



Dining for Women

Making Connections September 2008 Nicaragua and Heifer Int'l's WILD Program

“Before, I did not understand things. The men were the breadwinners and said everything. But now the women are a part of the community. We are happy and more active with much more confidence.”

“As women, we no longer feel alone... Now we help each other the best we can.”

*“It’s not just a project for each us. It’s a project for all of us.”
Rosa Carmen Medina, Bernadina Maria Salgado, and Felicitas Diaz Lopez
Nicaraguan Poultry Farmers and Heifer Project Participants*

Chickens, Piggies and Cows, Oh My! And Sheep too!

Okay, even a cynic like me can’t resist all those cute smiling kids with equally cute animals on Heifer International’s website. (See little Racquel and her hen on our homepage—too adorable!) We’ve tackled some tough subjects in the last few months—mass rape in the Congo, AIDS in Uganda; sexual enslavement of girls in Cambodia. Not that Heifer’s mission to end hunger isn’t equally serious. Remember that hunger is very much related to all those other tragedies and chronic malnutrition causes more deaths of women and children in the world than any other factor. But those kids and animals, and the hope and joy in the stories you’ll “hear” from women like the ones quoted above whose lives have been changed by some chickens or a cow— well, this is going to be the most upbeat meeting that we’ve had in awhile. So play along and enjoy it. Have story time with *Beatrice’s Goat* (see *Recommended Books*). Or as you’ll see the women in Heifer’s videos doing, dance for joy as we go for our goal of \$12,300 to help provide the 1150 chickens, 36 sheep, 34 heifers, 2(very busy) bulls, 86 pigs and 1740 fruit trees that will change the lives of 70 women—and then 210 more as they receive the offspring of those first 1308 animals and saplings. Animal crackers and milk anyone? Save room for the amazing Nicaraguan cake in *Dining with Women* too. Let’s go WILD with Heifer’s Women in Livestock Development Program in Nicaragua this month. For more on the project we are supporting, see the Project Outline on our Program Schedule page under Sept. 08 at http://www.diningforwomen.org/?page_id=12/ For questions and comments on MC and other resources: corrie@diningforwomen.org

FYI: A Cup, A Cow, and Being Counted

My aunt would never have called herself the “livestock farmer” in the family. *That* was my uncle. But if you had seen what she did on a daily basis—from gathering eggs at dawn to loading hay to feed the cows at dusk and many a night staying up with a sow in

labor—you'd have realized she was more than "helping" him. Millions of women around the world are more than helping with the livestock and other agricultural work these days and always have. In some cultures, care for animals is recognized as "women's work," even if ownership of animals and land is men's privilege.

But for a growing number of women in developing countries, "helping" their husbands or fathers with the animals as a euphemism for what they do has either taken on new and critical meaning or simply no longer applies at all. In places like Nicaragua, the impact of neoliberal economic policies (free trade, focus on export products and markets, privatization of social services) and soaring inflation has meant that families must take on more work to survive. To make ends meet, more rural women are farming themselves out as temporary or seasonal day laborers in the fields owned by multinationals and then coming home to farm what they can when they can as well as to do the "women's work." Many mothers and grandmothers are left to care for the land and children on their own for long periods while men (and young, single women who would otherwise be helping them at home) work in the factories. Or, they're left on their own forever as some men never return. For many women, there is no one to be the "livestock farmer" except them.

Yet still in Nicaragua, according to the best official estimates, only 26% of rural women are engaged in farm labor—a number that experts know is far underestimated. A lot of women are not being counted and not even counting themselves. The best estimated worldwide is that 86% of farm workers are women. How many are livestock farmers? Well, it's estimated that about 700 million people who qualify as "poor" tend livestock. Most "poor" are women. A good guess is a lot of poor women are livestock farmers.

Those overworked and underappreciated women who have livestock are blessed in the eyes of other poor women who must try to sustain their families on the few vegetables and grains they can grow on meager plots. For while having livestock means having more to look after, it can mean better nutrition for one's family almost immediately, more income with a little time, and hope for a better life a little further down the road. Being recognized as the livestock farmer can even mean more esteem in the community and for oneself. Given the realities of most patriarchal cultures and the need for sweeping cultural and political change in property laws, livestock ownership may be a quicker path to a better life for more women than land ownership.

The rising costs of food this year and predicted for the foreseeable future have increased both the challenge and the opportunity of livestock ownership. It's more expensive to feed animals; but with animals and their "by-products," women can feed their families what they otherwise couldn't afford to buy to eat themselves and the milk, meat, cheese, and eggs they don't consume can give them an entry into a marketplace with a growing demand for meat products at least at the local level. Maybe one day, as women band together in community groups and cooperatives to pool resources and products, on the global level.

There are a lot of maybes, coulds and ifs in farming *period*. For poor women—or anybody!—just being given a cow or some chickens isn't enough to make them successful livestock farmers or ensure that their children's cups and plates won't be empty. The Heifer Project began over fifty years ago when a relief volunteer realized that the children for whom he was ladling milk really needed "a cow, not a cup." He also knew they'd need more—training. In how to care for that cow. In how to care for the land so that it can sustain the family and the cow. In how to manage, use, and market what the cow produces and how to work with others to maximize productivity and profit.

What recent studies have shown is that women caring for livestock are less likely to have access to training and less likely to be prepared for farm management, even on a small scale (think illiteracy and innumeracy rates). Animals owned or cared for by women are less likely to receive medical care than animals cared for by men in the same family. The animals that women prefer (because they provide immediate nutritional sources for children) and are best able to manage while caring for home and children—a dairy cow, some chickens, sheep and goats—are less “valuable” than cattle managed by men in some cultures. What one raises signifies the difference in some places between being a “woman” and a “farmer.”

My aunt never counted herself a “farmer,” but she knew she counted. In part, she knew that because she literally counted—she kept the books and made most of the financial decisions. In *Voices*, you’ll read about some Nicaraguan women who have learned to count and care for their chickens and the benefits and profits they are hatching. They have realized how much they count for their families and communities. What Heifer demonstrates in the WILD Program is that when women—and the men they work and live with—realize how much and well they count as livestock farmers, they don’t have to worry as much about children’s cups being empty.

Resources used in preparation of *FYT*: Carmen Diana Deere, “Feminization of Agriculture? Economic Restructuring in Rural Latin America, UN Research Institute for Social Development, Occasional Paper 1, 2005; “Gender and Farming Systems: Lessons from Nicaragua, Gender and Development Service, Gender and Population Division, UN Food and Agriculture Organization, 2005; Jennifer Bickham Mendez, *From the Revolution to the Maquiladoras: Gender, Labor, and Globalization in Nicaragua* (Duke University Press, 2005); www.heifer.org; Briefs by the International Livestock Research Institute: <http://www.ilri.org/>; Ruth K. Oniang’o, “Trends in Women’s Contributions to Agricultural Productivity: Lessons from Africa,” 1999; P. Kristjanson et al., “Pathways out of Poverty in Western Kenya and the Role of Livestock,” 2004.

Recommended Books and Film: Part One

It’s a book buffet this month—the ironic result of not finding just the book I wanted on women in Nicaragua today (rather than during the Revolutionary period). At the risk of over-stuffing you, I decided to offer suggestions related to Heifer and its impact on women (a little girl becoming a remarkable young woman in this case) and to stimulate our thinking about the connection between our eating and food insecurity in places like Nicaragua. And there’s a nice surprise from our Charleston chapter in the follow-up too. So savor slowly; come back for seconds. First, I want to share something beautiful about Nicaragua with you.

Nicaragua is a land of poets. Schoolchildren participate in poetry contests. It’s as passionate a hobby for Nicaraguans as gardening or running are for many here. When your cab driver in Managua launches into verse at the wheel, don’t be surprised. Poetry is such a part of life there that *poeta* is a term of endearment like “pal” or “sweetie.” And Nicaragua has produced some great poets of international acclaim. The first that most Nicaraguans will cite (or recite!) proudly if asked are Rubén Darío, Alfonso Cortés, or priest-poet Ernesto Cardenal. But Nicaraguan women are poets too and among the celebrated poets of Nicaragua today are Gioconda Belli and Daisy Zamora. Both write from experience of the Revolution. Belli left her family to join the Sandanistas and Zamora was the voice of Radio Sandino and later vice minister of culture in the Sandanista government. And both write from women’s life experiences—not only out of their own lives before and after the Revolution, which have been a good deal more privileged than those of most Nicaraguan women, but also about women from many walks of life they have known. Sometimes their poetry, especially in the Revolutionary period, may be hard for Americans to read because their anger at our government is so

palpable. And other times, they resonate across cultures with great humor and pathos. And always, they write with pride in being “woman.”

In *MC May 07*, I recommended a memoir and novel by Belli. She’s recently completed another novel, already winning acclaim in Latin America, *El infinito en la palma de la mano* (*Infinity in the Palm of Her Hand*). It’s an allegory about Adam and Eve in paradise dedicated to victims of the Iraq war and will be published in English this year. She’s lived in the U.S. for many years and is a well-known peace and women’s activist. This time, I’m recommending a bilingual collection of her poetry, *From Eve’s Rib*, (trans. by Stephen F. White, Curbstone Press, 1989). I’ll give you one of the poems below; you’ll see she’s been fascinated with the creation story and women for a while.

Daisy Zamora lives part of the time in the U.S. now as well. She is also an activist and university professor (most recently in Santa Cruz, CA where we have a chapter). Zamora edited an anthology of Nicaraguan women’s poetry but unfortunately it hasn’t been translated into English. Here, I recommend a Spanish/English edition of poems from several of her collections, *The Violent Foam*, (trans. by George Evans, Curbstone Press, 2002). But I’m going to give you a poem from another collection of hers, one that fits very well with our featured project. It was written during the Revolution, but resonates with the hope many rural women still patiently hold for their land and their children. (If you’d like to read the Spanish versions in your meeting and can’t get the books in time, email me.)

Song of Hope

Daisy Zamora, fr. *Clean Slate* (trans. by Margaret and Elinor Randall, Curbstone Press, 1993)

One day the fields will be forever green
the earth black, sweet and wet.
Our children will grow tall upon that earth
and our children’s children...

And they will be free like mountain trees
and birds.

Each morning they will wake happy to be alive
and know the earth was claimed again for them.

One day...

Today we plough dry fields
though every furrow is soaked in blood.

And from Gioconda Belli...

And God made me Woman

And God made me woman,
with the long hair,
the eyes,
the nose and the mouth of a woman.
With curves
and folds

and soft hollows.
God carved into me
a workshop in me for human beings;
delicately wove my nerves,
and carefully counted
and balanced my hormones;
composed my blood
and poured it into me
so that it would flow
through my entire body.
And so ideas were born,
dreams,
instincts,
everything that was gently created
with hammering whispers
and the drilling motions of love,
the thousand and one things that make me woman every day,
that make me arise proud,
every morning,
and bless my sex.

References:

www.nicaraguaphoto.com/essays/update_nicaraguaJune2004.shtml

<http://www.curbstone.org/authdetail.cfm?AuthID=52>

<http://www.pen.org/page.php/prmID/1164>

<http://www.criticasmagazine.com/article/CA6534275.html>

Recommended Books and Film: The Sequel

In keeping with my intro this month, I'm also recommending Page McBrier's *Beatrice's Goat*, for the kid in all of us and all the little girls for whom a goat or a cow from Heifer has made all the difference. See *NYTimes* columnist Nick Kristof's lovely tribute to Heifer and Beatrice at

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/03/opinion/03kristof.html?ex=1372737600&en=17eefa72e2388b12&ei=5124&partner=permalink&exprod=permalink> Or follow the link to it currently on Heifer's homepage: www.heifer.org

And, I'm recommending a book and a film about our eating habits and food insecurity and why encouraging local food production is so important worldwide. Although the current heightening of the food crisis is prompting new books and documentaries almost daily, *The Global Banquet: The Politics of Food* is still perhaps the best introduction to world food security and agriculture. The two-part (28 minutes each) film is great for a discussion. It's available from

http://www.olddogdocumentaries.com/vid_gb.html Brian Halweil's *Reclaiming Hunger: Pleasure in the Global Supermarket* (Norton, 2004) is one of the few books written for a general audience that has a truly global take on the importance of local food sources. You'll find an excerpt on the Heifer web site at <http://www.heifer.org/site/c.edJRKQNiFiG/b.1339221/>

Recommended Books and Film: A Follow-Up

In July, I recommended renowned journalist and best-selling author Christina Lamb's *House of Stone*, about the enduring friendship between Nigel and Aqiu, a white

planter and the black nanny who cared for his children as Zimbabwe and their lives fell apart. Members of Charleston chapter read the book and became concerned about how Aqwi and Nigel were faring now, given the current crisis in Zimbabwe and Mugabe's crackdown on critics of his regime. Mary Catherine DuBois decided to see if she could find out about them and wrote to Christina Lamb, telling her about DFW. Here is Christina Lamb's very welcome response. Thanks to Mary Catherine and to CL Sandy Slavin for letting us know and for all our members in Charleston who found more that a good read in a good book.

Dear Mary,

Thank you for your email. I am so glad you liked the book and am happy to reassure you that Aqwi is very well and living in Marondera. I last spoke to her about two weeks ago. Of course the situation is terrible particularly economically with inflation now over 11 million percent but she is as feisty as ever. I was very worried about using her name in the book but she—and Nigel—were determined that people need to speak out for which I can only

admire them. We tried to make sure that all criticism of Mugabe was in my narrative rather than in their words. They both hope things will change soon.

*Best Wishes,
Christina*

If you'd like to keep up with what's happening in Zimbabwe, the continually updated BBC Special Report on Zimbabwe is good place to go:
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_depth/africa/2008/zimbabwe/default.stm

Socially Responsible Shopping

*If you'd like to know why buying clothes from fair trade worker-owned cooperatives, particularly organic cotton clothes, is so important for us and women workers in Nicaragua, see *FYI* and *SRS* in MC May '07. Here are a couple sources :
Lovely (and very reasonably-priced) camisoles, fitted T-shirts, and criss-cross tops made of organic cotton by COMAMNUVI, a women's cooperative we've supported in the past, are available from Maggie's Organics at

http://www.maggiesorganics.com/products_item.php?cat_id=4

Note: In our experience, the tops run small—buy a size up unless you like things tight.
http://www.cultureshop.com/index.php?manufacturers_id=54 carries Maggie's line of Nicaraguan organic cotton baby clothes as well as great Nicaraguan pottery and other items.

* Beautiful Nicaraguan pottery and wooden bowls can be found at
<http://www.oneworldprojects.com/products/pottery-geometric.shtml>
<http://shop.therainforestsite.com/store/> (type "Nicaragua" into the search box)

* Boaco is known for coffee as well as dairy products and beef. But times have been hard for coffee farmers—even after the devastation of war ended. Until the late '90s, coffee accounted for half of Nicaragua's export earnings from agriculture. Then coffee prices worldwide fell sharply and coffee farmers in droves went to work in the factories. But there is hope now in the many fair trade cooperatives springing up in Nicaragua and other coffee-growing countries. For more, see
<http://www.heifer.org/site/c.edJRKQNiFiG/b.476771/>
Here are two sources of fair trade Nicaraguan coffee produced by women's cooperatives:

<http://www.highergroundstrading.com/nicaragua.html>
<http://justcoffee.e-beans.net/coffees/detail.php?c=7&s=Nica-Las>

* And finally, our socially responsible shopper Carolyn is very high on the nice people at the Nicaraguan Cultural Alliance and their bounty of Nicaraguan products, including coffees, pottery and other crafts, and some lovely cards (really distinctive Christmas cards): <http://www.quixote.org/nca/>

Dining with Women

Nicaraguan food reflects its rich history and varied geography. Corn products are essential to the diet as they have been for centuries. Along with tropical fruits and indigenous vegetables, foods and techniques brought by Europeans over the years have become traditional parts of this “creolized” cuisine. *Nacatamal* is considered the national dish by many Nicaraguans. It is a cornmeal dough filled with meat, potatoes, and other vegetables, then wrapped in banana leaves and steamed for hours. Very labor intensive, *nacatamal*-making is a women’s cottage industry in Nicaragua. If you happen to live in an area with a Nicaraguan immigrant population, investigate the possibility of “take out” *nacatamal* for your meeting. A rival for national food is *Gallo pinto*. It’s the Nicaraguan everyday “bean and rice” dish that also reflects the blended heritage. Carolyn gives you two versions and a salad that often accompanies it below. Note that red beans, rather than the black beans more typical of other Latin American countries, are traditional in Nicaragua. The rest of our menu features classic dishes and some twists using milk, beef, eggs, and fruit—all products associated with the project we’re supporting.

Menu

Nicaraguan *Guacamol* or Deviled Eggs with Guacamole
Indio Viejo, “Old Indian” Beef Stew with Orange and Mint, Classic and a Twist
Gallo Pinto, “Rooster’s Beak” Red Beans and Rice, Vegetarian and w/Chorizo
Carolyn’s *Ensalata Nica* “Colesalsa”
Ensalada de Jicama y Naranja (Jicama and Orange Salad)
El Macuá or a guava, orange or lime-based fruit drink

Nicaraguan Guacamol or Deviled Eggs with Guacamole

You’ll see in Voices how much Nicaraguans like eggs. And just as in that story, the Boacan WILD project is all about eggs and chickens. This isn’t really a recipe. I’m assuming you all now how to make guacamole or how to buy it. Nicaraguan guacamole isn’t much different from what you know except that it uses diced hard-boiled eggs. About 2 eggs per avocado—but you can decide how much. Or, try the old potluck standby deviled eggs with guacamole instead of the usual filling. (Waste not the egg yolk—mash it up in the guacamole.)

Indio Viejo (Beef Stew with Orange and Mint): Classic and a Twist

adapted fr. <http://wheatlessbay.wordpress.com/2007/10/28/nicaraguan-beef-with-orange-and-mint/>

“Old Indian” as its name implies is a very traditional dish, often associated with religious holidays. But it’s great for our celebration of WILD in Boaco because it uses two of the foods involved, beef and orange. And, it really is delicious (and smells wonderful as it cooks). The classic version is a stew and was intended no doubt to stretch a little meat a long way. (I’ve seen recipes for this that use 3 times the amount of

cornmeal with the same amount of meat called for here.) The traditional dish with its cornmeal thickener (or in some renditions, leftover broken-up and soaked corn tortillas) is rib-stickin'. It's also a little tricky and labor-intensive to make (stirring cornmeal is great upper body exercise and trying to make it smooth is character building). And, it probably wouldn't adapt very well to our potluck buffets. So I've come up with a twist that I hope will encourage more of you to try this tasty combination of ingredients. It follows the classic version below. Serves 6 as a stew at a potluck; the appetizer version serves many. Can be doubled.

If you'd like to see how it's done in Nicaragua, check out the photos as this student blog:

<http://www.travelblog.org/Central-America-Caribbean/Nicaragua/Leon/blog-198786.html>

1 lb flank or skirt steak, cut into 4 pieces
2 onions—1 quartered, 1 diced
4 garlic cloves, 2 smashed and peeled, 2 peeled and minced
2c fresh orange juice plus 2T fresh lime juice, mixed together (this imitates the sour oranges popular in Latin America)
1c canned, diced tomatoes with juice or fresh tomatoes
1 t salt, plus more to taste
1 t freshly ground cumin
a pinch of red pepper flakes or chili powder or a diced jalapeno, opt. (Nicaraguan food is not spicy generally, but a little kick is nice here)
1/3c cornmeal or polenta
2T extra virgin olive oil
1 green pepper, diced
6 (or so) fresh sprigs of mint, chopped finely just before using
more mint, lime slices, sour cream for garnish
For the easier version: omit cornmeal above and substitute 1-2 tubes of prepared polenta (in the produce or refrigerator section of many groceries) or buy some thick large tortilla chips (as for making nachos) or make cornbread

1. Put the quartered onion, garlic, meat, cumin, pepper flakes, tomatoes, salt, and 1c of the orange-lime juice into a heavy pot with a lid. Add enough water to barely cover the meat. Bring to a boil, cover and simmer slowly until the steak is fork-tender, about two hours. (I was astounded how tender the skirt steak I used was at 1 1/2 hours so check/taste the meat periodically after an hour.)
2. Remove the meat. Mash up the onion and garlic into the broth and pour it into a measuring cup or smaller pot.
3. Heat the oil in the original pot and saute the diced onion and pepper and minced garlic over medium heat until soft.
4. Shred the steak with two forks (or your fingers). Add it to pot.
5. Mix the cornmeal with 1 cup of the reserved broth, and stir to remove any lumps. Add it to pot and stir as it thickens to prevent it from sticking to the pan. As the cornmeal thickens add the rest of the broth in small amounts to establish a thin-to-medium porridge. It will take about fifteen minutes of constant stirring to cook the rawness out of the cornmeal. If the broth is gone before that point, add water. Taste for salt. (If using polenta, check the directions for timing on the package.)
6. Turn off the heat and stir in the rest of the orange-lime juice and the mint. Taste for salt again. Serve at once—it may “congeal” otherwise.

My anglo-italian-tex-mex-potluck-easy version

Forgive me Nicaragua but it's the thought... and a tasty one

In my version, you can make a stew to serve over cornbread. Or you can make a pretty and tasty appetizer in one of two ways. For the stew over cornbread option, just omit step 5 altogether and mix the liquid back into the meat. Cook the liquid down a bit if necessary to get it to a stewy consistency. That's it. Serve over hot cornbread squares with the garnishes suggested. And you could easily reheat the stew.

For the lovely and tasty appetizer, you'll also omit step 5 altogether. In step 2, put the broth in a smaller pot and bring it back to a simmer. Reduce it to about 1-1 1/2c of "sauce." Add it back to the beef mixture. Make polenta rounds (instructions below). Top each with a little of the beef mixture and some of the garnishes. OR, make nachos with the beef sauce (you may want to cook the liquid down even further for this), tortilla chips and sour cream. Yes, go ahead and use a melty, mild cheese too.

Polenta Rounds

1 or 2 tubes of prepared polenta

Olive oil for brushing the polenta

Slice the polenta into not-too-thick rounds—something like a 1/3" thick. Coat a foil-covered sheet pan lightly with olive oil. Arrange the polenta rounds on the pan and brush the tops with more oil. Sprinkle on a little salt and pepper. Broil the polenta on one side until brown and slightly crisp, about 3-5 minutes. Make sure the rounds are warm throughout.

Gallo Pinto or Nicaraguan Red Beans and Rice

Adapted fr. <http://wheatlessbay.wordpress.com/2007/10/25/nicaraguan-red-beans-and-rice/>

Carolyn tested this one and here's her comment: "I made two versions of this and Tom and I loved both. The first is the "generic" version, to which nearly anything may be added, and makes a great side or vegetarian entrée, and the second uses chorizo, which gives you a hearty main course dish. Note: the original recipe called for using the bean cooking liquid to moisten the rice, in which case it should be reserved when draining the beans. I did not use it because I cook with brown rice and I wanted to achieve the "speckled" look, and I figured the dark bean liquid would turn everything the same color. If you want to use it, go for it! Serves 8-10 generously." In Nicaragua, salsa, sour cream, and a salad like the one below often accompany *Gallo Pinto* if you're fortunate enough to have them.

1c dried small red beans, soaked for at least 8 hours, then drained

1 bay leaf

4 cloves of garlic, peeled, 3 whole and 1 diced

1c dry white or brown rice, cooked as you normally do

2T olive oil

a large onion, finely diced

a jalapeno, or other hot pepper, diced (optional)

1/2 lb. chorizo, cut into small pieces (optional)

Chopped parsley or cilantro for garnish (optional)

Place beans in a saucepan and cover with water by a few inches. Add the 3 whole cloves of garlic and the bay leaf. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to low and simmer, partially covered, until beans are soft but still hold their shape. Drain the beans and remove the bay leaf and garlic. This can take from 25 minute to more than an hour, depending on your beans. In a medium-large frying pan, heat the oil over medium heat, add the onion and the diced clove of garlic (and hot pepper, if using) and sauté until the onion is soft

and transparent, about 10 minutes. Add the beans to the onion and stir. Add the rice and enough water to moisten the mixture, but not so much that it is runny. Heat, stirring, for a few minutes to heat through. Add salt to taste. Garnish if desired. For the chorizo version, sauté the chorizo in 1 instead of 2T of oil for 5 minutes, remove. Add onion, garlic and optional pepper to oil remaining in pan and proceed as above. Add the chorizo last and stir in. This would be pretty served with a small dollop of sour cream, as it is a darker color than the original.

Ensalada Nica, Nicaraguan Salad or “Colesalsa”

Adapted fr <http://www.siennamoonfire.com/nica/>

Carolyn says, “I found this in a travelogue about Nicaragua. This recipe is open to your own personal touches, and may also be made with no tomatoes at all in the winter when tomatoes aren’t worth eating anyway. But then I guess it wouldn’t be “colesalsa” anymore!! There are loads of possibilities, and I have included as many options as I could find in various versions. Serves 8 or more, depending on additions and amounts used.”

1/4 to 1/2 head of cabbage, depending on size, thinly sliced then cut crosswise
1 jalapeno or other hot pepper, diced
5 or more large plum tomatoes, chopped or equivalent in cherry/grape tomatoes, halved
1t sherry vinegar, if you have it, or other vinegar
1T corn or other light oil
juice of one lime, or two if you like your salads really twangy
1/8t sugar
salt and pepper to taste
Cumin (optional), suggested
Cayenne powder or hot sauce (optional)
Cooked green beans (optional)
Peeled, chopped avocado (optional)
Thinly sliced scallions either tossed in or as garnish or both
Cilantro or parsley as garnish

Combine cabbage, jalapeno and tomatoes (and green beans and scallions if using) in a large bowl. Whisk together the lime juice, vinegar, oil, sugar, a little salt and pepper (and cumin, if using) in a small bowl. Add dressing to salad (and avocado here, if using) and toss. Adjust seasonings as desired. This is better if it sits for an hour or so before serving, or longer, if necessary. In fact, it is a good idea to let it sit and toss it and taste again before you add any more heat.

Ensalada de Jicama y Naranja, Jicama and Orange Salad

Adapted fr <http://fooddownunder.com/cgi-bin/recipe.cgi?r=97804>

Carolyn: “This is a very refreshing salad, and perfect compliment to the beef recipe. I had an abundance of Asian pears, and couldn’t find jicama, so at Corrie’s suggestion I used them instead of the jicama, since they are of similar texture and only slightly sweeter. Other substitutes for jicama that I ran across were young turnips, raw, and I don’t see why you couldn’t even make this with young, sweet radishes, which would be really pretty. Even water chestnuts would probably work in a pinch.” Serves 4; easily doubled or tripled.

Juice of 2 limes

Salt, to taste
1/4t chipotle or other hot chili pepper powder
1 medium orange, cut into 1-inch pieces
1 small jicama or substitute, julienned
3 scallions, thinly sliced
Cilantro, chopped for garnish (optional)

Combine the lime juice, chili powder and a small pinch of salt. Place all fruits/vegetables in a bowl and stir gently to combine. Add the lime juice mixture and stir gently again. Taste for seasoning. Garnish with chopped cilantro, if desired, and serve.

Pastel de Tres Leches, Three Milk Cake

Adapted fr. <http://www.texascooking.com/features/sept2002treslechescakerecipe.htm>

What could be better for celebrating a HEIFER project in a dairy region than a cake with “3 milks” in it? It’s hard to beat this cake anyway. But it does have something of a mixed history. It’s an example of the continuous process of tradition-making in cuisine and the influence of global marketing on diet. (In this case, that influence at least tastes good.) Some of you—especially you Texans—will know *Pastel de tres leches* since it has become a popular dessert in Mexican restaurants and bakeries (and more recently in trendy gourmet spots.) The cake’s popularity began in Nicaragua, however. Some food historians trace it to a recipe that appeared on cans of evaporated milk after World War II. But it also harkens further back to the European tradition of sweet cakes soaked in custard, milk, or spirits. It has become a favorite, “traditional” celebration cake in Nicaragua. It may not be something that most Nicaraguans get to eat very often (neither should most of us given its richness), but let’s celebrate their hopes for a sweeter life with this sweet cake they would enjoy.

The version here has been adapted for North American kitchens by Texas pastry chef, Dorothy Sobele. Note: I use dark rum for the spirits—about 1/4 cup to soak the cake and 1t rum plus 1t vanilla to the cream when it’s about half-whipped. It is often served with fresh fruit on the side or decorating the top. Some other versions use meringue instead of cream on top. It’s worth every single calorie! Serves a crowd cut in small squares.

1 1/2 cups All-purpose flour
1 teaspoon Baking powder
1/2 cup Unsalted butter
2 cups White sugar (divided)
5 Eggs
1 1/2 teaspoon Vanilla extract (divided)
1 cup Milk
1/2 of a 14-ounce can Sweetened condensed milk
1/2 of a 12-ounce can Evaporated milk
1/3 cup Dark Rum, Brandy or Liqueur—Frangelico, Gran Marnier, Chambord (optional, fresh orange juice is also a possibility)
1 1/2 cups Heavy whipping cream

Preheat oven to 350F degrees. Grease and flour a 9x13-inch baking pan.

Sift flour and baking powder together and set aside. Cream the butter and 1 cup of the sugar together until fluffy. Add the eggs and 1/2 teaspoon of the vanilla. Beat well. Add the flour mixture to the butter mixture, 2 tablespoons at a time, mixing well until

blended. Pour batter into prepared pan. Bake for 30 minutes.

When cake has finished baking, pierce it in 8 or 10 places with a fork or skewer, and let it cool. Combine the whole milk, evaporated milk, condensed milk and liqueur and pour over the top of the cooled cake. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours before serving.

Whipped Cream Topping: When ready to serve, combine the whipping cream and the remaining 1 teaspoon of vanilla and 1 cup of sugar, whipping until thick. Spread over top of cake.

NOTE: Because of the milk in the cake, it is very important that you keep the cake refrigerated until ready to serve and refrigerate any leftovers (hah!). Serve chilled too.

El Macuá

fr. <http://www.iht.com/articles/2006/10/09/news/trnic.php>

Cuba has the Cuba libré. Mexico, the Margarita. A few years ago travel and hospitality professionals in Nicaragua decided it was a matter of national pride (and publicity and profit for the tourist industry) for Nicaragua to have its own national drink and sponsored a contest to discover it. This drink, named for a tropical bird, won. Since it uses at least one of the fruits in the Boaco project, I thought I'd throw it in. Guava nectar is available frozen or in bottles; make sure you get 100% guava and not a guava soda with corn syrup in it. But be careful—this bird can make *you* fly. There are several 100% fruit juice blends available that use guava if you'd like something more down to earth. Either way, garnish with lime or orange slices and toast the WILD women of Boaco and their fruit trees.

Per serving for a high ball glass:

One part White Rum, preferably Nicaraguan like Flor de Caña

One part guava juice

Half part lemon or lime juice

Sugar or simple syrup to taste

Shake the ingredients together with ice. Strain into a highball glass over more ice and serve well chilled.

Voices on the next page.

VOICES...

from a Heifer International project in Nicaragua similar to the Boaco Project

About 12 smiling women sit in a circle in the mid-morning shade of tropical trees, joined by one shy man, Juan Antonio Rodriguez. The women are participants in Heifer International's Norwich Women's Poultry Project, and Rodriguez takes pains to explain that he's present on behalf of his wife, who was unable to attend this gathering. As soon as a reporter and photographer sit down with the women, they whip out food-filled plates, tasty palettes of colorful egg dishes. Eggs with salsa, eggs with fresh *queso* (cheese), eggs wrapped in tortillas, eggs scrambled and fried—red, white and yellow. These women, most of them in their 30s and 40s, show pride in their culinary creativity, urging their visitors to eat. The food tastes delicious, but asking questions and taking notes and photographs while eating prove difficult. The eggs are wolfed down so work can proceed. Katarin Tellez Diaz, daughter of Rosa Maria Diaz, holds three eggs, eggs that not only provide the family nutrition but also income. "None of my children are sick anymore," Rosa Diaz says....

Bernadina Maria Salgado had always struggled to help feed her family, especially after Hurricane Mitch destroyed her tiny community on the banks of Nicaragua's El Zopilote River, forcing everyone to relocate. But then Heifer came along, and Bernadina learned more than she ever imagined—and uncovered skills she never knew she had. "Before, I had no way to help provide for my family, but today, I am the breadwinner!" said this grandmother of two young boys.

Bernadina and her grandchildren are one of several families—mostly headed by women—who are participating in a new Heifer project in Nicaragua. With the help of Heifer's field staff (and one busy rooster), these women are learning how to turn the hens they received from Heifer into a major source of income.

After Hurricane Mitch flooded their homes in 1998, the women banded together to seek help. A Dutch relief organization, the Friends from Holland, helped them purchase six acres of land and build new homes. The Catholic Sisters of Carmen Laura in nearby El Viejo, and a group from Norwich, England, provided each home with a well, a sink and a latrine. And the Agros Foundation helped the community buy more land for farming. A nearby sugar mill provides seasonal work for the men, but earns them less than \$2 a day. So Heifer International got involved, with the goal not only to feed these families, but to provide another—more consistent—way for them to make a living.

That's where the chickens come in. Chickens are perfect income-producing animals. By the time they're six months old, chickens can lay up to 200 eggs a year; and their manure makes a great organic fertilizer for vegetable gardens. As with every Heifer project, training and supplies were provided before a single chicken was distributed. The women learned how to build portable hen houses using local resources and how to feed and care for their hens....

Felicitas Diaz Lopez thrusts a chart into a visitor's hands. In orderly grids and tidy numbers, she has noted that her chickens laid 192 eggs in March. She and her family of seven ate 110, they sold 55, and from the sale of the eggs they earned \$3.50. "I'm so happy with this project," Lopez says. "Finally, instead of having to buy eggs, we can feed the eggs to our families and earn money to buy things like sugar and soap." Some of the eggs are left to hatch to increase the flock, and "every once in a while, we

can feed our children meat,” she says. “Heifer has given us an opportunity to get ahead,” Lopez says. “It’s been good for our families....”

Rosa Carmen Medina is another participant who’s proud of the skills she’s learned. “Life has changed for women in many ways because of this project,” she said. “Before, I did not understand things. The men were the breadwinners and said everything. But now the women are a part of the community. We are happy and more active with much more confidence. This project is not just for the women but the whole family. We are working together to make a difference... we can help others in our community who are having difficulties.”

The participants meet regularly with Heifer staff and other experts for additional poultry management training, along with marketing and leadership-building workshops. They agree that coming together to share their knowledge and resources is one of the best things about their new lives. “As women, we no longer feel alone,” said Bernadina. “Now we help each other the best we can.”

Thanks to Greenville member Jo Prostco for giving me the idea to use this story.

*Excerpted from “Today I am the Breadwinner” <http://www.heifer.org/site/c.edJRKQNiFiG/b.201441/> and Jan Cottingham, “It’s for All of Us,” *World Ark*, Sept/Oct 2004, pp. 26-29 <http://www.heifer.org/site/c.edJRKQNiFiG/b.1009907/>*

See photos accompanying the story at the links above.