

On 5 de Mayo, 1862, the Mexican Army, under the leadership of General Guillermo Zaragoza Seguin, defeated the French Army in the Battle of Puebla. On 5 de Mayo, many Mexicans all over the U.S. celebrate their ancestors, and people of all origins take their time to appreciate the Mexican culture. Many people think that May 5 is the Mexican Independence, but that happens on September 16. The Battle of Puebla was not the final ending of the conflict between the Mexicans and French because the French won the following year. The significance of the Battle of Puebla is that Mexico was totally without protection, and the French Army was considered the largest military force in the world, having been undefeated for 50 years. The Mexican Army was outnumbered 4,500 against 6,040, and even after having been attacked, the Mexicans suffered fewer deaths than the French (83 vs. 462).

Having lived a great part of my life in Mexico, and celebrating 5 de Mayo as an important day in Mexico, I never imagined that 5 de Mayo would be such a tremendous celebration for Americans. 5 de Mayo gained importance in this country in the 1940s with the Chicano movement, but it really spread in the 1980s when the beer companies took advantage of the commercial aspects of celebrating this day.

In the United States, it's part of the culture and celebrated even more than it is in Mexico. It has become a totally commercial day where it is an excuse for drinking beer and eating Mexican food without really knowing the origin of this day.

In Mexico, Puebla is one of the states with the most delicious gastronomy. The Poblana gastronomy has the combination of the origin of Mexican food before the colonial period (when the Spanish arrived), coupled with the European kitchens (Spanish and French).

Each gastronomy offered ingredients as well as utensils and processes that brought forth a very rich and varied food.

Chiles en Nogada and Mole Poblano originated in Puebla. Both of them considered Mexico's national dishes. Food from Puebla is considered one of the most representative of Mexico.

There is a Poblano dish called Las Cemitas or Semitas that I would like to share with you. La Cemita was a bread of Spanish origin that came from two varieties of bread, which were given to the Spanish crown in tribute from the city of Puebla. They were a biscuit of salt, which was long and hard, and some bread or hollow cookies, which resembled the French pambazo that later spread during the French military intervention against Mexico (1863-1867). Both breads were especially made to last and be eaten on long navigations to Spain and the Philippines, which could last four to eight months.

Some say that the name of this type bread from Puebla is related to the unleavened bread of Jewish (semita) origin, the matza, cultivated in Spain by the Sephardic Jews (Spanish Jews) from the time of the Roman empire.

The city of Puebla supplied Madrid with hundreds of tons of these breads at least six times a year for its crews on the high seas in the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

**Procedure:**

1. First, making the bread rolls:

Sift the flour, and make a shape like a mountain with a crater in its center, sprinkle the salt around the crater to avoid a too direct contact with the yeast; mix together the butter, melted, with the yeast and the egg; then mix with milk, which should be warm, at about 104°F [40 °C]. At this temperature, you can put your finger in, and it will feel warm, not hot. Again, the yeast will die if this is too hot.

2. Knead this dough, if necessary put more water (but little by little), if instead you put slightly too much liquid and the dough is sticky just sprinkle some flour over the table you're kneading on. Then put the dough in a large, oiled bowl, covered with plastic wrap and let stand at room temperature for about 30 minutes to one hour, until the dough has doubled its size.

3. Once the volume has increased, bring it to knead again and extract balls approximately four inches in diameter; separately mix the egg yolk and a dash of milk and paint this glaze on each dough ball; put them on a floured tray, make two shallow incisions with a knife on each top then sprinkle the sesame seeds over. Bake in the preheated oven, for about 30 minutes at 350 °F [180 °C] or until their color turns soft hazel and sound hollow inside when gently tapping.

4. Now that we have prepared the bread: slice the bread in halves, spread some refried beans, then the sour cream and over it put the breaded chicken. Now top with tomato slices, slices of avocado, Oaxaca or string cheese, if you like pickled peppers then put some in as well. 🇲🇽



Viva México 5 de Mayo

- For the bread rolls themselves:
- 1 and ¼ cups corn flour
  - 1 and ¼ cups wheat flour
  - 1/2 teaspoon salt
  - 1 egg
  - 7 tablespoons butter
  - 2 teaspoons dry yeast,
  - ¼ cup milk
  - 1 egg yolk and tablespoon milk, for the glaze
  - sesame

- For what we will garnish the cemitas with, we need part of or all of the items below:
- Steak Milanese, or use same procedure for pounded, and breaded chicken Milanese breasts
  - Seasoned refried beans
  - String cheese
  - 2 avocados, sliced (this is important)
  - Red tomatoes
  - Pickled peppers
  - Sour cream