



Dining for Women

***Making Connections
March 2008
El Salvador***

If you dream of a world where all women enjoy human rights, have the means to feed their children and work and live in communities with dignity and respect, you are invited to join our efforts. We're making it possible for women to work their way out of poverty one business at a time.

SEW website

I feel joy on the days I come to work with my companions and I feel I am advancing in my life.

Rosa, 47, Parajo Flor Sewing Group supported by SEW

We have a new project (Salvadoran Enterprises for Women), a new country (El Salvador), and a lot of new friends to be thankful for this month. I'd like to introduce them here since you'll encounter them throughout this edition of *MC*. One of the best things about being Education Director for DFW is getting to work with so many inspiring women—especially the visionaries who've created the projects we support and their staffs. Each month, I run across bright and gifted people who could have a much easier life (and higher—or in many cases at least *a*—salary) if they weren't so committed to making the world a better place for others. But I can't remember when I've encountered someone more inspiring or helpful than Anne Marie Gardiner, the founder of SEW. Anne Marie would say that the inspiration is to be found in the women she and SEW strive to help—and she's right too. You'll see that firsthand as you encounter them in the ample resources we have this month.

I also want to thank SEW Board Member Dr. Patrice Flynn, the founder of a socially-responsible research firm (flynnresearch.com) that aids a number of organizations assisting the poor around the world. She made time to make her research on global economics available to me while preparing for a conference with the likes of Noble Laureate Mohammed Yunus and former Federal Reserve

Chair, Allan Greenspan. You'll see I've relied heavily on her knowledge in *FYI* below. It's a lengthy one this time; please be patient with it because the issues relate directly to how we may help or, unknowingly, harm poor women through financial systems we support.

Quite by coincidence this month, while assisting a group of Furman University students with an unrelated project, I discovered that we shared an interest in El Salvador. One student, Angel Cruz, had spent last summer living with a family in a remote rural area while interning with a sustainable agriculture program. As I write this, Angel is back in El Salvador, this time leading other students into what will no doubt be a life-transforming experience. It certainly was for her—she hopes to return there to work full-time after graduation this spring. Before she left (in the middle of final exams!), she wrote about her experience this summer for us, particularly about one young woman who she can't forget. You won't either when you read her story in *Voices*. Through Angel I also am grateful to Liz Gandolfo, who recommended our book of the month and shared her extensive insight into the plight of Salvadoran women with me.

And I want to thank some DFW friends too. Writing *Making Connections* has become a lot easier and more fun for me in the last few months because of chapter leaders Carolyn Mayers and Miriam Bisk who help with shopping and recipes and so much more. This month Shannon Gordan, a leader in Carolyn's chapter, helped us out as well, saving me time *and* calories, by testing dessert recipes. If you're game for testing recipes or reviewing books, or have experience with or research interests in a topic that might be appropriate for *FYI* and would consider a "guest appearance" in it, I'd love to talk with you about joining us.

Rosa puts it very well, "I feel joy on the days I come to work with my companions"—even if it is on-line. Thanks everyone.

FYI: (Poor) Women and Money in a Global Economy

While Oprah and Suze Orman have got everybody talking about women and finance here, poor women around the globe face financial challenges that most (but sadly and certainly not all) of us can't imagine. While we may not face the same pitfalls they do directly, we do face them as contributors to philanthropic programs and participants in a global economy. Here, we'll just begin to scratch the surface of a very deep subject—how global finance and banking impact poor women in El Salvador and elsewhere and what we need to understand as we support development endeavors abroad.

Some twenty years ago, financial and political leaders in the U.S. and other "first world" nations began to persuade poor nations to "open up" to global

trade. By inviting in the international market and investment, many fervently believed, developing countries would also be making a way out of grinding poverty for their people. Indeed doors opened, but instead of seeing poverty out, poor village women have more often watched their children and husbands leave, sometimes for long periods, sometimes forever, in search of employment in an economy that focuses on mass producing for a world “out there” rather than sustaining community at home. Some have gone out themselves, leaving small children for long periods in the care of older siblings or elderly grandparents. For those who can’t leave for cleaning jobs or street-hawking in the cities or the \$150-or-less-a-month jobs in the multi-national factories, there are few alternatives. Doors may have opened to the world, but not for many poor women. At the same time, what few services their countries might have provided for them dwindle as they fall deeper and deeper in debt to foreign nations and must cater to corporate investors.

Yet even before it became apparent that global capitalism wasn’t going to be the quick fix for world poverty—and especially not the solution to village poverty—a model had already been established that showed some promise for those left behind. In the mid-seventies a frustrated economics professor in Bangladesh named Muhammad Yunus began to give small loans requiring no collateral to groups of poor villagers—primarily women—near his university so that they could start small enterprises, holding each other accountable for repayment. His micro-enterprise development project grew into what we know today as the Grameen Bank and the micro-credit model that now Nobel Laureate Yunus established has been copied and adapted throughout the world.

According to a comprehensive (and highly recommended) article on micro-credit in *The New Yorker* in 2006, the impact of Grameen alone is stunning: seven million people—96% of them women—working their ways out of poverty through small loans, 98% of which are repaid. But the micro-credit pattern can suit many sizes. DFW often supports smaller projects that don’t attract large donors. In Latin America, micro-credit enterprises range widely. Pioneers in the field include *Pro Mujer*, a communal women’s bank program that now operates in five Latin American countries and this month’s featured program, Salvadoran Enterprises for Women, with its eleven support projects in Salvadoran communities. But whatever the size, what they all intend to do is empower poor women to help themselves and their families while supporting each other and creating an economic base to sustain their communities. They do this not only through “seed money” but also through a variety of support services: education, empowerment training, health and childcare. The goal is no less than social justice—assisting the poor in realizing human rights, dignity, and self-reliance.

A more recent development in micro-enterprise, however, appears to be taking things back to the future. Some new schemes aimed at poor people tout themselves as twenty-first century advancements on the Yunus model. They operate much as our banks do, offering a range of financial services from personal checking and ATMs, to lines of credit and credit cards, mortgage loans, insurance, etc., making them available to people who have never qualified for such services with traditional banks. Proponents of these for-profit organizations argue that only by bringing poor people into the global economy through “market-regulated” financial institutions (rather than non-profit beneficence) will long-term sustainability of small enterprises be achieved. And only commercial institutions can do this, they say, on the kind of scale that will make a dent in world poverty. In other words, as Dr. Patrice Flynn points out, they are offering poor people what the powers-that-be offered poor nations twenty years ago: an opening into the free marketplace that could come on a personal level at a similarly high cost. And why? It is clear that some advocates truly have faith in the free market to heal all wounds. It is also clear that there is more to the issue of scale. As Connie Bruck reported in *The New Yorker*,

(I)n Latin America, there are roughly 360 million poor people who do not have access to financial services. While most of these people live on less than \$2 a day, together their purchasing power exceeds \$510 billion per year (IDB 2006). The bankers want to access this previously untapped market sector that offers both profitable and attractive financial margins.

Dr. Flynn underlines that microfinance is “lucrative.” Typical interest on credit cards, she notes, is between 15 and 35%. The largest microfinance bank in Latin American, *Compartamos*, according to *The New Yorker* article, charges “customers” between 105-120% per year in interest and taxes. In 2006, it already had “more than 500,000 clients.”

One doesn’t need to give much thought to this to figure out the risks for poor, uneducated and desperate women. We all know people who fall victim to easy high interest credit here where the warnings are loud and clear and most people can read the paperwork. And as *Pro Mujer* head Carmen Velasco puts it, ““If you give them a loan and don’t see that their other needs are met, perhaps they are worse off. They have a debt to repay, but still they have no sanitation, no health care, no education.” And *personal* banking may not be personal empowerment in all contexts. Poor women are good borrowers and entrepreneurs especially when they must be accountable to and draws support

from a community of women in similar circumstances, with similar hopes and dreams. Individuals empower each other.

Microfinance can be confusing not only for poor women but also for the rest of us as investors, donors, and consumers in a global economy where international businesses are ever on the look-out for new sources of profit. Even the terminology is confusing. I've juxtaposed "micro-credit" and "microfinance" because most scholarly literature does. But many institutions (for profit and non) refer to themselves with both terms. And that's not the only confusion of tongues. Dr. Flynn warns that in using the rhetoric about raising the poor out of poverty, microfinance initiatives "may be the newest form of green washing or 'charity washing' in the making, whereby bankers can use microfinance as a selling point to command pricing premiums while advertising their brand as charitable." And we're not talking banks somewhere else—we're talking, perhaps, yours and mine. And companies we support with our purchases or investments. We can easily be mixed up in this as well as about this. As Dr. Flynn says, "Wall Street is now a microfinance creditor because microfinance is profitable."

And to be fair, microfinance may not always be bad just as not all non-profit programs are responsible or effective. An ATM card in the hands of one poor Salvadoran woman may mean that she can access money sent to her in an emergency from relatives in the U.S., while it may be temptation to ruin for another. Even some of the most committed supporters of micro-credit don't share Professor Yunus's optimism that one day there will be "poverty museums." And as one official at the Gates Foundation, which supports a variety of poverty relief projects, put it to Connie Bruck, "You need a range of different business models. Some are going to be very commercial. And others will need some degree of continued support, in order to reach the destitute and specific communities in certain parts of the world." But he emphasizes that the goal should be clear: "moving hundreds of millions out of poverty.... (It's not to get a return." Leading proponents of microfinance, he says, have "taken a different approach."

Recommended Book

Liz Gandolfo is involved in social justice projects in El Salvador and helped to develop a college program there that is giving students like Angel firsthand knowledge of life there. (Liz is also an activist for Latino immigrants here, a doctoral student and about-to-be mom.) I asked her to recommend one book that might help us understand Salvadoran women and the challenges they face. She chose a novel that focuses on a day in the life of a grandmother and granddaughter during the Salvadoran Civil War. Liz says that besides

understanding the immediate factors that keep so many Salvadoran women in poverty, we have to recognize a not-so-distant past that they still live with. Little has been done to acknowledge the trauma so many women have experienced—rape and torture, abandonment, the loss of loved ones, the destruction of homes, the constant threat of violence and displacement, the sexism exacerbating it all—for so many years. Even less has been done to try to create reconciliation among neighbors who may have perpetrated violence on each other or been on opposite sides in communities that must come together for survival today. To understand better that past that still determines the present and threatens the future, she recommends **Manlio Argueta, *One Day of Life*, trans. by Bill Brow (Vintage International Edition, 1991).**

Socially Responsible Shopping

<http://www.peopleofhopecrafts.org/>

We highlight **People of Hope Crafts** that features the work of 20 Salvadoran artisan communities including women's groups supported by SEW. Contact PHC to find items specifically made by SEW-supported groups. How nice it would be to have an item or two to display at a DFW meeting!

<http://motherearthcoffeeco.com/index.htm>

Mother Earth Coffee Company is a woman-owned company dedicated to purchasing coffees from farms and cooperatives in which women play a major role. Get your fair trade, organic, shade (**and woman!**) grown Salvadoran coffee here.

<http://www.oneworldprojects.com/products/indigo.shtml>

One of the projects that SEW supports is reviving the art of **indigo** dying. Indigo was once El Salvador's main export and indigo dying is a traditional craft form, popular still in Salvadoran clothing. While the SEW-related projects produce for the Salvadoran market, here's a source that is marketing indigo products you can purchase.

<http://www.justshirts.ca/>

We all need **t-shirts** from time to time. This fair-trade cooperative of Salvadoran single mothers can fill the bill with a variety of styles for adults and children.

Heartbeats <http://www.heartbeatscatalog.org/cartproducts2.asp?c2id=55>

and Solidarity Crafts <http://www.cis-elsalvador.org/crafts.htm> also carry items made by Salvadoran women's groups.

Dining with Women

When I read about the food-related projects supported by SEW, I couldn't help but notice that as these women entrepreneurs seek to improve their quality of life, they are also preserving their culture, their customers' quality of eating and farm animals' quality of life, and the environment with their free-range poultry farms, traditional bakeries, and solar-powered fruit drying operations.

They may have never heard of the “Slow Food” movement in wealthier countries, but they certainly understand its principles and the importance of preserving their own traditional foodways. I doubt they romanticize them in quite the same ways however, for the poverty out of which some of these dishes come and the labor they entail are not remote history. One of Angel Cruz’s most vivid recollections of rural life in El Salvador is the time and effort women spend in the daily (*two or three times daily*) making of tortillas from scratch—from grinding the corn to shaping the dough to cooking it over a griddle heated by firewood they’ve chopped themselves. Filled with beans, or a little meat on a very good day, tortillas are the mainstay of most rural Salvadorans. For those in the city with some means, homemade tortillas and other traditional dishes are becoming rarer fare as American fast food becomes increasingly more available and a changing lifestyle no longer makes room for such laborious cooking. And yet, Salvadorans like most people still hunger for what is theirs. The women’s groups of SEW are improving their own lives by keeping foodways alive that have sustained and defined their people for a very long time.

We’re inviting you to honor their efforts with a *pupusa* party. No food is more Salvadoran than these savory, filled tortilla-pastries that Liz Gandolfo aptly calls “Salvadoran hot pockets.” They are El Salvador’s national dish, often sold in market stalls or out of mobile shops like those supported by SEW.

If you live in LA or another area where there is a large Salvadoran population, you might research take-out possibilities from local *pupuserias*. But pupusas are fun to make, not difficult, and have multiple filling variations. Cheese (here we substitute readily available melting cheeses for Latin ones—if you can find them, all the better), meat, and bean fillings are common. Basically, use anything you might put in a tortilla. We give two recipes for the pupusa pastry dough that work well and a filling option for each, but feel free to switch around. Cheese is the required filling—everything else is sort of “icing *in* the cake.” If you have access to fresh masa (cornmeal dough found in Latino markets), you could simply use it for the pastry (but you’ll want to add a little salt). The potato dough is lighter and of course has a slight potato flavor. You could also just use reconstituted masa harina (Latin fine cornmeal--- see the Latin section of your grocery), but these dough recipes with their additional ingredients are easier to work with as long as you think “play dough” consistency. Just add a little water to the dough if it’s cracking and keep it covered as you work with it. Moistening your hands with water or a little oil helps with the shaping. Play patty-cake with them for a few seconds to get the right shape and thickness.

If you want to see how it’s done by a real Salvadoran artisan, check out this pupusa-making video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2jucXZechoM>.

Note in the video that the cook adds a little more dough on top of the filling to help cover it and then pinches the edges to seal the pupusa well.

You can make up the pupusas ahead, cover and refrigerate them. But cook them at the last minute or near to it so they don't get soggy. Cooking them literally takes a few minutes. If you have a couple of griddles or cast iron pans going, this goes quickly. Each of these recipes makes anywhere from a dozen to twenty pupusas depending on the size of the balls of dough you make. Carolyn's instructions make bigger ones; the potato dough instructions turn out little appetizer portions. But you can vary the size. Salvadorans in the States tend to make them bigger like regular tortillas, while back at home, they tend to be smaller. One or two of the larger size per person is a gracious plenty.

Top the pupusas as Salvadorans like to do with *curtido*, a mildly pickled cabbage dish. We give two versions here. And/or, use salsa, sour cream, more cheese, etc. as accompaniments. If you prefer to have warmed, purchased tortillas instead of pupusas, you can use the fillings and *curtido* with them.

We've also included a mainstay dish of rice and beans if you want another course. Finish off with tropical fruit--- Salvadorans love mango, pineapple, banana, etc.—and/or one of the dessert recipes below. Any of these sweet options can remind us of the women of SEW who are improving their lives through bakery and fruit preservation enterprises—be sure to read about them on the SEW website.

Carolyn's Pupusa

adapted fr. <http://www.recipezaar.com/181189>

Carolyn perfected these using her food processor. She likes to fill them with the bean and cheese filling (see below) and serve them with *curtido* and salsa. She says you can keep them warm in the oven for a little while, in a single layer on a rack or pizza pan; but you don't want to hold them too long or they'll get soggy.

3 1/2c masa harina

1/2c flour

2t salt

2t baking powder

4T shortening or butter, cold and cut into small pieces

1 3/4c warm water

Combine dry ingredients in the bowl of a food processor and pulse to blend.

Add the butter or shortening pieces and pulse to blend evenly. With the processor running, add warm gradually through the feed tube until dough forms a ball. Remove dough and knead it 15-20 times. It should be soft, moist but not wet or sticky and hold together well. If crumbly, add a little more water and knead again. Allow it to rest, covered, for 10 minutes. The dough should feel

like play dough. Form dough into balls the size of a golf ball, keeping the balls and remainder of dough covered as you work so they don't dry out. One at a time, shape each ball into a little bowl with high walls. Place about a tablespoon of filling in the little bowl and work the dough up over and around it so that it is completely covered. Flatten the pupusa between your hands (toss them between your palms as if playing patty cake) into a 5" round about 1/2" thick. Coat the bottom of a large skillet (cast iron works well) or grease a cast iron griddle and heat. When hot, add a few pupusas at a time, cooking on each side about 4 minutes until crispy and browned.

Bean and Cheese Filling

A traditional pupusa filling contains finely diced fried pork. Here we substitute bacon. For a vegetarian version, Carolyn just leaves it out and adds a little chipotle chile for a kick. For a quick version, just use 3/4c of canned, seasoned refried beans with the cheese—no need to heat them before filling the pupusa.

1c cooked red beans or kidney beans, rinsed and drained
2T diced onion
1/2t ground cumin
2 pieces bacon, diced
1/2 seeded chipotle chile in adobo, minced (opt., or use hot chili powder to taste)
1/2lb Mexican Cheese Mix, Queso Fresco, Muenster, Mozzarella or Monterey Jack cheese, shredded

Cook the bacon until almost crisp and drain and cool. Cook the onion, cumin, chipotle and beans in a little of the bacon fat. Mash to an almost-smooth paste and add the bacon back to the mixture. (Or blend it all in a food processor). Cool to room temp before attempting to fill the pupusa or make ahead and store in the fridge. When filling the pupusa, add a little cheese when you insert the bean filling into the dough.

Pupusa with Potato and Piccadillo

adapted fr. Chef Brian Shaw at <http://www.nevadaappeal.com/article/20070328/FOOD/103280078>

1c masa harina
3/4c warm water (approximately)
1t baking powder
2 medium size baking potatoes
1t salt (or to taste)
6 oz. grated Monterey Jack cheese or other filling

picadillo filling

thinly sliced radish, sour cream thinned with a little milk

Peel and boil the potatoes in lightly salted water until completely cooked. While the potatoes are cooking mix the dry masa and water to form a smooth ball of dough. Allow to rest while the potatoes cook. When the potatoes are done, drain and cool them a few minutes and then mash them until they are smooth. Add them, the baking powder and salt to the masa dough. Knead the dough until a soft, smooth dough is formed the consistency of play dough. Divide the dough into 16 balls about 1/2 inches in diameter. Using your thumb, make a deep dent in each ball. Stuff the dent with 1 1/2t of peccadillo and a little cheese OR just cheese. Squeeze the opening closed to seal it and flatten the balls into patties about 1/4 inch thick. (Can be made up to this point and stored refrigerated under a damp towel.)

Heat a large frying pan over medium heat with enough oil to cover the bottom. Add the pupusas and press each one down gently with the back of a spatula for a few seconds. Cook for about two minutes or until golden brown then flip them and repeat the pressing-frying procedure for another two minutes or until golden.

Top with curtido if you filled the pupusa with cheese and picadillo. Or top with picadillo (and garnish with sliced radish and a drizzle of sour cream if you filled them with cheese alone and serve the curtido on the side.

Beef Picadillo Filling or Topping

adapted fr. Chef Brian Shaw at <http://www.nevadaappeal.com/article/20070328/FOOD/103280078>

You can use this as a filling for pupusas (or tortillas) or top pupusas or nachos with it. Variations of this sweet-sour spiced beef exist through Latin countries.

1 pound ground beef (turkey, pork, or chicken work too)

2T vegetable oil

1 medium onion, diced

1t fresh minced garlic

2c peeled, seeded and diced fresh plum tomatoes or canned diced plum tomatoes, drained.

1/2 cup chicken stock

2 T. of cider vinegar

1t salt

1/4 tsp. ground cloves

1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon

1 tsp. ground cumin

1/2 tsp. ground black pepper

1/2c raisins

1/2c slivered almonds, toasted
8 large stuffed green olives, chopped

Heat the oil in a sauté or frying pan. Add the onion and beef and cook, breaking up the beef as it browns. Before it's completely brown, add the garlic. When the meat is brown and the onion soft, if there is excess grease, drain some of it off. Add everything else to the pan, stir well, and simmer to a thick (but not completely dry) consistency about 10 minutes. Cook slightly and grind in the food processor. (Even better made ahead, refrigerated overnight, and reheated if using as topping or tortilla filling. If using as a pupusa filling, no need to warm it before filling the pupusas.)

Curtido

adapted fr. http://en.belgourmet.be/world_recipes/el_salvador_recipes.php

1 medium (2lb) head cabbage, shredded
2 small carrots, grated
1 small onion, sliced very thinly
1/2t dried red pepper (optional)
1/2t oregano
1t olive oil
1t salt
1t brown sugar
1/4c cider vinegar
1/2c water

Blanch the cabbage in boiling water for 1 minute. Drain, rinse in cold water to stop cooking, drain well again. Place the cabbage in a large bowl, add everything else and mix well. Chill at least two hours, preferably overnight, and even a couple of days ahead. Bring to room temp to serve. After allowing it to rest awhile, you may want to adjust the seasonings. Serves a lot as a pupusa topping—makes about 8 cups.

Pineapple Curtido

adapted fr. <http://www.recipehound.com/Recipes/3266.html>

Another great example of ingenuity and not wasting a thing. Salvadoran cooks would make this with a vinegar made from pineapple peelings; we give a simpler formula. This really perks up a meal. Be sure to make and store it in a nonreactive (glass or plastic) container.

1 small head green cabbage, cored and shredded

1 small red onion, peeled, halved and cut into very thin slices
1 medium carrot, peeled and grated
1c diced fresh pineapple
1-1/2t minced garlic
3/4c distilled white vinegar
1/4c pineapple juice (puree a bit of fresh pineapple or use the juice in the bottom of the container if you've purchased an already peeled and cored pineapple)
1-2 jalapenos or other fresh chiles to taste, seeded and diced (opt. but the kick is nice)
salt and freshly cracked black pepper to taste

Blanch the cabbage 1 minute in boiling water. Drain. Rinse well in cold water or place in an ice bath for a minute or two. Drain well.

Mix the cabbage with everything else. Chill at least overnight and preferably a couple of days before bringing to room temp to serve.

Casamiento (Salvadoan Beans and Rice)

http://en.belgourmet.be/world_recipes/el_salvador_recipes.php

Whereas in some Latin countries, this ubiquitous bean and rice dish is called "Moors and Christians," in El Salvador, it's called "casamiento," meaning a marriage of the two main ingredients. Here it is a marriage of a bean soup with rice gradually cooked with additions of liquid (risotto-style). You could also make the rice by the usual (for us) method of sautéing the onion and rice, adding 3c of broth and bringing it to a boil, covering and cooking on low for 18-20 minutes. Then mix in some of the bean soup once it's done.

1 pound dried black beans
1 medium onion, halved
2 garlic cloves, smashed slightly
1c chicken broth, heated
1 1/2c white rice (long grain)
salt and pepper (to taste)
1t dried oregano or 1T fresh

Make sure no stone or dirt remain in the beans, rinse them well, and cook them with water to cover, the garlic and half an onion. When it boils, decrease the heat and simmer for one and a half hour, checking regularly so that beans always remain covered with water. Toward the end, season with salt.

Heat the oil over medium heat in a large heavy pan. Chop the rest of the onion and add it to the pan, cooking a couple of minutes. Add the rice. Cook until rice becomes transparent (2 to 3 minutes) and well coated with the oil. Add

1t salt and stir. Add 1 cup of black bean “soup” (both beans and liquid), and stir gently to avoid crushing the beans. Add a ladle or so of the broth, and a little more of the bean soup, stirring so that the rice absorbs the liquid. Repeat with more broth until rice is cooked. Serve with a fresh salsa, grated cheese, chopped onion or chopped cilantro.

Quesadilla Salvadorena (Salvadoran Cake with Cheese)

adapted fr. http://www.doe-mbi.ucla.edu/~cascio/RECIPES/quesadilla_salvador.html

This isn't the Mexican quesadilla with which most of us are familiar but a sweet cheese-enriched cake. Shannon Gordon calls it “plain but moist” and very likable. She says it's good on its own but some fruit would enhance it. Maybe a fresh fruit salad or even a little jam glaze. (Just warm a little pineapple or mango jam and spread it on the cooled cake. Thin it with a little water if it's too thick to spread easily). The parmesan here is an ingenious substitute for Salvadoran cheese that Salvadoran immigrants to the U.S. came up with.

1c flour
1c sugar
1c sour cream
4 oz Parmesan cheese (grated)
3 eggs
1 stick butter, room temperature
1t baking powder
sesame seeds

Butter and Flour a 9” springform pan. Preheat oven to 350. Mix butter and sugar until creamy with a mixer. Add eggs one at the time, mixing well after each addition. Sift together the flour and baking powder. Add to sugar-butter mixture little by little. Add sour cream and cheese and mix well. Pour batter into the pan and smooth the top. Sprinkle on sesame seeds. Bake for 40 to 60 minutes until done. Cool before serving.

Maria Luisa Cake (Salvadoran Orange Layer Cake)

adapted fr. http://www.whats4eats.com/recipes/r_de_marialuisa.php

Maria Luisa was a Spanish Princess. This cake is a variation on an English one dedicated to another royal woman. Salvadorans suffered under colonialism but they also adapted it to their uses when they could—nowhere is that better exemplified than in their adoption of European-style sweets and

breads. Indeed these have become part of Salvadoran traditional cuisine. If you visit a bakery in El Salvador or a Salvadoran bakery in the U.S., you're likely to see several varieties. A happy historical irony is that some of the women of SEW may be finding their own empowerment through bakery enterprises that feature these sweets that came down to them through a bitter history of oppression. And who knows? Maybe Salvadorans will figure out ways to adapt the fast food thrust at them by our culture so that they become just a part of, rather than overtake, their own foodways.

Shannon says this is a lovely layer cake and recommends a bitter orange marmalade unless you like things very sweet. You could make this in a 13x9 sheet cake pan. Allow the cake to cool completely, then carefully split it into two layers horizontally through the middle. (This is most easily done with dental floss held tautly in each hand and pulled slowly through the cake.) Carefully remove the top layer, spread the bottom one with the marmalade, return the top, dust with the sugar, and serve cut in squares. The traditional layer cake is very pretty though, and could be cut in thin slices.

1 1/2c flour
1t baking powder
1c butter, room temperature
1 1/4c sugar
1T orange zest
1t vanilla
6 eggs, room temperature
1/4c orange juice
1 1/2c orange marmalade
1/3c powdered sugar

Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease and flour three 8" round cake pans. Sift together the flour and baking powder in a large bowl. Place the butter and sugar in the bowl of an electric mixer and beat on medium-high speed until fluffy and light, about 3-5 minutes. Add the orange zest and vanilla and beat for another 15 seconds or so more. With mixer at medium speed, add one egg at a time, letting each egg incorporate before adding the next. Turn mixer to medium-low. Add the flour in three parts, alternating with the orange juice and beating just until smooth. Don't overbeat.

Spoon equal parts of batter into the three cake pans. Bake for about 25 minutes. Remove cakes and cool completely.

Mix the marmalade with a little water and stir until it is almost pourable. Spread half the marmalade over one of the layers. Place the next layer on top and spread with the other half of the marmalade. Top with the last layer.

Sprinkle the cake with powdered sugar by shaking it through a sieve. (You may want to add marmalade to the top layer as well before dusting it with the powdered sugar.)

VOICES: Rural Daughters and City Mothers

Angel Cruz is a senior at Furman University. She spent last summer in El Salvador, living with a family of eleven in a rural village two hours from the nearest town, in a tiny shack with no electricity or running water. Here, Angel remembers the eldest daughter of the family, Tina.

Cristina, or “Tina” as everyone calls her, is my Salvadoran little sister. Even though I only knew her for three months, I truly think of her as my sister. She taught me so much. Despite being only fifteen, she knows much more about being a woman than me, a twenty-one year-old about to graduate from college.

When I was with her, Tina’s day began before 6am when she got up to make breakfast for the family. The only one up before her would be her father who would have already been out in the fields for an hour or two. Breakfast consisted of tortillas, beans and rice, and maybe a fresh picked avocado or mango since she lives in a rural area and has access to the trees. After breakfast, Cristina was responsible for getting her nine younger brothers and sisters ready for school. The rest of the morning was spent cutting firewood, washing at the river, or planting beans before finally getting ready for school herself. (Older kids go to school in the afternoons.) For kids like Cristina, going to school is the only break from working all day. That is why most go to school—not to learn in hope of improving their lives, but for a little break from what their lives will always be.

My first week there, Tina would not let me help her with anything. By the time I left, we were doing everything together. She even taught me, a *gringa*, to make tortillas. We got up and made breakfast together, we went to the river to do the washing together, we worked in the cornfields together, and we went to school together. She was the student and I was the teacher for that small portion of the day. She was the best teacher I have ever had. Everyone said there was no way I could learn to make tortillas like a Salvadoran in only three months, but in two I was doing it. Everyday she would take me into the jungle to teach me a new fruit. I tried to teach her what I knew too, but it was a different kind of knowledge. We started doing homework at night together. She did all of her younger siblings’ homework too because she liked to do it and they hated it. She was different; she wanted to learn.

About six weeks into my stay, Tina told me that her mom had recently told her that she would no longer be going to school after this year. She told Tina that she would have to marry or go to the city to get a job to help support the family. My heart broke for her. Her dream was to graduate from high school—something only one kid in the village had done. Tina told me that at first she was angry with her mom, but then she understood. And as much as I hated it, I understood too— this is the reality of most rural girls.

I got the news about a month ago. Tina is married now. I was saddened but not surprised. Many Salvadoran women are married by fifteen, especially in the rural areas. If a man asks a woman, often she cannot say no. Tina is beautiful. After I left, she began receiving messages from a guy in the city. I wonder if he is the one she married. I had hoped that she would continue on with her schooling somehow because she loved it and she was smart, but it is so difficult to overcome the culture. This is the reality of Salvadoran women. “Even if you do have an education, where are you going to work?” That is what people would ask Tina and girls like her who wanted to go to school.

Sr. Anne Marie Gardiner, founder of SEW, provided the following tribute to Salvadoran city mothers. Much of the text first appeared in SEW NEWS (March-April '06).

Well before 7am, things are bustling in San Salvador. Children in the morning session are off to school and mothers like Lupe, Maria, Carmen, or Lucia are off to the Central Market in the Capital to purchase fruits and vegetables to sell, door-to-door, in slightly better off neighborhoods as well as in their own shack community.

They can struggle aboard the bus with their heavy purchases or add their burdens to the back of a pick up truck for more than they might want to spend. Once the truck or bus arrives at its destination, children who are slated for the afternoon school session are summoned to carry the "groceries." They and the older family members "plastic bag" the tomatoes, onions, potatoes, peppers, and plantains. These are arranged into very wide baskets that the women skillfully balance on their heads as they leave the house before mid-morning to make their sales.

Monies earned can buy soap, shampoo, rice or beans or tortillas, as well as the next day's commodities. To buy shoes for school is a daunting task. Xiomara, who sells juice drinks which she makes herself, earns about \$2-\$3 a day, and never loses hope. Grandmothers are often the dependable caretakers if women must spend the day in the Capital selling cigarettes and candy, etc. The extended family is important for survival.

When the daily sales are completed, the women still face cooking meals over a fire and doing the laundry by hand. School uniforms are pressed with an iron heated by hot coals or wood.

If Jenny works all day on the corner in the Capital to put her daughter through high school and send her son to mechanic school, the former could get an enviable job in a supermarket, and the latter might work at a Shell gas station. With their combined incomes, they might be able to afford a small cinderblock apartment with indoor plumbing and lighting.

And as the mothers are riding the bus, selling vegetables or washing the school uniforms, what are they thinking about? Hoping for? Worrying about? Like moms everywhere, the mothers of El Salvador want their children to get an education that will prepare them for employment, a job that will maintain them and a family. Because the twelve-year civil war interrupted or precluded education for so many of them, mothers want their children to have a better life. Mothers worry about whom their daughters and sons are dating; if the children will make good decisions; if daughters will be pregnant too soon; if the schools are safe; and if the children will emulate good role models.

El Salvador is the most violent country on the American continent. It is a path for drugs traveling from Columbia to the U.S. Gangs have become increasingly violent with initiation rites demanding robbery, extortion or killing. Like mothers in any locale facing these dangers, mothers in El Salvador worry that their preteens and teenagers may be lured into these deadly networks. Barring that, mothers count on relatives and neighbors to walk children from school buses safely home, and they pray their dear ones are not caught in the line of fire in turf wars. In many areas, mothers do not let the children go out after dark.

Where there is life, mothers find hope. So it is with mothers in El Salvador. The women count on each other for moral support, for advice from the elder, wiser ones, and for assistance in times of need. When there is serious illness, more than likely, aunts, cousins, sisters-in-law, grandmothers will be at the home or hospital, fixing meals, watching children, sleeping over, comforting the sick.

Resources

<http://www.sewinc.org/index.html>

http://www.boston.com/news/globe/editorial_opinion/oped/articles/2006/04/29/in_el_salvador_an_invasion_of_american_agriculture/

<http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/elsalvador/index.html>

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4983325>

http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/food/71317_salvador22.shtml

<http://www.pbs.org/itvs/enemiesofwar/story.html>

<http://www.flynnresearch.com> at which are available the following articles:

Connie Bruck, Millions for Millions, *The New Yorker*, Oct. 30, 2006 at

http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2006/10/30/061030fa_fact1

Patrice Flynn, "El Salvador: Hope Blooms in the Wedge between War and Global Capitalism," *Cases in Hope*, August 2005

Patrice Flynn, "Microfinance Technology: Implications for Nonprofit Financial Institutions," *Exempt Magazine*, Spring 2007

Patrice Flynn, "Microfinance: The Newest Technology of the Washington Consensus," *Challenge: The Magazine of Economic Affairs*, March-April 2007

Patrice Flynn, "Alternative Economics," soon to appear on the SEW website (see top).