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planta baja

"Buy your first glass of wine with either your lunch or dinner main course and all subsequent glasses are on us, really!"
Sunday to Thursday

Canal 28 Col Centro 154 65 55

The Buen Provecho Book
Capturing the Spice of Mexico through Popular Food and Sayings

7. CHILES AND SALSAS
Se cree muy salsa.

Chiles and salsas are such a part of our daily meals that many Mexicans feel that if they do not have them, they cannot eat; the meal just doesn't taste right. Of course not all salsas, meaning sauces, are spicy or have chiles in them, but *salsa picante* is expected at any respectable Mexican table.

TIPSY
Adding a *mole* chile to have drunk alcoholic beverages in excess, to be at half chiles.
This means to be tipsy, to have had a lot to drink.

Salsa de tomate verde asado en molcajete
Grilled green tomato salsa ground in a molcajete, stone mortar

5 large green tomatillos
2 chiles serranos
1 clove garlic
1 medium onion, finely chopped
½ cup loosely packed chopped cilantro
1 ripe Hass avocado, cut in chunks, set aside to taste

Grill the tomatillos, serranos and garlic on the comal. Do not let them overcook and burn. Peel the tomatillos. In a mortar, mash the garlic with sea salt, then the serranos and the tomatillos. Stir in the chopped onion, cilantro, and avocado chunks. This is the favorite. Sprinkle pomegranate seeds for a superb contrast.

Patricia Merrill Márquez

What does that mean?

By Patricia Juana Merrill Márquez

Have you ever walked down the street and heard someone yell "¡Aguas!"? Perhaps you concluded someone is selling *aguas frescas*, or the stranger is alerting you to the presence of a nearby river. However, the truth of the matter is that "¡Aguas!" is a warning, possibly an oncoming car, a slippery pavement, or a small child crossing the street. It means be careful, take care.

The expression originates with the emptying of chamber pots from balconies into the street. "¡Aguas!" also warned serenading suitors about a bucket of water about to be emptied on him by a disapproving father. These expressions, or *dichos*, give insight to Mexican culture—its playfulness, wisdom, irony, joy and pain.

Take the expression "Es mi mero mole" (That's just my mole). Understanding the role of "mole," the sauce served often with chicken or turkey for special occasions, is the same as saying "That's my cup of tea." Linguistically, we know that there are many different meanings to a word or an expression.

I was born in San

Book Presentation

The Buen Provecho Book

Patricia Merrill Marquez

Fri, Jun 11, 6:30pm

Actinver-Lloyd

San Francisco 33

Free

Miguel in one of the first bi-cultural, bi-national families after the Second World War after my father came to study art on the GI Bill. My interest in



linguistics comes from my mother and my father who both taught languages. My love for cooking was inspired by three generations of great cooks on my mother's side who acquired their knowledge from the convents of San Miguel.

When I was studying architecture in Guanajuato in the early 1970s, I spent weekends in León where my parents ran a cultural institute. During these "cooking vacations," I had the opportunity to meet food writers such as Barbara Hansen of *The Los Angeles Times* as well as Diana Kennedy and Rick Bayless early in their careers. A new "cooking vacation" was born in 2001 when I opened the Arcos del Atascadero Bed and Breakfast in San Miguel.

Our culture often makes reference to our food because for us it's as colorful, delicious and spicy as life itself. Mexican cuisine is about joy, friends, *compadres*, and festivities. For us, food brings to mind a teething baby chewing on boiled chicken feet and grandmothers sipping on *atolito* to warm and soothe their tummies. On our birthdays we want mole and mariachi music. During Lent, we crave *capirotada*. On Independence Day, September 16, we ask for *chiles en nogada*. We share *tamales* and *atole* with the musicians who serenade our mamas on Mother's Day and place our dearly departed loved ones' favorite foods on altars during the Day of the Dead. When we have had a little too much to drink, *menudo* and its wonderfully rich broth fixes us right up. When we are angry or feel taken advantage of, we immediately think "¿Y qué... me da de comer?" (So what... does he feed me?) Oh, the power of food and feeding. It's all about life, about tradition.

Perhaps the most commonly used phrase in Mexico in reference to food is "¡Buen provecho!" roughly trans-

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lated "to your health." The phrase is considered part of being well-mannered. To not wish people eating in your presence "¡Buen provecho!" is tantamount to cursing someone, or, at the very least, bad vibes.

The Buen Provecho Book is about Mexican cuisine and thus the Mexican psyche. The book's material comes from the voice of the people and is an enjoyable way to learn.

It is a mix of proverbs, *albures* (double entendres), *refranes* (rhymes), anecdotes and recipes as well as some wonderful illustrations.

I will be presenting the book for the first time at a reception sponsored by Actinver-Lloyd, which coincides with the second anniversary of the death of my mother, Yaya, to whom the book is dedicated. The book will be on sale for 600 pesos at the event and is also available at local bookstores as well as at www.thebuenprovechobook.com, for US\$60.



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