1/4 C. fresh cilantro leaves and salt and pepper to taste. As water evaporates, replace with boiling water.

In Mexico, beans are not usually served as a “soup” like we do in the U.S., but in a small bowl as a side dish. Beans are served at most meals, breakfast included (refried), but not as *the main* dish — only the side dish.

FRIJOLES REFritos

Refried Beans

This is a very, very popular dish in most of Mexico. In Mexico's interior, black beans are used. In the North of Mexico and along the Texas-Mexican border pinto beans are favored. Refrito does not mean fried again; it means "really fried".

2 C. Cooked Olla Beans (see pg. 81)
2 TBS. Oil or Lard
2 TBS. Flour
Water if beans don't have enough broth

In a large fry pan, make a light brown roux with the flour and oil or lard. Add cooked beans with their broth to the roux and stir until they begin to thicken. Then with a potato masher, mash the beans until almost all are mashed. Then reduce the beans until almost dry or until they are the consistency you prefer.

Refried beans go with everything and usually does. Alone, in burritos, on chalupas, as a side dish, in tacos, - everything -- even tamales!

Add a salsa of your choice! I even replace peanut butter with refried beans and sprinkle with Mexican farmer's cheese (Queso Fresco see pg. 142) or Requeson (see pg. 142).

GLORIA'S GREEN CHILE STEW

Green chile stew is not a North Mexico/South Texas dish, but popular here. It is a high country New Mexico dish made with mutton and New Mexico chiles (Chiles Anaheims). We make it with either Boston butt or pork chops. The chiles are roasted and peeled as described in the appendix on chiles. Chiles Poblanos may be used and if so, are handled the same way as the Chiles Anaheims.

12 Green Chiles Anaheims (substitute two - 7 oz. Cans)
1 TBS. Flour
3 Tomatillos, chopped coarse
2-1/2 lbs. Pork Chops, trimmed
2 Cloves Garlic, chopped
1 Tsp. Black Peppercorns
1/2 Medium Yellow Onion, chopped
1/2 C. Chicken Broth
1 Tsp. Whole Comino
Stew meat or Boston butt may be used.

Chop chiles coarsely. Cube pork chops and dust in flour. Fry cubed pork until barely browned. Grind garlic, comino, and peppercorns into paste in mortar or molcejete.

Add all ingredients together in large skillet or enameled cast iron pot. Simmer about 15 minutes. Mix chicken broth and garlic/comino mixture and add to meat in pot. Simmer until meat is tender and flavors are blended. Add water as needed to make "gravy". Serve over cooked rice.

GLORIA'S MEXICAN RICE

Arroz Mexicano

Mexican rice, I'm sure, is a great-great grandchild of the classic Spanish paella since rice was brought to the "New World" by the conquistadors, probably on Columbus' second voyage. We believe it is an improvement.

Not to be confused with Spanish rice or Mexican rice in Tex-Mex and fast food restaurants, this is hearty and flavorful. I use Indian Basmati but most Mexicans use whatever rice is available, usually long grain.

1 to 1-1/2 C. rice, uncooked
3 TBS. Oil
1 Clove Garlic, chopped
1/2 Tsp. Whole Comino
2-1/2 C. Water or Broth

2 Small Tomatoes*
1 Medium Onion, chopped
1 Tsp. Black Peppercorns
1/2 Large Bell Pepper, chopped
2 TBS. Cilantro, chopped

*If tomatoes are out of season or are not good, use canned tomatoes and replace water or broth with juice from can making sure to maintain total amount of liquid to cook rice.

Sauté onions and bell peppers in large skillet. Add raw rice; spread out evenly and brown stirring occasionally. In a mini-food processor, grind the peppercorns, garlic, and comino to make a paste. Add a little of the liquid to make a slurry.

When rice is about the color of almond skins, add liquid and bring up to heat. Then add the seasoning slurry. Stir thoroughly. Place lid on skillet and reduce heat to very low and "steam" rice until rice has absorbed liquid (about 15 minutes). **Don't uncover rice during this 15 minute period.**

Uncover and stir in chopped cilantro; heat until cilantro is wilted and flavor is brought out. Garnish with cilantro leaves and hard boiled egg slices.

CHILE POBLANO SOUP WITH CREMA

This soup has several names - Poblano Soup, Corn Soup, Corn Soup with Chiles, Corn Soup With Chile Strips, etc. Any thing you call it, it is delicious. Chiles Poblanos are tricky - some are *muy caliente* (very hot), some are barely hotter than bell peppers. Canned green chiles are available in nearly all areas. They are chiles Anaheim and the flavor is not the same, but they will work. I like both. We use only fresh chiles Poblanos here and they are fairly seasonal. Campbell Soup Co. has a soup called, "Crema de Chile Poblano". It is authentic and good but expensive. When I use it, I extend it with whole kernel corn and a little light cream.

3 to 4 Chiles Poblanos, roasted, peeled, stemmed, and seeded*
1 Cup Corn Kernels**
3 C. Chicken Stock
3 to 4 Garlic Cloves, roasted
2/3 C. Onions, chopped
1/3 C. Chopped Carrots
1/2 C. Celery, chopped
1/2 Chile Jalapeño, seeded, chopped
1 C. Crema Agria***
1 C. Half & Half or Evaporated Milk
Salt to Taste

*Add or subtract to adjust heat.

**Fresh corn off cob or frozen corn.

***Substitute commercial sour cream if crema not available.

Place all ingredients, except crema agria and half & half, in medium saucepan. Heat until contents boil and immediately reduce heat to simmer. Simmer for 10 minutes.

Remove saucepan ingredients and place in blender to puree. Leave some of the corn whole or add separately. Strain into saucepan and cook over low heat adding crema and Half & Half. When thickened, place in serving bowl and decorate with green pepita oil (see pg. 98) or creamy cilantro sauce. Soup will be pale green. If brighter green is desired, add spinach puree or cilantro puree when crema is added.

PEPINO DEL MONTE

Wild Mountain Cucumbers

Pepinos del Monte (mountain cucumbers) are wild cucumbers which grow widely in this area. They look like small green quince with little “prickles” all over like pickling cucumbers (gherkins). Very seasonal. The vines look like watermelon vines.

12 Pepinos, sliced 1/8” - 1/4”
1/2 C. Flour
3 TBS Oil
1 Medium Onion, chopped
1 TBS Whole Comino
1/2 TBS. Black Peppercorns
1 Large Clove Garlic
2 C. Water
6 or 8 Chiles Piquin*

*Use green chiles pequin if available; dry, red ones if not.

Mix cominos, peppercorns, and garlic clove in mortar and pestle and make a paste of them. Add 1/2 C. water and let set while you make roux.

Make medium brown roux with flour and oil. Sauté onions in roux. Add remaining 1-1/2 C. water and stir thoroughly to make sauce with consistency of cream. Add seasoning mixture from mortar. Stir.

Add pepinos to sauce and simmer until they are “al dente” tender — more tender if you wish. Add salt to taste. Crush chiles pequin with the back of a spoon and add to pepinos. If sauce gets too thick, thin with more water.

A little chopped cilantro added at the last minute changes the flavor favorably.

MENUDO

Menudo is very popular along the border. It is reportedly a good breakfast “waker-upper” for hangovers, the “caldo del dia” for drinkers. Real spicy and picante is preferred and sides include chiles pequin those little B-B sized chiles that grow wild all along the border — muy caliente - muy picante!! I prefer the hominy and broth with soda crackers and chopped onions.

2 Small Pigs Feet, split length-wise into 2 or 3 pieces*
2 lbs. Honeycomb Tripe
1 Small Onion, chopped
6 to 7 Cloves Garlic, chopped
Salt to Taste
Juice of 2 Key Limes
1or 2 TBS. Chile Powder**
1 TBS. Dry Oregano
1- 30 oz. Can Hominy

* Along the border, markets have these already prepared for menudo.

** Prepared menudo seasoning is available in most supermarkets in South Texas.

Wash tripe thoroughly. Rub with salt and lime juice vigorously. Allow to set in colander to drain. After 10 minutes, wash tripe again. Cut tripe into 2” squares and place in pot with water to cover by one inch. Add pigs feet, chile powder, garlic, oregano, and onions. Cook for 1-1/2 hours. Remove pigs feet, cool, remove meat and place it back into pot. Add hominy and simmer 1/2 to 3/4 hour more.

Serve in soup bowls with condiment bowls of oregano, ground chile pequin, lime quarters, ground chile ancho, chopped onions, and soda crackers as sides for guests to serve themselves.

Part Two - Creations

**Seasonings & Sauces
Desserts & Beverages
Poultry & Egg Dishes
Salads & Dressings
Miscellaneous**

Seasonings and Sauces

CREAMY CILANTRO SAUCE

This is a sauce I came up with one day when I wanted a sauce for some left over grilled chicken breasts. Turned out pretty good, but I later added a little sour cream, thus the “creamy”.

- 1 Tsp. Vegetable Oil
- 1 Tsp. Oriental Sesame Oil
- 1 Sliced Green Onion
- 1 - 1 inch Piece Ginger, chopped
- 1 C. Chicken Broth
- 1 C. Fresh Cilantro Leaves, chopped
- 1/4 C. Commercial Sour Cream,
or Crema if you wish to make it

Sauté green onion in oil; add ginger and cook one minute. Add stock and bring to boil. Reduce over medium heat to one cup (about 8 or 10 minutes). Remove from heat and pour into blender. Add cilantro and puree.

Allow to cool then add sour cream and puree until cream is blended.

Good over fish and lean pork.

PINEAPPLE - CHIPOTLE SAUCE

Pineapple and chiles chipotles are a fine combination of Mexican ingredients giving a smoky, spicy-hot flavor which has strong affinity for pork, especially grilled pork, roasted tenderloin, or pork chops.

1-1/2 C. Crushed Pineapple (unsweetened) retaining juice
2 Canned Chiles Chipotles, mashed
1/2 C. Mexican Pineapple Vinegar*
2 or 3 TBS. Key Lime Juice
3 Tsp. Dried Oregano, crushed between palms of hands
Salt and Pepper to Taste

*Substitute apple cider vinegar if you must.

Cook the pineapple juice, chiles chipotles, and vinegar. After boiling for a couple minutes, reduce heat and simmer until liquid coats back of spoon. Remove from heat stir in the balance of the ingredients adjusting salt and pepper to your taste.

Pour sauce into serving dish so guests may use as they desire with their grilled pork. If using chicken, substitute cilantro for oregano. I like this over steamed cauliflower.

CREAMY TOMATILLO SAUCE

This sauce is especially good with chicken dishes. There seems to be an affinity between tomatillos and chicken but the sauce is good with grilled pork like pork chops.

Appr. 6 - 8 Fresh Tomatillos
1/2 Medium Onion
1- 1/2 Chile Jalapeño
1/2 C. Fresh Cilantro
1 Clove Garlic
1 TBS. Lime Juice, optional
1/2 to 3/4 C. Crema

Peel husks from tomatillos and wash sticky material from them. Place tomatillos in blender or food processor. Chop until fairly fine (add 1/3 C. water if tomatillos seem to “gel”). Place chopped tomatillos in a pint resealable jar. Place balance of ingredients in a food processor or blender and chop coarsely (leave some texture). Add to tomatillos and mix well. For more picante, add more chile. For more tartness add some lime juice.

At this point you have Salsa Verde. Place Salsa Verde in saucepan and bring to simmer. If more liquid seems required, add a little water, or chicken broth if you have it handy. Remove salsa from heat and stir in crema. Mix until sauce is smooth and creamy. Goes good with chicken enchiladas!

Note: Store bought Salsa Verde may be used if it is available.

VINAGRETA FIESTA II

This is a “Creation” recipe. Vinegreta Fiesta II is a colorful (fiesta) dressing for just about any vegetable salad — even some meat salads like grilled chicken salad. The original Vinegreta Fiesta used no olive oil.

2 TBS. Margarine*
2 TBS. Olive Oil
3 TBS. Key Lime Juice
1/4 Tsp. Coarse Grind Black Pepper
1/4 C. Sliced Green Onions
1 Canned Whole Pimiento, drained and diced into 3/8” pieces**

*Use real margarine - not a spread.

**If the imported (from Spain) whole pimientos are not available, dice a roasted and peeled red bell pepper.

Heat butter and olive oil in a small saucepan over medium heat. Add onion and bell peppers is used and sauté until wilted. Stir in the remaining ingredients, heat, and pour over salad of your choice — enjoy!

BITTER ORANGE SUBSTITUTE

Bitter orange (Naranja Agria) is the Seville orange of marmalade fame. It is used extensively in the Caribbean and is called many names: sour orange, bigarde orange. At the time of this writing, Naranja Agria is fairly difficult to find, except for probably in the South Florida area and specifically Miami. In Jan. 1997, I found it stocked in 24 oz. bottles packed by GOYA at a Fiesta Supermarket in Houston, Texas.

I have been very pleased with the marinades I make with it. Our import laws prohibit bringing Seville Oranges into the country. I have seen them growing in Laredo, Texas and I believe there are 3 or 4 here in San Diego, Texas where I live.

Here is a reasonable substitute, although only the real thing gives the real flavor:

1/2 C. Fresh Squeezed Orange Juice
1/2 C. Fresh Key Lime Juice
1-1/2 C. Fresh Grapefruit Juice
1 Tsp. Fresh Orange Zest

Mix zest with lime juice for about 1 hour. Place lime juice and zest in double cheese cloth and squeeze out as much of the juice as possible. Add lime juice to grapefruit and orange juice, mix, and allow to set for 30 minutes.

Note: An interesting side light is Curacao, the liquer, originally made on the island of Cuarcaco, West Indies is made with, among other things, the peelings of the green sour orange.

CHIPOTLE MARINADE

This is a recipe I came up with when I was experimenting with chiles chipotles in 1994. If you like “smoky”, this marinade will help.

- 1 or 2 Canned Chile Chipotles, drained
- 2 TBS. Olive Oil
- 2 TBS. Apple Cider Vinegar
- 2 TBS. Key Lime Juice
- 1 Tsp. Grated Fresh Ginger with juice
- 1/2 Tsp. Ground Black Pepper
- 1 Clove Garlic, minced

Mash chiles chipotles in a small bowl. Stir in all the other ingredients and mix well. Place meat in a one-gallon zip-lock bag and pour in the marinade. Zip bag closed and shake to coat the meat with the marinade. Refrigerate for at least one hour. Remove meat from bag, drain off excess marinade, and grill meat to your preferred doneness.

Note: This marinade works best with red meats, however, it also does well with chicken or pork.

MANGO BBQ SAUCE

This is a “creation” recipe inspired by a BBQ sauce I saw used by a black cook to cook duck at Didi’s restaurant in Opelousas, Louisiana. He used peaches for the sauce. Why not mango?

One or More Ripe Mangos, depending on size, peeled and diced
3 large Tomatoes
1 Medium Onion, unpeeled
2 Chiles Chipotles in Adobo, drained
1/2 C. Brown Sugar
1/2 C. Cider Vinegar
1/2 Tsp. Salt

Broil or grill tomatoes and onion charring all sides until soft, about 35 minutes for onion — 25 minutes for tomato. Allow to cool and peel onion. Chop onion and tomato.

Place all ingredients in a saucepan and simmer for 30 minutes. Remove from saucepan into a blender and puree.

Marinate meats or poultry in BBQ sauce. Place meat on grill and cook until done, basting periodically with sauce.

The chiles chipotles give the smoky flavor desired. Serve hot as a side dish for guests to use as needed.

My Own BBQ SAUCE

Over the years when I wanted to barbecue, I would make up a quick sauce for basting and for serving. Every time it would be different depending on ingredients I had on hand and the meat I was cooking. In 1994, I began experimenting with chiles chipotles (see Chiles in Appendix). I decided to make a larger amount so I could have some on hand — this makes approximately a quart.

3 Large Roma Tomatoes (peel if you like)	2 Fresh Chiles Jalapeños
1 Large Onion	1 Qt. Chicken or Beef Stock
2 Celery Stalks	2 Tsp. Dry Mustard Powder
1 Bell Pepper	1/3 C. Vinegar
3 Cloves Garlic	1/2 C. Brown Sugar
2 Canned Chile Chipotles, drained	1 Stick (1/4 lb.) Margarine
2 Dry Chiles Anchos, stemmed & seeded	1/2 C. Catsup

Clean and prepare all vegetables. Place vegetables in food processor or blender and puree. You may have to do this in two batches. “Fry” pureed vegetables in large skillet for 2 to 3 minutes. Set aside.

Place all liquid ingredients, and margarine, in a large saucepan. Bring to boil; reduce heat and reduce by one third (leaving 2/3). Add all pureed vegetables to the liquids and simmer for 20 minutes. Adjust flavor. If more heat (spice heat) is desired, add adobo from the canned chiles chipotles until hot enough. Or add more chiles jalapeños.

To Use: Marinate meat in sauce for about one hour. Grill meat basting periodically with sauce. Serve barbecued meat with warm sauce on side.

PEPITA OIL
Green Squash Seed Oil

This is not a common product. Mostly used in the Yucatan to decorate (and flavor) papadzuelas. It is easy to make and is nice drizzled over chicken enchiladas with sour cream or over chicken breasts in creamy poblano sauce or chicken with creamy cilantro sauce. The nutty flavor makes a dish more complex in flavor.

1 C. Green Squash Seeds, toasted and finely ground
1/4 C. Hot Chicken Broth

Place the ground seeds in a concave plate and pour the broth over them. When the mixture is cool enough to touch, knead the mixture thoroughly. Pile the mixture up on one side of the plate and placing a table knife under one side of the plate allow the oil to seep out onto the lower side of the plate. Should make about 4 TBS. of oil.

MANTEQUILLA PEPITA

Green Squash Seed Butter

Green squash seeds are used a lot in Mexico. Squash is a centuries old crop cultivated by the Indians who used them for stews, for the shells (dippers), and for the seeds. Most stores along the border sell roasted and salted pumpkin (squash) seeds as snacks. Ground seeds (unsalted) are used to cook duck or as thickener for many sauces and moles.

1 oz. Green Squash Seed, toasted and ground very fine
1/4 lb. Butter or Real Margarine

Mix both ingredients together thoroughly. Chill. Then make into a roll 1 inch in diameter and wrap in Saran, twisting ends or folding over to seal. Freeze. When ready to use, unroll and slice off a piece 1/4 inch thick.

Very good for grilled chicken: Place grilled chicken on serving plated and put a “disc” of mantequilla pepita on top to melt. Good on pork and steaks, too.

RED CHILE MAYONNAISE

This is one of my “creations”, although since I wrote it in 1989, I have seen it mentioned in articles in food sections of newspapers. It is especially good when used to make grilled chicken breast sandwiches.

1/2 C. Mayonnaise

1/2 C. Roasted Red Peppers, drained

1 TBS. Parsley or Cilantro, chopped

1 Tsp. Tomato Paste

2 Large Chiles Jalapeños or 1 Canned Chile Chipotle in Adobo, drained

Remove the seeds and stems from the chiles Jalapeños if used. Place all ingredients in blender or food processor and puree. Chill not less than 2 hours so flavors can mingle.

SANGRITA PASTA SAUCE

This is a “Creation” recipe of ‘93. Sangrita is the spicy chaser for tequila along the border. Sangre is the Spanish word for blood - sangrita = little blood. It is not used normally in cooking, but it was such a temptation!

6 oz. Sangrita
or
1- 5.5 oz. can spicy V-8 or Mexi-Pep if available.
1 Heaping Teaspoon tomato paste
1 Tsp. Ground Chile Ancho
1/2 C. Chicken Broth
1 TBS. Oil
1 TBS. Flour
Salt and Pepper to Taste

Make dark roux with oil and flour. Remove from heat and add liquids and tomato paste. Return to medium-low heat and stir until sauce thickens. If too thick, add more sangrita. Salt and pepper to taste. Consistency should be that of pasta sauce.

Serve over pasta shapes which hold sauce well - rigatoni, bow-ties, etc. To increase “pica” (hotness) add a little cayenne.

Note: For those who like creamy sauces, you can add a little sour cream as the sauce is thickening.

CHILE STEAK SAUCE

This is a sauce I created while experimenting with those unique chiles chipotle. I call it steak sauce but use your imagination - it is good stuff! The chiles chipotles give the sauce a smoky flavor.

3 each Dry Chiles Anchos and Chiles Pasillas
6 Roma Tomatoes
1 or 2 Canned Chile Chipotles, drained
1/2 Large Onion, not peeled
2 Cloves Garlic, unpeeled
1 C. Chicken Broth

Wipe dry chiles with damp cloth to remove dust. Break out stems and remove seeds. Toast these chiles in dry skillet until fragrance is released (if the chiles are too hard, skip the toasting). Cool and place in blender and grind.

Broil tomatoes, onions, and garlic until they are bubbly and blistered. Cool, peel, and add to blender along with chiles chipotles. Pour 1/2 of the chicken broth into pan to deglaze scraping up pieces of broiled vegetables which may have stuck to pan.

Add broth mixture to blender with balance of chicken broth. Puree leaving only a few chunks. Heat until warm. Salt and pepper to taste.

Note: If you use “winter tomatoes”, improve flavor by reconstituting sun-dried tomatoes and puree with other ingredients.

SMOKY BEAN DIP

In 1994, I began making a bunch of recipes using chiles chipotles because I was/am fascinated with their unique flavor. The process of making chiles chipotles is interesting, too (see pg. 140). The chiles chipotles give the dip a smoky flavor. This recipe makes 3 cups.

- 2 TBS. Olive Oil
- 1/2 Onion, chopped
- 2 C. Cooked Pinto Beans With 1/2 C. of their liquid
- 1/4 Tsp. Black Pepper
- 1/3 C. Crema Agria* (see pg. 69)
- 3 Chile Chipotles, Canned Type, Drained of Adobo Sauce

*Use commercial sour cream if crema is not available.

Heat the oil in a small skillet, then add the onion and sweat the onions, covered, for 5 minutes. Use very low heat so as not to burn. Remove the cover, raise the heat to medium and cook until the onion begins to brown well, stirring occasionally to avoid scorching.

Remove the pan from the heat and allow the onion to cool. Place the onion and it's oil in a blender or food processor, add all the remaining ingredients and puree until smooth but leave some small pieces. If too thick, add some bean juice. Serve with fresh tostados (crispy tortillas) or nacho chips.

CREMA DE CHILE POBLANO

Creamy Chile Poblano Sauce to Use To Mask Enchiladas

2 Medium Chiles Poblanos, roasted, peeled, stemmed, and peeled
1/2 Tsp. Dry Oregano
1 TBS. Oil
2 Small Onions, sliced
1/2 C. Crema Agria (see pg. 69)
1/4 C. Red Bell Peppers, roasted, peeled, stemmed, and seeded
1/4 C. to 1/2 C. Monterey Jack Cheese, shredded

Chop chile poblanos and red bell peppers in a food processor. Don't puree, just chop coarsely by pulsing two or three times.

Sauté onions in oil in heavy saucepan or skillet. Add chopped chiles and oregano. Cook for one minute. Remove from heat and stir in crema. Return to low heat and stir until mixture thickens. Add a little Monterey Jack cheese and heat until cheese melts.

Serve over enchiladas or make double recipe and use to coat tortillas when making chicken enchiladas.

Desserts and Beverages

COBERTURA DE TUNA

Prickly Pear Dessert Topping

I spent some time experimenting with prickly pears. I call them “Mexican Kiwi”. Several recipes exist in Mexico and other countries have developed recipes using prickly pear.

10 Prickly Pears (tuna)
2 TBS. Tequila
2 Tsp. Corn Starch
1 TBS. Key Lime Juice
1/4 C. Sugar

Peel the prickly pears using leather gloves to hold. Cut the ends off , slit down the sides, and just pull the skin off. Puree in food processor or blender.

Add tequila through feed tube. Mix cornstarch with water to make a slurry.

Simmer prickly pear puree then add cornstarch mixture as well as the sugar. Boil gently for a couple minutes to thicken until syrupy.

Add lime juice and stir in.

Serve over ice cream or fresh fruit salad. Great when served with frozen strawberries (thawed). Place a dollop of crema espesa on strawberries, then pour a little prickly pear dessert topping over that. Mmmm!

MOCHA ICING

This is the icing for Mexican Chocolate Cake (see pg.108), but I like it so much I am keeping it for other uses, too, like topping for ice cream.

6 oz. Semi-Sweet Chocolate
1/2 C. Strong Coffee
1 Tsp. Vanilla
6 oz. (1-1/2 sticks Real Margarine*

*Real margarine is full-fat; spreads don't have enough fat to make icings.

Put the chocolate, coffee, and vanilla in a small heavy saucepan, or double boiler, and heat over medium heat until chocolate is melted, stirring to keep from burning.

When melted, pour into a bowl and beat in the margarine. As icing cools it will thicken to spreading consistency. Spread on top and sides of cake.

MEXICAN CHOCOLATE CAKE

This is not my recipe and I don't know where I got it, but I thought it should be in a cookbook of Mexican cooking, so here it is:

1/2 C. Butter	2 Tsp. Cinnamon
1 C. Sugar	3 Eggs
1 Tsp. Baking Powder	1-1/2 Tsp. Vanilla
1/4 Tsp. Baking Soda	1/8 Tsp. Almond Extract
1/2 C. Buttermilk	2 C. Flour
4 oz. Semi-Sweet Chocolate	1/2 Tsp. Salt
3/4 C. Water	2 TBS. Instant Coffee

Butter and flour two 8 inch cake pans. Cream butter and sugar until light. Beat in eggs one at a time, then add the vanilla and the almond extract.

Sift the dry ingredients together, mix, and fold into the butter mixture, alternating with the buttermilk. In a small saucepan, combine the chocolate, water, and coffee over low heat, stir until smooth and melted.

Add the chocolate mixture to the batter and stir to blend. Then pour batter into the baking pans. Bake in 350 degree oven until done (about 45 minutes). Test with toothpick for doneness. Rotate the pans at about 25 minutes to assure even baking.

Turn out cakes and allow to cool, then ice with Mocha Icing (see pg. 107).

MEXICAN CHOCOLATE FUDGE SAUCE

Mexican bars of chocolate for making and for baking cocoa come in several sizes and several brands. Usually milk is heated and put into a blender with a couple squares of the chocolate, blended and served hot. This recipe makes sauce.

4 oz. Mexican Chocolate
1 C. light Cream*

*Or use crema espesa mixed with equal parts Half & Half.

In a heavy saucepan set over low temperature or a double boiler, melt the Mexican chocolate. Add the cream a spoonful at a time, stirring to mix evenly. Let mixture heat until the chocolate is completely melted. To make a more authentic flavor, add 1/2 Tsp. cinnamon. Omit cinnamon if Mexican chocolate already has cinnamon.

Note: Usually Mexican chocolate contains sugar, cocoa, and vanilla. Recently (1994) a new "Sweet Chocolate" became available from the company Ibarra. - 7oz. Ingredients: Sugar, cocoa nibs, almonds, cinnamon, and lecithin.

Mexican chocolate sauce is very good on ice cream and may even be used to make cocoa mixing with milk.

MANGO ICE CREAM

Here's an easy recipe for a dessert using Mexican ingredients (mangos came to Mexico from India). I've been tempted to use Mexican Hot Fudge Sauce (see pg. 109) as a topping, but the mango flavor is just too delectable to mask with a stronger flavor. When it's delicious, don't mess with it!!!

3 C. Mango Pulp*
2 TBS. Sugar
1 C. Crema Espesa**
1 TBS. Key Lime Juice

*Mango pulp is available in Indian grocery stores, Fiesta Supermarkets in Houston, or you can make your own by removing the flesh from mangos and passing it through a food mill to remove the fibers. Or just leave the fiber in. If you make your own, increase sugar amount to 1/4 cup.

**If Crema Espesa is not available, make your own (see pg. 69) or substitute whipping cream.

Blend mango pulp and sugar, then mix crema into the mango pulp making sure it is thoroughly mixed. If you use whipping cream, whip until slightly thickened. Add the lime juice.

Freeze the mixture in an ice cream freezer. Remove ice cream from freezer, put it into a sealable container, place in freezer, and allow to freeze hard.

Texas Chef **CHILE PEQUIN JELLY**

Jellies made from hot peppers have been around for 15 or 20 years, especially Jalapeno Jelly. Since chiles pequins grow wild along the border and have a unique flavor, I decided to use them rather than Jalapenos. When the chiles pequins are green, I make green jelly — when they are ripe and red, I make red jelly.

1/4 C. Green Chiles Pequin
3/4 C. Diced Green Bell Pepper
1-1/2 C. Apple Cider Vinegar
6-1/2 C. Sugar
1-3 oz. Pouch CERTA

Clean jars and lids you plan to use. Pour boiling water over all to sterilize. Blend chiles (bell and pequins) in blender leaving some small pieces. Mix chiles in with the vinegar and sugar in a heavy pan. Cast iron will darken jelly — use something else.

Bring to a boil and barely boil for 15 to 20 minutes. Mixture should be clear. Cool 10 minutes then stir in CERTA. Return to heat and boil, stirring constantly, for 2 minutes. Remove from heat — skim — and ladle into sterilized jars. Screw on lids at once to seal.

Put all jars in a pan and cover with hot water. Boil 15 minutes. Remove and allow to cool. Tighten lids a little.

Delicious with most meats, especially roast beef.

I throw a few RED chiles pequins into each jar when I fill — for color.

MARINATED TROPICAL FRUIT SALAD

This is a concoction I came up with over the '96 holidays to get a break from pumpkin pie, etc. The marinade has a Mexican character and Mexicans love fresh tropical fruits in preference to desserts.

3 Oranges, peeled and diced	1/2 C. Shredded Coconut
1 Cantaloupe, peeled and diced	1/4 C. Pecans, chopped coarse
1 Pineapple, peeled, cored, and diced	2 TBS. Fresh Cilantro, chopped
2 Bananas, sliced	Sugar if Needed
1/2 C. Jicama, diced small	

MARINADE:

1/2 C. Sugar	1/2 C. Water
1/2 C. Bitter Orange Juice*	2-3" Sticks Cinnamon
10 Allspice Berries	1/4 C. Tequila
Pinch Salt	

*Bitter orange juice (see pg. 94) may be obtained at all supermarkets that handle GOYA food products. It is labeled Naranja Agria, 100% pure Seville orange juice.

In a large bowl, toss all the diced fruit and the seasonings.

For the marinade, boil all the ingredients except the tequila for 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from heat and allow to cool. Stir in the tequila. Pour over the diced fruit and allow to macerate for 30 minutes.

Serve in parfait glasses with a dollop of crema on top!!

TROPICAL FRUIT SALAD DRESSING

Tropical fruits are so-o-o delicious and the flavors so unique, a tropical fruit salad is a natural. This is my version of a fruit salad dressing to bring out those flavors and compliment, not clash, with them.

1/2 C. Crystallized Ginger, diced fine
1/4 C. Vegetable Oil
1/2 C. Vinegar
2 TBS. Key Lime Juice
1 Tsp. Dry Mustard
1 Tsp. Fresh Cilantro, chopped
1 Green Onion, minced
1/4 Tsp. Salt
1/4 Tsp. Ground Black Pepper
1/4 Fresh Jalapeño, minced

Place vinegar, dry mustard, and salt in blender and spin; then drizzle in oil through feed tube while blender is running.

Pour blender contents in glass bowl and mix all other ingredients into the liquids

Use over tropical fruit: mango, papaya, banana, diced orange slices, shredded coconut, whole strawberries, diced cantaloupe, etc. Use your imagination.

CREMA DE TUNA *
Cactus Pear with Creme Fraiche

I call cactus pear “Mexican Kiwi” because the cross-cut slices look like kiwi and the flavor is just a “little kiwi”.

1C. Cactus Pear Puree (see below for preparation)
1/2 C. Crema Espesa (see recipe pg. 69)
Juice of 1/2 Key Lime
1 Tsp. Honey
Pinch Salt

Puree: If you harvest your own cactus pear, wear leather gloves. Cut both ends off each pear; slice down the side and just peel off the thick skin like peeling an orange. Or, slice pear in half and scoop out pulp. Cactus pears have lots of seeds so run the pulp through a food mill to remove seeds. Puree in food processor or blender enough for 1 cup.

Combine puree with honey and lime juice and mix well. Adjust flavor with honey if needed and a pinch of salt.

Serve in parfait glasses layered with crema espesa for effect ending up with crema on top. Garnish with slice of cactus pear and a couple dots of pepita oil (see recipe pg. 98) or red chile paste (see recipe pg. 72).

*Tuna is the Spanish word for cactus pear.

GRILLED PINEAPPLE WITH LIME AND BROWN SUGAR

Piña a la Parilla

Mexicans, and most people from Latin American countries, like pineapple; and no wonder — it is so versatile. Grilled pineapple “desserts” are not common in ranch cooking, though. Many Mexican restaurants have a version of this either with rum or tequila and with brown sugar or the Mexican brown, unrefined sugar called piloncillo”. I use fresh ginger for a little zip.

1 Fairly Large Fresh Ripe Pineapple With Core Removed
1/4 lb. (one stick) Margarine
1/4 C. Key Lime Juice
1/4 C. Tequila
1 C. Brown Sugar, not packed
1/4 Tsp. Allspice
1/2 TBS. Fresh Ginger, grated

Slice pineapple into fairly thick slices, 3/4 inch to 1 inch without peeling it.

Put all other ingredients into saucepan and simmer until syrupy and will coat the back of a spoon.

Brush pineapple slices lightly with oil to prevent sticking when grilling. Grill until soft clear through and slightly crust from caramelization, about 8 to 10 minutes per side.

Serve a slice to each guest and pour sauce over each slice. A La Mode with ice cream!

Poultry and Egg Dishes

CHICKEN IN CREAMY CILANTRO SAUCE

This is a sauce I came up with back in 1993. Lately (1996) I notice recipes in newspapers which seem very similar. Cilantro is an ingredient which begs for experimentation and since it has an affinity for chicken and pork, I felt a cream sauce would be particularly tasty with chicken breasts. Cilantro flavor seems to cook out if cooked too long (simmered) so I add the cilantro last in the simmering process.

About 2 lbs. Boneless/Skinless Chicken Breasts Olive Oil
1 C. Crema Agria (see pg. 69)
6 oz. Half & Half
1/2 C. to 3/4 C. Cilantro, fresh, chopped
Salt and Pepper to Taste
3 to 4 TBS. Key Lime Juice
6 to 8 Cloves, minced

Clean chicken breasts and pat dry with paper towels. Mix olive oil, garlic, salt, pepper, and 2 or 3 TBS. lime juice. Rub chicken breasts with mixture. Place chicken breasts in a 1 gallon zip-lock bag, pour in balance of lime juice mixture. Refrigerate for about one hour.

In a blender mix the crema, the half and half, and a pinch of salt. Pour crema mixture into a non-corrosive saucepan (no aluminum or cast iron — aluminum is corrosive and cast iron darkens the sauce).

Bring crema mixture to simmer then stir in 2 - 3 TBS. lime juice.

Remove chicken breasts from zip-lock bag and sauté until brown and done through. Place the chicken breasts on serving platter.

At the last moment, stir fresh cilantro into crema mixture and simmer about one minute. Pour the light green cream sauce over the chicken breasts. Enjoy!!

CHICKEN BREASTS IN CHIPOTLE CREAM SAUCE CHICKEN

In 1993 and 1994 I started experimenting with chiles chipotles. They are such a unique chile and have the ability to contribute complex flavors to any dish but they seem to work best with chicken. However, I make a BBQ sauce using chipotles that has that chipotle smoky flavor.

6 Boneless, Skinless, whole Chicken Breasts
5 TBS. Olive Oil
1/4 C. Key Lime Juice
1 Clove Garlic, minced
1 Tsp. Salt

Crema Chipotle Sauce

1 - 7 oz. Can Chiles Chipotle en Adobo
10 Cloves Garlic
1/4 C. Onions, chopped
1 Pt. Heavy Cream*

*Or Mexican Crema Agria (see pg. 69)

Put chicken breasts in glass bowl. Salt on both sides of chicken breasts. Mix olive oil and lime juice and pour over chicken breasts. Rub well and marinate for 1 hour. Grill chicken breasts and top with Crema Chipotle Sauce.

Sauce

Cook garlic and onion in iron skillet for about 5 minutes or until charred. Put garlic and onions in blender with cream and chipotles. (Start with 1/2 the chipotles - if you desire more heat add more) Process until sauce is smooth. Place in saucepan and heat stirring continuously. Pour over chicken breasts and garnish with chopped cilantro leaves.

CHIPOTLE CHICKEN BREASTS

This is a dish I came up with while experimenting with the many uses of chipotle chiles. The sauce reminds me of Salsa Ranchera, only with a different chile and a little different texture. Chiles Chipotles are an example of the creativity of the Mexican people who have been using chiles for centuries.

2-1/2 to 4 Chiles Chiles Chipotles, stemmed and seeded.
4 Boneless/Skinless Chicken Breasts
2 TBS. Oil
2 Medium Onions, cut up
2 Cloves Garlic, chopped
1/2 C. Fresh Cilantro, chopped
5 Green Onions, chopped
1- 14 oz. Can Whole Peeled Tomatoes, drained
2 C. Chicken Broth

Reconstitute chiles by pouring boiling hot water over them in a bowl and allow to set for about 5 minutes.

Place chiles, onions, green onion, garlic, tomatoes, and chicken broth in blender and blend until smooth.

Cut chicken breasts into two pieces lengthwise making 8 pieces. Sauté in oil until browned slightly. Add contents of blender to chicken breasts and bring to boil. Immediately reduce heat and simmer for 10-12 minutes adjusting thickness of sauce if needed with chicken broth.

CHICKEN BREASTS STUFFED WITH PICADILLO

This is a “creation” recipe. In the U.S., we stuff chicken breasts with many ingredients, so I decided, “why not picadillo”. When served with Creamy Tomatillo Sauce (see pg. 75), it is great!

4 Boneless/Skinless Chicken Breasts
1/4 Red Bell Pepper, julienned
1 to 1-1/2 C. Picadillo (see pg. 33)
Fine, Fresh Bread Crumbs
Cayenne & Black Pepper To Taste
1 Egg White
1- One inch Piece Fresh Ginger, julienned

Hammer chicken breasts out very flat and thin without breaking. Lay out into oblong shape overlapping on edges that meet. Use two pieces for each serving. Drain picadillo well and spread about one tablespoon on chicken breasts about 1/2 inch from the edge. Spread bell pepper and ginger strips over picadillo.

Roll chicken breasts like jelly-rolls. Beat the egg white and dip each roll in the egg white draining excess. Season with cayenne and black pepper and roll in the bread crumbs.

Place on cookie sheet and bake at 325 degrees for 20 minutes or until tender.

Allow to cool and slice off 1-1/2 inch to 2 inch pieces of roll and serve topped with Creamy Tomatillo Sauce.

Try wrapping chicken rolls in phyllo then baking.

Salads and Dressings

JICAMA SLAW

(pronounced: hic-cama)

This is a “Creation” recipe I created in the Summer of ‘93. Jicama is a root (see glossary) popular in Mexico and along the border (it’s popular in Asia, too.) When peeled and sliced, it has the texture and taste similar to water chestnut and in some books is recommended as a substitute. Here’s my Jicama Slaw.

About 3/4 lb. Jicama, peeled
2 Medium Carrots
1/2 C. Cold Slaw Dressing
1/2 Tsp. Whole Comino
1/2 Tsp. Whole Celery Seed
1TBS. Fresh Lime Juice (or more)
1 TBS. Rice Vinegar (seasoned)*
1 TBS. Creole Mustard
1 to 2 TBS. Cilantro, chopped
Lettuce if desired

*Seasoned rice vinegar is a Japanese product. “Seasoned” is sweetened. If only unseasoned rice vinegar is available, add 1/2 tsp. sugar.

Shred very fine jicama, carrots, and lettuce if used. Set aside. Toast comino and celery seed in dry skillet until they begin to jump to bring out the flavor. Dump in mortar; add Creole mustard and cilantro and grind to a paste with pestle.

Empty mortar contents into a small bowl; add cole slaw dressing, lime juice, and vinegar. Stir thoroughly. Pour dressing over shredded vegetables and toss well to coat completely. Set in refrigerator, covered, for 1/2 hour or so before serving so carrots will be tenderized slightly by dressing. Serve as relishes or salsas are served.

TORTILLA/JICAMA SALAD WITH RICE WINE VINEGAR AND OIL

This is a creation by Bryan Crawford, Executive Chef at Heritage Plantation Resort in South Carolina. He created this before becoming Ex. Chef. while visiting his father in Port Isabel, Texas.

5 or 6 Corn Tortillas
1/2 C. Jicama, julienned
1 Medium Purple Onion, sliced very thin
1/4 C. Cilantro, chopped
2 TBS. Key Lime Juice
2 TBS. Corn Oil
2 TBS. Seasoned Rice Wine Vinegar*
Salt & Pepper To Taste

*I use the Japanese brand KAME seasoned rice wine vinegar which is available at most grocery stores. For the Japanese, seasoned is with sugar; unseasoned is without sugar. If not available use white wine vinegar and adding a bit of sugar according to amount used.

Stack the tortillas and julienne them. Heat a little oil and fry the tortilla strips in batches only slightly (too much will harden them). Drain and pat dry with paper towels. Toss tortilla strips with onions, jicama, and cilantro. Pour oil, vinegar, and lime juice in a jar and shake. Pour over salad and toss to coat everything.

Note: Sometimes I add 1/4 tsp. Oriental Sesame Oil to oil & vinegar.

Garnish with cilantro leaves and red bell pepper strips.

ENSALADA DE AGUACATE

Avocado Salad

The “other” avocado salad is guacamole. Traditional guacamole is mashed avocado with tomatoes, onions, and lime juice. This “creation” is my version.

Avocados should be diced last because they darken. If you can’t arrange this, “wash” the diced avocado in lime juice to retard darkening.

1- 7 oz. Can Herdez brand salsa verde or one recipe
Tomatillo Salsa Verde (pg. 75)
3/4 C. Crema Agria (pg. 69)
1/2 C. Onion, finely chopped
1/2 C. Lettuce, coarsely chopped
1 TBS. Fresh Cilantro Leaves, chopped
2 or 3 Haas Type Avocados, diced in 1/2 inch cubes.

Place crema and salsa verde in salad bowl and mix thoroughly. This makes a creamy dressing.

Place, onion, lettuce, and cilantro in bowl with dressing and toss. Put avocado cubes in last to prevent mashing and toss lightly.

Serve with just about anything!!

TOMATILLO MOUSSE

This idea came from an avocado mousse I saw once and decided tomatillo would make a good mousse and have a more distinct flavor.

1 TBS. Unflavored Gelatin
1/4 C. Tomatillo Broth
1 C. Drained Tomatillo Puree
1/4 C. Celery, minced
2 TBS. Chiles Jalapeño, minced
1/2 C. Crema Agria (see pg. 69)
Salt & Pepper to Taste

Clean tomatillos by removing husks and washing off sticky material on surface. Simmer 10 or 12 tomatillos in water until tender, drain, and reserve water in which they are cooked. Place tomatillos in blender and puree, adding some of the water in which they were cooked if necessary.

Soak gelatin in 1/4 C. of the tomatillo broth for 10 to 12 minutes. Heat over low heat until gelatin is dissolved. Stir the gelatin into the tomatillo puree; add celery, chile, salt and pepper, and mix well.

Beat the crema until it holds soft peaks and fold it into the mixture.

Place the mousse in ramekins or a small mold and chill for two hours. If using a single mold, make another batch of gelatin, allow to thicken then brush a coating onto the mold with thin slices of cooked tomatillos then pour the mousse in. When unmolded the gelatin and tomatillos will decorate the mousse.

Serve with grill or roast chicken.

GELATINA DE TOMATILLO

Tomatillo Aspic

This is a “Creations” recipe. When molded in a decorative salad mold and sliced it is great with chicken enchiladas or grilled chicken breasts.

3 C. Water
Sprig Cilantro
1 Chile Serrano, whole (don't slice)
2 lbs. Fresh Tomatillos*
Pinch Salt and Pepper
2 Envelopes Unflavored Gelatin

*You can use canned tomatillos (one 30 oz.tin). If you do, it is unnecessary to cook; drain and reserve juice. Proceed as with cooked fresh tomatillos.

Cook tomatillos with the salt, pepper, and chile serrano until tender. Place in blender and puree adding some or all of the cooking liquid after removing chile.

Line colander with double thickness of wet cheese cloth and strain puree into saucepan. Twist and squeeze to remove all juice. Take about a tablespoon of the remaining pulp (avoid peels) and add back to liquid.

Measure out 2 cups tomatillo juice adding water if necessary. Take 3 tablespoons of the warm juice and place in small bowl; sprinkle with gelatin and stir until dissolved. Whisk gelatin mixture into 2 cups tomatillo juice. Pour into mold and refrigerate. Unmold and decorate with thin slice of tomatillo and sprig or cilantro.

Note: Tomatillo aspic can be used as an ingredient for Vaciado de Crema de Tomatillo (Creamy Tomatillo Mold.)

Miscellaneous

FRIED TOMATILLOS

(pronounced tom-a-tee-yos)

This is a “Creation” recipe. Tomatillos (husk tomatoes) are not really tomatoes but are a relative of the gooseberry and are available year-round along the border. They are fairly inexpensive. My mother always made fried green tomatoes so I got the idea from that. This recipe uses Mexican ingredients: corn, chiles, and tomatillos.

1 Doz. Large Fresh Tomatillos
1/4 C. Flour
1 Tsp. Ground Cayenne
1/2 Tsp. Ground Black Pepper
1/4 C. Oil
1/4 to 1/2 C. Corn Flour*
Salt to Taste

*Corn flour (not corn starch) is available in grocery stores labeled as unseasoned Fish Fri. The most available is Zatarian’s Fish Fri (unseasoned).

Slice tomatillos about 1/4 inch thick. Sprinkle both sides with 1/2 Tsp. of the cayenne and salt to taste. Allow to rest. Sift flour, corn flour, 1/2 Tsp. cayenne, black pepper, and salt if desired. Mix thoroughly to blend seasonings evenly.

Heat oil in skillet. Dredge tomatillo slices in seasoned flour, shake off excess, and place in hot oil. Make only one layer, frying in batches until all tomatillos are brown on both sides and tender.

Place on paper towels to drain, then serve as side dish much as you would okra. Excellent with quail and other poultry.

CABBAGE LEAVES STUFFED WITH CHORIZO AND PINE NUTS

I have experimented with this since the Summer of 1993. I'm not even sure someone has not already thought about it, but here is what I came up with.

12 Large Good Fresh Cabbage Leaves	1/4 C. Pine Nuts, toasted
1 Qt. Water	Pinch Nutmeg
1 TBS. Caraway Seeds	Pinch Cinnamon
1/2 C. Chopped Cabbage Leaves	1 Canned Chile Chipotle, drained, mashed
Salt and Pepper to Taste	1/2 Medium Onion, chopped
1 C. Cooked Rice	1 Recipe Salsa Ranchera (see pg. 73)
1 C. Cooked Chorizo, drained well	

Bring water, caraway seeds, and the 1/2 C. chopped cabbage leaves to a boil in a stock pot. Simmer for 5 minutes, then strain out cabbage leaves and caraway leaves. Mix cooked rice, cooked chorizo, chile chipotle, cinnamon, nutmeg, salt and pepper, and pine nuts together. In a large skillet, sauté the onion in 1TBS. oil, then add chorizo/pine nut mixture and bring up to heat. Set aside.

Bring caraway/cabbage broth up to boil and blanch the 12 whole cabbage leaves to soften them for stuffing. Remove leaves from broth and allow to drain and cool enough to handle.

Take each blanched cabbage leaf and put 1 heaping tablespoon of the chorizo/pine nut mixture on it, then fold over 1/3 of the leaf, turn over each side and make a roll. You may need to hold together with a toothpick. Repeat process with remaining leaves.

Heat the caraway/cabbage broth and drop cabbage rolls in to bring up to heat. Place cabbage rolls on serving platter and pour on the ranchero sauce. Serve with side orders of pico de gallo and crema agria (see pg. 69) - substitute commercial sour cream if crema is not available.

GRILLED CORN ON THE COB

Corn is *the* Mexican vegetable — the source of life. Without corn, there would be no Mexican food - no tortillas, no masa, no corn soups, etc. This recipe was made up to serve with Codorniz al Pastor (see pg. 44) because it FITS and the grill is hot.

4 Ears of Very Fresh Field Corn
One 1/4 lb. Stick of Margarine
Juice of one Key Lime
Zest From One Key Lime
1 TBS. Ground Chile Ancho

Make lime butter by melting margarine and adding lime juice and lime zest as well as the chile to it. Simmer on low heat for 1 to 2 minutes. Chill the margarine in refrigerator.

Pull shucks back from corn (don't remove). Clean silks from corn. Brush chilled lime butter to each ear of corn and place shucks back in place tying in place with strip of the shucks.

Grill over mesquite embers with grill covered until corn is done — 15 to 20 minutes. Check doneness by pulling shucks back and piercing kernel of corn. If the milk is "set", corn is done. Don't overcook.

Serve in shucks with quail letting each guest shuck cooked corn and sprinkle with the ground chile ancho..

CILANTRO PASTA

This is my own version of Pasta Verde, the Italian pasta with spinach incorporated. Serve with your favorite pasta sauce.

1 C. Cilantro, chopped
3/4 TBS. oil
1 C. Flour
1 Egg, beaten
2 TBS. Dry Sherry (optional)
1-1/2 C. Chicken Broth
1 TBS. Soy Sauce
1/2 Tsp. Sugar

Puree cilantro with oil. Add to egg and mix. Place egg and cilantro mix in food processor. Add sugar and pulse once. Then add 3 TBS. of flour and process. Add flour, a tablespoon at a time through the feed tube and process until dough ball forms pulling away from bowl sides. Add more flour if needed to make dough compatible with rolling out on counter.

Remove dough, knead by hand into ball and wrap in plastic film to “rest” for 30 minutes. Roll out to 1/16 inch to 1/8 inch thick. Cut into noodle strips with pasta cutter or sharp knife and allow to dry.

When you cook this pasta, cook only about 3 minutes. Fresh pasta cooks faster than dry pasta.

FIDEO

Vermicelli with Pinto Broth and Chile/Crema Sauce

This is a “Creation” recipe. Fideo is the Mexican version of vermicelli or angel hair pasta. It’s is popular in most Spanish speaking areas of the new world. Most grocery stores along the border carry a brand which comes in 5 oz. yellow boxes.

5 oz. box Fideo or other nested vermicelli
1 TBS. Oil
2 TBS. Ground Chile Ancho*
Salt & Pepper to Taste
3 TBS. Hulled Green Squash Seeds, ground
2 TBS. Crema**
1 C. Broth From Cooked Pinto Beans
Chicken Broth
1 Tsp. Tomato Paste

*Or use Chile Paste (see pg. 72)

**Substitute 1TBS. commercial sour cream mixed thoroughly with 1 TBS. Half & Half.

Sauté Fideo in oil until crispy and slightly browned. They will look like Oriental fried noodles. Allow to set while preparing sauce.

In a saucepan heat pinto broth, tomato paste, and a little chicken broth. Gradually add ground chile ancho (or paste), and ground squash seeds. Sauce will begin to thicken (squash seeds are thickeners). When sauce reaches consistency of spaghetti sauce, remove from heat and stir in crema. If sauce becomes too thick too soon add chicken broth to thin to correct thickness.

Serve over prepared Fideo and garnish each serving with a dollop of crema and a sprig of cilantro.

MASA PANCAKES

This is an idea which came to me while preparing to make pancakes like my mother's in my first book, **Texas Chef**. Living here, in Mexican ranch country, inspires me to use Mexican ingredients.

1 C. Masa Harina Trigo*
1/4 C. Masa Harina**
Milk
1/4 Tsp. Salt
2-1/2 Tsp. Baking Powder
Pinch Allspice
2 Eggs
2 Whites of Egg
1 to 2 TBS. Oil

*Masa Harina Trigo is flour from wheat for making flour tortillas.

**Masa Harina is dehydrated corn masa for making corn tortillas.

Sift all dry ingredients into medium mixing bowl. Mix them thoroughly; set aside.

Mix all the liquid ingredients except milk including oil and beat in mixer until pale lemon color. Add dry ingredients to liquid ingredients gradually but quickly to avoid over mixing; then add milk to make batter for pancakes. Amount of milk may vary.

Heat griddle over medium heat. Brush with oil and ladle batter onto griddle to bake pancake the size you prefer. Brown on both sides.

Serve with butter or crema espesa and syrup of your choice. I like a sauce from cactus pear, Cobertura de Tuna, (see recipe pg. 106). Crema may be sweetened if you wish by stirring in a little sugar.

MEXICAN FLAG RAVIOLI

Stuffed with Picadillo and topped with Three Color Sauces

This is a “Creation” recipe. A twist in flavors from the Italian flag pasta dish. Make three ravioli doughs; one colored red with ground chile ancho, one with spinach puree or green food color, and the third left plain for white — red, white, green.

Roll out doughs, cut into 8” x 4” strips. Space about 1 tsp. picadillo (see pg. 33) one inch from one side and 1-1/2” apart. Fold other edge over picadillo, press ends and sides to seal and cut ravioli with pasta cutter or back of table knife. Continue with all the dough; you should have three batches of ravioli ready to cook.

Bring 6 to 8 cups water to boil. Drop in ravioli in several separate batches — don’t try to cook too many or water will cool down. Cook 12 to 13 minutes and remove from water with slotted spoon.

Make two sauces; one a ranchero sauce (see pg. 73), & one a creamy tomatillo sauce (see pg. 75) with a little green food color to strengthen the color. Use crema agria for the third color sauce (white).

On serving platter spread red sauce on left one-third, and green sauce on right one-third of platter leaving white space in the middle. Place green ravioli on green sauce, white ravioli in middle space, and red ravioli on red sauce. Top each color ravioli with corresponding color sauce using dollop of crema agria for white sauce on white ravioli.

GARNISH: Green - Cilantro Leaves
Red - Red Bell Pepper Slices
White - Julienned Jicama

Enjoy!!!

Appendixes

Appendix A - Chilies

About Chiles

Fresh Green or Red Chiles

Roasting and Peeling Chiles

Dry Chiles

Chipolletes

Appendix B - Cheese

Queso (About Mexican Cheeses)

Queso Fresco (Fresh Cheese)

Appendix C - Glossary

Appendix A - Chiles

CHILES

Since chiles are such an important part of Mexican cooking, this section will not be a history of chiles or a glossary of chiles, but will be about those chiles used along the border in ranch cooking. There are so many chiles growing in so many countries that it would take a whole book to tell about them. Some people have spent their lives studying chiles.. This is a cookbook and not a history of chiles, but if you cook with chiles you should know what purpose they have and some reason why one is used and not another or why two are used rather than only one.

There are many words for chile depending on where they are: *Aji* in South America and in the Caribbean, *chilli* in India, *chili pepper* in the U.S.A., and *chile* in Mexico.

Along the border, our word is *chile* from the Spanish corruption of the Nahuatl word *chilti* and we designate which by the suffix, example: chipotle - chilpochtli - chile smoked or chiltipintle - flea chile - chile pequin.

Chiles are used fresh and/or dried. I will separate them and try not to be confusing with names. The first part will be about fresh green or red chiles; the second part will be about dried chiles. Dried chiles are always some shade of red because they are picked ripe and red.

ALL ABOUT CHILES (ALMOST)

At Least Those Used In Ranch Country

I'm going to guess there are about a dozen chiles that are used often in ranch cooking, maybe more. Most are either available wild or are found in local grocery stores. A short trip into Mexico will get you more. There are two categories - fresh green or red chiles and dry chiles. There names may change depending on your location so I'll give some "other" names, too.

FRESH GREEN OR RED CHILES

Jalapenos - Probably the most used chile in the U.S. and maybe Mexico. Easy to grow it is in most people's garden and is grown commercially to a great extent. They are canned in brine or en escabeche (pickled) sometime with carrots, onions, garlic, etc. Jalapenos have thick fleshed similar to bell peppers and don't dry very well naturally, so they are picked red ripe and placed on racks over mesquite fires and dried/smoked until they are dry. Then they are called chiles chipotles. Jalapenos are the most used chile in salsas.

Serranos - Serrano in Spanish means mountain dweller. Serranos are the second most used chiles. Used much in the same way Jalapenos are they have a slightly different flavor and those who use chiles a lot appreciate the difference. Being thick fleshed, Chiles Serranos are dried the same way chiles Jalapenos are and are then called chiles moritas. Both Jalapenos and serranos are available dried or canned in adobo sauce and are very easy to use.

Poblano - Chiles Poblanos are named for the area where they originated, Puebla, Mexico. They are very popular for stuffing (chiles rellenos). Poblanos are easily recognized because they are very dark green

with a black cast — the darkest green in the supermarket — and shiny. Until recently poblanos have been fairly seasonal, but lately they are showing up in supermarkets all along the border and most of the year — much to everyone's delight. Poblanos have a subtle flavor which cannot be duplicated with any other chile and the recipes where they are used usually say, "don't substitute", however, many people use New Mexico chiles (sometimes called Anaheims) when making chiles rellenos. Other names: Anchos, Pasilla.

Anaheim - Anaheims are really New Mexico chiles, being developed by the Univ. of New Mexico, however, they were developed for farming and California took them up quickly and renamed them. They are used where poblanos are used and have a different flavor. Now and then a Poblano will be hot - Anaheims are uniformly mild and are good for stuffing. Since Anaheims are farmed extensively in New Mexico and California, they are available in more grocery stores than Poblanos. Dried Anaheims are most visible in New Mexico in the form of *ristas*. Other names: Chile Verde, Mild Green Chile.

Guero - Gueros are not as popular in ranch country as other green chiles, but are available in many stores. Guero means pale or blond in Spanish. Mexicans call Anglos “guero.” Gueros are used mostly for salsas and salads and are available en escabeche (pickled). Other names: Fresno, Caribe, Yellow.

Chilaca - Chilacas are not readily available in the average supermarket, but are in Mexican stores most of the time. Chilacas are recognized by their color. When fresh they are chocolately brown. They are available dried and are then called pasillas from the Spanish pasa (raisin). Green they are long and thin - 5” to 7” long and about 1/2” to 3/4” in diameter. Chilacas are good for mixing with other green chiles to make more complex flavored dishes. Chilacas,

used in ranch country but not widely; usually are from home gardens and good for variety.

Chile Pequin - There are two types of pequins, one called chiltepin which is tiny and round like BBs and the more oval shaped ones called chilipiquin. In ranch country, both grow wild and all are called chile pequins. Pequins do not take well to cultivation and must be hand picked so are not widely available in supermarkets. In Mexico both fresh green and dry red chile pequins are available. The green eaten fresh as a condimentor in salsas; the red ripe dry ones used in cooking and ground into chile blends. Very hot! I use both to make chile pequin jelly. Other names: bird, chile bravo (wild), chile del monte (woodlands).

ROASTING AND PEELING:

Only a few chiles need to be peeled before using. The peelings are too tough for pleasant eating and most taste better if they are roasted and peeled even bell peppers which normally don’t require peeling because the the peelings are not tough. The chiles that are used in this book which require peeling are: chiles poblanos, New Mexico chiles, and chiles Anaheim.

All green chiles may be roasted and peeled, however, they are very tedious to

peel. For example, the jalapeno. To roast and peel chiles: Place the chiles on a griddle and toast them on all sides until they are charred. Then put all the chiles in a paper bag and close it. Allow to “steam” for 5 or 6 minutes. By then they should be cool enough to handle. The skins of the chiles will be bubbled and cracked. Just pull off as much of the charred peelings as possible. A little charred peeling left on the chiles gives them a nice flavor.

DRY CHILES

Chiles Anchos - Anchos are dry chile poblanos and are probably the most used chile anywhere. They are used as the “bulk” flavor in dishes using other chiles as well as the basis for what Americans call chili powder. The flavor is mellow, not hot. Everyone has a different description of the flavor: chocolate, prune, mocha.

All seem to fit. Other names: poblano, pasilla.

Chile Mulato - Chile mulatos are so similar in appearance (and use) to anchos that the only way to tell the difference is to break them open and hold up to the light to observe the color. The ancho appears brown the mulato is reddish or wine color. Both can appear almost black from the outside. Mulatos have a subtle difference in flavor - fruity or like red wine.

Chile de Arbol - Arbol means tree, thus tree chile. Arbols look like chile cayenne. Some say they are a type of cayenne. Arbols are hot but not nearly as hot as cayennes. In appearance they are chocolaty, not as red as cayennes and arbols are thicker. Usually used to make sauces - often with other chiles.

Chile Guajillo - Chiles guajillos look like they could be dried Anaheims, but they are not, having a different flavor and more brown than red. Blended with other dry chiles like anchos and chile chipotles they make fantastic flavored sauce. Guajillo means little gourd.

Chile Chipotle - From the Nahuatl word chilpochtli meaning smoked chile. They are smoked dried Jalapenos, very hot and smoky in flavor. They are one of the most interesting chiles I know about. I have a booklet of the many uses for

chiles chipotles. Chipotles (See pg. 142) are available canned in an adobo sauce of tomatoes, onions. Flavorable/versatile.

Chile Pasilla - Chiles pasillas are dried chile chilaca. They are shaped like enlarged cayennes and are nearly black in color. Pasillas are normally used with other chiles to make sauces.

Chiles Cascabel - Cascabel means “rattle” like a babies rattle because when dry the seeds rattle inside. They appear to be dried cherry peppers. Like most dry

chiles cascabels are used to make Sauces.

Chiles Pequin - The name comes from the Nahuatl word chiltipintli meaning flea chile. They are small - about the size of BBs whether green or dried. This is the chile which when dry is crushed and sprinkled on menudo for “the morning after heavy drinking”. Dry or green they make good salsa. I use green or red ones to make green or red chile piquin jelly. Delicious with grilled meats of any kind.

Chile Powder - Chile powder is an American concoction with usually ground chiles anchos, comino, powdered garlic, black pepper, and maybe other spices. Ground chiles are used in Mexico and other spices or chiles are used according to the dish.

Preparation of dry chiles - Dry chiles are prepared for use in different ways; green chiles are always roasted and peeled the same way. I have included the preparation of dry chiles in the particular recipe where they are used. The constant is to wipe the dust from them with a damp cloth. See chile paste (pg. 73).

Viva! **CHIPOTLES**
SOME TASTY IDEAS FOR USING CHILES CHIPOTLES

Chiles chipotles are the “toney” chiles used by many of the “Southwestern Chefs”. They are chiles jalapenos. Chiles jalapenos are thick-fleshed and do not sun-dry well. Therefore, after they turn red on the plant and are picked, they are placed on racks with warm smoke passing over them, a method similar to smoking fish. They give a smoky flavor desired by Southwestern cooks. Chiles Serranos dried this way are called *chiles moras* or moritas. The dried chiles are sold bulk like sun-dried tomatoes or packed in cans in an adobo sauce.

Chipotle Wings

Mash canned chiles chipotles and mix with melted butter or margarine - one or two chipotles per one pound butter. Simmer a few seconds and use for Buffalo Wings Sauce after the wings have been deep-fried or baked.

Chipotle Sandwich Spread

Mash canned chiles chipotles and mix with two parts good mayonnaise (without sugar) and one part Creole mustard. Delicious spread for bologna, salami, or ham sandwiches.

Chipotle Chile Oil

Mash two canned chiles chipotles and mix with one cup oil or peanut oil. Heat, allow to cool; strain and store in a sealable container. I use a small Perrier bottle with a pour spout. Use as you would Oriental chili oil.

Chipotle Vinegar

Want an exciting flavored vinegar? Mash two canned chiles chipotles and add to five ounces of wine vinegar in a 16 oz. bottle. Shake well and allow to steep for 2 or 3 days. Strain, use as any other flavored vinegar.

Chipotle/Tomatillo Salsa

Add mashed chiles chipotles to Tomatillo Salsa (Salsa Verde) for a little KICK !!

Chipotle-que

Mash canned chiles chipotles and mix very thoroughly with your favorite BBQ sauce for *enlivenment*.

Chipotle Chips

Using ordinary corn tortillas, dry them between paper towels to remove most of the moisture. Cut tortillas into chips your choice of shapes or size. Add two tablespoons of Chipotle Chile Oil to deep-frying oil and fry chips for crispy, nippy chips.

Chipotle Marinade

Mash canned chiles chipotles. Mix into equal parts wine vinegar or lime juice, olive oil, a little grated ginger and coarse ground black pepper. If you wish, you may use the adobo sauce the chiles are packed in versus the olive oil, since the adobo sauce is part sesame oil. The marinade may be an octave or two hotter. For marinating game, always increase the acid ingredient - vinegar and/or lime juice.

Appendix B - Cheese

QUESO Cheese

There are about half dozen Mexican cheeses used along the border. The Mennonite settlements in the Mexican state of Chihuahua have dwindled now but their legacy remains in the form of cheese. However, the Mennonites are not the only ones in Mexico to make cheese. Some cheese is made in nearly every state. Here are the ones most used in this book:

Queso Fresco - Fresco means fresh so the cheese most similar in the US would be farmers cheese. Queso Fresco is crumbled over nearly every type of food and used as stuffing for chiles. A recipe for Queso Fresco is in this book (see pg. 144).

Queso Chihuahua - This cheese was originated by the Mennonites in Chihuahua. It is similar to a white cheddar but Monterey Jack is the most used substitute. This cheese is very popular in Mexico especially for stuffing as in Chiles Rellenos con Queso and for making Quesodillas, that snack made with tortillas with cheese between like grilled cheese sandwiches.

Queso Panela - One of the most popular cheeses along the border. Queso Panela is used when eating cheese with fruit, as snacks, or as a garnish. It is semi-soft and white as are most Mexican cheeses.

Queso Oaxaca - This is the Mexican version of mozzarella or Armenian string cheese. The form it usually found in is a

large ball the size of a soccer ball made ball made from strands of cheese. After making the ball of cheese, it is aged. This is one of my favorite cheeses and every time I go to Mexico, I buy a pound or two. I prefer it over mozzarella and it is especially good making Quesadillas.

Requeson - This is a cheese which is semi-dry and very crumbly. It is similar to dry cottage cheese with smaller curds. Requeson is used for every thing!! I love it sprinkled over tacos and especially over enchiladas - even over fruit.

Mexican type cheeses can be purchased in the US, but so far I have unable to find a brand which is authentic. My feeling is that US cheese makers want to make it only use US methods. I may be wrong. The other reason may be our pasteurization and homogenization requirements because the same problem exists with Crema.

QUESO FRESCO

Fresh Cheese

Queso Fresco (fresh cheese) is very similar to old fashioned farmers cheese made from “clabber”. It is a sort of dry, crumbly cottage cheese and is delicious on many Mexican dishes like enchiladas, tacos, fresh fruit, Huevos Mexicanos, etc. Ranch wives along the border let the raw milk “clabber” naturally and make the cheese like my mother used to by hanging the curds on the clothes line to drip dry. Since U.S. health laws don’t allow raw milk to be sold, we must use homogenized milk which makes things a little more difficult, but not impossible. Use Calcium Chloride with Rennet to “set” the curds.

3 Qts. Whole Milk
1 TBS. Water
Rennet, per instructions on package
Calcium Chloride, per instructions
2 Tsp. Ground Kosher Salt

Heat milk to 110 degrees (test with thermometer). Add all other ingredients (except salt) and mix well. Allow to cool for 40 minutes. Criss-cross clabber (curds) with knife cutting into squares (when using homogenized milk you won’t get the neat, firm squares as with raw milk). Set aside for 4 to 8 hours to “season”. With a slotted spoon, transfer curds to cheese cloth “bag”. Drain for 18 hours. (Save whey to make ricotta if you are so inclined).

Transfer drained curds to food processor and pulse until curds are small pea-sized crumbs. Don’t puree. Add salt at this time. Scrape curds into mold (4” across and 2” deep); press and cool in airy place for two hours. Turn and allow to cool another two hours. Continue drying for a few hours. Seal in zip-lock bags and refrigerate. Will keep three or four days - remember it is fresh!.

Appendix C - Glossary

The following terms are used along the area from appr. Del Rio, Texas down to the mouth of the Rio Grande river near Matamoros, Mex. on both sides of the border. They are terms that are, to the best of my knowledge, correct. Terms, especially names of chiles and of cheeses, vary extremely from region. For example, Chiles Anchos are dried Chiles Poblanos here, but in other areas Anchos are called Poblanos and/or Poblanos are called Anchos. Queso Requeson here is called Queso Fresco other places, altho Queso Fresco means fresh cheese and Requeson is fresh cheese or curd. I am in the process of compiling a "cross reference" for cheeses and chiles.

Acero - A special skillet for baking Pan De Campo, biscuits, etc. It has a cover with "side boards" to hold embers so baked products will brown on top when the acero is buried in embers. Most have little legs to allow embers to be underneath.

Achiote - Brick-red seeds from a tree which grows more or less wild in the Yucatan. It is used to color foods such as rice and to provide some flavor. The flavor is unique. An ingredient in marinades and adobos in the Caribbean and Mexico.

Acitron - A candy made from the leaves of the biznago cactus. In Mexico it is used also in ground meat dishes such as picadillo. In the US, it can be used in fruit cake like candied cherries, etc.

Adobo - Adobos are a form of dry rub or wet marinade similar to moles. Dry adobos have chiles, garlic, onion, etc. which is rubbed on meat and allowed to rest a while so it "marinates" the meat. Wet is used in a similar

fashion. Wet adobos can also be diluted with water, broth, or even tomato juice or lime juice to use in simmering meats that have been browned before.

Asado - Roasted or broiled.

Ajonjoli - Sesame seeds.

Bolillo - A carry-over from French rule in Mexico. They are little 5" - 6" long crusty rolls similar to French bread available in most Mexican bakeries. They are thick in the middle and pointed on the ends.

Bunuelo - Fritter. Along the border bunuelos are tortillas, either flour or corn, fried in oil then dipped or rolled in sugar and cinnamon mix.

Burrito - A taco made with flour tortilla vs. Corn tortilla, usually rolled like a Chinese egg roll and may be fried like an egg roll.

Cabrigo - A kid goat used extensively along the border of Mexico and the US in ranch country usually spitted and roasted over open hot coals.

Cena - Dinner.

Comida - Main meal of the day.

Chorizo - A spicy sausage made in Mexico and both sides of the US/Mexico border. A decendent of the Spanish Chorizo only liv-ened up by chiles, etc. to make it really Mexican. The best brand in Texas ranch country is *Guerro* made in San Manuel, Texas near Edinburg.

Cilantro - Chinese parsley. The herb of choice along the border. In the interior of Mexico, the herb of choice is Epazote, especially good in beans. Epazote grows wild in the U.S. and Mexico.

Cocido - Cooked.

Cocina - Kitchen.

Comal - A cast iron griddle originally made from clay in Mexico. Along the border you may see cooks using sheets of tin, pieces of iron or steel - nearly anything for which to heat tortillas. Clay comals are nearly a lost art. Only a few remain, but they work best.

Cordiniz - Quail.

Crema - A dairy product made in Mexico, unfortunately not in the US, similat to clot-ted cream in England or creme fraiche in France.

Cruda - Raw as in uncooked, example: salsa cruda (uncooked salsa).

Desayuno - Breakfast.

Epazote - A semi-wild herb used along the border to season dishes, especially beans. It grows wild along US highways and sidewalks and is called pigweed or wormseed. Even

though, the preferred herb is cilantro.

Gordita - Spanish for "little fat one", it is a cake of corn masa, really a thick tortilla, grilled then fried and stuffed savory fillings.

Guacamole - From the Nahuatl words *guaca* for avocado and *mole* for mixture. A mixture of true Mexican ingredients: avocado, to-mato, and chile.

Huevos Estrellado - Fried eggs similar to some versions of Huevos Rancheros only with mole poblano instead of salsa ranchera.

Limes - Called limon (le-moan) in Spanish. Mexican limes are little golf ball size/ shaped fruit called Key Limes in the U.S. Persian limes (the green ones in the grocery stores) may be used, but the flavor is very different. Used for marinades, drinks (lime-ade), mixed drinks, sauces, etc. When you order lemon in Mexico you will get limon (Key lime).

Masa - Dough from corn. Made by soaking and cooking corn kernels in a solution of slaked lime and water to remove the hulls, then ground into a moist dough between rollers. Not made with corn meal or corn flour.

Masa Harina - Dehydrated masa (flour like).

Masa Harina Trigo - Dehydrated wheat flour dough (flour like).

Menudo - Mexican tripe soup.

Mexican Cheeses - Mexico has several cheeses: Anejo (aged), Requeson (a dry fresh cheese similar to dry cottage cheese or farmer's

cheese.) It is called Queso Fresco in some places, Chihuahua cheese (similar to Jack cheese), Oaxaca cheese (similar to mozzarella or Armenian string cheese), Panela (similar to Feta but not so salty). It too, can be crumbled like Feta or Requeson. Mexican cheeses taste more “tart” or “sour” than “cheesy”, however, they are improving and I find the Panela, Oxacan, Chihuahuan, and Requeson are very good. The “sour” taste is part of the “Mexican flavor” of the dish it is used in. Requeson means curds. It is my favorite for “garnishing” dishes. Just a little sprinkle adds a nice touch of flavor.

Molcajete - (pronounced mole-kay-hate-e) The basalt mortar used by every Mexican cook. The Mexican food processor. Very effective for grinding spices, tomatoes, garlic, etc. Preferred by cooks because it leaves a desired texture to whatever is ground.

Mole - (pronounced mole-ay) Mole usually means a mixture like a sauce or paste. The most popular in Mexico is Mole Poblano which originated in a Spanish/Mexican convent in Puebla thus the name Poblano. The *mol* in molcajete comes from the word mole.

Nahuatl - The language of the central highlands of Mexico (Toltec, Mayan, Aztec, etc). Root for most of the names used in this glossary like chiles, mole, harina, etc. Nahuatl mixed with Spanish makes up the language of Mexico.

Nogada - The Spanish word for walnut sauce. From the Spanish word for nogal (walnut tree).

Nopales - Cactus leaves or paddles. Much used in cooking in Central Mexico and along the border. Several recipes in this book.

Norte - The Northern regions of Mexico.

Nueces - The Spanish work for nut. Along the border nueces means pecan.

Olla - The clay or pottery pot used for cooking beans, soups, stews, etc. Still extensively used along the border. I call it the Mexican crock pot or slow cooker.

Pan - Spanish for bread. Pan Dulce is sweet bread; sweet roll.

Pepita - From the Spanish for seeds. Usually understood to mean squash seeds, sesame seeds, or even peanuts or all.

Pescado - Fish.

Pipian - A type of mole made with sesame seeds as a thickener. Also, may include peanuts or almonds. The sauce “pipian” probably originated in Moorish Spain from ground almonds. Some pipians and moles have fruit raisins, prunes, etc.) like North Africa still has.

Quesadilla - Turnover of tortilla made by sprinkling cheese on a tortilla then placing another tortilla on top and grilling. Mexican version of grilled cheese sandwich.

Ranchero - Ranch style as in salsa ranchero.

Rolleno - Stuffed or stuffing.

Tejolotes - The basalt pestle for molcajete.

Tuna - Mexican for prickly pear from nopal cactus.

Yema - Yolk.



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