

Meat Gluttons of Western Mexico

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ABSTRACT

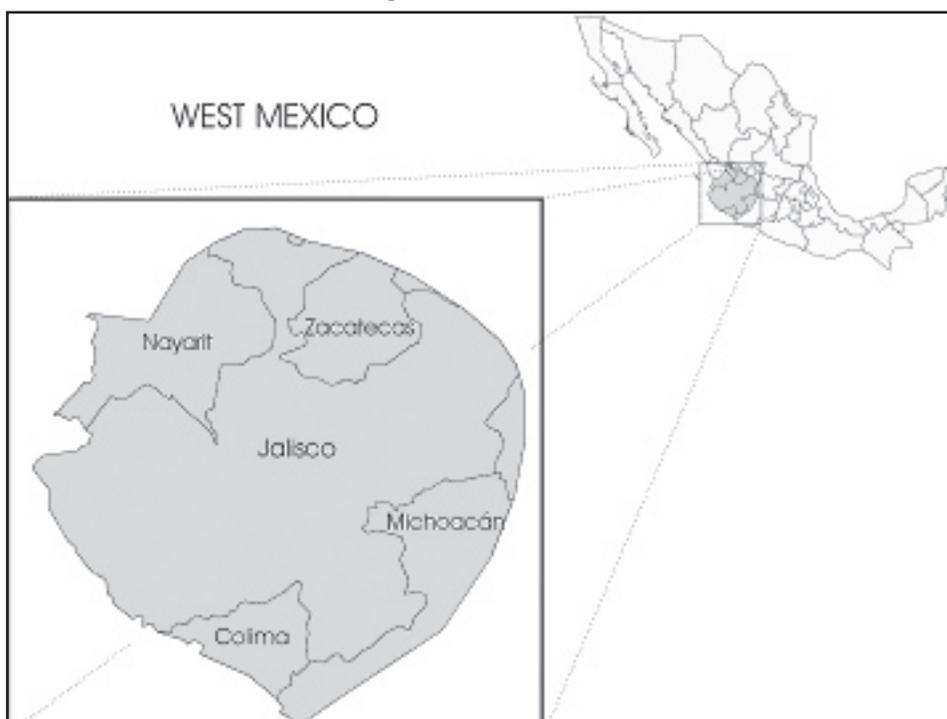
The people of a certain area in the west of Mexico have inherited a pattern of diet that is based mainly on meat, prepared in a variety of ways. This chapter contains a rich description of the diet of these people and their eating customs. The lack of culinary sophistication is remarked upon, together with its probable cultural roots.

ENTRÉE

This article is a report on customs related to meat consumption in western Mexico, a geographical area roughly covering the present-day states of Jalisco, Colima, Nayarit, Aguascalientes, the west of Michoacán, and the south of Zacatecas (Figure 1). The region is characterized by having been,

in pre-Hispanic and colonial times, an intermediate area between what we call Meso-America and its northern periphery: the former, civilized and sophisticated in culinary matters; the latter, also called Arido-America, firstly nomadic and barbaric, during pre-Hispanic era and part of the colonial period, but also a mining region with extensive livestock from the mid-16th century to the present day.¹

FIGURE 1
Map of Western Mexico



The area we refer to as western Mexico is a macro geographical and cultural area whose unifying characteristics derive from its principal productive activity, the breeding of livestock, at least until the middle of the 18th century. Culturally mixed foodway traditions have developed there, ranging from a limited autochthonous diet to the consumption of diverse kinds of meat – introduced by the Spaniards at the time of the Conquest in the 16th century.

To describe in greater detail the diet of western Mexico, we have decided to deal with it under two headings: public and private cuisine. However, in both cases we will try to distinguish gourmet food from popular cuisine.

THE PUBLIC SPHERE: EATING OUT

As far as the public sphere is concerned, at the time of writing – particularly in Guadalajara, the large macro-regional capital – gourmet and urban food is similar to that found in the other large Mexican towns, with the exception of Mexico City, which is undoubtedly superior to the rest, being the great metropolis. (For the purposes of this study, we exclude from this classification luxury, cosmopolitan tourist centres, where international influence has had a strong impact.)

In the area under study, records on urban cuisine characteristic of the bourgeois (González Turmo, 1995: 307) and the *nouveau riche* are few. There is emphasis on so-called international and continental cuisine, whose predominant influences are the United States and western Europe. Moreover, in a limited number of places, ethnic cuisines can be found: French, Italian, Spanish, and Asian food from China and Japan, as well as food of Arab origin.² As far as “gourmet” cuisine is concerned,³ truly Mexican food is scarcely represented, with the exception of what has been recreated in recent years, thanks to the influence of international culinary fashions, above all the French. This could be called *nouvelle cuisine mexicaine*.⁴

Meal times

To understand the public culinary contexts of western Mexico and perhaps those of the whole country, it should be pointed out that there are three fundamental meal times, each with specific tendencies, and a period when midday snacks are consumed. These are described below.

Breakfast

Breakfast in western Mexico, in contrast to Mediterranean countries, is a hearty meal and may include a range of dishes only eaten at that time of

day. Rightly, it is called *almuerzo*,⁵ a term that implies large amounts of heavy and nutritious food. *Menudo*, eggs, and chilaquiles are exclusively morning foods, as is pork or beef with chilli. Birria is also a breakfast dish, as are tacos of *cabeza*, *tripa*, *suadero*, *bistec* and seasoned pork prepared in a style known as “*al pastor*.”⁶

It should be said that *menudo* is an archetypical morning dish, found both in bourgeois and popular cuisine throughout the entire region. Roughly speaking *menudo* is eaten between midnight and midday, since night party-goers may eat it after a night of revelry, usually at dawn, or as well-off people’s parties draw to a close. Nevertheless, this dish is most frequently consumed by workers at cock-crow, very early in the morning, as many consider it the ideal dish to prepare a man for an intense day of hard work, compensating for poor nutrition, exorcising violent hangovers and even curing certain diseases, according to popular wisdom in this area. *Birria*, another characteristic dish of western Mexico, is also eaten in the morning and is considered to be the ideal breakfast for travellers before boarding a bus that will take them to their destination. This habit is to be found mainly in rural areas where the only thing consumed at daybreak is a cup of coffee or an infusion of cinnamon, with a shot of alcohol added.

In the last ten years, breakfast has acquired preferential status among middle and upper-class Mexicans. Business breakfasts are quite common, as well as those attended by well-to-do housewives, later in the day, after freeing themselves from husbands and children, at work or school. These liberated women can enjoy a good meal and spend the morning chatting with their friends.

Midday snacks

In the sphere of popular public food, midday is the time for the *botana*: in addition to *birria* and the already mentioned *tacos*, we find various stews, where meat predominates and is almost always seasoned with a spicy sauce. We also find *barbacoa* from the pot, certain varieties of seafood, and in the area of Guadalajara, “*tortas ahogadas*.” This last snack is sandwiches of white *birote* bread, filled with pieces of pork fried in lard, called *carnitas*. These *tortas* are “*ahogadas*” (drowned), in a choice of two

saucers, one has a mild tomato flavour and the other is very, very spicy. Generally, these dishes are consumed at street stands or in very simple restaurants (Ávila/Ruiz, 1998: 177). These establishments attract people from the lowest strata of society, as well as those from the elite: taste does not discriminate on socio-economic grounds.

Lunch

Lunch-time, which means the hours between two and four in the afternoon, is when people usually go to so-called “folkloric” restaurants. These offer regional specialties or specialties from other parts of the country, often accompanied by music appropriate to the ambience. Dishes are almost always a preparation of some kind of meat. Lunch-time customers also go to *cantinas* and *fondas* specializing in fish or seafood. In all of these establishments, copious alcoholic drinks are consumed – especially beer, tequila, and rum. At the same time, the few restaurants that offer sophisticated Mexican food tend to be more crowded at midday than in the evening.

In this type of restaurant, it is uncommon to eat good meat, in the sense defined by the gastronomic canons of western Mexico. The meat is almost always seasoned with a spicy sauce that exploits the bountiful range of Mexican chillies. As is known, cooking meat in sauce tends to diminish its flavour. It might be said that, as far as we can observe, a sophisticated taste in meat eating has not yet spread to the whole area under study.⁷ The public meal at midday, among the affluent social strata in this country, has gained sophistication thanks to the recovery of Mexico’s economy in recent years and the cosmopolitan impact on urban society. In some cases, this food can be considered fine cuisine. But it still has less influence among the people of Guadalajara and other populations of western Mexico compared to the yearning they have for meat, prepared in any manner whatsoever. In fact, the quasi-compulsive fondness for meat is what pervades public and private cuisines in Western Mexico (Ávila/Ruiz, 1998: 170).

Supper

Generally, the places crowded at night in western Mexico tend to be unsophisticated and serve popular food. It is the reign of the so-called

fritangas, sold in restaurants, accompanied by small amounts of alcoholic drinks and served in a family or neighbourhood atmosphere. Beer and tepache are the alcoholic drinks most frequently found in these establishments. The meat is eaten in *pozole*, *tostadas*, *sopes*, *enchiladas*, *tortas*, *tamales*, and *tacos* with different fillings; in all these dishes, corn and numerous varieties of chilli also play a fundamental role. *Pozole*, a classic dish, is eaten particularly at night. The *fondas* which serve *carne asada*, prepared in different ways, are equally popular, although their establishment in this area is relatively recent.

At the same time, due to massive migration, as well as interchanges of trade and customs, one can witness the development of what we might call “popular international food”, in the shape of hot dogs, hamburgers, pizzas, and sushi, which permeate almost all regions of Western Mexico, each with their own local varieties. However, for the time being we shall not dwell on this topic since it concerns what is considered to be “global cuisine”. We will only reiterate what various cooks have pointed out: “People enjoy novelties (meaning new dishes), but they always come back to what they know best.”⁸

Meat is eaten morning, noon, and night, as well as between meals. But we insist that taste in meat-eating tends to be on the non-sophisticated side. For example, from an international perspective, beef, which international taste dictates should be hung for a certain time and then cooked rare, in western Mexico tends to be recently butchered and grilled to excess.

THE PRIVATE SPHERE: EATING AT HOME

Whereas public food in western Mexico has a tendency to flaunt social status and assert it through external signs of wealth, with the encouragement of recently acquired gastronomic tastes, in the context of private cuisine things are different. In fact, the relative sophistication shown in certain public eating habits disappears when at home. There, instead, foodways are characteristic of people’s sober and austere traditions. Gluttony ends and temperance begins, a temperance which for gourmets often seems to border on meanness. These characteristics are evident even in well-to-do households, referred to by historians as old *criollos*, in reference to their status as heirs of the conquerors and colonizers who once were part of the elite.

Breakfast

In the cultural environment of daily life at home, breakfast is perhaps the most lavish meal of all, with fruit juice, fruit, eggs, bacon, and meat dishes, accompanied by hot sauces, the inevitable beans, maize *tortillas*, and sometimes bread. Also, due to the influence of our neighbours in the north, cereals and some dairy products are consumed. But these fashions are anathema to any gourmet worth his salt.

Lunch

At midday soup or pasta are generally served. In many homes, as in cheap *fondas*, rice follows, to which many times a fried egg is added. The main dish is generally prepared from some kind of meat, but in this case, because of frugality and the dubious quality of materials, the charm of the meal is greatly reduced. Meat is presented in a number of Spartan forms. If “bistec” is served – whether pork, beef or occasionally veal – the slice is so thin that the diner can almost see through it. Likewise, a good cook will try to fool the gourmet with *pacholas*, a characteristic dish of the region, made with ground beef, to which is added a generous dose of air, due to its being ground on the *metate*. In fact better-quality meat, including fillet, is eaten only if guests are present. When there is chicken, if the family is large, the normal portions are cut in half in order to make it go as far as possible. Until recently, beef broth was made practically every day, but it was often a thin broth full of bones and overcooked vegetables. Broth was also served instead of pasta, while meat, not always of the best quality, was served as the second dish accompanied by cooked vegetables and sometimes rice.

Among festive dishes should also be mentioned those prepared with goat and pork. The latter is simply fried in its own fat over a low flame, so as to later produce *carinitas* and *chicharrones*, another archetypical dish of Western Mexico. This treat is seldom made at home, but is often eaten there after buying it from a favourite street stand.⁹

Three or four decades ago, beef was cheaper than it is today, with the exception of fillet steak. Chicken came next in cost, and then pork, of which loin was the part fetching the highest price, since people had not discovered that leg had better flavour. There was no culinary sophistication (and this

is still true today) regarding the maturity of meat, the amount of cooking it should receive or how it should be prepared. Eating meat rare provokes widespread repugnance, the more so if it appears bloody. The perception and behaviour of people in western Mexico with regard to meat consumption might be considered odd in a region culturally identified as a land of cowboys, cattle and meat.

Supper

At home in working-class neighbourhoods, night meals are less attractive. Leftovers from the midday meal might provide a treat, but these are not always available, since food from day-time meals has often been eaten up completely. The picture then becomes more sober and somewhat gloomy: a table, on which light falls dimly, with a basket of *pan de dulce*, accompanied by two beverages, one being poorly made coffee left over from midday, and the other boiled milk. Sometimes there is chocolate dissolved in milk or water. The great treat at night would be a plate of beans, accompanied by reheated tortillas. If these are *frijoles de la olla*, that is, recently cooked and served in their cooking liquid, not refried in lard, they can be delicious with tomato and onion. But that is all there would be.

LIVESTOCK AND MEAT

In Western Mexico, pre-Hispanic societies consumed meat and animal protein in a limited but sufficient fashion. However, its consumption was modest in comparison to that of modern, highly carnivorous societies like those of the West. Three groups of “meats” could be distinguished. The first was that of domesticated animals, such as the hairless dog called Xoloizcuinle¹⁰ (*Canis familiaris*) and the turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*). A second source of meat was game such as chichicuilot (turkey) (*Bartramia longicauda*); hare, boar (*Tayassu pecari*, *Tayassu tajaçu*) and deer (mammal game); iguanas (*Iguana rhinolopha*) and snakes (edible reptiles). The third source of protein were insects such as *chicatana* ants (*Oecodoma maxicana*)¹¹ and grasshoppers (*Sphenarium magnum*), which for the most part are hardly ever consumed today.

Much has been written about the fact that the pre-Hispanic peoples and, in particular, the Mexica, relentlessly consumed quantities of human flesh, which would have complemented their intake of animal protein. It is even said that due to this practice they rapidly adapted to eating pork when it was introduced by the Spaniards, since this is supposed to have a taste similar to that of human flesh. However, since we have no access to anyone who admits to eating human flesh, it is impossible to confirm such a similarity with pork (Díaz del Castillo, 1985: 186-187; Sahagún, 1992: 506; Harris, 1982: 154; Hassler, 1992). In fact, some biologists argue that such a similarity is improbable because the physiological constitution of these two greater mammals is very different, especially in terms of muscular mass and the molecular structure of the fat, so they should not taste the same.

The introduction of cattle

Early in the 16th century, the Spaniards introduced cattle, horses, donkeys, sheep, goats, mules, and pigs, as well as some domesticated fowls, with the exception of the above-mentioned turkeys. From then on, the herds greatly multiplied throughout the country, but to a much greater degree in Western Mexico (Chevalier, 1982: 125). The main reason for the increase in livestock in that area was its geographical setting: all northern territory during the early colonial period was beyond limits to agriculture. It was then sparsely populated and its inhabitants were mainly nomadic groups, generally referred to as *Chichimecas*. This frontier coincided roughly with the course of the two rivers linked to Lake Chapala, the Lerma and the Santiago rivers. At the time of the Conquest the courses of these two rivers represented the east-west axis of western Mexico. This frontier corresponded to an isohyet of between 650 and 700 mm. of annual rainfall. The southern part of this area was populated by conquered peoples under the cultural influence of the central region of Mexico, but at that time peripheral to the powerful Meso-American culture, whose societies were demographically denser and much more sophisticated in general, including culinary matters.

In this setting, where territories were more extensive, possessing a range of habitats of little geographic density, but apt for livestock breeding, herds grew at a remarkable pace. And thus a carnivorous cattle-raising culture came

into being. This was all in sharp contrast to the cultural norms of central and southern Mexico, which were more densely populated areas, with well-developed agricultural traditions and finely balanced diet based on a number of different vegetable foods. Only in some areas of Western Mexico, such as the south of Jalisco, can one still perceive traces of bygone sophisticated eating habits, halfway between a solid, civilized Meso-America, and a hunting, carnivorous north. Even today, in these western and south-western regions, the use of condiments is limited in comparison to those used in the centre and south of present-day Mexico.

The province of Ávalos and its area of economic influence illustrates the way in which livestock-raising developed in the area – this province represented the heart of western New Spain. When the magistrates of New Galicia, Contreras and Oseguera, visited the towns of Ávalos in 1552, they confiscated from Alonso de Ávalos the Elder, conqueror and chief landholder in the region, five cattle ranches that he had been able to establish in just three decades after his arrival in 1523.¹² All of them had plenty of cattle for the period and, consequently, on top of the settlement pattern inherited from pre-Hispanic populations was superimposed a new organization of territory. Formerly empty lands were transformed into pastures, roughly defined, and some of the pre-Hispanic cultivated lands, where maize had predominated, became “bread-providing lands” producing wheat for the Spanish cattlemen and their servants.

To offer a clearer idea of the rapidity in which cattle-raising spread in the territory of Ávalos, we may cite some examples. According to Alonso de Ávalos, from whom it was confiscated, the ranch of Cacaluta possessed 1,500 pigs; the Tizapán ranch had more than six-hundred mares and more than 3,000 cows and calves; the Toluquilla ranch had more than 8,000 heads of large livestock, mainly cows and mares; there was also the Huejotitán ranch where de Ávalos owned more than 300 colts and mules, and that of Cocula, where there were more than 4,000 heads of cattle. This group of ranches alone accounted for some 16,000 heads of cattle, in addition to the 1,500 pigs mentioned above, and considerable herds of mules and horses (Fernández, 1999: 79-81). Moreover, at the hacienda of Miahuatlán, slightly to the south of the province of Ávalos, Alonso de Ávalos possessed at that time 40,000 heads of large livestock (Hillerkuss, 1994: 210-226).

Thus, from the early colonial period, livestock formed the basis of the economy of the western region of Mexico. Maintaining this economic system implied recourse to certain types of social arrangements that, among other things, encouraged marriages between the great landowning families. These families enjoyed close links with the viceroy's seat of government thanks to the strategic importance of their principal productive activity. Their role involved supplying meat, as well as beasts of burden, both to the central ruling apparatus and to the mining enclaves to the north.

The demographic crisis of the indigenous population, which began with the Conquest itself and continued until the first half of the 18th century, created an enormous opportunity for the consolidation of livestock as the main productive activity in Western Mexico. While depopulation due to extinction of the native communities led to land being abandoned, livestock flourished: it did not need local labour to survive. As it increased and became consolidated, livestock-raising incorporated more territory, previously barren land, into the area's macro-regional organization and logic. It was a scenario similar to that which occurred in northern Europe after the demographic crisis of the High Middle ages, caused by the Black Death (Vincent-Cassy, 1995).

Bovine livestock, according to the interpretation in Ramón Serrera's work (1997), seems to have experienced greater production to the south of the Lerma and Santiago rivers, in part of the central plateau that reaches to the northern border of the kingdom, along the Pacific coastal plain. Sheep-raising was differently distributed, since this became extensive solely at higher altitudes in the eastern region of western Mexico. In the domains of the Santiago River Valley, there were only a few isolated centres where sheep were raised, in regions of mixed animal husbandry. In warmer territories, the species produced poor results. But in the region of Guadalajara in certain seasons, major herds of sheep from the Bajío came to pasture, starting from the last quarter of the 16th century (Serrera, 1977: III, VII; Chevalier, 1982: 129).

The first species to multiply in the west of New Spain in the first half of the 16th century seem to have been large livestock: cattle and horses. Smaller livestock appear to have spread throughout these territories some decades later, at a time when several hundred thousand heads of cattle

from Querétaro and Mezquital Valley were herded towards the Chapala basin on a seasonal basis (Chevalier, 1982: 129; Salvucci, 1987: 46; Melville, 1994: 154). The exception was perhaps the pig, known to have arrived in herds, accompanied first by conquerors and later by colonizers (López Portillo, 1976: 132-33; Zavala, 1990: 129). Through other sources it is known that these migrating herds arrived beyond the basin of Chapala, to the west of the present state of Jalisco. The members of just one of the families dedicated to this activity during the second half of the 17th century usually brought each year 80,000 sheep accompanied by 50 black slaves.¹³ Although these herds returned annually to the Bajío to be sheared, a liking for mutton seems to have developed in parts of western Mexico owing to their presence, since by the end of the 17th century and in part of the 18th, the consumption of lamb in Guadalajara appears to have been relatively high. However, towards the late 1790's, the number of sheep slaughtered for consumption in Guadalajara shows a drastic reduction in comparison to previous decades (van Young, 1981: 45). But in those times, the majority of sheep that were eaten came from neighbouring haciendas, mostly from the great ranches to the south of the city (van Young, 1981: 49). Perhaps the decline in sheep and bovine migration permitted the introduction and multiplication of goats, which in time became one of the favourite meats in the zone and the basis of one of its archetypical dishes: birria.

LAST COURSE

At present the quantity of meat consumed in Western Mexico is high, as it is in the entire country, but its preparation is not very sophisticated. The flavour of meat eaten in this area is distorted by the fact that it is prepared in a great variety of hot sauces, including archetypical dishes like *birria* or *pozole*. In principle, this relative intricacy in food preparation is due to the relatively small number of ecological zones that make up the area in question. It is, as has already been observed, a zone of transition between Meso-America – whose wealth of resources made possible the development of high cultures – and the great, semi-arid north. Even so, it still shares with densely populated Mexico City the millenia-old tradition of corn, beans,

and chilli, which has sustained the process of Meso-American civilization and its areas of influence.

The nutritional basis of the pre-Hispanic inhabitants of Western Mexico was, as in agricultural New Spain, the Meso-American triad complemented by the consumption of other resources, such as game and insects that were rich in proteins. On the arrival of the Europeans, with their highly carnivorous eating habits, Indians and Mestizos of the area soon got used to eating like Europeans – above all meat, a nutritional source of the first order, food that could be prodigiously multiplied thanks to the area's rural conditions.

The importance of livestock in Western Mexico was such that it became highly developed, with its own characteristics. To a large extent, livestock allowed the regional elite to accumulate enormous riches in land, cattle and diverse commercial activities, with the exception of mining. The latter, though the most highly valued source of wealth during the colonial period and afterwards, developed only marginally in this area. However, raising cattle and related activities exercised such a strong influence that livestock marketing produced certain repercussions in other parts of the territory. Within our area of study, the presence of livestock made possible a high level of meat consumption, which gave rise to the appearance of dishes such as *menudo*, *birria*, and *pozole*, though from meat products that were often, paradoxically, of dubious quality.

Ensclosed in a transitional zone between two geographical and cultural worlds, these regional societies became insular. Their colonizers had to work hard to recreate their former living conditions, in addition to which their cultural parameters were not at all sophisticated: the main criterion for success and social prestige was territorial accumulation and, by extension, its exploitation. Under such conditions was born and developed an austere, closed-minded, frontier society – bearing in mind its relative isolation and limited range of production (Moreno, 1993: 97), where temperance and cupidity were valued far above a gourmet passion for food and other excesses characteristic of sophisticated societies.¹⁴ Thus, in such an austere and acquisitive society, sumptuous styles of consumption failed to make inroads, and, as for food, the elite ate almost the same as the poor. In fact, bar the gastronomic sophistication that has appeared in recent years thanks to capitalist expansion characteristic of a world with multiple cultural

influences, in Guadalajara, as in Mexico as a whole, it is extremely difficult to draw a dividing line between the food of the rich and that of the poor.

In contrast to other cities and colonial domains, such as Oaxaca or Veracruz, in Guadalajara and its region the limited variety of food products, the limited indigenous influence, and the austerity characteristic of a border zone, has caused its communities to indulge more in ideological leisure – religion in this case – than festive leisure, which includes food. This might explain in part why, in spite of being Mexico's second capital for centuries, Guadalajara and its region has not developed, at least until very recently, awareness of food and its refinement in the sense expressed here, as occurred in Mexico City and Puebla, for example.

Be that as it may, the region's food, characterised by its consumption of meat – not necessarily of the best quality and prepared in a quite simple manner – is a pivotal part of the identity of the people who have lived there. And this identity has very strong roots, which shape their way of seeing the world and behaving in it. It is above all popular, rural, and livestock-related. This confirms what Ginzburg (1991: 185) said about the substantial importance of popular culture for the social fabric. In fact, to a large extent, it is the strength of this popular culture in Western Mexico that has caused the originality of some of its customs, habits, and behaviour, which have eventually become symbols of national identity. Such is the case of the stereotyped man on a horse, the *ranchero*; the popular music of the *mariachi*; and an emblematic drink, *tequila*, that has with considerable effort managed to earn a place in the international world.

NOTES

1. In this area, people ate in an unsophisticated way because they remained north of the pre-Hispanic and early colonial agricultural frontier. The area is far from the 650 to 700 millimeter isohyet of annual rainfall, which impeded the growth of most basic crops, with certain rare exceptions.
2. The yellow pages directory lists about a hundred restaurants that serve ethnic cuisine, which is not very many for a city bordering on five million.
3. As an initial position statement, it could be claimed that fine cuisine implies a reflection on methods of preparing different foods that in western Mexico appeared with the ascendancy of the bourgeois. Any food designated as fine has its basis in popular cuisine, but has been recreated by the skill of the chef – the specialist – and

this expresses in gastronomy an image of reality that pertains to the social elites. In addition to recreating, through culinary expression, a certain vision of the world, fine cuisine has unlimited access to a wide range of specialist ingredients and utensils, and is therefore influenced by exogenous gastronomic traditions.

4. For the last two decades, traditional Mexican cooking has entered a suggestive phase of “re-creation” thanks to chefs influenced by *nouvelle cuisine*. Two parameters emerge from this influence: a liberal and sometimes daring approach to combining flavours, aromas, and colours; and delicacy in the presentation of dishes. But, for the most part, this tendency has appeared in restaurants for the elite.
5. Ed. Note: For this and other italicised words see Glossary at the end of the chapter.
6. This type of meat preparation is of Greek and Turkish traditions.
7. As proof of this, the percentages that follow show the approximate consumption of foods in one of Guadalajara’s most prestigious restaurants: beef, 45 per cent; chicken, 30 per cent; fish and shrimp, 15 per cent; pork and non-meat consumption, 5 per cent each. The low rate of pork consumption can be explained by previous outbreaks of trichinosis that affected the pig herds. Nevertheless, in popular restaurants pork consumption is much greater. (Information from Federico Díaz de León).
8. Words of Laura Medina, a cook representative of Guadalajara food specialties.
9. Not long ago, in small towns it was quite common to see animals slaughtered in the gutter for human consumption, and the hide was used as container for the meat being sold.
10. *Xoloizcuinle* comes from the Nahuatl root, *xolotl-itzcuintli* (young dog), according to the *Diccionario de Mexicanismos* (3rd Ed.) by Francisco J. Santamaría. Mexico: Editorial Porrúa, 1978, 1125.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 373.
12. The ranches in question were Cacaluta, Tizapán, Toluquilla, Amatitlán, Huejotitán, and Miahuatlán.
13. Regarding this, one can see papers belonging to Beatriz de Arteaga y Sotomayor in Cocula and official writs from the *Real Audiencia de México* “so that labourers from the hacienda were not taken by force.” Archives of the Hacienda de la Saucedá (care taken by Rodolfo Fernández), box B, sheaf 42, document 86, f. 5.
14. One example of these attitudes is summed up by an informant, the manager of a luxury restaurant in Guadalajara: “Here people are touchy about prices, they don’t like to spend much...” (Communication from Federico Díaz de León).

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GLOSSARY

Almuerzo.- A term of Moorish origin that means a hearty meal, eaten from early to mid-morning, and designed to stave off hunger until lunch, which is eaten rather late in Mexico.

Al pastor.- Way of cooking meat, impaling it on a vertical or horizontal metal spit, with fire underneath or to one side, depending on the spit's placement. The spit revolves with the meat attached, and it can be placed nearer or farther from the fire, according to the cook's requirements. This way of preparing meat, usually pork, lamb, or chicken (usually whole) resembles that used in the Mediterranean world. The vertical model appears above all in Greece and the Middle East. The horizontal appears more in North Africa and the Western Mediterranean.

Barbacoa.- Word of Caribbean origin (apparently Arawak) designating a method of preparing meat in a pit, mostly lamb. The floor of the pit is covered with stones and a wood fire is set alight upon them to burn for about three hours. When the fire burns out, the stones are red hot; the meat, wrapped in maguey or avocado leaves, is then placed on a grill over the stones. The upper part of the hole is covered with more leaves, covered with earth. It is left to cook for some eight hours and later uncovered to be served up. There is also a *barbacoa* not made in a pit, but prepared in a sealed pot.

Birote.- A crusty roll of white bread, speciality of Guadalajara. One variety is made with sour dough. It is said that this bread cannot be made outside the Guadalajara area, because the particular climatic conditions there are necessary for its preparation.

Birria.- Meat dish, most often made of young goat (or a mature female), cooked by steaming. It is flavoured with a variety of chilies and spices, among which cumin is prominent. It used to be made of discarded beef or pork, including viscera, which workers had obtained as a gift from hacienda owners, who consumed the finer parts of the animals themselves. The isolated expression, *una birria*, still denotes something of low quality, even when not associated with this dish.

Bistec.- A slice of pork, beef or veal, generally lean. Comes from the English expression “beef steak”, but in the Mexican context no distinction is made as to the origin of the meat.

Botana.- Various foods eaten before the midday and evening meals, usually accompanied by an, like the Spaniard’s *tapas* and *pinchos*. They are usually eaten in a different place from where the main meal is eaten.

Cabeza.- The word head in this case designates pork for *pozole* and beef for *tacos de cabeza*. In both cases the head is cooked with aromatic herbs and spices.

Cantinas.- Cantinas are a kind of tavern, where people come to drink and eat *botanas*. They are like Spanish *tascas*, but with their own peculiarities. Beer and liquor of all types are consumed, perhaps with an emphasis on rum. Table wine is relegated to the celebration of mass and left to the priest, while generous aperitif wines are allotted to nuns; both are glaringly absent in cantinas.

Carne asada.- Grilled meat

Carnitas.- Pork, cooked in a large copper pan or pot. It is fried in lard over a low flame, often in the street, and usually as a leisure snack, especially in the country. In cities, it tends to be prepared daily, in specialized outlets and sometimes in restaurants.

Chicharrones.- The greasiest and commonest parts of the pig, including the skin, prepared and consumed along with *carnitas*. The generic name of *chicharrones* usually includes both of these. *Chicharrones* are for the poor and hungry what *carnitas* are for the rich and “those who are watching their health”.

Chichimecas.- Generic name given to the nomadic indigenous people who inhabited the territories beyond the agricultural border of Meso-America in the north of Colonial New Spain. They were renowned for being indomitable, barbaric, and superb warriors. Peace was not made with this tribe until the end of the 16th century.

Chilaquiles.- A dish prepared with small squares of dried tortilla, fried and bathed in sauce ? usually tomato based. It is sometimes cooked with egg, or chili sauce without tomato. In Western Mexico it is usually served sprinkled with dry cheese and onion.

Criollos.— The descendants of Spanish families, who have not intermarried with indigenous people or those of mixed blood.

Enchiladas.— A dish made of whole tortillas rolled like tacos, with onion or meat filling. They are prepared by dipping the tortillas in a sauce made from a mild, not hot chili sauce, called *chilacate* sauce, which is also poured on them when served, sprinkled with dry, grated cheese, cream and lettuce.

Fonda.— Place where food is served, generally simple and modestly priced. In broader terms, *fonda* is the Spanish word synonymous with the gallicisms: *restaurán*, *restaurante*, or *restorán*.

Fritangas.— All types of popular food, whose common denominator is being fried in oil or lard, and made with a base of corn *masa*. Generally, they are prepared with beef or pork, ground or shredded. They are usually served with a topping of lettuce or cabbage, radish, bits of cheese, and sometimes cream. They are bathed in a mild tomato sauce, made with broth in which the meat was cooked, seasoned with garlic, marjoram, and diced onion. The diner can add the hot sauce of his choice.

Masa.— A generic word for dough, although the unmarked term in Mexico nearly always refers to corn dough, as used for making *tortillas* or *tamales*. This is prepared by first soaking the corn kernels in water with lime.

Mariachi.— Music and the band that produces it. The word is said to come from *mariage* or marriage in French, referring to the occasions on which these bands were hired. Mariachi bands have fiddles, guitars and other string instruments, with a brass section for the riffs. The music is romantic, and at times very loud and evocative, producing the accompaniment for traditional Mexican songs.

Menudo.— Dish of boiled and seasoned tripe, eaten like a soup with abundant broth. It is served with oregano or mint, fresh Mexican lime juice, onion, and hot sauce or chilies. These can be green Serrano chilies or dry chilies (*chile de árbol*). Accompanied by tortillas.

Mestizo.— People of mixed Spanish and Indian blood, the majority of the population in Mexico.

Metate.— A neolithic-style, oblong grinder with a flat, curved bottom and almost imperceptible edges. A grinding stone, semi-cylindrical in cross-section, and of a length similar to the width of the flat surface, is scraped along this to grind and fluff various foods. It is mainly used to make *tortillas* and *pacholas*, and to grind chiles and seeds, when preparing *mole* (a mixture of spices and other ingredients used to make sauces) or *pinole* (a maize-based powder, with sugar and flavours, eaten as a sweetmeat).

Pacholas.- Small patties of ground meat and seasoning, made on the *metate*. The *metate* serves to expand them and make the food go a long way. Once made, the *pacholas* are fried and then served with a mild tomato sauce, flavoured with marjoram and onion, similar to the sauce served with *tostadas*.

Pan dulce.- Common pastry of old world origin, in a wide variety of forms depending on local tradition. It includes items of puff pastry in various forms; some of biscuit dough; and others with a bread centre and sugar decorations on the upper surface. They are also known as lardy cakes, to distinguish them from white breads of European tradition and dark breads of local tradition.

Pozole.- A dish cooked with grains of corn and flesh of the head of the pig, garnished with radishes, cabbage, or lettuce. Cabbage or *repollo* is more frequently used in small towns, while lettuce is used in urban areas.

Sopes.- The word *sope* includes two generic types of small corn *masa* pancake, one eaten as such, and the other, fried. The first is prepared in the same way as a tortilla and when freshly made is eaten with accompanying foods. When cold, they are fed to the dogs. A variety of *sopes* are eaten with meat and vegetable filling, and called *gorditas de comal*. Fried *sopes* have the same initial preparation as the others, but once cooked they are reworked while hot, to make a ridge around the sides, so as to form a kind of bowl with straight edges that is then fried and served like *fritangas*, with beans at the bottom, then meat with mild tomato sauce, lettuce, cabbage or radish, and cheese on top.

Suadero.- Part of the cow often sought by those who love *carne asada*. It comes from the animal's back, and owes its name to the place where the saddle or riding gear is set on a beast of burden, placed over a cloth called *sudadero* (*suadero*) or *carona*, between the saddle and the animal's skin, to soften contact with the back.

Tacos.- Corn tortilla rolled around some filling, or simply seasoned with salt or hot sauce.

Tamales.- Corn *masa* additioned with lard, shaped in square-sectioned cylinders, filled with meat, beans, or something sweet, wrapped in banana or corn leaves, according to the area where they are made or the type of *tamal*, and then steamed. There is a variety made of ground, tender corn, with salt or sugar. Other kinds, from the south of Jalisco and the centre of Michoacán, are made from a *masa* prepared with ashes and not lime ? as are the majority of products made with cooked corn. The variety in Jalisco is prepared with an egg coating, similar to puff pastry, and has beans between the layers of *masa*.

Tepache.- A beverage made of fermented pineapple with *panocha* (brown sugar), served with a spoonful of bicarbonate of soda.

Tortas.- A kind of sandwich, prepared with or without a top (open faced). *Tortas ahogadas* (see below) are of the first kind: the bread roll is sliced open only on one side and the filling inserted. The combined *tortas* are served without tops. They are prepared like *tostadas*, with beans, meat, vegetable, radish, and sweet sauce with oregano.

Tortas ahogadas.- Made with white sourdough bread (*birote*), filled only with *carinitas* and sometimes spread with beans. Served in a very hot sauce, usually made by combining for every kilo of tomatoes, sixty dried red chilies and sixty cloves of garlic, plus vinegar and spices. These represent a culinary sacrifice, almost a ritual dish, whose force has been weakened in recent years by the accompaniment of a mild sauce, similar to that used with *fritangas*.

Tortilla.- A flat, round pancake made of maize dough, which has been the basic bread of the Meso-American people since the Neolithic era. In the north of Mexico, people commonly eat tortillas made of a dough of wheat flour, with added lard.

Tostadas.- Fried, crispy *tortillas* topped with beans, meat, and other ingredients characteristic of *fritangas*: vegetables, radish, cheese, and sauce. They can also be garnished with cream and avocado slices.

Tripas.- Pork innards of various kinds fried in lard and served in tacos with hot sauce. This constitutes a false cognate in relation to *tripe* in French or English, which would be translated as *callos* or *mondongo* in the Spanish of Spain.