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Cocina de Raizes / Roots and Recipes: A Family Cookbook

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Cocina de Raíces / Roots & Recipes

A FAMILY COOKBOOK



jenises gonzalez

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Acknowledgements and Dedications

PARA MI FAMILIA. GRACIAS
POR DARME EL AMOR Y EL
APOYO QUE NECESITABA. SI
SE PUDO.

THANK YOU TO ALL MY
EDUCATORS THAT HAVE
SHOWN ME SUPPORT AND
HAVE REMINDED ME THAT I
BELONGED HERE.

The Big Crazy Family

The first thing you need to know before you enter this family is that they are crazy but, a good kind of crazy so don't run away too soon. Two parents and fifteen children, it does not get any crazier than that. There are brothers and sisters who are always fighting over who will get the terrenos. No one says I love you. Their love language seems to be the kind that embarrasses you. They are divided by a border, yet they still find a way to make each other mad. Behind all the chaos there is so much love.

Abuelito Nacho was born and raised in Michoacan. He is the most stubborn little man I know. No one can disagree with him because it drives him insane. He has brown skin, curly brown hair, and two little brown eyes. He always tells us the best stories about how he grew up in the rancho. He met Abuelita when they were around 18 and they married pretty young. Once they got married he started building their home that they still own today.

Abuelita Mayo was also born and raised in the same ranchito as Abuelito. She is the most caring and nurturing person I know. She also has dark brown skin, dark brown hair, and is a petite woman. In my opinion she is the best cook on earth. She makes the best posole, sometimes she lets me make tortillas with her. She has taught me that food is a love language and when people cook for you it means that they truly love you. When she is not in the kitchen she is almost always dancing. I love abuelita so much. Somehow she managed to raise fifteen children.

First we have Tio Speedy, he's a short, chubby, bald man who's never been married but plays the marriage counselor. He's always mad about something, he is the oldest of fifteen after all. He was the first to come to the U.S, none of us really know how he got here but he did. I would be mad too if I sacrificed my life crossing a border and my brothers didn't listen to me.

Second is Tia Martha, she is the meanest tia in the bunch. She is the oldest girl in the family and we all know how hard that is. She had to give up playing to help abuela in the kitchen. I hear horror stories about how she would hit her younger sisters if they didn't clean well enough. I heard mom say she has a secret daughter, I don't know what that means though.

Third is Tio Miguel, he's the most annoying of them all. He is short, brown, and chubby, kind of like Tio Speedy. For a small man he carries a very big ego. One time he got in a fight with a stranger because he said he could drink more than him. My advice is you avoid Tio Miguel at all costs.

Tio Jose is the most serious brother. He does not take jokes very well and will most likely get mad if you take it too far. He hardly comes around because his brothers are burlistas. He can be a good contact if you want to work though.

Then came my dad, he's the funniest of them all. He has dark brown skin, two squinty brown eyes and very thick eyebrows. When you first see him, you will be scared and intimidated. Give him a chance, he will make you laugh. He is also the most generous person I know, he will sacrifice himself for all his siblings even when they don't do the same for him.

Tio Rafa, is my dad's favorite brother maybe because they are so close in age. He is a very hard worker. He used to live with us in the US, but he got caught by ICE. They took him back to Mexico and he hasn't been back since.

My Tia Candi seems to be the black sheep of the family. The other sisters talk badly about her when she is not around. "Cambia de novio como se cambia los calzones," they say. I guess it's true, she always has a new boyfriend. I think she is a chingona, she is breaking gender norms one at a time.

Tio Fernando is also very silly. He is tall, slender, and just like his other siblings he has dark brown skin. He's one of the most courageous people I know. He has gotten deported three times and he still wants to come back. We had to pick him up in a random alley from the coyote once.

Tia Jenny came next. She was the only one of the siblings to go to a university. She studied computer science and knows so much about computers. Unfortunately, she got married too soon and has been failed by machismo and she was not allowed to graduate. Poverty continues to steal her dreams.

My Tio Rojelio who is also known as Shrek is also a funny man. I just learned that he tried to name my dad Shrek but dad started calling him that and it stuck with him instead. He is married to a woman no one in the family likes, mostly because she is a chismosa as mom says.

Next is Tia Ana, she is my favorite Tia. She is so nurturing and always reminds me how proud she is. I wish she loved herself as much as she loves me. If you sit next to her she will almost always scratch your head and rub your back. My favorite spot is next to her. When she was younger she pierced her belly button herself I can't forget her screams.

Growing up My Tia Claudia was the cool aunt. She always had the most stylish clothes, she would let me play with her high heels, and she always did my nails. Sadly, like most of her sisters she married too young. Her husband won't let her study, his excuse is that she has kids. She has citizenship here but spends her time trapped in a home.

Then came Tia Rosi, they say I look like her. She has beautiful brown skin, long dark hair, and has perfect brown eyes. She moved away from home as soon as she could, how could we blame her. I wish I knew more about her.

The last brother is My Tio Oscar. He is the only brother that graduated from high school in the US. I can see how the other brothers resent him for not taking advantage of his citizenship and education. He carries the guilt of not wanting to achieve the American dream.

Last came Tia Lupita, just Lupita to me though. She is only a few years older than me so I used to think we were cousins. I have watched her struggle with her sexuality my whole life. She never wants to do girly things with me, she is very secretive about relationships, and she gets very uncomfortable when we ask.

I told you that this family was crazy. Fifteen children were raised in a three bedroom house. The boys in one room and the girls in the other. They had to make what their parents gave them enough. Some of the siblings were forced to grow up faster than others to help out. There is so much resentment within each other, I don't get it either. Who will abuela and abuelo spend Christmas with this year? God knows they can't all get together without a fight happening. This is only the siblings, there are fifty something grandchildren and counting that come with them. There is so much to understand about every individual in the family but I promise it is worth it, just give them a chance.

Nacho's Wedding, Bautizo, Quince Carnitas

INGREDIENTS

• Manteca (Lard)

• 1 Orange

• Carnation milk

• 1 Bottled coke

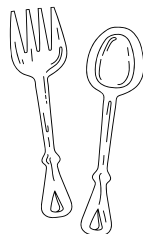
• 2 garlic heads

• Lemon juice

Lomo & Ribs

DIRECTIONS:

1. Cut your meat in chunks
2. Add some Manteca into a hot Caso then brown the meat (Add salt)
3. Once it has some color to it, add in the lemon juice
4. Once it simmers add half the Carnation milk
5. Let simmer for half an hour, then squeeze orange juice in
6. Add half of the bottle of coke
7. Let cook for 2 hours and a half



Nacho and Our Pig

As we wake up to prepare for my sister Mariana's bautizo the house is full of chaos. Mom, Abuelita, and my tias are all in the kitchen prepping everything from the rice to the salsas for the party. There are cumbias playing loudly throughout the house. Dad and my tios are outside cleaning the backyard to set up the tables and they listen to corridos. The kids run back and forth from inside the house to the outside.

"LAS MOSCAS!" mom yells.

Those kids never listen. I head outside to see where I fit in to help. I don't feel like peeling tomatillos. The leaves are sticky and they have a gross smell that will linger on your fingers. Abuelito Nacho and dad are getting ready to go pick the pig for the carnitas. In my young naive mind that sounds so fun and cute so I ask to come. They agree and we get into dad's white 1999 Chevrolet Silverado. His trokita is a two seater so the whole way I am squished between two chubby men, but I am just happy to be included.

When we get to the "farm" it smells like cow manure and sweat. I get so excited to see all the cute piggies and cows. A man covered in mud meets us at the entrance and leads us to where they keep the pigs. I don't think anything could have prepared me for what I was about to witness.

We enter and there are rows of pens full of pigs awaiting their fate. I could hear their little feet against the metal and their squeals. I immediately got a weird feeling in my stomach but I had to be quiet because I wanted to come. Dad and Abuelo are discussing which pig they want. The whole time I am thinking we get to take a pet pig home. They choose a pig that is hefty in size "es de buen carne" as abuelo says. The worker tries to capture the pig and they all start yelling and squealing as loud as they could. This makes me feel guilt and fear. I hide behind dad. The worker catches the pig and I look into its sad little eyes.

"Que le van hacer dad?," I ask

"Ahorita vas a ver.," he replies.

I remember waiting very anxiously for our pig. We sat in the truck and snacked on some flower seeds while we waited. The worker comes out with boxes of meat.

Dad says, "Aqui esta el puerco."

I still did not catch on, so we headed home. The whole time I'm wondering where our pig is. *Why did we come all this way for a pig? Why couldn't we bring it home? Are they saving it for later? When will we come back for it?* Dad and Abuelo look content so there should be nothing to worry about.

As soon as we got home, I ran inside to tell my mom about all the pigs we saw. She awes and agrees that it sounds cute. Little did I know that the most traumatizing thing was about to happen. I decided that I should go ask dad and Abuelo when we will go back for our pig.

I step outside and there he is. Our pig is laid out on the table and right next to it Abuelo is setting up the caso for the carnitas.

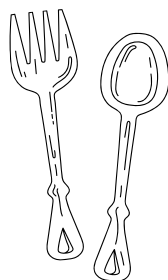
Mayo's Barbacoa Tacos

INGREDIENTS:

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------|
| • Chuck roast | • Vinegar |
| • Chiles california | • Garlic |
| • Cominos | • Paprika |
| • Ojas de laurel | • Salt |
| • Clavos | |
| • Piementa dulce | |

DIRECTIONS:

1. Devin 10-15 chiles depending on how much color you want and add them to hot water
2. Once they are soft add to a blender
3. Add 6 clavos, 4 peppercorns, 4 garlic teeth, 2 pinches of oregano, paprika, a splash of vinegar, 1 oja de laurel, and sal a tu gusto into a belnder
4. once done blending, strain this mixture
5. In a pot add your seasoned meat to a pot and add water until the top of the meat is covered
6. Add in the mixture you blended
7. let cook on medium heat for 4 hours



The Recipe for the Perfect Grandma

Ingredients

3 cups of catholicism
2 cups of beauty
4 cups of patience
2 teaspoons of regret
4 tablespoons of worry
1 cup of love
½ cup of stubbornness

Directions

Gather all ingredients. Start with the beauty and mix in the patience little by little. Heat the 3 cups of catholicism until it comes to a boil and pour it into the mixture. Next add the ½ cup of stubbornness and mix until all the clumps are smooth. Add the 2 teaspoons of regret for taste. The worry is sprinkled throughout. Bake at the maximum heat so that all the love can rise.

My grandmother, Amada, embodies all these characteristics. Even just her name is so endearing and sweet. Amada in English translates to be loved and she truly is loved by everyone that meets her. We tend to spend our time divided by a border. She spends most of her time in her beloved country of Mexico and when one of her grandchildren is born she heads over to the states to help.

When mom was pregnant with my baby sister, Abuelita came and stayed with us for two months at the end of mom's pregnancy. This was some of the best time we have ever spent with her. She made us homemade tortillas everyday! She also made sure mom and the baby were doing okay. She had all the remedios ready for when she went into labor.

“Te tienes que tapar o te vas a resfriar.,” she would say.

“Y cuando nazca la niña te tienes que fajar.,” she emphasized to my mom.

The day that my baby sister was born, Abuelita was in charge of us while mom and dad went to the hospital. That day she made caldo de pollo because it was cold outside. I watched her in the kitchen throw spices and herbs in the pot while she danced to cumbias. It was always so fun to be around her. As she would make our tortillas she would make us “ranitas” while we waited. She would roll a clump of masa into the shape of a frog, cook it a little and sprinkle some salt onto it. We would always beg her for another but she would say, “No, se me van empachar.”

When the caldo was ready she served us and made us sit at the table. The soup was always so warm and colorful, full of cabbage, carrots, zucchini, rice, and chicken. As I was enjoying one of my favorite dishes at the time, my spoon fished up a chicken foot. I had never had or seen chicken feet in a meal. I was mortified.

“QUÉ ES ESO?,” I shouted.

Abuela laughs and says, “Las manos de tu hermanita.”

“No voy a comer...,” I say quietly

She says sternly, “No te vas de la mesa hasta que termines de comer.”

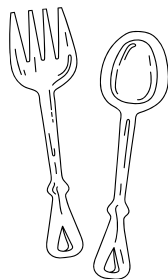
Abuelita is evil, she cooked my newborn sister. There was no way I was finishing my food. How could she make me sit here and eat my sister's hands? I sat there all night thinking about how much I missed my mom. I prayed and hoped that my baby sister was okay.

Now that I am old enough to reflect about my Abuela and how much she means to me. I see how often she discredits her knowledge. She has a misconception that because she did not get a formal education, she is not “smart” or “knowledgeable.” But she has taught her family how to cook, how to love, and most importantly that family will always come first. No matter what she is doing in her beloved country, she drops everything and tends to her grandbabies.

Mom's Posole Rojo

INGREDIENTS:

- Chuck roast
- Chiles california
- 1 garlic head
- hominy
- 1 onion
- Pepper
- Salt



DIRECTIONS:

1. Devein 10-15 chiles and add to hot water
2. Once soft add to a blender
3. Then add 3 garlic teeth, salt, onion powder, garlic powder, and pepper to the chiles in blender
4. Blend and strain mixture
5. Cut and season the meat, then add to a pot
6. Add water and mixture to the pot until the meat is covered
7. When the meat is soft and tender add the hominy
8. Let it come to a boil and serve
9. Garnish with lettuce, radish, onion, avocado, and lime.

Tortillas para el corazón

cuando estoy triste pienso en mi madre.

pienso en las tortillas hechas a mano
que preparaba para el corazón
pienso en el caldo de res y de repente
recuerdo el amor que sentía
la aroma de la hierbabuena me abrazaba
el vapor del caldo me llenaba de alegría

“Come miya, you’ll feel better.”, she would say
and she was almost always right.

her food can heal a broken heart.
food is her love language.
I feel her love in every bite.
she captures all her emotions through food.

cuando pica la salsa, está enojada.
cuando llora mientras pica cebolla, está celosa.
cuando le sale salada la comida, está triste.
y cuando le sale todo bien, está feliz.

querida mama,
cuando pienso en tu comida, pienso en tu niñez.
siento la tristeza de la niña atrapada en ti. nunca
tuviste a alguien que te currar con la comida. veo
tu esfuerzo por romper los ciclos. te veo mamá.

-con mucho amor, tu hija

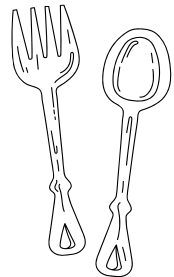
Tia Ana's Perfect Rice

INGREDIENTS:

- Jasmine Rice
.....
- Onion
.....
- Garlic Cloves
.....
- Tomato
.....
- Tomato Seasoning
.....
- Oil

DIRECTIONS:

1. In a small pot add some oil and a garlic tooth
2. Once that is fragrant add the jasmine rice and brown
3. To make tomato broth add 2 tomatos, half an onion, tomato seasoning, and some water to blender.
4. Once the rice is browned add the tomato broth.
5. Let it simmer and cover with lid
6. Let cook for 15 minutes adn enjoy!



I was Raised by..

Inspired by Kelly Normam Ellis

I was raised by
some always cussin', finger snappin', gossip lovin'
"Don't talk back to me
I'm your mom, not your friend"
sorta woman.

I was raised by
some brown skinned, chisme talkin', chancla wearin'
trapped in marriage
failed
by machismo
"La belleza cuesta"
type of Tias.

I was raised by
some babymakin', cumbia dancin', always cookin',
"Estas muy flaca"
kind of Grandma.

I was raised by
beer drinkin', soccer watchin', joke tellin', always workin'
pursuing
El Sueño Americano
"Pues si Dios quiere"
type of dad.

I was raised by
church every Sunday, familia luchona, always eatin'
divided
by a border
"Te veo en diciembre"
type of family.

I was raised by
hard workin', dream chasin', always givin'
always
accused of taking people's jobs
"No quieres terminar como yo"
type of community.

for mi gente, I continue
to prosper in a system
not made for us.

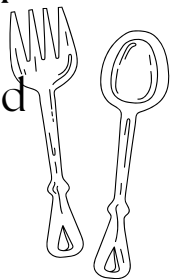
Juan's Frijoles Fritos

INGREDIENTS:

- Pinto beans
.....
- Oil
.....
- Chile serrano
.....

DIRECTIONS:

1. In a hot pan add oil and a chile serrano cut in half
2. Once the chile has browned a little bit add some pinto beans
3. Smash with a potato masher or cup like my dad
4. make sure that there is enough liquid to make beans smooth
5. enjoy with queso fresco and tortillas



Frijoles are our Glue

If you ask dad who the best cook in the family is, he will say it is him. Though he is not the best cook, he loves to cook a little too much. For someone who doesn't cook that often he is our biggest critic and has a lot to say. He knows what every recipe that Abuelita Mayo taught us should taste like and he will let us know what is wrong and what could be better.

Growing up mom did all the cooking. She made three meals a day, everyday of the week and we only ate out on special occasions. When dad is in the kitchen that meant that mom was sick and we were going to wish we had her food. He almost always makes frijoles fritos and when he doesn't make frijoles he throws what he finds in the fridge together.

When I was younger I did not realize how important dad was to the kitchen. To little me he was just our bread winner. He dedicated more than half of his life to working in the fields harvesting whatever fruits and vegetables were in season. When he came home he would eat dinner, tell mom what was wrong with the food, go to bed and repeat. In my eyes dad did not belong in the kitchen but he holds the knowledge.

Though he did not grow up with much in his beloved ranchito, he had the privilege of growing up with the recipes Abuelita Mayo made. He knows exactly what they should taste like and what flavors are missing. Mom once made albondiga soup, dad tasted it and said "No le hechaste cominos." At the time we all rolled our eyes because it was just another thing he was complaining about. But how could he identify such a small detail of the recipe?

Now that I am old enough to reflect on our experiences in the kitchen, dad truly is the glue to our family. Without him we would have no connection to Abuelita, meaning no recipes to follow. Our love for food and for each other wouldn't be as strong without him. Even just his Frijoles Fritos recipe holds so much power in our kitchen. It is a staple in a lot of our dishes. We eat frijoles fritos with every meal and no one can make them like him. He knows he is the key to our family, which is why he names himself the best cook.