

FOOD AND CULTURE

The Whole Enchilada

We are living in a very intense and interesting time in this country. Those coming from Latin America represent an important part of the population. Culture is being shared in a consistent way, consciously and unconsciously among the people.

People are living difficult moments of migratory status that puts many families in danger of being separated. Also, with the political plans of putting up a wall on the border, we see that not only could this stop the immigration, but also stop the interaction of the cultures.

Before there has not been this tension between the two countries. Lately, you can hear threats to different minority groups in this country, causing of lot of bad and uncomfortable feelings.

In this article, I would like to reflect on how, through food, the countries come together in a natural bonding. There is a dish that is absolutely adapted and adopted by the culture of the United States – the enchilada.

The word enchilada is so commonly used that there is an expression that says, “the whole enchilada,” which means the whole thing.

Even if they build a very big wall and try to stop the immigration of Latinos to this country, there are already many millions already here, first, second, third and many generations that have contributed and enriched the culinary culture of this country.

The enchilada is one of these dishes that came to stay and has even evolved into a different form than its place of origin.

Enchiladas are very common and uniform because the people know that it consists of fried corn tortilla filled with meat, chicken or cheese, covered with red or green sauce. But, when we travel around Mexico, which is the origin of the

enchiladas, we find that there are innumerable varieties depending on the different regions.

The practice of wrapping food in a tortilla existed since the time of the Mayans. The people who lived in the Valley of Mexico near the lakes ate tortillas wrapped around little fish.

The original Nahuatl name for tortilla was *tlaxcalli*, which the Spanish changed to *tortilla*. The Nahuatl word for enchilada is *chillapitzalli*, which is formed with the word *chilli* (chile), and the Nahuatl word for *flute*, which is *tlapitzalli*. The word *enchilar* means to add chile to something like adding tomato sauce and chile on top of the tortillas.

There are many varieties of enchiladas, which get their names from the region where they are prepared, for example the enchiladas *potosinas* from San Luis Potosi, that use chili to color the tortilla dough. Other examples are those from Michoacan, filled with vegetables and chicken, the *emoladas*, which are enchiladas covered with mole, and the *enfrijoladas*, which are covered with a bean sauce.

I am going to give you a recipe for enchiladas *poblanas*, which are covered with poblano chile sauce and filled with chicken, with Oaxaca cheese on top.

- 6 poblano chilies
- 1 can of evaporated milk
- 1 C of sour cream
- 4 tsp. of butter
- 25 tortillas
- 1 tsp. of powdered chicken bullion
- Oaxaca or fresh cheese
- Cooked and shredded chicken breast

Process

- Wash the poblano chilies, toast them and take off the skin and seeds.
- Put the chilies in the blender with the cream, milk, chicken bouillon and a little water if needed to make the sauce.
- Put the butter in a pot to melt, and add the blended sauce. Boil for two minutes, and turn off the flame.
- Fry the tortillas in oil in a pan. When the tortillas are slightly golden, dip them in the poblano sauce, and fill with shredded chicken. Arrange them in a pan, put the rest of the sauce on them and sprinkle shredded cheese over them. If you want, you can fry strips of poblano chile over the enchiladas as well. ♦

