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Pati's Mexican Table: The Secrets Of Real Mexican Home Cooking



Synopsis

The host of a highly popular PBS series, Pati's Mexican Table, and a self-described overloved soccer mom with three kids and a powerful blender, Pati Jinich has a mission. She's out to prove that Mexican home cooking is quicker and far easier than most Americans think. Her dishes are not blanketed with cheese, or heavy and fried, or based on complex sauces. Nor are they necessarily highly spicy. Surprising in their simplicity and freshness, they incorporate produce and grains. Most important, they fit perfectly into an everyday family cooking schedule and use just a handful of ingredients, most of which are already in your pantry. Many are home specialties that Pati learned from her mother and grandmother, some are creative spins on classics, while others are not well known outside of Mexico. Dishes like Chicken Á la Trash (it's delicious!), a one-pot meal that Pati gleaned from a Mexican restaurant cook; Mexican Meatballs with Mint and Chipotle; Sweet and Salty Salmon; and Mexican-Style Pasta can revitalize your daily repertoire. You'll find plenty of vegetarian fare, from Classic Avocado Soup, to Divorced Eggs (with red and green salsa), to Oaxaca-Style Mushroom and Cheese Quesadillas. Your friends and family will enjoy Tomato and Mozzarella Salad with Pickled Ancho Chile Vinaigrette; Crab Cakes with Jalapeño Aioli; and Chicken Tinga (you can use rotisserie chicken), which makes a tasty filling for tortas and tostadas. Pati also shares exciting dishes for the holidays and other special occasions, including Mexican Thanksgiving Turkey with Chorizo, Pecan, Apple, and Corn Bread Stuffing; Spiral-Cut Beef Tenderloin; and Red Pozole (a Mexican party in a bowl), which she served on her wedding day. Desserts like Triple Orange Mexican Wedding Cookies, Scribble Cookies (sandwich cookies filled with chocolate), and little Apricot-Lime Glazed Mini Pound Cakes are sophisticated yet simple to make.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I preordered this book the day offered it, expecting a collection of recipes from Pati's PBS programs. When I started reading it, the recipes were the third thing I admired -- right after the numerous Mexican Cook's Tricks and the extensive descriptions of Mexican ingredients. This is my third Mexican cookbook (after Diana Kennedy and Roberto Santibanez), but it should be everyone's introduction to Mexican flavors, techniques, and gusto because it works so well on four levels, each of which is worth the price of the book:

1. Mexican Cook's Tricks -- There is a "trick" at the end of most of the recipes. They are short and most apply more broadly than just the subject recipe: how to cook an egg, prepare enchiladas, marinate meats, prepare chiles. These are as addicting as nachos (or Margaritas): You can't eat just one. After you finish one, you poke around to find more.
2. Mexican Ingredients -- What stops you from reading the "cook's tricks?" There are about 60 green-highlighted sidebars, most of which describe a Mexican ingredient and how it is prepared and enjoyed: tamarind, corn versus flour tortillas, several varieties of chiles, hibiscus flowers, cinnamon, and buying avocados. A few succinctly describe cooking processes for rice and beans. By the time you've read eight or ten of these sidebars you want to cook.
3. Recipes -- The recipes are for home cooking. This is the food that Pati, a busier-than-we-are soccer mom, serves her family. They are not the traditional servant-prepared recipes that Diana Kennedy features.

Pati Jinich, a native of Mexico City, proves a most engaging guide to homestyle Mexican dishes from street foods to colonial gems, Middle Eastern influences to comfort foods from across Mexico: you'll find references to Guadalajara, Oaxaca, Veracruz, Michoacán, the Yucatan Peninsula and Mexico City. Her PBS show Pati's Mexican Table features two seasons of episodes that revolve around a certain ingredient, holiday, or theme. I was lucky to receive a review copy of "Pati's Mexican Table; The Secrets of Real Mexican Home Cooking" several weeks ago courtesy of Pati's publicist, and in that time I've tried several recipes from the various sections, including two of the salads (red leaf, avocado, and grapefruit salad with olive-mint vinaigrette and the spinach goat cheese salad with caramelized pecans and jamaica vinaigrette), a soup (Mexican alphabet soup), several of the egg dishes (huevos rabo de mestiza, Mexican frittata with poblanos, potatoes, and feta), and two of the desserts (triple orange Mexican wedding cookies, Alisa's marbled pound cake). I also made the tamarind, apricot and chipotle sauce for use with another dish. Pati's easygoing manner and clear explanations translate well to the written page; many of the recipes in "Pati's

Mexican Table" come complete with a "Mexican Cook's Trick" sidebar with the types of tips that add an extra layer of authenticity: you'll find tips on enhancing the flavor of cucumbers by rubbing them with the cut ends, that your masa should have the consistency of Play-Doh, tips on working with tortillas before adding sauce, and using rice flour in tortes. These little tidbits are the types of things that you don't often find in cookbooks, and it's a nice touch that makes you feel like you're being let in on a family secret.

At first this reviewer thought "oh, not ANOTHER Mexican cookery book!" yet first impressions can be very deceptiveâ | In fact this is a bit of a special little gem. The key aim of the book is to provide a range of recipes for making everyday, authentic Mexican food for everyday families. Some of the recipes are not your typical "Mexican fare" but they are said to be 100% Mexican. You may just need to adjust your perceptions and expectations (and all for the better). In many areas what we think of to be a typical food from a region is, in fact, nothing like what the locals would eat over there. Localised food for a localised taste, if you will, often lacking in true authenticity. After an interesting, personal overview of the author and what makes her tick it is straight into the recipes. Split into chapters of salsas, pickles & guacamole; salads; soups; anytime vegetarian; seafood; poultry; meat; sides; desserts and drinks there is going to be something new to try here, that is surely clear. Whilst this is a book you can clearly pick up and down, select a recipe and go, you really should take a sequential read through at least once to immerse yourself in the background, hints, tips and diverse comments given by the author to the various dishes and Mexican cuisine as a whole. You should not be surprised to note that the wide range of recipes will surely have something for everyone. No boring variations on a variation here. The recipes are ably accompanied by a lot of wonderful full colour photographs, so clear and inviting that you want to reach through the page and start munching away. The recipes are well-written, easy to follow and convey all the bits of information that you need including a typical preparation and cooking time. Hurrah!

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