



MEXICAN CUISINE

MEXICO

- Where two oceans meet
- Very little of the country receives rainfall
- A desert climate in the north
- Cuisine influenced by the Maya, Aztecs and Spanish
- The founding of Mexico in the 900s BC
- When the Mexica tribe of Azatlan arrived in what is now central Mexico, they found an eagle clutching a snake in its talons atop a cactus. They believed this event to be a message from Huitzilopochtli (the sun god) in their beliefs, signifying that the lands they had arrived at were sacred.



GEOGRAPHY



- 6 regions comprising 31 states and 1 federal district
- These are: Northern Mexico, Central Mexico, Southern Mexico and the Gulf of Mexico, the Yucatan Administration, the Pacific Coast, and the Baja Peninsula
- A highly mountainous country
- Mexico City is one of the highest-altitude cities in the world. Because it is so difficult to feed this densely populated city with high-quality grains at such a high elevation, a search began for a plant that grows as easily as rye but has as high a nutritional value as wheat. This led to the creation of “triticale” through the crossbreeding of the two grains.
- Although Mexico has a hot climate in some areas due to its southern latitude, the western coasts are milder in the summer, while the eastern coasts are milder in the winter. For this reason, both marine tourism and fishing vary by month.



CUISINE

- With the Spanish discovery of the New World and the introduction of wheat to Mexico, the “tortilla” became the region’s primary staple food
- Northern Mexico: certain peach varieties, melons, peanuts, and over thirty types of apples, as well as “Chihuahua” cheese,
- The Central Mexico region, despite its rugged terrain, makes use of both highland life and coastal culture. Sugar cane, rice paddies, coffee trees, Macedonian hazelnuts, avocados, corn, beans, peas, potatoes, mangoes, strawberries, papayas, bananas, lemons, and limes. The State of Michoacán (Fishermen’s City) and the State of Puebla are Mexico’s gastronomic capitals. This state produces fresh vegetables and fruits year-round, and the world’s most sought-after beef and pork are raised here.
- Southern Mexico’s Mediterranean-influenced cuisine. The seabass dish made with tomatoes, onions, capers, olives, olive oil, and pickled jalapeños is very famous. Capers, grapes, and green olives are used in meat, vegetable, and fish dishes, along with peanuts, wild bananas, yucca, and sweet potatoes. Although olive oil is not popular throughout Mexico, it is frequently used in Southern Mexico and the Gulf of Mexico region. Coffee and cocoa production is high.

CULTURE

- Many elements associated with Mexican culture around the world originate from “Guadalajara,” the country’s second-largest city. Mariachi music, the Mexican hat, rodeo, and tequila are all products that originated in this region.
- The agave plant



- Mealtime is a time for socializing and enjoying the company of family and friends.
- Meals are served and eaten slowly.
- “Buen provecho (Enjoy your meal)”
- Although the dishes may be unique, the rituals are classic.
- Meals are served from the left. Although modern menu etiquette is generally followed, salads are served after the main course. If the salad contains greens like lettuce, it is considered inappropriate to cut them with a knife; instead, the knife is used to help the fork pick up the lettuce
- Tequila is served in a small dish with salt and a slice of lime. First, the salt is licked off the left palm in one swift motion, then the tequila is downed in one gulp from the shot glass, followed by biting into the lime wedge to suck out the juice. This way, the lime juice sweetens the taste in the mouth and makes the drink more palatable.
- Street food is abundant

STREET FOOD

- “Tostadas,” made by stuffing deep-fried corn tortillas with various meats and vegetables



EL CAGUAMO

- “El caguamo,” a snack made with seafood



FLUTSA

- “Flautsa,” made by wrapping potatoes, chicken, cheese, and lamb in corn tortillas and deep-frying them



EL HUEQUITO

- The “el huequito” döner, inspired by Lebanese immigrants



UNIQUE CONCEPTS IN MEXICAN CUISINE

- Chile (Hot Red Pepper)
- Chorizos: A type of pork sausage brought to Mexico by the Spanish.
- Plantain: A type of banana that, unlike its close relatives, is quite difficult to eat raw; it contains a high amount of starch and has a sweet taste that makes it suitable for cooking. This wild-growing banana variety comes in pink, yellow, brown, black, red, and green varieties.
- Huitlacoche: A product obtained by utilizing a type of fungal disease found in immature corn as a gastronomically valuable ingredient. The corn affected by this disease is harvested before it fully matures, and the fungus is allowed to develop by absorbing the corn's sugary sap. Later, this fungus—which has a black, earthy scent and a smoky, mushroom-like aroma—is used to flavor soups, dishes, and quesadillas.
- Mole: A staple sauce in Mexican cuisine, mole is prepared in nearly every region using locally specific vegetables, spices, meat, and herbs, though red chili peppers are used in almost all versions. This group of sauces, typically prepared in a thick, dark consistency to coat meat dishes, possesses a distinctive aroma and flavor.





MEALS

- In Mexican culture, people typically eat four or five meals a day. The day begins with breakfast, which is a very light meal consisting of sweet bread and coffee.
- Lunch is a heartier meal and includes scrambled eggs with tomatoes, onions, and peppers, corn tortillas, various types of beans, fruit, and coffee.
- In the afternoon, it's time for "comida," the heaviest meal of the day. The afternoon meal usually consists of multiple dishes. It begins with appetizers known as "anto jito." For the starter, a dish such as toast, vegetable chicken soup, or Mexican rice is served. A chicken taco prepared with chopped vegetables, cheese, beans, and salsa makes for a good main course. The meal can be concluded with a pastry-based dessert.
- Before dinner, "meri enda" is completed by eating corn porridge, sweet bread, or a light dessert.
- Dinner is usually eaten lightly. Sometimes a lighter lunch is preferred, allowing for a heartier dinner. Dinner typically consists of a small meat dish served with corn tortillas, followed by a dessert such as fresh fruit or fruit puree.

POPULAR MEXICAN DISHES IN TURKEY

Taco

A snack made with a corn or flour tortilla, typically filled with ground meat, chicken, vegetables, and cheese. In Turkey, it's usually served in a fast-food style, though sometimes it's served using lavash.

Burrito

A mixture of meat, rice, beans, vegetables, and cheese wrapped in a flour tortilla. It is commonly found in chain restaurants or establishments serving “Tex-Mex” cuisine.

Quesadilla

A grilled dish consisting of melted cheese between two tortillas, sometimes containing chicken or vegetables. In Turkey, it has made its way onto menus at some cafes and restaurants under names like “cheese tortilla” or “toasted tortilla.”

Guacamole

A dip made with mashed avocado, lime juice, onion, and tomato. It has become popular as a healthy snack, and with the increasing availability of avocados, it is also frequently enjoyed as a homemade dish.

Nachos

Corn chips topped with melted cheese, jalapeño peppers, salsa, and other ingredients. It is served as a popular snack in movie theaters and bars.

Chili con Carne

A spicy stew made with ground beef and beans. It appears on the menus of some international cuisine restaurants in Turkey, especially during the winter.

