LA TIERRA DEL ENCANTO

Food and Plants as Healing, Community, and Place in New Mexico

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Photo: New Mexico Department of Agriculture
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About: Reclaiming Raíces

This summer, I’ve thought a lot about the concept of place, which “encompasses not only a specific location and the physical world, but also the human relationships and meanings that unfold there” (Schnell 624). Physical space becomes place when we “get to know it better and endow it with value,” and “there is no place without self and no self without place.” (Casey 684, Tuan 6).

My independent project began with a question about place: how have Indigenous and Mestizo food and agricultural traditions in New Mexico contributed to the state’s unique sense of place, particularly as catalysts for spirituality, healing, and community? I came to this question after reflecting on why I was drawn to the Yale Farm internship in the first place: my raíces (roots). I am a proud Nuevo Mexicana, raised in Albuquerque and part of the Ortega, Maes, Chavez, and Padilla families from central and northern New Mexico. I identify as Mestiza; on both sides, my family can trace our ancestry back to the sixteenth-century Spanish colonists of the region, and, like most Hispanic New Mexicans, we also have Indigenous ancestry.

In preparation for a recent discussion, the farm interns read a piece about decolonization in settler colonial states. One sentence, about the way Native Americans have been racialized in the United States, stood out to me: "Native Americaness is subtractive: Native Americans are constructed to become fewer in number and less Native, but never exactly white, over time" (Tuck & Yang).[1] First, I want to acknowledge that my racial identity of "Mestiza," of mixed Indigenous and European ancestry, gives me a certain degree of privilege. But this sentence also made me ponder how Mestizos in New Mexico were forcibly stripped of their "Native Americaness"-- my family speaks Spanish, and we were able to learn the names of our European ancestors through Catholic church records, yet we know extraordinarily little about our Indigenous ones. As a result, I have also been racialized by this country as less native, but never exactly white. This realm of precarity and uncertainty about my Indigeneity has always left me searching for my raíces that were lost to settler colonialism.

[1] Terminology note: In New Mexico, Indigenous people tend to refer to themselves as ‘Indian,’’ not Native American or Indigenous. Although sometimes the use of generic catch-all terms like Indigenous, Indian, or Native American are necessary for brevity, I tried to use the preferred names of specific tribes as much as possible. See here for more on this subject.
The path that I’ve chosen toward reclaiming these raíces and understanding “place” in New Mexico is through plants and food. In her article “Decolonize your Diet,” Catrióna Rueda Esquibel explains that growing and eating heritage food is a form of cultural and physical survival. When I think about both of my grandmothers and their commitment to nourishing their families with the recipes they learned from their mothers, grandmothers, and from preceding generations, I see this cultural survival at play. This project represents my love and admiration of food and plants as family, medicine, community, and place in “la tierra del encanto” (the land of enchantment).

Dedicación

For my grandparents: Equilda Padilla Chavez, Alfredo Chavez, Eloisa Maes Ortega, and Arturo Ortega.

Special thanks to my family members Carlos and Cristina Ortega, as well as my sister, mom, and dad for helping to make this project possible.

“The moment I saw the brilliant, proud morning shine high over the deserts of Santa Fe, something stood still in my soul. ... In the magnificent fierce morning of New Mexico one sprang awake, a new part of the soul woke up suddenly, and the old world gave way to a new.” — D.H. Lawrence
One of the reasons that I find New Mexican agriculture so fascinating is the fact that the state is one of the driest and highest in the country, with an average elevation of 4,700 feet and 60 days of precipitation per year. And yet, my Indigenous ancestors ingeniously developed techniques not just to grow plants but to get them to thrive in the arid climate, paving the way for agriculture to become one of the state’s largest industries [1].

GEODETICAL FATE AND THE ANCIENT HISTORY OF AGRICULTURE

Indigenous people first inhabited New Mexico approximately eleven thousand years ago. But the story of the state’s unlikely agricultural success can be traced much further back through its geological history. 20-25 million years ago, the North American and Pacific tectonic plates moved against each other, which caused the Earth’s outer crust to thin and spread. This movement created the Rio Grande continental rift, which caused the uplift of New Mexico’s mountain ranges, created a valley that gathered the flow of the Rio Grande, caused a drastic rise in elevation, and led to significant volcanic activity. As a result, New Mexican soil is rich with volcanic minerals. According to agronomist Rich

[1] The history of Pueblo Indian agriculture in New Mexico is expansive, particularly during the 15th-20th centuries. I chose to focus on the origins of agriculture, but for more information on more recent history, this is a great resource.
Affeldt, “volcanic basalt has been proven to minimize deficiencies, improve root systems, and help grow stronger crops with higher yields and higher levels of nutrition” (Affeldt). Further, the increase in elevation led to a more temperate climate for crop production, compared to most of the desert Southwest.

This climate and fertile soil undoubtedly contributed to the success of one of the first cultures to develop agriculture in New Mexico. The Ancestral Puebloans were one of most complex early civilizations in North America (previously and derogatorily referred to as the Anasazi, which means ‘ancient enemies’ in Diné (the Navajo language). The

Ancestral Puebloan culture emerged in the present-day “four corners” region of the U.S. around 100 BC, reached its golden age around AD 1250, and either spread out or assimilated with other cultures toward the end of the 1400s [2]. In northwest New Mexico, the Ancestral Puebloans built apartment-like dwellings into cliffs and large ceremonial complexes known as “great houses,” which eventually made up nine towns along a nine-mile stretch of Chaco Canyon— the remains of which are stunningly preserved as a National Historic Park (image 1). The Ancestral Puebloans were a sophisticated society that built astronomical markers, structures with solar, lunar, and cardinal directions, and a 400-mile network of roads (Cordell).

[2] “Four corners” refers to the region where the corners of southeast Utah, southwest Colorado, northeast Arizona, and northwest New Mexico meet.
lacks consistent surface water, so the Ancestral Puebloans selected drought-tolerant crops and developed various methods of collecting rainfall and diverting it to their fields, such as terracing, check dams, and a complex system of canal irrigation (Vivian and Watson). Another strategy was the use of Pumice, a volcanic, sponge-like rock that could fill with water and slowly release it over time. This system allowed the Chaco Ancestral Pueblos to grow food for around 5,000 people during their zenith.

The unpredictability of water access is intertwined with Ancestral Puebloan culture. Archaeologists have uncovered Turquoise and frog effigies near the burial sites at the ceremonial great house called Pueblo Bonito (image 6),

Around the time the Ancestral Puebloans transitioned from nomadic to sedentary in the sixth century, they began to cultivate maize (corn), beans, and squash, a triad now known as the “Three Sisters” (Benson). Maize, beans, and squash were some of the first domesticated crops in Mesoamerica, and over centuries of migration and trade, they were introduced to the Southwest and eventually spread to Indigenous tribes across North America [3]. The triad was grown together so that the crops could benefit from their complementary growth features and planted in mounds to assist with drainage—both of which are highly productive and sustainable planting methods that are still in use today (Pleasant).

Despite the luxury of fertile soil, the Ancestral Puebloans’ never-ending obstacle was water scarcity. Chaco Canyon is in the San Juan basin, which

[3] Catharine Webb, (Cherokee Nation) a previous intern at the YSFP, has written about her personal relationship with the Three Sisters and introduced the growing method to the Yale Farm.
which are “ethnographically documented symbols of moisture and fertility throughout the Southwest” (Scarborough). This symbolism suggests that water availability and thus agricultural success were key elements of the spirituality, worship, and ritualistic ceremonies of the Chaco Ancestral Puebloans.

THE PUEBLO INDIANS

The Puebloan culture emerged from the Ancestral Puebloan culture and consists of a group of similar but individual tribes that live in Pueblos (villages) in New Mexico. Many Pueblos follow the valley of the Rio Grande, the river that stretches from the Gulf of Mexico into southern Colorado. Nineteen of these Pueblo communities still exist and are federally recognized tribes (image 7). The Puebloans were the first Indigenous communities in New Mexico to encounter Spanish settler-colonists that followed the river north from present-day El Paso, Texas in the sixteenth century (Lavin). As seen on the map, many of these present-day Pueblos have Spanish names, such as Santa Clara and San Felipe, which recall the Spanish attempts to convert them to Catholicism. Many Pueblo Indians were violently forced to assimilate to the Spanish language, culture, and Catholic religion, and their Mestizo descendants make up much of the state’s present-day Hispanic population.

The history of the Pueblo Indians is also one of resistance: despite enslavement, forced conversion, and mass mortality with the arrival of European diseases, the Spanish were unable to completely subjugate them (Lavin). Some Pueblos were better able to maintain their cultures than others and, as a result, New Mexico experienced a cultural collision; its culture, ethnic makeup, and agricultural crops carry the legacies of both Indigenous peoples and Spanish colonists. The state’s proudest crop, the hatch chile, was developed by a mestizo horticulturist who used a breed of chile peppers that were first brought to the region by conquistador (conqueror) Juan de Oñate.
THE ATHABASKANS AND FLOODPLAIN FARMING

This story of resistance also applies to the largest non-Pueblo tribe in New Mexico: the Diné (Navajo) and the Apache. These tribes migrated to the region in the 1300s and are members of the Athabaskan language family of tribes in Alaska and Canada. Because these tribes’ territories were much further from the Rio Grande (see image 7), they were able to better evade the cultural destruction experienced by the Puebloans (Iverson). As a result, many of the desert agricultural methods of these tribes, particularly the Diné, passed the test of time.

To understand one of these key techniques, we must look to New Mexico’s meteorology. Although the state doesn’t receive consistent rainfall throughout the year, when it rains, it pours. This is known as the North American monsoon, also referred to as the Southwestern monsoon (see image 8). Monsoon season in New Mexico occurs from April to September, with its peak in late July, when the rising temperatures cause a change in atmospheric pressure that brings moisture and dramatic thunderstorms to the state (Becker). During this time, the region experiences intense flash-flooding, which was controlled and manipulated to become an essential element of agriculture for the Diné and other Indigenous desert farmers in the southwest. Farmers learned to strategically select basins that would receive most of the floodwater from the mouth of an arroyo (a dry creek typical in arid climates), but also those that had other natural forces, such as sediment deposits that could break a flood’s erosive force (Nabhan).

Desert farming also requires far less human labor to maintain the fields. Plowing and weeding happened rarely because over centuries of cultural and natural selection of drought-resistant agro-ecosystems, “volunteer” plants in these fields were simply tolerated and even welcomed. Unless they were completely invasive, most plants had some sort of cultural value as supplemental foods, medicines, or fibers (Nabhan).
LOOKING FORWARD

After centuries of forced acculturation and oppression at the hands of the U.S. Government, most Southwestern Indians have lost this agricultural knowledge and ability, though revival efforts are arising across the Navajo Nation in particular. Spirit Farm, a Diné demonstration farm in New Mexico that was founded in 2014 as part of the nonprofit Covenant Pathways, is doing just that. On their website, they explain their mission to “heal the high desert southwestern soil and be a living example of how we can recover and reclaim traditional farming and spiritual practices, along with modern practices, to establish resiliency in our way of life, reducing the dependency on the very food system that is harming us.” Spirit Farm was recently featured in the Magic in the Dirt presentation by the New York Times. James Skeet, one of the co-founders, explained that “this everyday connection to the land and what it offers, the feeling of being ing tethered to one another, is “hózhó,” the [Diné] word that describes living in a holistic way. When you live in it, he says, you walk in beauty” (Turshen).
Curanderismo

I first learned about curanderismo over a decade ago, when I read Rudolfo Anaya’s novel, Bless Me Ultima. The novel centers on life in 1940s rural northern New Mexico. Anaya recounts curandera (a woman who practices curanderismo) folkways through the character Ultima. Her knowledge of medicinal plants from the desert landscape struck me as indispensable knowledge, and the respect she gained in her community as its healer inspires me to this day. This fond memory encouraged me to further research and share about this practice.

Curanderismo is a form of traditional healthcare or folk medicine. It’s important to note that the origins of curanderismo can’t be attributed to one culture and are instead the result of centuries of cultural mixing. In New Mexico, there is a significant overlap between the techniques and rituals of mestizo and Pueblo Indian healers along the Rio Grande Valley, medicine persons of the Athabaskan-language tribes, and healers within the Mexican and Central American immigrant communities across the borderland (Arrelano). My research focused mostly on knowledge that...
The practice of curanderismo has no inflexible rules or boundaries. Most healers have historically been and continue to be female-identifying because a knowledge of healing herbs for pregnancy and childbirth is an essential aspect of most traditional medicines and midwifery [1],[2]. Every healer also has their own distinct methods; some rely only on chants and Catholic prayers, some use animal and mineral materials as treatment, but the vast majority use herbs in their healing rituals (Hendrickson) [3]. Some of the most powerful and widely used plants are sabila (aloe vera), ruda (rue), albahaca (basil), epazote (Mexican tea), romero (rosemary), and chamisa (rabbitbrush). The origins of these plants defy borders and tell the story of transregional trade and migration—only chamisa one of them is native to the southwest.

Curanderas’ use of plants can be understood through the lens of ethnobotany, which is the study of the interrelation between humans and

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[1] The practices and techniques of the “natural childbirth” movement in the United States are rooted in these traditional medicinal folkways, and are seen as a rejection of the medicalization of childbirth.

[2] For this reason, I mostly use the words 'healer' and 'curandera' interchangeably, though male ‘curanderos’ also exist. The Spanish language operates in the gender binary, so there isn’t a gender-neutral term as there is in English.

[3] I use the word ‘herb’ to indicate the plants used by healers, following common usage of ‘herb’ as a plant or plant part used for its medicinal, aromatic, or flavoring qualities.
By modern medicine, I refer to the practice of medicine that arose in the late 19th century in Europe and the United States. Maestra Cuauhtli Cihuatl passed away from cancer quite recently. A beautiful interview about her life and work can be found here.

In medicine, this term means the treatment of a whole person, and typically considers mental and social factors alongside the physical symptoms of a disease.

A curandera performing a healing ritual during the curanderismo summer course at UNM. Image: Albuquerque Journal.

plants. In curanderismo, medicinal plants aren’t considered mere substances in the same way modern medicine considers a bottle of Tylenol. Instead, they hold distinct metaphysical properties [4]. Even attributes such as a plant’s aroma and its effect on the person smelling it are part of its energy and power. Many healers believe that when one smells a plant, they are taking in its “spirit” (energy). In curanderismo, plants become a metaphor for life and how one thinks about life: “la planta es la vida” (de la Portilla).

Today, curanderismo is still a common form of healthcare across the Southwest that is either solely relied on or supplemented by modern medicine. It’s also an ever-expanding body of knowledge; experimentation with new combinations of plants for maximum healing benefits is a customary practice among healers. In New Mexico, this knowledge is being preserved and spread to new generations through the work of three prominent healers: Professor Eliseo “Cheo” Torres, Maestra Cuauhtli Cihuatl, and Elena Avila [5]. They founded the curanderismo program at the University of New Mexico in 2000, and Professor Torres teaches a summer

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class on the practice. When asked about the program’s success in 2015, he explained that “what’s unique about this class is that local curanderos, practitioners and healers all come together with well-known healers from various regions of Mexico to share and learn about traditional healing methods.” This teaching method is a feature that carries forward the legacy of sharing medicinal and herbal knowledge that defines the origins of curanderismo (Dinaro).

The continued popularity of curanderismo also lies in its holism [6]. Mental, physical, and spiritual ailments aren’t distinguished from each other; to heal one, the other two must be healed as well (Hendrickson). For example, after a traumatic event such as a car accident, a curandera treats physical injuries alongside “susto” (fright). Curanderismo can also treat historical trauma or “soul wounds,” which Dr. Maria Yellow Horse Braveheart defines as a “cumulative emotional and psychological wounding over the lifespan and generations, emanating from massive group trauma” (Brave Heart). In this way, curanderismo is also a form of cultural activism and community healing from the devastating effects of colonial subordination.

[6] In medicine, this term means the treatment of a whole person, and typically considers mental and social factors alongside the physical symptoms of a disease.

“Indeed, curanderismo pushes an individual to take ownership of [their] illness, signifying that the cure is primarily through the efforts of the individual and not an outside agency. Everything that is needed for an individual to be healed, she or he already possesses. It is the role of a curandera or curandero to guide the individual to a state of wholeness.”

Elizabeth de la Portilla, from her book They All Want Magic
Red or green? My musings and memories of hatch chile

The New Mexico chile is the state’s most iconic crop and the staple of its cuisine, and those grown in Hatch, New Mexico are the most sought after. The chile was developed by horticulturist Dr. Fabián García at New Mexico State University in 1921, however chile peppers have been grown in the state for centuries (Hawkes). One of the reasons why these chiles are so famous is because of the Hatch Valley’s unique terroir, a French term that describes a characteristic taste that is influenced by the natural environment in which a particular crop is grown.

Green chile is picked just before the plant ripens to its full red color. It is best enjoyed simply: roasted, peeled, and mixed with a bit of salt and fresh garlic. I like to eat it with scrambled eggs, mac ‘n’ cheese, slathered on a burger, and mixed with sautéed summer zucchini and corn (calabacitas). When I visit home, it’s become a tradition to get green chile chicken enchiladas at Barela’s Coffee House, a family-owned breakfast and lunch spot that serves up the best New Mexican food in the state. My Dad always comments that their tortillas taste just like his mother’s.

Red chile is left to ripen. My answer to our state question, “red or green?” is almost always red. It is typically dehydrated and ground to a powder, which is then made into a red chile sauce. This can be used as a marinade for carne adovada (braised pork), enjoyed on top of chiles rellenos (fried chiles filled with cheese), or in posole (pork and hominy stew). My maternal grandmother always had a pot of red chile on the stove for every Thanksgiving and Christmas meal. We poured it over our mashed potatoes and tamales, our taste buds tingling with heat and nostalgia.

In fact, most of my favorite food memories in Albuquerque involve chile, and I find myself daydreaming about its warmth often. In September 2020, when COVID cases in the country took a slight dip, my father, sister, aunt, uncle, and I got together on a warm evening for an outdoor chile roasting session. We fired up two charcoal grills and took turns placing green chiles over the flame until the skin was completely dark. We spent the rest of the night enjoying a meal together, and then peeled the chiles, packed them into freezer bags, and stored them for the long winter to come. This is one of my only real memories from that fall. After so many months of difficult isolation, our coming together for one evening to enjoy and celebrate our favorite food meant that, for a brief moment, everything felt okay again.
Chile roasting in September 2020, images from my sister Paloma.
My paternal grandmother, Eloisa Maes Ortega, grew up in rural northern New Mexico on a sheep and cattle ranch, and is descended from several generations of ‘rancheros.’ She was born in 1923 and had seventeen siblings, but because the ranch they lived on was entirely self-sustaining, my grandmother and her family were mostly untouched by the Great Depression. While her brothers tended the animals, my grandmother and some of her sisters learned to cook from her mother, Margarita Griego Maes. She became a culinary artist who devoted her life to cooking and caring for her husband and their seven children. In a stroke of lucky timing, my Aunt Cristina compiled, scanned, and distributed my grandmother’s recipes to our family a few months ago. They include some of my favorite New Mexican recipes, so it is very special for me to prepare some of them for members of the Yale Farm. Although my grandmother passed away when I was quite young, the embodied practice of cooking these heritage foods is my way of honoring, connecting with, and carrying her legacy into the future.
This is a collection of recipes written and typed (!) by my mother, Eloisa Maes Ortega. They were compiled from the many recipe cards my mom kept and recipes she clipped from the newspapers and magazines. I also went through her well-worn cookbooks and included recipes she used over and over, those where she had written her modifications in margins or pages that were stained with cooking oils or splatters.

The way my mom personalized her recipes truly brings out her personality and her love of cooking. It is almost as if she knew this was going to be part of her legacy to us as we read them and use them. She communicated her ideas and suggestions to the reader. She also was an incredible typist and early conservationist—using every square inch of an index card to memorialize the recipe!

In addition to my mom’s recipes, there are recipes from my grandmother, Margarita Maes and recipes from other relatives: Connie Dowler, Maggie Ortega and Ruth Ortega. Also, friends who shared recipes which are included.

As my brothers and I would attest, my mom devoted her life to providing a warm welcoming home, particularly in her kitchen. Every afternoon around 4 pm I remember her starting her preparation of the daily dinner or “supper,” as my father call it. Most of her cooking was done from scratch. There were very few shortcuts. Each night we had a feast of her creation. Some nights we ate leftovers (always good). The only food we could agree we disliked was anything with aspic.

Our mealtimes around the table were mandatory. We waited for my dad to come home and everyone was present at the table. In the early years, there would be nine of us gathered around the table. As time went on, the numbers lessened as we left home, but any time we visited, the tradition around dinner was the same. Mom displayed her talent until she couldn’t anymore, in her later years.

I am one of the children who lived afar during my adult years. When I would let Mom know that I was going to visit, one of her first questions was: “what do you want to eat?” If I had as early flight from Albuquerque to return to my home, she would get up even earlier to make muffins. She always wanted to make sure we were well fed and had something from home to take with us.

I hope you enjoy using these and pass them on to your children, with Eloisa’s love.

Cristina
Red CHILI (Aunt Sallo Style!!)

1 lb. lean, boneless pork or lean round steak
1½ cups water
4 tablespoons chili powder
2 tablespoons flour
Salt to taste, about 1½ teaspoon
Sugar = ½ teaspoon
Garlic = 2 pods, finely chopped
Leaf oregano = ½ teaspoon

Place meat in frying pan with at least one tablespoon of cooking oil, or bacon grease, particularly if meat is unusually lean. If pork is used, trim some of the fat on meat and use it for cooking, making sure that you remove any excess fat from frying pan. Do not cook meat too dry – this tends to make it tough – so cook it over medium-low heat, stirring occasionally. Add flour and cook together about 3 to 5 minutes again stirring well. Now add your chili powder which you've been soaking in water, adding it slowly until all is mixed in well. Cook down over low heat until it thickens.
CARNE ADUVADA —— (MARINATED CHILI PORK)

Begin by making a medium thick chili sauce in your blender, adding plenty of garlic, some oregano, salt to taste and a touch of sugar. Cut away excess fat from pork chops and wipe clean with paper toweling, moistened in warm water. The center chops are usually the meatiest, so I prefer using that cut of meat. Select them so that they are pretty uniformly thick — at least 3/4 inch. I generally allow at least two chops per person.

Place chops in a dish with a tight fitting cover; pour enough of the sauce to cover each chop generously. Stir them around in the sauce so as to cover them completely in sauce. Cover them and place them in the refrigerator overnight, tossing them around in the marinade several times during the day before you are to bake them. It doesn't hurt to marinate them even up to two days. Use more garlic if flavor is not strong enough, the garlic being a most important ingredient in flavoring this dish. To bake — arrange chops in a single layer in baking dish. Cover with foil and bake at 375 degrees for about 15 minutes; remove cover the last 10 to 15 minutes to allow top of chops to cook down a bit out of the sauce.
POSOLE

Recipe of my mother Margarita Griego de Maes

6 lbs. fresh posole corn
6 lbs. lean pork butt, cut in 2 x 3 in pieces
2 lbs. fresh pig's feet
1 Cup red chili puree (made in blender or 1 pt. ready prepared frozen chili)

Sugar
Plenty of Garlic
Salt
Oregano - dry

Serves 20 to 25 Generously.

Preparation of Chili Puree

To prepare chili puree from red dry chili pods, begin by removing stems and all seeds from about 20 to 25 pods. Rinse in lukewarm water and drain. Place in saucepan with enough water to cover pods, and parboil until chilies become tender, about 10 to 20 minutes. A pressure cooker can be used and chilies cooked under pressure for about three minutes. Place a few chilies at a time in blender, with some of the liquid in which they are cooked and blend at slow speed for a couple of minutes, or until pods begin to blend into a sauce-like mixture.* Add a scant teaspoon of granulated sugar and two large or three medium-sized garlic buds to blender and blend on high speed another two or three minutes, or until chili and garlic are completely pureed. Empty into bowl and repeat above blending procedure until all pods and liquid are blended into a sauce. This amount of sauce is more than you will need in preparation of posole, so set it all aside to use as extra sauce when serving the cooked posole.

Preparation and Marinating of Pork Cubes

In a large bowl place the meat cubes and sprinkle with one tbsp. dry oregano leaves. Pour one cup of the prepared chili puree over meat cubes, one tablespoon salt and one teaspoon of sugar. It won't hurt to add an extra two or three garlic buds cut very fine or pressed in mortar and pestle. This is a very necessary ingredient in seasoning posole. Toss meat gently to coat cubes of meat with sauce and cover with saran wrap or foil. Store in refrigerator overnight or at least eight hours before you are to cook it for the posole, tossing it occasionally in order to marinate pork with sauce and seasonings sufficiently. (If ready prepared frozen chili is used, begin by defrosting carton of chili and adding enough garlic buds (2 or 3 finely chopped or pressed to a pulp in mortar and pestle, or garlic press) one tbsp. salt and one tsp. sugar. Use the sauce for marinating the pork as above.)
POSOLE

Cooking Process for Meat:
Cook meat, marinade and pig's feet by placing in large container and adding enough water to cover. Cook about 30 minutes. (If you use pressure cooker for this step, cook it about ten minutes under pressure.) Pork should not be thoroughly cooked at this point as you will complete the cooking when you add it to posole corn later on and finish the cooking process. Cool cooker, or if other utensil is used remove from heat and set aside to cool. Remove meat and pig's feet from broth with slotted spoon and set in refrigerator until ready to add to posole corn. Empty meat broth into container and place in refrigerator to chill. This enables you to remove a lot of the pork fat by simply removing the layer of fat that rises to top of broth as it cools and congeals in refrigerator.

Cooking Process for Corn:
Remove any kernels which are defective and rinse corn in cool water several times, or until water becomes very clean and clear. Drain in collander. Place in large enough cooking utensil so as to allow for the increase of corn as it cooks and pops open. Add enough salt to taste and a sprinkle of sugar. Boil hard for at least 30 minutes adding water as it becomes necessary and adjusting salt. Cook slowly until corn is almost all popped, or approximately six to seven hours, adding water and salt as necessary. Begin adding some of the meat broth from which congealed fat has been removed, along with water as you cook corn to doneness. (Test corn for doneness by sampling for tenderness)

Add meat, pig's feet and all of the meat broth and allow to simmer for an additional hour, adjusting seasonings, salt, oregano and more garlic to suit your taste. You may also add more chili sauce if you desire. However, I make mine somewhat mild with chili flavor and prefer to have the extra sauce as a condiment for those who prefer a bit more piquant chili flavor.

YOU ARE NOW READY TO ENJOY "UNA BUENA POSOLADA."

* In preparing chile dishes, be it red or green chili, my mother always added that "little pinch" or sprinkle of sugar to bring out the real taste of the chili. I have followed this in all my cooking years and chili prepared this way is definitely delicious. I might add that I follow the same method when preparing dishes with tomato or tomato sauce. It certainly counters the piquancy of chili or the acidity of tomato.
Receta para Tortillas

4 copas de harina
3 cucharadas grandes (Tbsp.) de espeadúa
2 cucharaditas (tsp.) de sal
3 cucharadas grandes (Tbsp.) de manteca o margarina
½ cucharadita de levadura granulada
cia
¾ cucharadita de azúcar granulada
1 copa de agua tibia (warm) y
3/4 de copa de harina

Echese a mojar la levadura en la copa de agua tibia, y desuelvese completamente. Se enada la ½ cucharadita de azúcar, luego se le pone los 3/4 de copa de harina y se junta todo muy bien. Cubrase con un trapo de la cocina, limpio, y pongase en un lugar de la cocina donde este agradablemente calientito (warm, not hot, and certainly not drafty). Esto de deja siquiera por una hora, o hasta que se alce la levadura. (Esta es una esponja). Entonces chapeando esta masa porque tendrá sopa.

Recipe for Tortillas

4 cups of flour
3 + 1/2 tsp of
3 1/2 tbsp of butter or margarine
1/2 tsp of granulated yeast
1/2 tsp of sugar
1 cup of warm water and
3/4 cup of flour

Put to wet the yeast and sugar in the warm water, and dissolve completely. Then add the 3/4 cup of flour and mix very well. Cover with a clean kitchen towel, and put in a place in the kitchen where medium warm (warm, not hot, and certainly not drafty). Leave for at least an hour or until the yeast mixture is spongy.
Biscochitos de Anise

1 cup Bourbon --- 2 teaspoons Anise seed
2 cups pure lard --- dash of Baking soda
1 cup granulated Sugar
2 Eggs
6 cups all purpose flour
3 teaspoons Baking powder
1 teaspoon Salt --- dash of Cinnamon

Soak Anise seed in cup of bourbon for at least one hour.

In large bowl whip lard with baking soda while adding sugar gradually. Beat until light and fluffy. Add eggs and beat together until completely mixed.

Sift dry ingredients together. Add to lard-egg mixture together with bourbon and anise seed. Work all ingredients together with hands until ball of dough leaves sides of bowl. Add only a small amount of flour to hands to work off dough, being careful not to make dough tough by working in too much flour. (You will have to judge this—dough should be soft and pliable—not dry or sticky.) Roll out on lightly floured board to ¼” thickness. Cut into pretty shapers. Dredge in a mixture of granulated sugar and cinnamon. Place in ungreased baking sheet. Bake at 375° for 8 to 10 minutes. Cool on cake rack for a few minutes before removing from baking sheet.
Bibliography


