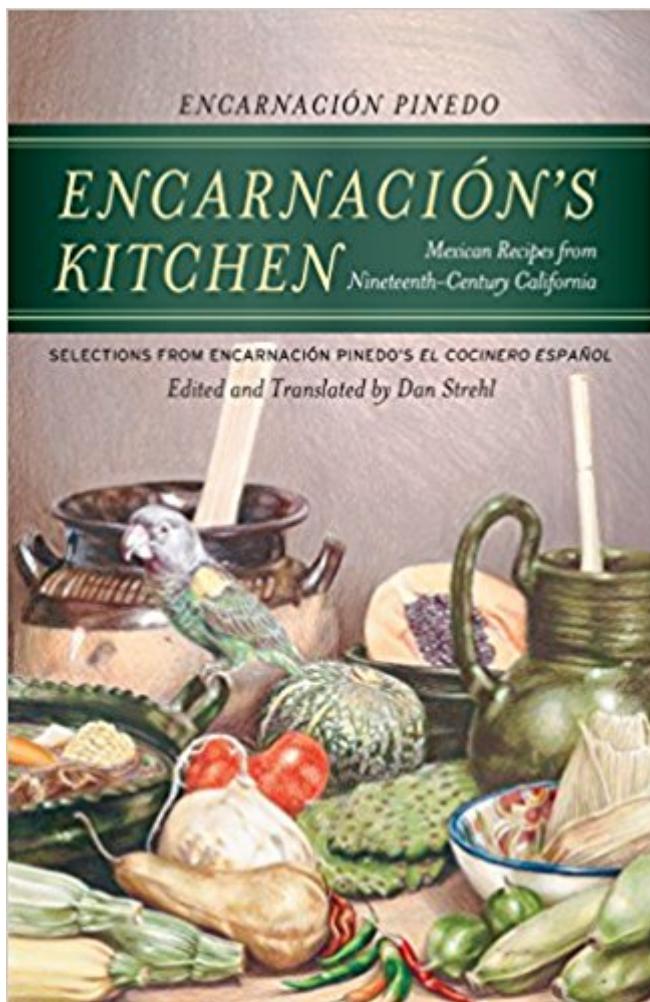


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Encarnacion's Kitchen: Mexican Recipes From Nineteenth-Century California, Selections From EncarnaciÃ³n Pinedo's El Cocinero EspaÃ±ol (California Studies In Food And Culture)





Synopsis

In 1991 Ruth Reichl, then a Los Angeles Times food writer, observed that much of the style now identified with California cuisine, and with nouvelle cuisine du Mexique, was practiced by EncarnaciÃ³n Pinedo a century earlier. A landmark of American cuisine first published in 1898 as *El cocinero espaÃ±ol* (The Spanish Cook), *EncarnaciÃ³n's Kitchen* is the first cookbook written by a Hispanic in the United States, as well as the first recording of Californio food—Mexican cuisine prepared by the Spanish-speaking peoples born in California. Pinedo's cookbook offers a fascinating look into the kitchens of a long-ago culture that continues to exert its influence today. Of some three hundred of Pinedo's recipes included here—a mixture of Basque, Spanish, and Mexican—many are variations on traditional dishes, such as chilaquiles, chiles rellenos, and salsa (for which the cook provides fifteen versions). Whether describing how to prepare cod or ham and eggs (a typical Anglo dish labeled "huevos hipÃ³critas"), Pinedo was imparting invaluable lessons in culinary history and Latino culture along with her piquant directions. In addition to his lively, clear translation, Dan Strehl offers a remarkable view of Pinedo's family history and of the material and literary culture of early California cooking. Prize-winning journalist Victor Valle puts Pinedo's work into the context of Hispanic women's testimonios of the nineteenth century, explaining how the book is a deliberate act of cultural transmission from a traditionally voiceless group.

Book Information

Paperback: 222 pages

Publisher: University of California Press; Reprint edition (October 24, 2005)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0520246764

ISBN-13: 978-0520246768

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.5 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 7.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 5 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #509,709 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #196 in Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Regional & International > Mexican #672 in Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Cooking Education & Reference > History #9078 in Books > History > Americas > United States > State & Local

Customer Reviews

Though this bible of 19th-century California cuisine is now more than a century old, a new and seamless translation by Strehl (The Spanish Cook) proves that common sense culinary advice is timeless. Pinedo's introduction to her recipes offers guidance on selecting produce and cuts of meat that stands the test of time, including this gem: "Foods are much more appetizing and healthy when they are cooked in a clean and tidy manner. Many lives have been sacrificed because of a lack of cleanliness in bronze, copper, and ceramic pots." Many of the recipes themselves—which are organized traditionally, beginning with soups and ending with desserts—also stand up to today's picky tastebuds. Good examples of century-straddling delights include Pinedo's recipes for whitefish stuffed with hazelnuts and almonds and for *Relleno Para Ganso*, or stuffing for goose, which, like many of the recipes, shies away from specific quantities ("Finely chop some cooked mushrooms...add a good piece of butter, with some lemon juice"). Touted as traditional "Californio food" (cuisine prepared by Spanish-speaking California immigrants and residents), these recipes may be a little too exotic for the contemporary health-conscious palate: *Menudo a la Espanola* (Spanish-style tripe) and *Morcilla Negra a la Espanola* (Spanish-style black blood sausage) are two such examples. Still, the book, with its *Bunuelos, o Suspiros de Monjas* (Puffy Fritters, or Nuns' Sighs), serves as a window on another time, as a cultural document as much as a culinary one. And the simplicity with which these dishes can be recreated more than makes up for a deep-fried dependence on lard. Victor Valle (Recipe of Memory) provides an enlightening introductory essay that briefly chronicles the life and times of the remarkable woman who shaped present day Cal-Mex cookery. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"A landmark for anyone interested in learning about and preparing Mexican food. . . .Strehl's sharp 300-recipe version . . .will ensure new generations of experts. There are more than 15 variations of salsa alone. Readers will recognize the roots of lots of additional still-popular traditional dishes, such as enchiladas and chiles rellenos, as well as many dishes they most likely have never prepared or tasted before. Recipes are presented just as Pinedo did, written out in paragraph form without separating ingredients and directions and without specifying exact amounts of ingredients or yields. Befitting most of history's classic, well-loved cuisines, recipes are simple, yet memorably flavorful."--Lisa Messinger, "Copley News Service"

Until recent history, women rarely wrote their own stories for the history books, men did. This is especially true of the Hispanic women living in the lands after the Mexican war (1848). The

Hispanics living in California and other territories that became the American Southwest were quickly defrauded of their land and civil rights. This cookbook begins with beautifully researched and sensitively written essays describing the social-political context within which Encarnacion penned her recipes. The recipes are as she wrote them in 1898. To cook them accurately presumes adequate knowledge of cooking. Cookbooks are more than a collection of recipes, they transmit culture. This book is necessary for any person deeply interested in the cultural context of California and Southwest cuisine. Before I read this book, I wondered how accurate or true to my experience it would be. My late grandmother, Catalina Maria Ortiz Acosta, was a woman from a prominent Hispanic family, and was born in Los Angeles in 1904. When I read this book I recognized the recipes from the meals and the style of food my grandmother had cooked. The history confirmed the stories she would tell me about the various political elite she knew. (Catalina Pico, the granddaughter of Pio Pico, the last Mexican Governor of Alta California was her godmother.) I highly recommend this book.

I love this book. It's both a history book and a cookbook. Everyone who cares about central California history should own this.

One of my favorite Christmas gifts.

Who knew they ate so well 120 years ago in California? A must read for food history buffs. Two words.

The woman who wrote these recipes is my several times great grandmother of mine which my family only recently found out. We were so excited to know there was this interesting connection to our past out there. My mother loves this book now its one of her treasures.

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