

\$3.50



# La Posta Cook Book

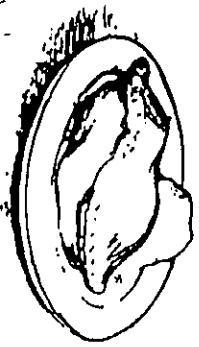
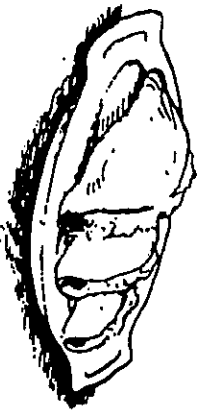
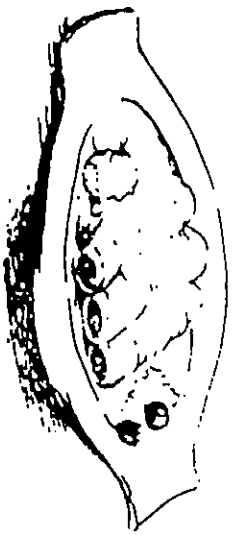
*The Authentic Old Mesilla Mexican Cook Book  
With Original World Famous Recipes  
And A History Of The New Mexico Frontier*

*50th Anniversary · 1939 ~ 1989*

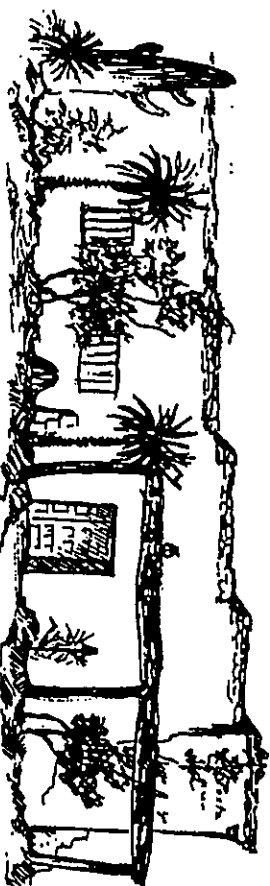


*La Posta de Mesilla Recommended By Life Magazine*

**LIFE**



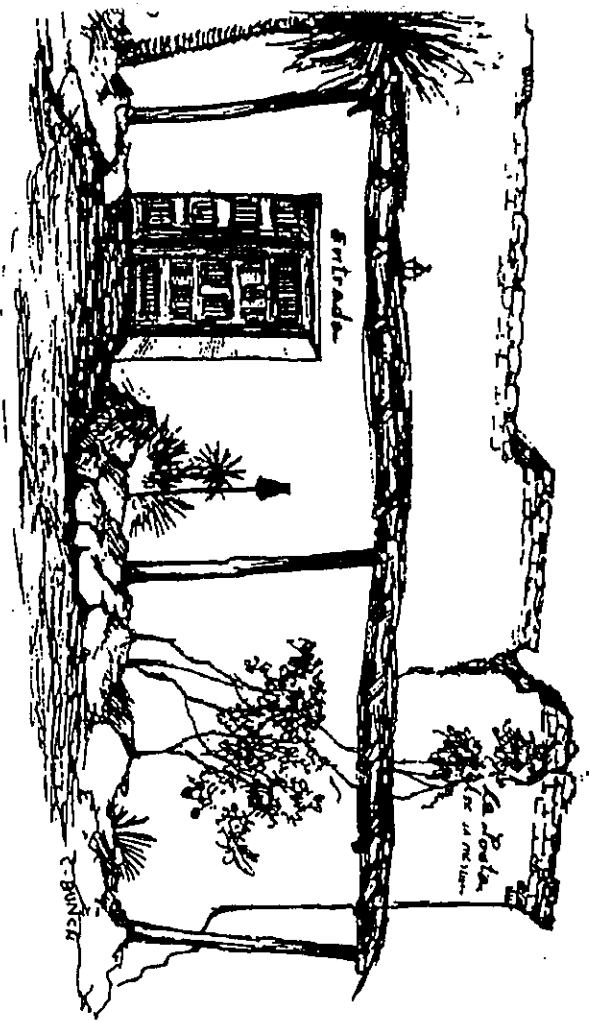
# The Authentic *La Posta* COOK BOOK



*Prepared By*  
Katy Camuñez Meek

Paul Rader  
*Editor*

Carolyn Bunch  
*Art*



## FOREWORD

"When will there be a La Posta Cookbook?" Friends from all over the world have asked me that question over the years, personal friends from Mexico to Majorca, from London to Canary Islands, from Florida to Istanbul, and the many thousands of friends who have simply come to La Posta and have become part of the family. "Don't make it too complicated, Katy," they said, "just tell it the way it is!"

Well, here it is, and the way it is! All the basic dishes from the La Posta kitchen, recipes as old as southwestern history, presented in the simplest fashion possible. This is a book to have fun with, not one to give you a nervous breakdown in the kitchen! For all of you who have been to La Posta, the sketches of the La Posta dining rooms and the Mesilla scenes will bring back pleasant memories. For all who haven't come yet, I hope the "Authentic La Posta Cookbook" turns out to be an invitation you can't resist. Come soon! We think you'll love La Posta and Mesilla, where Mexico and the United States are as close together as the two flags that happily wave on the back of the book!

— Katy Camuñez Meek

Published August, 1971

## EDITORIAL NOTE

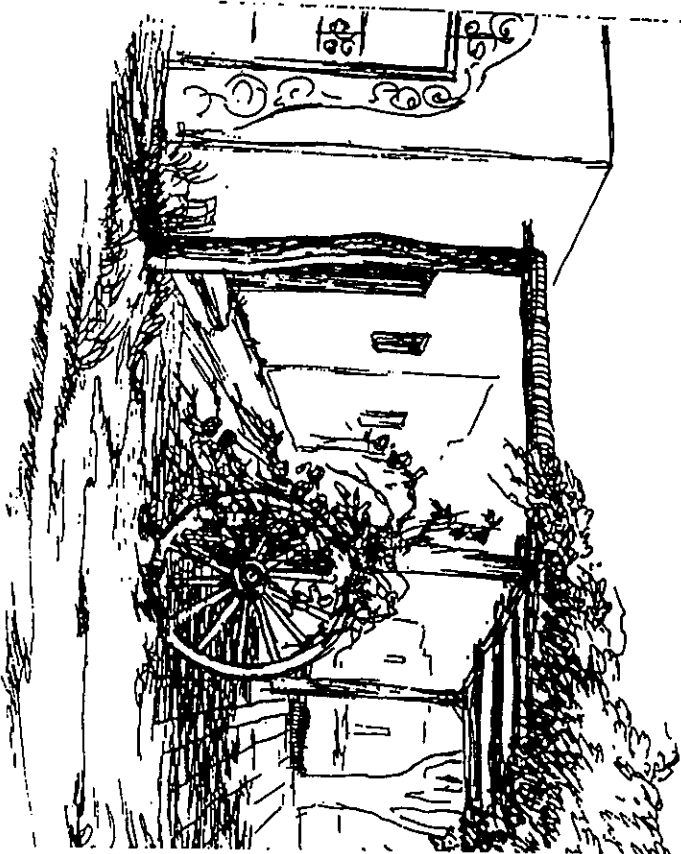
As a member of the La Posta "family" of diners since 1939, I've come to think of it as more than a restaurant. La Posta is a reflection of everything that makes New Mexico fascinating, its history, romance, and hospitality. For the traveller, eating at La Posta is the sudden discovery of another world, one in which not only the stomach is gratified but all the senses as well. The recipes of La Posta have come out of the history of Mexico and the American Southwest. It is only fitting that they are served in an atmosphere that reflects the history of the Frontier and the beauty of Old Mexico. La Posta is one of the fine institutions that help make New Mexico "The Land Of Enchantment."

*Paul Rader,  
Editor.*



## INDEX

La Posta de Mesilla . . . . .	
Mesilla, New Mexico, a brief history . . . . .	
Chile, the Great Vitamin C Food . . . . .	
The Mexican Pantry Shelf . . . . .	
A Guide To The Authentic La Posta Recipes . . . . .	
Index for the Authentic La Posta Recipes . . . . .	
Note Page . . . . .	
Recipe Numero Uno . . . . .	



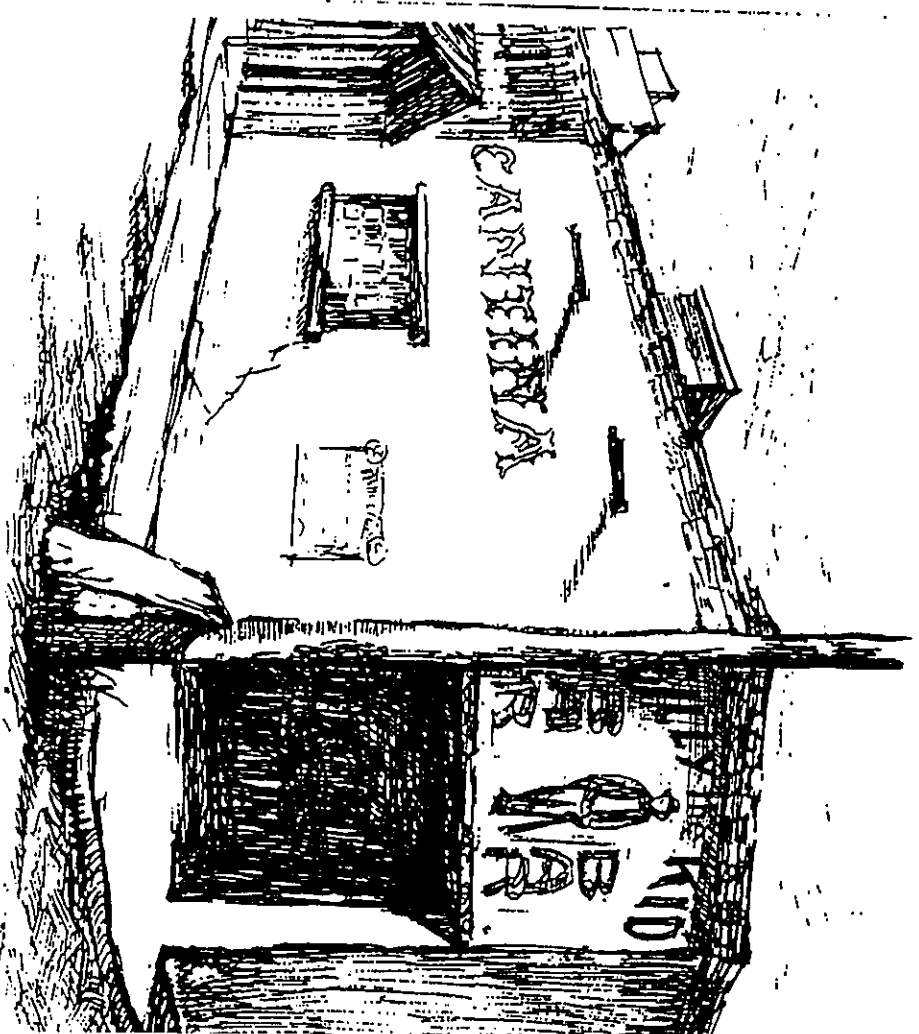
## MESILLA, NEW MEXICO

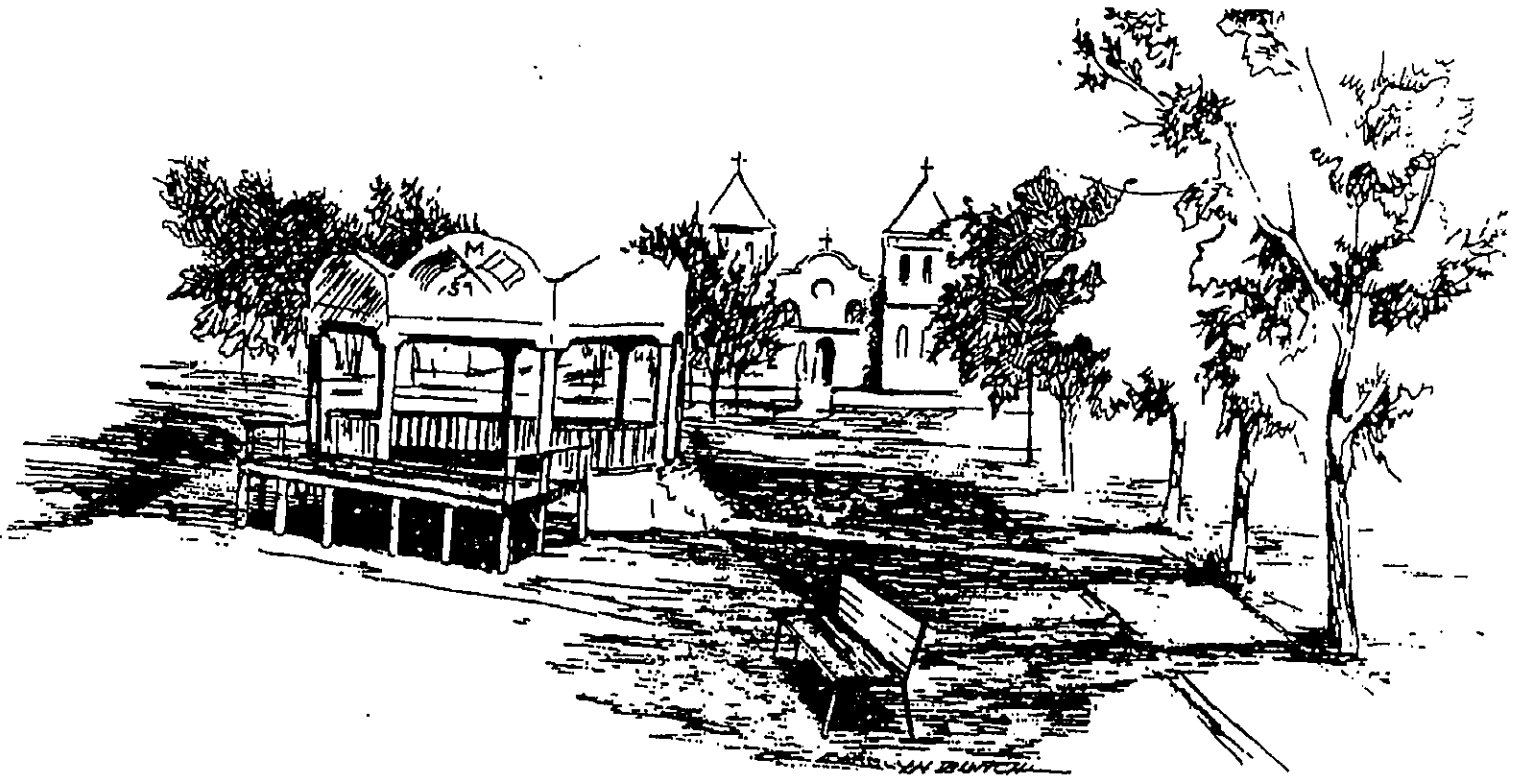
memory of the diner is to be permanently captured. The first condition, of course, is the presence of great food on the table. The La Posta menu is made up of recipes from the family of Katy Camuñez Meek, La Posta's founder and owner. These recipes, representing a unique melding of historic Mexican-Indian dishes with those from the annals of New Mexican cooking, have evolved through generations of Katy's maternal Mexican heritage. This cookbook is the first authentic and comprehensive presentation of these recipes as they are prepared at La Posta.

Another special condition for a great restaurant is the presence of a unique and notable environment for dining. The shops, the lobby, and the network of dining rooms in La Posta are cohesively designed to recreate in full the old romantic atmosphere of the Mexican-Southwest. The challenge of maintaining and enhancing this atmosphere is a personal one for Katy, who directly supervises changes or additions in decor. The expansion of the restaurant over the years has been carried out to the purpose of improving service to the diner while adding rooms that deepen and enrich the sense of historical adventure.

Perhaps the most special condition of all that must exist if a restaurant is to be great and warmly remembered is that of genuine hospitality, a sense of welcome that makes each diner wish to become a permanent member of the "family." Happily, the La Posta family is worldwide and is made up of a host of familiar faces. The *Authentic La Posta Cookbook* might be considered then as a kind of family chronicle, a way to remind each family member where his heart is and where his appetite belongs.

The special charm of La Posta rises out of the quiet but persuasive inspirations of the town of Mesilla, an open history book of the Old West, a place where sleep is pretended but where both the past and present cultures of New Mexico are alive and well. Beginning in the Sixteenth Century, Mesilla was a waystop for explorers and soldiers of fortune of the New World — Coronado and Juan de Oñate, to mention but two. It could be said, however, that Mesilla has been a center of adventure, of human enterprise, as far back as history will take us. In dry arroyos on the west mesa, a short distance from Mesilla Plaza, are unchiphered Indian petro-





glyphs of tribes unknown. Old Spanish armor and muskets have sifted out of the mesa sands, mute reminders of ancient dreams of conquest.

After the War with Mexico in 1846, Mesilla became part of a fascinating drama of cultural and political shifts of allegiance. At that time Mesilla sat on the west bank of the Rio Grande River and was under the jurisdiction of the Mexican State of Chihuahua. Its beginnings as a true village, a place of bustling commerce and political intrigue, date from that period when many "refugees" from the immediate north moved down to Mesilla to reassert their allegiance to Mexico. But the Gadsden Purchase, ratified by the United States Senate in 1853, brought Mesilla into New Mexico Territory, to the unhappiness of many. The question of nationality was further complicated by the capriciousness of the shallow-flowing Rio Grande River, then the demarcation line, which at flood tide would often jump its banks, shift its course, and make Mexicans of "Gringos" and vice versa. In the great flood of 1865, the Rio Grande made a final shift to the west of Mesilla, where it now flows. To this day in Mesilla there is still some feeling of allegiance to Mexico: the fiesta in the Plaza celebrating the Mexican independence day, "The Sixteenth of September," often has an exuberance about it that subtly outmatches the celebration of The Fourth of July.

The Gadsden Purchase was ceremoniously acknowledged by a flag-raising pageant in Mesilla Plaza on November 16, 1854. In the interest of a practical railroad route to the Pacific, James Gadsden negotiated the purchase of 45,535 square miles of land from Mexico (now the extreme southern part of New Mexico and Arizona south of the Gila River) for a price that came to about \$219.50 per square mile. In 1857, Mesilla became a central point on the Overland Mail route established by John Butterfield and soon found itself thriving in the stagecoach economy. Perhaps because of this, the citizens of the town were indifferent to the prospects of rail

---

*The Plaza of Old Mesilla was the setting for the flag-raising ceremony that acknowledged the Gadsden Purchase on November 16, 1854. San Albino Church sits in the background. The Plaza is surrounded by outstanding examples of territorial adobe architecture.*

service, and The Santa Fe subsequently established its service and depot in Las Cruces, a few miles to the east. Mesilla's desire for insularity still persists with the result that the village happily remains much in appearance as it did in stage-coach days.

The peak population of Mesilla, about 8000, was reached in post Civil War days with the advent of the cattle industry in the Mesilla Valley and the adjoining Tularosa Basin. The town's first newspaper, the *Mesilla Times*, made its appearance in 1860. During the Civil War—from July, 1861 to August, 1862—Mesilla was headquarters for Colonel John Robert Baylor of the Confederate Army, who proclaimed Mesilla the capital of the New Confederate Territory after a decisive victory against Union forces at Ft. Fillmore. Col. Baylor, a former Indian agent to the Comanches and a resident of Weatherford, Texas, had been elected by President Jefferson Davis as a delegate to the Secession Congress. Baylor's short-lived dream of Confederate power was ended by the victorious arrival of the California Column under General James H. Carleton of the Union Army. After August, 1862 La Mesilla was made headquarters for the Military District of Arizona.

In those post Civil War days, Mesilla politics dominated the Territory. The ferocity of opposing Republican and Democratic forces was demonstrated by an election riot in Mesilla Plaza in 1871, an eruption of gunplay that left 9 dead and between 40 and 50 wounded. Bullet-punctured musical instruments from a band playing at the rally are on display at the Gadsden Museum to the east of the Plaza. Political power struggles underlay the famous Cattle Wars of the 1870's and 80's that brought Billy the Kid to legendary fame. Like many of the frontier desperados, The Kid found Mesilla and its bustling activity a fine place for business and pleasure, and it was in a jail on Mesilla Plaza where he was incarcerated for the last time before his transfer to the Lincoln County jail and his subsequent death at the hands of Sheriff Pat Garrett.

In the 1880's Mesilla was threatened by the marauding Mes-calero Apache braves under the colorful chiefs Geronimo and Victoriano. Active in the containment of the threat was

another famed frontier figure and Mesilla citizen, Colonel Albert J. Fountain, a Union officer who had arrived with the California Column and remained in the southwest to become President of the Texas Senate, from El Paso, after the Civil War, then to Mesilla as an organizer of Republican politics in New Mexico Territory. A military man, Indian fighter, newspaper editor, lawyer and Federal Judge, Colonel Fountain typified the political spirit of the Frontier and the restless efforts of the Territory to find meaning beyond the "Law of the Six Shooter." The Colonel's disappearance and presumed murder in the White Sands of the Tularosa Basin in 1895 is one of the famed unsolved mysteries of the Southwest. The political overtones of the case were suggested by the implication in Fountain's disappearance of forces around Albert Fall, a New Mexico rancher and politician who later became Secretary of Interior under President Harding and sent to prison as a result of the Teapot Dome Scandal.

With the exception of the decrease in population to about 2000 citizens of predominantly Mexican descent, and the long demise of the cattle industry, Mesilla is little changed from the 1860's. Most of the adobe stores in the Plaza and the homes in the back streets are of Territorial vintage and make up an architectural intactness that is as unique as any in the nation. The old Butterfield Stage stop, one of the most ancient adobe structures in southern New Mexico, is now the home of La Posta de Mesilla. Perhaps the old Spanish South-western charm of Mesilla Plaza is best exemplified at Christmastime, when the candlelight procession of the *peregrinos*, the travellers Mary and Joseph seeking lodging for the birth of the Christchild, winds around the Plaza from San Albino Church. Known as *Las Posadas*, it begins on the night of December 15th and continues through Christmas Eve.

The rich agricultural valley in which Mesilla sits is often compared to the Nile River Valley of Egypt. The Mesilla Valley is famed for long-staple quality cotton and for its huge pecan orchards that provide much of the nation's supply. For the visitor, Mesilla, and La Posta de Mesilla, are easily located just one mile off Interstate Highway 10 at the Highway 28 off-ramp in Las Cruces, New Mexico, forty-five miles north of El Paso, Texas and Juarez, Mexico.

# CHILE

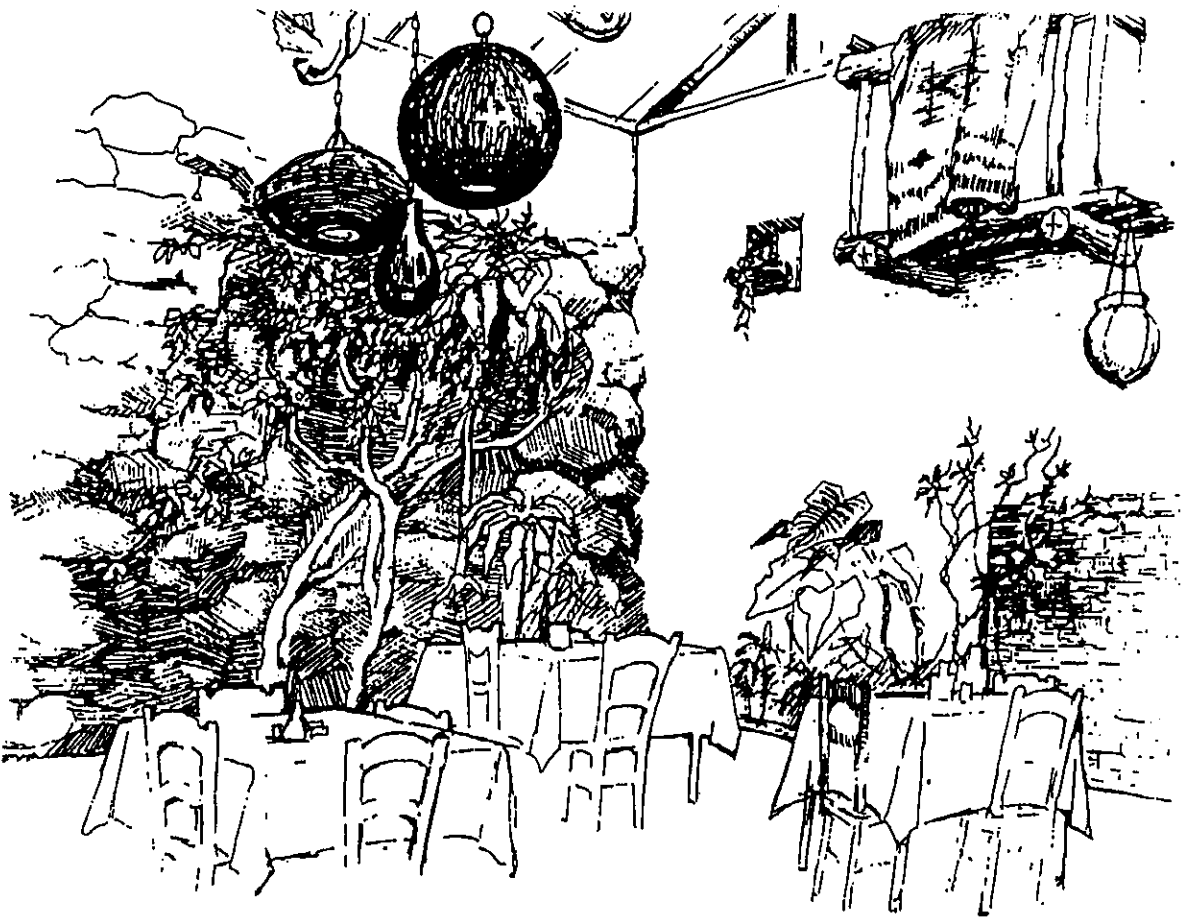
## The Great Vitamin C Food

The newcomer to the pungent taste of chile may have a mixture of concerns about this basic ingredient of Mexican cooking. It would be hard to imagine, however, an acquired taste that would be better for you. Heavy chile eating in Mexico and the Southwest has historically produced robust digestive systems, and scientific evidence supports the happy fact that chile is a nutritional masterpiece. It is, in a single plant, one of the richest sources known of ascorbic acid (Vitamin C) and carotene (Vitamin A).

Chile may in fact be such a nutritional miracle worker that it helps prevent the common cold. Dr. Linus Pauling, the Nobel Prize Chemist, in his recent book on *Vitamin C And The Common Cold* (published by W. H. Freeman & Co. of San Francisco) maintains that massive doses of vitamin C can actually cure as well as prevent a cold. In reviewing Dr. Pauling's book, the *Wall Street Journal* had the following to say:

"Most creatures produce their own Vitamin C, although man, some apes and monkeys, the guinea pig, an Indian fruit-eating bat and an oriental bird called the red-vented bulbul don't, apparently due to some genetic defects that occurred millions of years ago. But man does build up a pool of it from oranges and the like; the excess is excreted. *One way to build up a pool of it is to eat a lot of Mexican food; red, ripe hot chile peppers have up to six times as much Vitamin C as oranges do.*"

Part of La Posta's secret of success is that it is situated in one of the finest chile-growing areas in the world, the Mesilla.

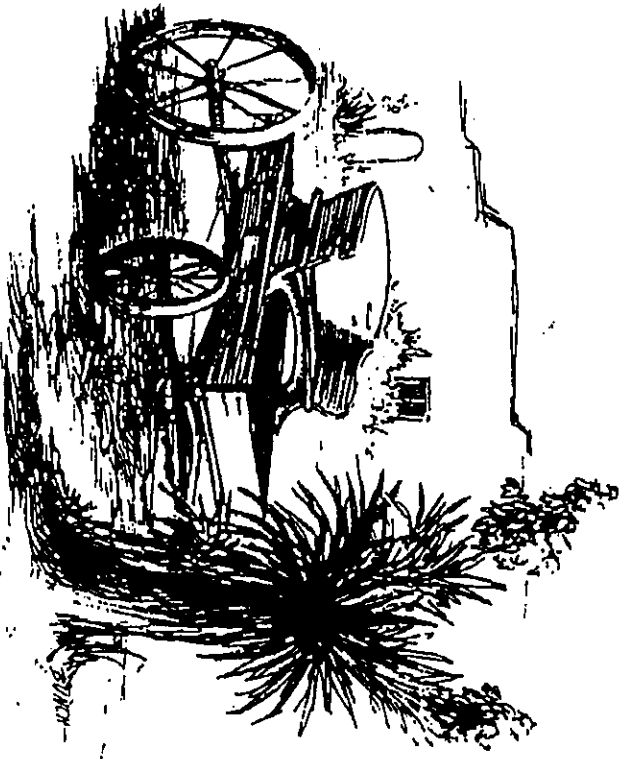


*The Stable Room of La Posta has been created from a part of the old stable that served the numerous stage lines that stopped at La Posta a century ago. The lava that lines the walls is from the Black Mesa, a few miles west of Mesilla.*



Valley of New Mexico. In 1907 the noted horticulturist Fabian Garcia at nearby New Mexico State University initiated a scientific search for the best possible chile for New Mexico. Dr. Garcia selected fourteen different strains of native chile and over the years, one by one, the less promising strains were eliminated. His work has resulted in three fine strains of chile in New Mexico, ranging from the mild to the pungent, that are acknowledged to be among the world's finest.

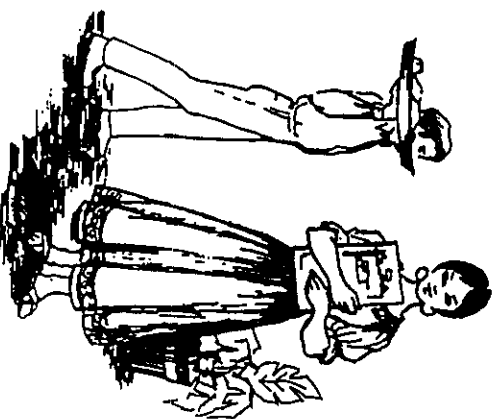
Chile has been a part of the natural cuisine of New Mexico since 1598 when the followers of the Spanish explorer Don Juan de Onate brought the vegetable north with them from the tropical areas of the New World. Chile is the Spanish adaptation of *chili*, the Aztec name for the plant. So, the devotees of chile, in whose noble ranks we hope to recruit all owners of *The Authentic La Posta Cookbook*, are the inheritors of a centuries-old tradition of great dining. And, as can rarely be said about something that tastes so good, *Chile is good for you!*



## THE MEXICAN PANTRY SHELF

Over the last few years many fine canned and frozen Mexican foods have been produced under reliable brand names and are generally available at your local supermarket. Many of these products can be used successfully in the preparation of the La Posta recipes. You should be able to find the following items without too much difficulty:

- |                         |                          |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Red Chile Powder        | Refritos Con Chorizos    |
| Chile Molido            | Canned Tomatoes And      |
| (Pure Ground Chile)     | Green Chile              |
| Enchilada Sauce         | Canned Spanish Rice      |
| Pinto Beans, with and   | Chile With Beans         |
| without chile seasoning | Green Chile Enchilada    |
| Refried Beans           | Sauce                    |
| Canned Corn Tortillas   | Garbanzos                |
| Taco Sauce              | Canned Tamales           |
| Taco Shells             | Canned Whole Green Chile |
| Chopped Green Chile     | Masa Harina (Flour for   |
| Jalapeno Chile          | corn tortilla, tamales)  |
| Jalapeno Chile Relish   | Chile con Queso          |
| Red Chile Puree         | Chile con Carne          |
| Beef Taco Filling       | Beef Enchiladas with     |
| Bean Dip                | Chile Gravy              |

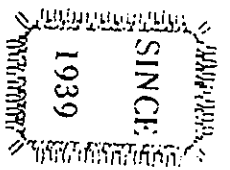


# A GUIDE TO THE Authentic La Posta Recipes

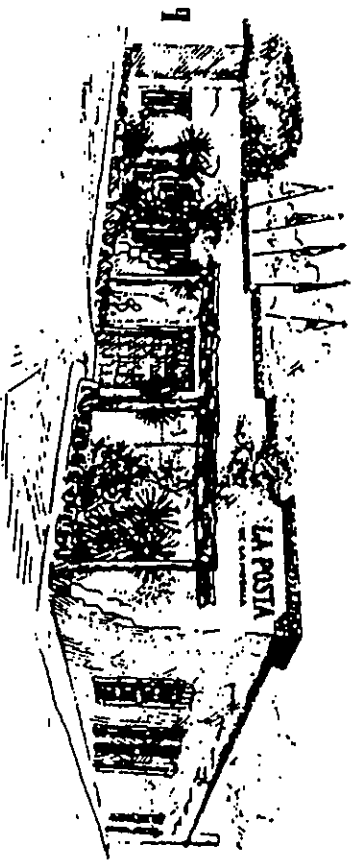
The centerfold following is a reproduction of the basic La Posta menu which includes the most popular dishes served to thousands of diners yearly. You will note that a page number follows each dish and this will serve as your index to the La Posta recipes that follow the centerfold. These basic recipes have been chosen by Katy Camuñez Meek from the point of view of presenting a manageable challenge to the cook who simply wishes to prepare a good Mexican dinner. Most of the dishes from the La Posta menu can be prepared in a half hour and use ingredients that can be found in most supermarkets (see the Mexican Pantry Shelf, pg. 11). As is true in all national cuisines there are many complicated and exotic Mexican dishes that are popular both in Mexico and the Southwestern United States. However, for the cook who wishes to begin at the beginning there could be no better permanent handbook than *The Authentic La Posta Cookbook*.



# LA de MESSILLA



Recommended By **LIFE** Magazine



This building is the Original LA POSTA\*. For more than a century and a half, these adobe walls have withstood the attack of elements and man; they have sheltered such personalities as Billy the Kid, Kit Carson, General Douglas Mac Arthur, and Pancho Villa. Mesilla, a roaring frontier town of the past, now sleeps, but La Posta still offers its traditional hospitality and fine food to all that wander here.

\* (In Spain, for centuries past, LA POSTAS were inns built for the King's rest, and were stationed at intervals along important travel routes. They were also used as mail drops.)

**LA POSTA de MESSILLA**      **Mesilla, New Mexico**  
U.S. Highways 70 - 80 - 85 and Interstate 10 & 25

## **HUEVOS RANCHEROS CON FRIJOLES**

Eggs .. "Ranch style" served on tortillas with green chile and tomato sauce, frijoles refritos and hot corn tortillas. A great "morning-after" dish

Page 25

## **TAMALES**

Made of corn masa spread on corn-husk and filled with delicately seasoned meat and steamed before serving

Page 18

## **TOSTADAS COMPUESTAS**

A New Mexican dish originated at LA POSTA in 1939. Toasted corn tortilla cups filled with chile con carne and frijoles, topped with chopped lettuce, diced tomato and grated cheese

Page 23

## **CHILE RELLENOS**

Whole green chile filled with cream cheese, dipped in an egg and cream batter and deep-fat fried to a golden brown, garnished and served with frijoles and hot corn tortillas

Page 24

## **COMBINATION PLATE**

Rollled enchilada, tamale, chile con carne, frijoles and rolled teco, garnished and served with hot tortillas

Page 31

## **TACOS \***

The taco can best be described as a Mexican sandwich. Corn tortillas are filled with delicately seasoned chile-beef, rolled or folded and deep-fat fried until crisp, topped with grated cheese and garnished

Page 17

\* Eat tacos with fingers

## **GREEN ENCHILADA**

Corn tortillas .. smothered with green chile tomato sauce and topped with grated cream cheese. For centuries, the green chile enchilada was a summer delicacy, made during the growing season before the chile pods turned red. With modern food processing, we now contract tons of shock-frozen green chile for our green chile dishes

Page 21

## **SOUP CREAM ENCHILADA**

Green enchilada topped with grated cheese and sour cream

Page 21

## **RED ENCHILADA**

Corn tortillas, chopped onion, grated cream cheese, red chile sauce and topped with a fried egg. Our red enchilada is served pancake style, traditionally made this way by the Indians along the Rio Grande River

Page 19

## **MEAT ENCHILADA**

Topped with chile con carne

Page 22

## **CHILE CON QUESO**

An excellent starter - a velvety cheese and chopped green chile dip. Spoon the chile con queso on a hot corn tortilla and roll like a cigarette and eat with your fingers. A great favorite

Page 27

## **GUACAMOLE SALAD**

This is a real treat from Mexico. The avocado, a native of Mexico, is the base for this delicious salad

Page 27

## **SOPAPILLAS**

A light fluffy pastry bread, served hot with honey

Page 28

## **EMPANADA**

Mince, apricot or cherry, served hot with ice cream  
SABROSALI!

## **DESSERTS**

Page 29

**SALUD -- BUEN PROVECHO**



## MI CASA ES SU CASA

As we say in Spanish, "My house is your house," and we are pleased that you are paying us this visit — If you are not familiar with Mexican food, we feel sure that dining with us today will be a memorable experience. — Your waitress will be happy to assist you in making your selection. — LA POSTA'S authentic dishes are made from century-old recipes, handed down to us from the Fountain, Chavez and Griggs families.

The basic seasoning food used in our Mexican dishes is chile, a New World vegetable, many varieties of which are found throughout Mexico and Central America. Chile was first introduced to Europe in 1493 by Columbus, when he returned to Spain — "with a pepper more pungent than that from the Caucasus." Our other basic food is corn, which is made into "masa" by soaking the corn kernels in lime water then ground into a moist meal. — Corn is a native of Mexico and Central America; it was also introduced to Spain by Columbus. With this in mind, you are being served authentic Mexican food and not Spanish food, and for this reason, we do not serve Spanish rice. — Spanish food is basically fish, rice and olive oil.

The Southwesterner has long been "addicted" to chile, and the Newcomer soon acquires the chile habit. LA POSTA can make an Honorary Mexican out of you in a few weeks.

## YOU ARE IN THE LAND OF BILLY THE KID

1859 - 1881

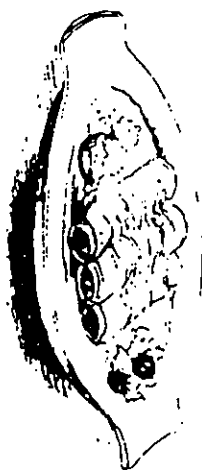
Three centuries before Billy the Kid, Mesilla (now a monument) was a flourishing Indian settlement, a cover for the Conquistadores and the Spanish emissaries to the Crown City of Santa Fe. In more recent times, colorful historical role has included the capital of the old and New Mexico Territory after the acknowledgment of the Gadsden Purchase in the village plaza in 1853. The plaza unchanged today, and the old adobe buildings house interesting business typical of the times a century ago.

Use feel free to browse through the LA POSTA Compound, we shall be happy to answer your questions about LA POSTA in Mesilla.



William Bonney

Alias Billy the Kid



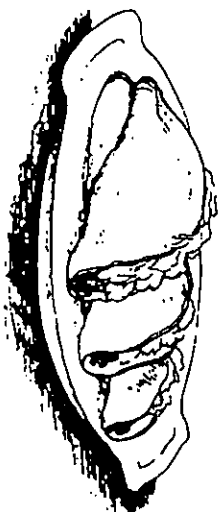
## TACOS (Rolled)

- |                             |                           |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 lb. ground round or chuck | 1 large tomato            |
| 1 small raw potato          | 1 teaspoon salt           |
| 1 medium size onion         | ½ teaspoon pepper (black) |
| 2 garlic cloves             | 1 dozen corn tortillas    |
| 4 slices of white bread     | Jalapeno sauce            |

Fry meat until slightly brown. Stir frequently to make sure there are no large lumps. Combine quartered potato, tomato, onion, plus garlic and bread slices in grinder. Add these ground ingredients to meat in frying pan. Continue to fry this mixture until potatoes and onions are done. Now heat the tortillas on an ungreased griddle for ease in rolling. Spread two teaspoons of the mixture evenly on each tortilla, then roll and fix with a toothpick. Fry in deep fat until a golden brown. Serve three to five on a plate, sprinkled with grated cheese. Add cole slaw and shredded lettuce on each side of plate. Serve with jalapeno sauce or a canned taco sauce, available at your grocers.

## TACOS (Flat)

Use meat mixture as described above. You may also use shredded chicken, or refrito beans heated in a frying pan with grated longhorn or jack (or mild cheddar) cheese, until mixture is blended. Heat tortillas as above, and put two tablespoons of meat mixture on center of each tortilla. Fold over and fix with toothpick. Fry folded taco in deep fat until a golden brown. Remove toothpick and open taco carefully so as not to break. Stuff with shredded lettuce, diced tomato and grated cheese. Place three on a plate and serve with taco sauce or sour cream. (Note: packaged taco shells are available at most markets and will save the cook from the task of deep frying the folded corn tortillas).



## TAMALES

(Fair warning, cooks one and all — tamales are not easy to make, but if you are game for a good try, follow instructions closely!)

### FILLING

(for 4 to 5 dozen tamales)

- 4 lbs. pork shoulder      6 lbs. chile powder
- 6 cups of water      2 cups water or meat stock

Cook pork in 6 cups of water until well done. Drain broth and reserve this stock for making dough. Chop cooked meat in small pieces. Now, dissolve the 6 tablespoons of chile powder in 2 cups of the meat stock or water. Add this to the chopped meat and cook until almost all of the liquid is absorbed by the meat.

## TAMALE MASA (tamale dough)

- 5 cups ready-mixed white corn meal for tamales      3 to 4 lbs. of pure lard
- (available at your grocers as "tamale masa")      2 lbs. of salt
- Stock from meat filling (from above)

Place ready-mixed corn meal in bowl. Add salt, lard and enough of the stock until dough is of spreading consistency (if there is insufficient meat stock, add water). Now, tamales are usually rolled in corn husks, but a good aluminum foil (such as Reynolds #711 9"X9" sheet) is an excellent substitute. Cut sheet in half for each tamale. Spread the dough on the aluminum foil evenly but leaving sufficient foil at each end to fold as a little package. Spread a tablespoon of the meat filling down the center of the dough. Now, first overlap foil around tamale, then fold at ends. To cook, place tamales in a steamer or blancher and steam for 1/2 hour. The tamales are ready when they loosen easily when the foil is unwrapped. Serve several to a plate, with frijoles, shredded lettuce and a red chile sauce.

(Note: A good brand of canned tamales from your grocer can be made very tasty if properly prepared. Heat can in hot water for a few minutes, then remove tamales carefully and place in a 350 degree oven for five minutes. Serve with frijoles or refritos and cole slaw. If desired, a tablespoon of red chile sauce on each tamale adds much to the flavor).

## RED ENCHILADA

### (Enchiladas Coloradas)

- 1 doz. corn tortillas
- 2 cups grated cheese (sharp cheese is preferable)
- 1/2 cup chopped onions
- 4 eggs, if desired
- 2 cups red chile sauce or 2 ten-ounce cans of red chile sauce
- shredded lettuce

Fry individual tortillas in hot fat. Leave in only long enough to soften. Do not fry crisply. Immerse tortilla completely in red sauce. Take out quickly and place on serving plate and sprinkle generously with the cheese and onion. Continue in layer cake fashion until each plate has 2 or 3 tortillas. If tortillas seem dry, spoon added sauce to taste. Fry an egg, sunny side up, per serving and place on top of enchiladas. Serve 4. Garnish around edge of plate with shredded lettuce.

(Now, if you would like to try your own chile sauce and corn tortillas, the following is for the adventurous).

## CHILE COLORADO

### (red chile sauce from dried pods)

- 12 pods dried chile
- 2 cups of water
- 1 tsp. salt
- 2 lbs. pure lard or corn oil
- 1 lbs. flour
- tomato juice or water

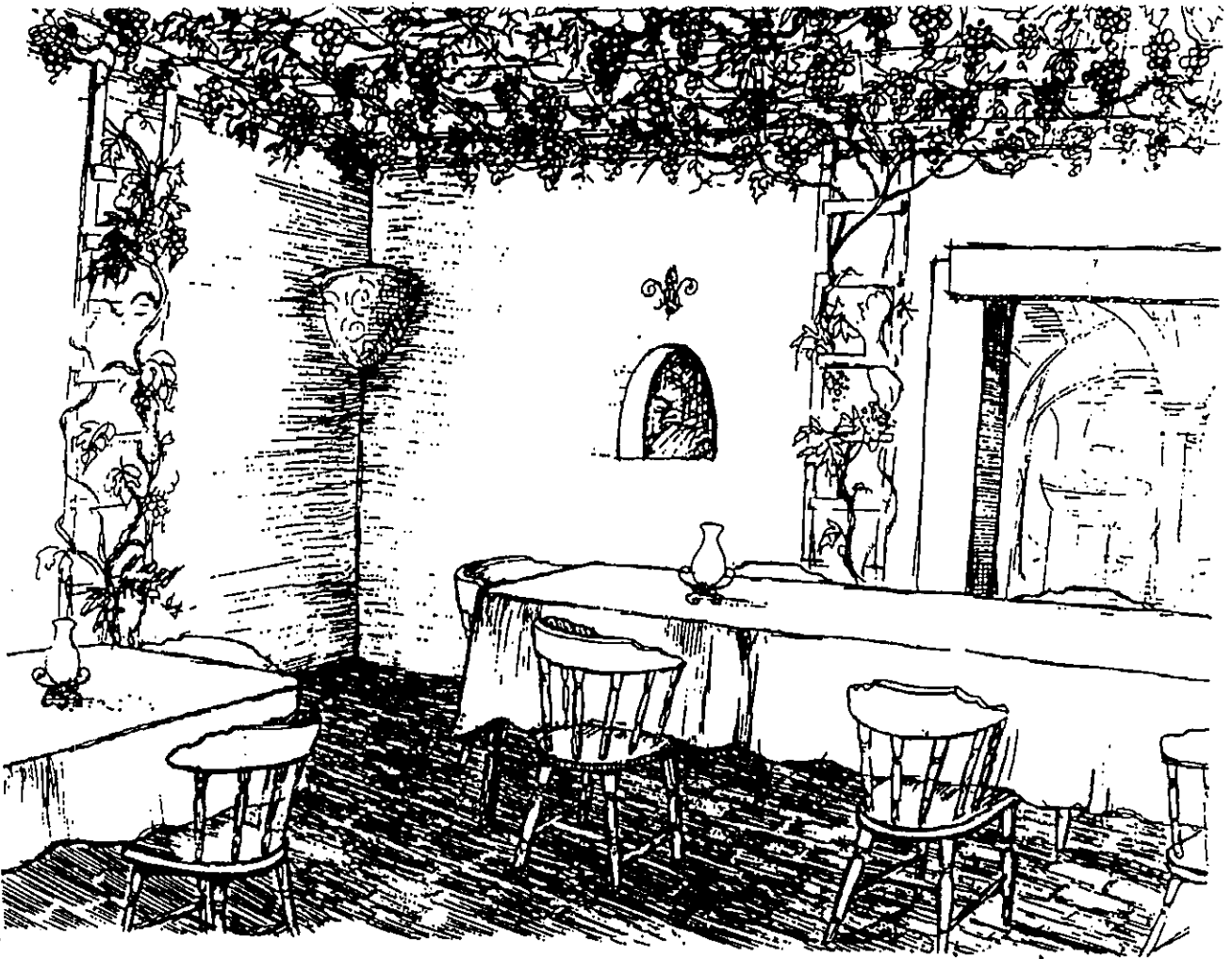
Wash chile pods, removing stems and seeds. Bring chile pods and water to boil, reduce heat and allow to steam 10 minutes or longer. Pour into blender and liquify. Strain sauce through a colander or sieve. Add salt to taste. Heat lard (quite hot) in frying pan, then add flour and mix quickly. Pour in chile sauce and stir until thickened. Add tomato juice or more water if needed.

(Note: Various good brands of red chile — enchilada sauce — can be found at your grocer. Pour can of sauce in pan and add 1/4 can of water and 1/4 teaspoon of salt. Heat 2 tablespoons of corn oil or pure lard. Pour into chile sauce and let simmer for five minutes).

## TORTILLAS (Corn)

- 2 cups commercial corn meal for tortillas (available at grocers)
- 1 1/2 cups warm water
- 1 tsp. salt

Add salt to corn meal and mix well. Mix in water and let set until mixture can be shaped into two-inch balls. Place balls between two sheets of wax paper, then press down thin on chopping board. Cook on both sides on very lightly greased griddle. Tortilla should come off griddle before browning. Do not cook crisp. (Corn tortillas are generally available either canned or packaged at your supermarket).



## GREEN ENCHILADAS (Enchiladas Verdes)

- 1 doz. corn tortillas
- 2 cups grated cheese
- 3 cups green chile sauce

Allow 2 or 3 tortillas per person. Following the same procedure as described in the red enchilada recipe, fry tortillas in hot fat, quickly immerse in sauce, then build on plate layer-cake fashion with grated cheese sprinkled between layers. Pour green chile sauce over each enchilada to desired wetness. Shredded lettuce placed around edge of plate is an attractive garnish.

(Again, for the adventurous cook who wishes to start from scratch, use the corn tortilla recipe given with the red enchilada, and prepare the following green chile recipe).

## GREEN CHILE SAUCE (Chile Verde)

- 12 green chile peppers
- 2 medium tomatoes or 1 cup canned tomatoes
- 1 medium onion chopped
- 2 small garlic cloves or garlic powder
- 1 tsp. salt
- Water

Roast chile peppers directly over electric or gas burner until outside skin can be easily peeled. Remove core, seeds and the visible veins of the chile. Chop into half-inch pieces. Place in sauce pan and add tomatoes, onion, salt and garlic. Pour in enough water to cover. Simmer ten minutes.

(Note: A good brand of canned green chile and tomatoe sauce may be used. Saute two tablespoons of chopped onion in pure lard or corn oil. Pour in the can of green chile and tomatoe sauce along with ½ teaspoon of salt. Let simmer for two or three minutes).

## SOUR CREAM ENCHILADAS

Simply follow the recipe for green enchiladas, then pour ½ pint of sour cream over each serving, or serve sour cream as a side dish. In Mexico this is known as a Swiss Enchilada.

*The Grape Room of La Pasta* is a banquet room just off the subtropical patio-lobby. The room once housed the notorious Bean Saloon and later became the office for the Butterfield Stage. Its decor includes hundreds of realistic bunches of grapes on trellises overhead, simulating a Spanish Krabe arbor.

## MEAT ENCHILADAS

Prepare red enchilada, then top with chile con carne. The diner will run across many varieties of chile con carne in the Southwest, but the La Posta recipe that follows brings to perfection the match between good pork and fine red chile!

## CHILE CON CARNE

- |                                  |                      |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 lb. good lean pork             | 1/2 tsp. garlic salt |
| 1 cup thick red chile sauce      | 1/2 tsp. oregano     |
| 1 tbs. flour                     | 1 tsp. cumin         |
| 1/2 cup of tomato juice or water | 1/2 tsp. salt        |

Cut pork into 1/2 inch squares and fry over low heat until brown and moderately dry. If meat is fat pour off all but 2 tablespoons of the fat. Now add flour and mix well. Add tomato juice or water and the red chile sauce, then more water if sauce is too thick. Add the ground cumin and ground oregano. Add garlic salt. Simmer until pork is completely done, about ten minutes. If sauce is too thick, continue to add tomato juice or water.

(Note: Cumin is a plant of the carrot family, long cultivated for its aromatic seeds. Oregano is a bushy perennial mint, a source of aromatic oil, and also known as wild marjoram).

Another good meat and chile dish recommended by La Posta utilizes green chile and beef:

## CHILE VERDE CON CARNE

- |   |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 2 lbs. round steak                      | 8 green chile peppers         |
| 2 tbs. lard or cooking oil              | (canned acceptable)           |
| 1 medium onion                          | 2 cloves garlic               |
| 2 tomatoes medium size, fresh or canned | 1 tsp. salt or to taste water |

Cut steak into inch size pieces and brown lightly in hot fat. Add salt. Add diced onions and cook until onions are soft and clear. Peel tomatoes, slice, and add to mixture with enough water to cover. Mash garlic and cop chile in small pieces, then add. Chopped potatoes may be added, if desired. Simmer until meat is tender, usually about forty-five minutes. When dish is finished very little liquid should remain.

## TOSTADAS COMPUESTAS



The main challenge to the cook in preparing Tostadas Compuestas is the ingenuity required to fry the corn tortilla in the proper cup-like shape. Don't panic. It's really quite simple. First, cut four one-inch slits evenly around tortilla. You must fry the individual tortilla in a skillet of deep fat, holding the tortilla down in the center with any round wooden roller having a flat end. The boiling grease will force the tortilla to embrace the roller and form the necessary cup. Fry until crisp, then drain on a paper towel. Place two heaping tablespoons of heated chile con carne and beans (frijoles) in each cupped tortilla, then garnish with shredded lettuce, chopped tomatoes, and grated cheese. A very colorful dish for a festive occasion.

## CHILE RELLENOS (Stuffed green chile)

8 fresh green chile pep.      1 cup grated cheese (longhorn  
peps (or canned long      or cheddar to taste)  
green chile peppers)      Batter (see recipe below)

Careful preparation is the secret to making good chile rellenos. If using the fresh green chile peppers they must be roasted directly over a gas or electric burner until the outer skin is easily peeled. Slit chile open the long way. The seeds and "veins" are then removed from each chile pepper but making sure to leave stem. Then stuff the chile with the grated cheese that has been shaped to size with your fingers. Close slit by lapping over, roll prepared pepper in a small amount of flour, then fry in batter (recipe below) in about one inch of deep hot fat until golden brown. Turn over, so that both sides are browned equally.

## BATTER FOR CHILE RELLENOS

To  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup flour add enough pancake flour or ready-mix biscuit flour to make a total of  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup. Add 1 cup milk and 1 egg. Beat until smooth. The stuffed chile pepper should be dipped in the batter, holding chile by stem, then placed immediately in hot fat as above. After frying, stuffed chile pepper should drain on paper towel.

Chile rellenos should be served hot, with either a spicy tomato sauce or green chile sauce. Very good served with frijoles and a garnish of shredded lettuce. Leftover chile rellenos can be refrigerated, then reheated and served.



## HUEVOS RANCHEROS CON FRIJOLES

An easily prepared "morning after" dish that starts the day with a zing! Fry a corn tortilla in deep fat until crisp (or some prefer simply good and hot and not crisp). Place fried or scrambled egg on tortilla, then cover with either warmed red or green chile sauce. Huevos Rancheros needs the partnership on the plate of a good order of frijoles or refried beans. There is an art in cooking the frijoles, as simple a bean as it is, so we recommend that you follow instructions carefully!

## FRIJOLES (pinto beans)

The pinto bean is a staple in the diet of many New Mexicans and is an excellent source of protein. Nutritionists have found that pinto beans, chile and tortillas constitute a balanced diet. In the correct cooking of the frijole, experience is a big helper — but now is the time to get started!

1 cup pinto beans       $\frac{1}{4}$  lb. salt pork or ham hock  
2 tbs. pure lard      Salt to taste

Clean and wash beans (soak overnight for faster cooking, unless beans are new). There are two schools of thought on how water should be added. One is that all the water necessary should be added at the beginning of the cooking. The other is add only enough to cover, then continue to add fresh boiling water as needed (never add cold water to hot beans, as it causes the bean to break open and become mushy and black). When beans have cooked tender, heat lard very hot and pour into bubbling beans. Some cooks prefer not to use the salt pork or ham hock in the beans, but if it is to your taste add the meat at the beginning of the cooking. After the beans have cooked about thirty minutes, add salt to taste.

## REFRITOS OR REFRIED BEANS

Mash the cooked frijoles and fry in a lightly greased skillet. Add 1 tablespoon of lard for every cup of frijoles, blending the heated lard and beans before frying. Also blending in grated longhorn or cheddar cheese to taste. A little water may be added if beans are very dry. Refried beans may be refrigerated and reheated or refried as many times as wished. They get better with age!



## CHILE CON QUESO

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 tbs. pure lard or<br>bacon drippings                              | 1 large clove of garlic                     |
| 2 tbs. minced onions  | 1/2 lb. Velveta cheese                      |
| 6-8 green chile peppers,<br>roasted, peeled,<br>deseeded and copped | 1/4 lb. longhorn cheese,<br>grated or cubed |
|   | 1/3 cup thin cream or<br>canned milk        |

Saute onions in the lard until clear and soft, using a frying pan of sufficient size to hold entire mixture. Then add the chopped chile, mashed garlic and the cheese. When cheese is thoroughly melted, add the cream or canned milk and stir well. Do not allow mixture to come to a boil.

Chile con queso is a tasty treat served with tostados, as a dip. It can be made very hot or mild depending on the chile pepper used. Also excellent on steaks or hamburgers.

## GUACAMOLE SALAD

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 large ripe avocado                                    | 1/2 tsp. salt                                    |
| 1 fresh tomato<br>(canned tomato can<br>be substituted) | 1 tbs. salsa de jalapeno or<br>green chile sauce |
| 1 small chopped onion<br>or onion flakes                | 1/2 tsp. lime juice                              |

Mash avocado with fork until smooth. Add lime juice and mix. Add finely chopped tomatoes, chopped onion, salt and chile sauce. Mix well. Serve chilled on lettuce leaves with tostados.

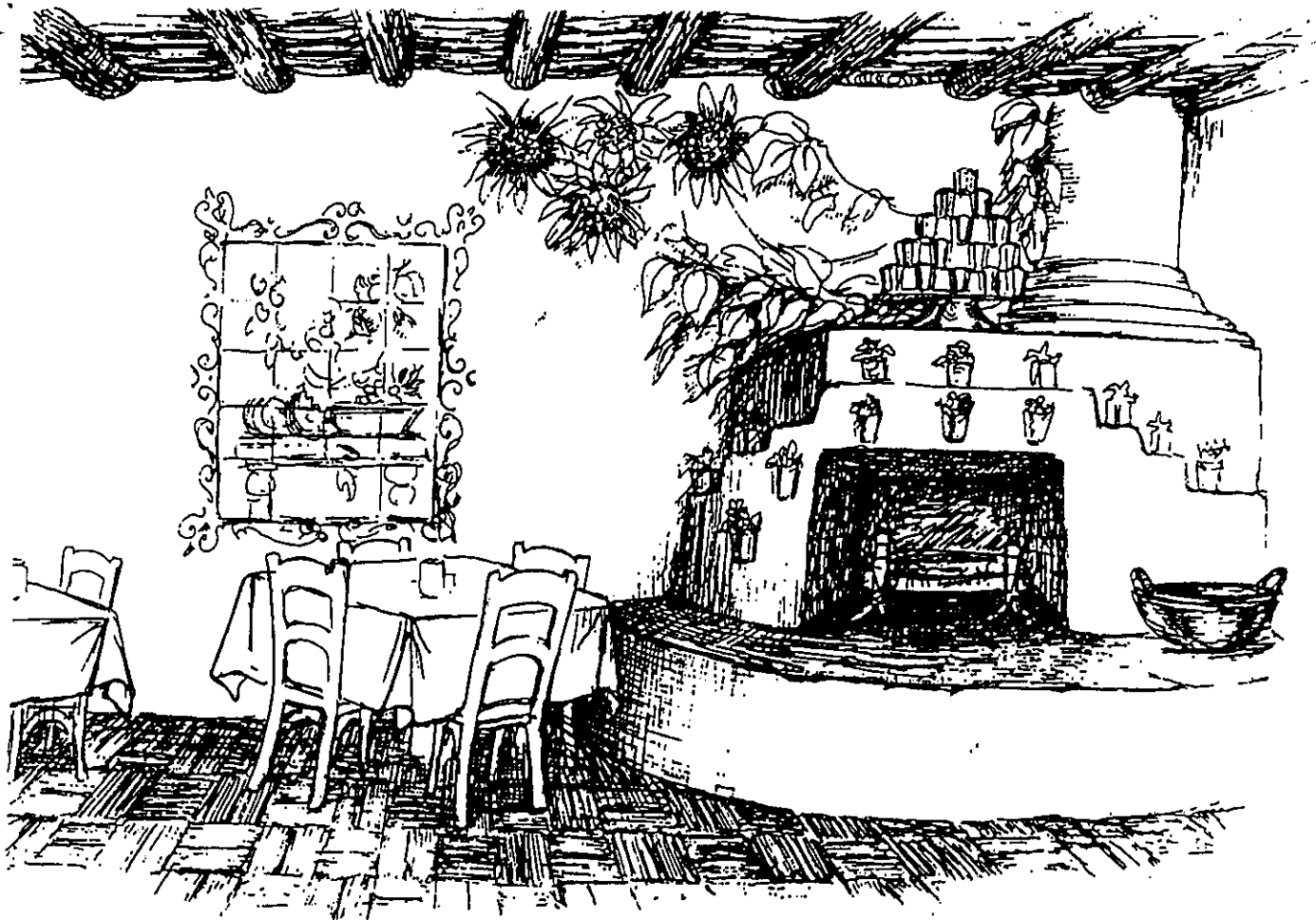
## SALSA DE JALAPENO

- |                                    |                          |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 12 jalapeno peppers                | 1/2 teaspoon garlic salt |
| 1 cup tomatoes, fresh<br>or canned |                          |

Boil peppers for ten minutes, then drain and remove stems and seeds (wear rubber gloves!). Mix in tomatoes and garlic salt and put through food chopper. Serve on tacos or refritos. If using canned jalapeno sauce, it is recommended that 1/4 tsp. of garlic flavoring be added.

## TOSTADOS

Cut corn tortillas in little pie-slice shapes. Drop slices in very hot lard, 400 degrees, and fry until crisp. Drain well and salt lightly.



The Harness Room of La Posta a century ago housed a harness shop, a wheelwright and blacksmith shop when La Posta was a central station of the Butterfield Stage Route.

## SOPAIPILLAS (fried bread)



- |                      |                                |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2 cups flour         | 1 lbs. pure lard or shortening |
| 2 tsp. baking powder | 1 tsp. sugar                   |
| 1 level tsp. salt    | warm water                     |

Mix flour, baking powder, salt and sugar, until well blended. Add enough warm water to make a medium soft dough (like pie crust). Place dough in covered bowl and allow to stand at room temperature for thirty minutes. Then, roll dough out on floured board evenly at  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch thickness. Cut into 3 inch squares and fry in deep hot fat until fluffy brown (if dough has been prepared properly, the sopaipilla will swell and take shape while frying). Remove from fat and drain on paper towel. Serve hot. Makes about two dozen. Honey is very good with sopaipillas. Also, sprinkle with sugar and cinnamon.

(Note: The conventional Mexican "bread" is the tortilla de harina, or floured tortilla, which is generally available fresh-packaged in the southwest. But if you cannot find them packaged, they are fairly simple to make, by following the recipe below):

## FLOUR TORTILLAS

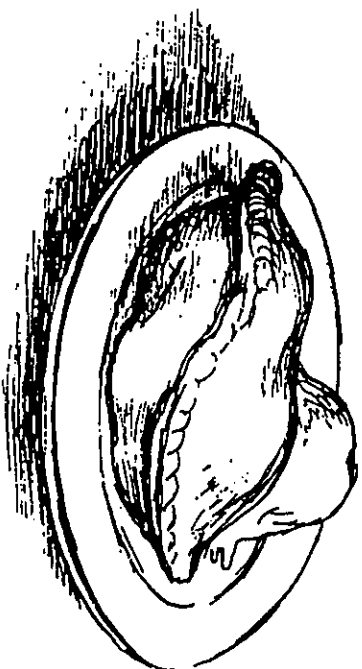
- |   |                              |
|---|------------------------------|
| 2 cups tortilla mix<br>(masa de harina) | $\frac{1}{2}$ cup warm water |
|---|------------------------------|

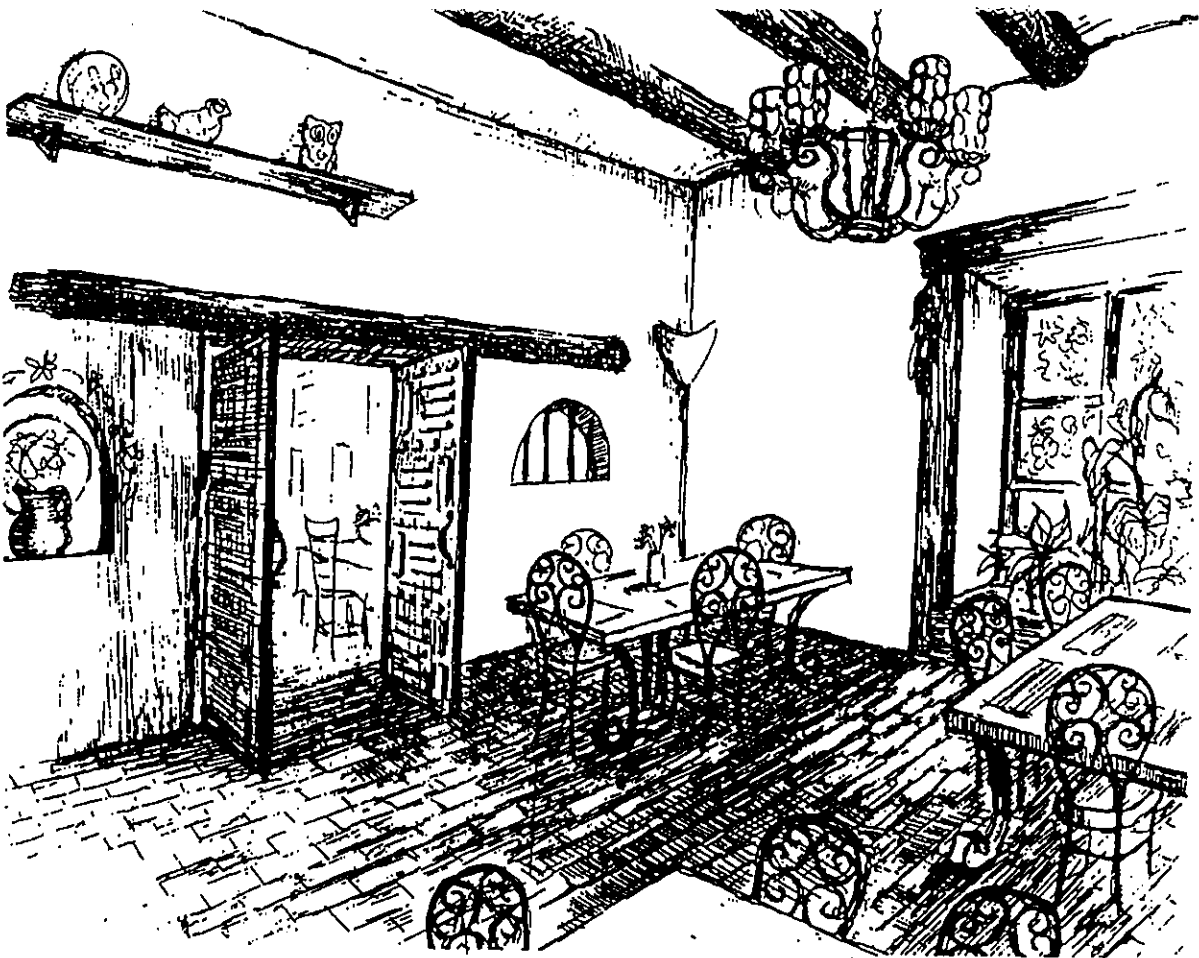
Combine tortilla mix and water in bowl. If dough is crumbly, add a little more water. Knead until smooth. Cover and let stand for about 20 minutes at room temperature. Divide dough into twelve balls. Roll out each on lightly floured board to form a six-inch circle. Bake on ungreased griddle (at 400 degrees) until lightly browned on each side. Do not over-cook. Tortillas should come off grill while still soft and flexible. Can be refrigerated or frozen.

## EMPANADAS (turnovers or fried pies)

- |                      |                            |
|----------------------|----------------------------|
| 2 cups of flour      | 1 tsp. salt                |
| 2 tsp. baking powder | milk                       |
| 2 tbs. shortening    | mincemeat or fruit filling |

Combine flour, salt and baking powder and sift thoroughly. Cut in shortening until whole is well mixed. Add only enough milk (water may be used) to make medium dough. Dough should be easy to handle and not sticky. Let stand for about ten minutes. Roll out thin and cut into circles about four inches in diameter. Place one heaping teaspoon of mincemeat or fruit filler, such as apricot preserves, on circle. Fold dough over in half, then pinch edges together in a semicircle to hold in filling. Fry in deep fat until golden brown. Sprinkle with powdered sugar. La Posta serves mincemeat, apricot, and cherry empanadas along with vanilla ice cream, making a festive desert. A delightful birthday dessert can be made of the empanada by serving it with a tiny birthday sparkler or candle.





## COMBINATION PLATE

The combination plate is the ne plus ultra for impressing guests with your new skill as a Mexican cook. Served on a hot plate, the combination is a strategic arrangement of rolled enchilada (simply a variation of the flat red enchilada), tamale, chile con carne, frijoles, rolled taco, garnishes of La Posta cole slaw (see below) and shredded lettuce, with hot corn or flour tortillas served as "bread." Preparation of the very special La Posta cole slaw is as follows:

### ENSALADA DE COL

- |  |                            |
|--|----------------------------|
| 1 small head of cabbage or 2 cups shredded | 2 lbs. apple cider vinegar |
| 1/4 cup olive oil or Wesson Oil            | 1 tsp. salt                |
|  | 1 tsp. pepper              |

Shred cabbage. Mix together olive oil, vinegar, salt and pepper, then add to slaw. Mix thoroughly and chill before serving.

Now, if you want to add a piece de resistance to your La Posta banquet, we leave you with the following very special (and previously secret) recipe for one of the great Mexican meat dishes of all times!

### CARNE ADOBADA (marinated pork)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 6 quality center-cut pork chops or other good grade of pork | 2 or 3 large cloves of garlic mashed and soaked in 1 tbs. of cider vinegar |
| 2 cups of thick red chile sauce                             | 1 1/2 tsp. ground oregano  |
|   | 2 tsp. salt  |

Cut pork into one inch thick strips about five inches long. Mix chile sauce and spices. Place meat one layer thick in a baking dish. Pour sauce over meat, making sure meat is completely covered. Let stand in refrigerator for at least 2 hours or longer, but of course the longer the better. Bake in 350 degree oven for one hour. If you find that you like your carne adobada on the crisp side, cook longer to taste.

*The Pool and Saddle Room of La Posta served horsemen and cowboys during the roaring frontier days after the Civil War. The shop furnished equipment to the Butterfield Stage Line that ran from Ft. Smith, Arkansas to San Diego, California.*

## NOTES

In preparing the dishes from The Authentic La Posta Cookbook you will inevitably make some mistakes and also some discoveries worth remembering. Why not jot down some reminders of these fascinating experiences:

On the opposite page we encouraged you to jot down your successes or frustrations with these La Posta recipes

**But**

If you really find yourself in trouble with your Mexican recipe and are suffering the anguish of all fine cooks in such circumstances, then write your problem to:

Katy Carmuñez Meek  
La Posta  
Mesilla, New Mexico  
88046

You will receive a personal letter back from Katy with encouragement, specific solutions, and the latest news from La Posta!