

Muy Bueno

Three Generations of Authentic Mexican Flavor

By Yvette Marquez-Sharpnack, Veronica Gonzales-Smith and Evangelina Soza
Photography by Jeanine Thurston



Cook book, yes. I want to cook it all and then eat my way to *paraíso* paradise...most certainly. If ever there was a declaration that there is more to Mexican food than tortillas, beans, cheese and red sauce, *Muy Bueno* is that defining statement. It has taken three generations of *damas*: grandmother Jesusita, daughter Evangelina and granddaughters Yvette and Veronica to render a cookbook so beautifully done that one wishes to merely dine of the alluring imagery alone, created by Denver photographer Jeanine Thurston. If you love great Mexican Food, you must add this cookbook to your collection. The following are but a few of the recipes you will find inside.

Green Enchiladas

Enchiladas Verdes

4 to 6 Servings

If I had to pick ONE recipe to remember Mom by this would be it. This is Mom's signature dish: delicious, spicy, stacked green enchiladas. We pile them flat and high, sometimes three and four tortillas high. After leaving home I craved her enchiladas verdes constantly and tried for years to duplicate them. Two ingredients make them uniquely her recipe, slow-roasted long green chiles and suero de sal (whey). The only place I know to get suero de sal is from Licon Dairy in El Paso, Texas. Buttermilk is a close second if I can't get my hands on suero. The combination of the suero with green chiles gives this recipe its one-of-a-kind sabor. Feel free to enjoy these stacked or rolled.

Sauce

- 12 Anaheim chiles, roasted and peeled (instructions below)
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 1 quart Suero de Sal (whey) or buttermilk, divided
- Salt to taste
- ½ cup crema Mexicana or sour cream
- ½ cup canola oil for frying
- 12 to 18 corn tortillas, preferably white corn
- 1 pound shredded store-bought rotisserie chicken (optional)
- 1½ cups white shredded cheese (Monterrey Jack, asadero, or Muenster cheese)
- 1 medium white onion, finely chopped
- 2 green onions, diced (optional)
- 2 avocados, pitted, peeled and sliced (optional)

Prepare the Chiles

Preheat broiler. Select firm, meaty peppers without wrinkles. Rinse thoroughly to remove dust particles. Place peppers evenly in a single layer on a foil-lined cookie sheet. Pierce each chile with a knife. Place under broiler. Watch them closely as the skin will blister and turn black within minutes. Turn the peppers after 3 to 5 minutes to blister all sides evenly. When done, the pepper skins should be evenly blistered and mostly black. Place roasted peppers in a plastic bag, cover with a wet kitchen towel and when cool, peel off blackened skin. tear open and pull out the seed pod and stem.

Prepare the Sauce

In a blender combine the roasted and peeled chiles, flour and half the suero or buttermilk and blend until creamy. Pour mixture into large skillet and set over medium-low heat to warm. Add remaining suero or buttermilk and stir. Taste and season with salt, usually about 2 teaspoons. If the sauce is too spicy, add ¼ cup of crema Mexicana or sour cream and stir. If the sauce is too thick, add water until desired consistency is reached.

Assemble stacked enchiladas:

In a non-stick frying pan heat canola oil. Drop 1 tortilla at a time into the hot oil and fry until softened, turn once during frying. Drain on paper towels. Soften tortillas by soaking in chile sauce one at a time.

Place a chile-coated tortilla on a serving plate. Layer with some shredded chicken (optional), shredded cheese and chopped onion. Top with another coated tortilla. Repeat layers for a total of 3 or 4 tortilla layers per serving. Serve stacks with a dollop of crema Mexicana or sour cream, some chopped green onion and slices of avocado.



Homemade Chicken Soup

Caldo de Pollo

4 to 6 servings

- 8 cups water
- 4 to 6 skinless chicken drumsticks or thighs
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 4 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- ¼ cup white long grain rice
- ½ cup chopped onion
- 2 roma tomatoes, chopped
- 2 carrots, sliced
- 3 celery stalks, sliced
- 3 Yukon Gold potatoes, quartered
- ½ cup tomato sauce
- 1 tablespoon chopped cilantro
- ¼ teaspoon whole safflower petals
- Lime wedges

In a large (at least 10-quart) pot, put the water, chicken, salt and garlic. Boil for 15 minutes.

While the chicken is boiling, in a separate pan, heat the oil over medium heat, add rice and cook, stirring occasionally, until rice is browned, about 2 to 3 minutes, being careful not to let it burn. Add onion to rice and continue cooking until onion is translucent, about 2 minutes. Add tomato and cook for an additional 3 minutes. Add mixture to chicken pot. Add carrots, celery, and potatoes to soup and let come to a boil; reduce heat. Let simmer until vegetables cook through, about 20 to 30 minutes. Add tomato sauce, cilantro and safflower petals during the last 5 minutes. Ladle soup, including a piece of chicken for each serving, into bowls and serve with lime wedges, warm corn tortillas and salsa casera.

Book Launch for Muy Bueno

Friday, October 19 from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.

Tattered Cover Book Store

2526 East Colfax Avenue, Denver

Meet author Yvette Marquez and photographer Jeanine Thurston at this reading and book signing with treats.

Beef Short Ribs

Costillas de Res

4 to 6 servings

- 4 pounds beef short ribs
- 2 or 3 bone marrow bones (optional)
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 8 ounces liquid smoke (recommend Claude's Barbeque Brisket Marinade Sauce)
- 3 red potatoes, quartered
- 2 carrots, peeled and quartered
- 2 ears of corn, quartered
- 1 teaspoon crushed dried Mexican oregano
- 1 teaspoon dried parsley
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 fresh rosemary sprig
- ½ yellow onion, sliced

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Arrange all the ribs and bone marrow, if using, in a roasting pan, casserole dish or Dutch oven. Pour olive oil and liquid smoke over the ribs. Surround the ribs with potatoes, carrots and corn. Sprinkle the oregano, parsley, salt and pepper over the meat. Place the bay leaves and rosemary sprig on the meat. Place the onion slices on the meat. Cover roasting pan or casserole dish with aluminum foil or oven safe lid and bake for 2 to 2½ hours. Remove the foil or lid and turn the meat over. Replace the foil or lid and bake for an additional 15 to 20 minutes. The ribs are done when you grab one of the rib bones and try prying it off the meat it is loose and spins with little or no resistance. Remove the bay leaves before serving.

