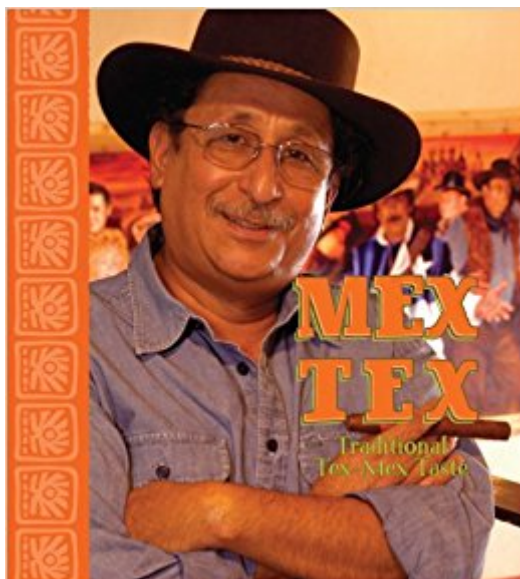


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MexTex: Traditional Tex-Mex Taste



Synopsis

Reintroducing the prairie/range style cooking of cowboys, Chef Matt Martinez, Jr. focuses on indigenous, high-flavor, low-fat foods with Southern roots. Using traditional methods and native ingredients, these recipes bring authentic taste to a home kitchen.

Book Information

Hardcover: 192 pages

Publisher: Bright Sky Press; 1st Edition edition (July 1, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1931721696

ISBN-13: 978-1931721691

Product Dimensions: 9.4 x 0.9 x 10.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.2 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 31 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #692,755 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #160 in Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Regional & International > U.S. Regional > Southwest #246 in Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Regional & International > Mexican

Customer Reviews

". . . taste buds shout ole! to Tex-Mex cooking." -- Houston Chronicle". . . the perfect Chile Relleno." -- D Magazine". . . this book is a treasure trove . . . no secrets left out." -- The Texas Food and Wine Gourmet". . . vibrant seasonings and complex flavors." -- Lexington, VA News Gazette"A tasteful find . . . handsome." -- Courier-Times (Newcastle, IN)"Martinez has compiled a cookbook, "MexTex: Traditional Tex-Mex Taste," that is almost as delightful as his food . . . timeless favorites . . . rich images . . . recipes reflect Tex-Mex cooking at its best . . . truly innovative. . . ." -- Tucson Citizen"Our 100 favorite foods, restaurants, drinks, people, places and things" -- The Saveur"The recipes are well written, unintimidating and made all the more inviting by the color photograph that accompanies each one." -- Fiery Foods Magazine"Mex-Tex, Traditional Tex-Mex Taste, will encourage anyone who enjoys cooking Tex-Mex to try his easy-to-follow recipes." -- Dallas Morning News

Matt Martinez Jr. is a fourth-generation Tex-Mex chef and has continued his family's tradition with many successful restaurant concepts.

Let me first say that if you're in Dallas or Austin, Texas then you must try one of Matt's restaurants as his contribution to Tex-Mex cuisine is notable. I think you'll find he offers some of the best of Tex-Mex in the great state of Texas. This nicely bound hardcover cookbook has excellent color photos of many appetizers, drinks, sides, sauces, and main dishes accompanied with an interesting story about his family, the business, and the cultural complexity yet simplicity of this under-rated cuisine, but with some not so slight shortcomings. While he does give you a glimpse of dishes and sides, et al., used in his different restaurants, I found my results, after carefully imitating the recipes, left something to be desired and wondered if he's "telling all" or holding back with a few secrets as my finished product didn't taste like what I find in excellent Tex-Mex establishments, namely his. Furthermore, there are a few spots where editing mistakes confuse the cooking method or times. Also, the nice, colorful pictures aren't always related to the adjacent recipes. Some examples of where I think the book could've excelled fall within his enchilada sauce section. I found this to be a mix of satisfaction and disappointment. This is arguably the most important aspect of the cuisine as it can make or break enchiladas, tamales, and other dishes that require some kind of sauce or gravy. His chile con carne proportions, in my view, produces a meaty chile rather than a gravy with chile meat. And the flavor was off. His original enchilada sauce (or what I would call gravy) is fine and maybe the best in the book but it doesn't look or taste like what he uses in his restaurants. Believe me when I write such comments because I carefully followed the recipes. Lastly, his refried bean recipe doesn't taste like what you have in his restaurants which makes me wonder if the rendered pork lard or pinto beans they use are somehow processed differently than what one can do at home or some method that wasn't added in what was provided; I cannot see how though. On the other hand, his Tex-Mex spice and Bob Armstrong appear to be on target. There are many recipes I intend on trying and flavorings to use such as Black Magic, but the main thing I hope to try is a new and expanded version, with better attention and focus, on how to create this wonderful cuisine from your own kitchen. All in all, I wasn't disappointed with this purchase but hope that Matt will provide a forum for question or answer regarding his revealed recipes and techniques and/or expand the topic with another volume. John in Dallas

It was 1986 when Matt's El Rancho opened at its new location on South Lamar in Austin that I savored their wonderful food for the very first time. Surrounded by a sea of people waiting to be seated, we were greeted warmly by Matt, Sr. with his gracious smile and sincere welcome. When we finally got a table and ordered our food, the Chile Rellenos were to die for! Since leaving Austin a decade later--having made countless trips to Matt's through the years for a Mexican food "fix"--the

challenge became bringing Matt's El Rancho to our own dinner table. Thankfully, Matt Martinez, Jr. (Little Matt), has generously extended to homesick Texas expatriates, and to the world, the wonderful gift of his family's culinary heritage through his series of cookbooks. *Mex Tex: Traditional Tex-Mex Taste* is the latest and by far the best contribution of all. Unlike Matt's earlier efforts, *Mex Tex* is a rich and colorful tapestry of wonderful photographs that immediately transport the reader to the restaurant. It makes for an absolutely delightful dining-with-the-eyes experience. For those who've eaten often at Matt's, and treasure this family's vital contribution to "making Austin, Austin," the journey is enhanced greatly by many older photos and Matt's personal accounts, most notably the origin of "Bob Armstrong Dip." While Matt's delightful array of recipes is absolutely wonderful, and quite accessible to virtually anyone with cooking experience, the larger contribution of *Mex Tex* should not be overlooked. Beginning with his first book, *Matt Martinez's Culinary Frontier* appearing ten years ago; to, *Matt Makes a Run for the Border: Recipes and Tales from a Tex-Mex Chef*; to *Mex Tex*, Matt Martinez, Jr. is clearly concerned to establish for all time the legitimacy of Mexican food made by himself and many generations of Tejanos (Texans of Mexican descent) as being "authentic" in every sense of the word. This formidable challenge emerged in 1972 with the appearance of Diana Kennedy's, *The Cuisines of Mexico*. On the one hand, Kennedy did a good job of exploring much of the culinary picture and meaning and recipes of "Mexican food" as it exists in great variety within Mexico proper. Sadly, Kennedy, followed by legions of her admirers, has also been a mouthpiece of misinformation and misunderstanding regarding Mexican food as it has long been prepared by Texas Mexicans. Kennedy sought to convince the world (and with considerable success) that the Rio Grande River exerts a kind of magical demarcation, with the foods made south of it qualifying as "authentic," while food made to the north of it--tacos, burritos, enchiladas, etc.--as somehow counterfeit. The most obvious result of these misguided efforts was the emergence of the term, "Tex-Mex"--perceived initially (and accurately) as nothing less than a slur, as though Tejanos were unworthy of their own noble ethnic heritage. To his great credit, Matt Martinez, Jr. responded to this indignity, not with rancor and invective (at least not in print!), but by following Kennedy's lead in publishing cookbooks, in order to set the record straight. Without apology, Matt embraces the necessity of "Tex-Mex" by turning it into *MEX TEX*, so as to awaken the reader to the actual truth of the matter: Mexican Texas food, while differing in many respects from the "cuisines of Mexico," is genuine--and delicious!--in its own right. The proof (if such is necessary) is that "authentic" Texas-style Mexican food has never been more popular. Unfortunately, it has been years since I have dined at Matt's El Rancho on South Lamar. And yet, because of his wonderful cookbooks--the best being *Mex Tex*--Matt Martinez, Jr. makes it possible for us to get our

"Mexican Food fix" with great regularity. It is a cookbook no Mexican food junky should be without.

In my Tex-Mex family, I am not known as a good cook. However, none of my family really know how to cook authentic Tex-Mex. Their food is usually bland. Still, it is better tasting than what I was making. We lost our great cooks in the family nearly 20 years ago, so I was too young to pick up their skilled art and none of the other family wasn't interested to learn their magic. Enter Mr. Martinez. His recipes taste as good as the food at his family's restaurant in Austin, TX. I made the burrito beans for a family get together. The pot sat next to two other Auntie's "famous" beans. Hands down, the men went for mine and started ribbing their wives how come they don't use spices like this pot of beans. I have also made the cheese and beef version of enchiladas for the family. Now, I am the sole supplier of enchiladas for family gatherings. Thanks Mr. Martinez for the recipes. I have been able to take some of the methods and branch out in "fixing" some of the other bland recipes my family cooks. My family is in total shocked with their niece. I had a great-aunt tell me they are reminded of their mother, my great grandmother, when they taste my food.

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