



Recipes and Cuisine of Guatemala

Cuisine

Many traditional foods in Guatemalan cuisine are based on Maya cuisine and prominently feature corn, chiles and beans as key ingredients.

There are also foods that are commonly eaten on certain days of the week. For example, it is a popular custom to eat paches (a kind of tamale made from potatoes) on Thursday. Certain dishes are also associated with special occasions, such as fiambre for All Saints Day on Nov. 1, and tamales, which are common around Christmas. Meat including chicken, beef and pork is usually stewed or braised in sauces that are unique to the region.

Fruit is abundant in Guatemala including mango, papaya, banana, pineapple, melons and many other fruits. Coffee is popular and tends to be served weak with much sugar and milk. (The best coffee is exported to the U.S.) Poor rural families tend to subsist on tortillas and chile peppers and whatever food they can grow.

Guatemalan Dinner Customs

If you are invited to a Guatemalan's home, it is likely his wife will serve everyone first, even if there are servants, and then will be seated herself. Unless you are attending a meal served in a household from the privileged class that observes European-style customs, all of the food will be served at once.

If the meal takes place in a private home, bring a small gift to indicate your appreciation. However, do not bring a gift of food – your hosts will think that you do not appreciate the food they have prepared or that you consider the woman of the house an inadequate cook.

It is appropriate to eat everything you are served. If you don't like the taste of something, just attempt to eat a bit of it. If you cannot eat something for health or religious reasons, explain this and apologize for any inconvenience it may cause.

At the start of a meal, it is the custom to say to everyone, "Buen provecho." (Enjoy your food.) Most Guatemalans are fairly quiet once the food is served. Compliments about the food will be welcome. In some areas of the countryside, food is eaten with the hands. Follow the lead of your hosts. Napkins are provided. There are no special rules about their use.

If you must leave the table, before getting up say, "Con permiso, ya vengo." (With your permission, I'll be right back.) It's appropriate to stand when someone

arrives at the table. If you do not want to drink, say, "Lo siento, pero no yo tomo." (Sorry, I don't drink alcohol.) Guatemalan women are expected not to drink. If they do, they have only a glass of champagne at most. This rule is applied to foreign women as well.

The standard toast is to raise your glass and say, "Salud!" You should always offer your own toast: say how pleased you are to be in Guatemala and commend everyone for treating you in such a family-like manner.

If you are invited to a restaurant, your host will pay. It is appropriate to offer to pay for your part of the meal, but your offer will be politely declined. Reciprocate your host's hospitality with an invitation of your own soon afterward.

Sources:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guatemala#Cuisine>

http://www.guatemala.alloexpat.com/guatemala_information/customs_etiquettes_guatemala.php