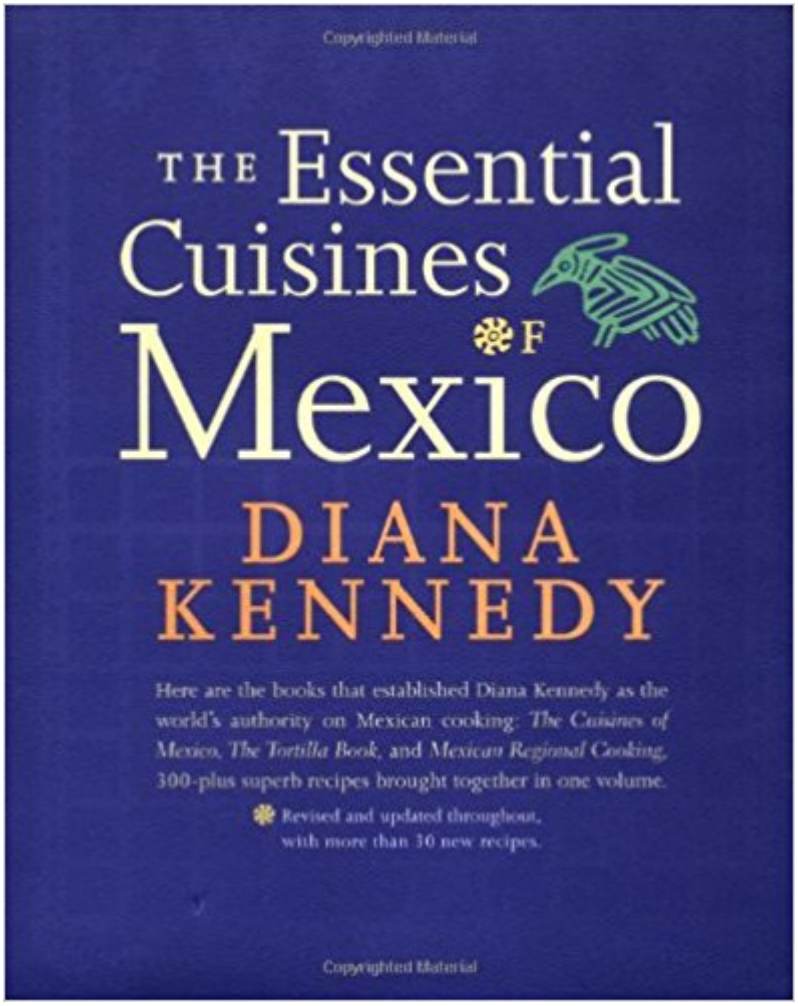
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The Essential Cuisines Of Mexico: Revised And Updated Throughout, With More Than 30 New Recipes.



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Synopsis

More than twenty-five years ago, when Diana Kennedy published The Cuisines of Mexico, knowledge and appreciation of authentic Mexican cooking were in their infancy. But change was in the air. Home cooks were turning to Julia Child for an introduction to French cuisine and to Marcella Hazan for the tastes of Italy. Through Diana Kennedy they discovered a delicious and highly developed culinary tradition they barely knew existed. The Cuisines of Mexico, Mexican Regional Cooking, and The Tortilla Book became best-sellers, and Diana Kennedy was recognized as the authority on Mexican food.Now a new generation has discovered that Mexican food is more than chimichangas, that they can find fresh hierbas de olor (pot herbs, including marjoram and Mexican bayleaf) and chilacas in their markets. The book that will become indispensable in their kitchens is The Essential Cuisines of Mexico.Diana has combined her three classic books in one volume, refining recipes when possible, bringing them up to date without losing the spirit of their generation. Old friends will be delighted to revisit these refreshed classics and to find more than thirty new recipes from different regions of Mexico. Among these discoveries are the very popular arroz a la tumbada (rice with seafood) from Veracruz, a pico de gallo with peaches from the state of Mexico, and tasty snacks from the cantinas of MÃƒÂ©rida. Newcomers will delight in Diana's "word pictures" -- descriptions of her travels and discoveries -- and in her off-the-cuff comments. Whether they turn to this book for the final word on tamales, recipes for tasty antojitos to serve with drinks, or superb tacos, they will find there is no better teacher of Mexican food. How enviable to attempt for the first time Calzones del Diablo (yes, the Devil's Pants), and what a pleasure to succumb to Diana's passion for Mexican food.

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Customer Reviews

Can it be 30 years since Diana Kennedy’s first cookbook was published? Since then, and due largely to her, Americans have learned that Mexican food isn’t just burritos and combination plates, but a subtle, highly developed repertoire with roots in European as well as native Mexican cooking. The Essential Cuisines of Mexico combines in one book Kennedy’s first three works, The Cuisines of Mexico, The Tortilla Book, and Mexican Regional Cooking. Updated and revised, and with 30 new recipes to make more than 300 in all, the compilation is instantly the definitive English-language exploration of Mexican cooking. In 20 chapters--from appetizers to sweets and drinks--the book presents old friends like Pozole de Jalisco and chile con queso, and new delights, including pico de gallo with peaches, Arroz ÃƒÂ la Tumbada (rice with seafood), Pollo en Cuiclachoce (chicken in a sauce made with cuitlacoche, the wonderfully exotic corn fungus), snacks from YucatÃƒÂ¡n cantinas, and a delicious barbecued chicken from Chiapus. The recipe revisions reflect increased ingredient availability and our evolved appreciation of the Mexican palate (Kennedy now requires fresh poblano chilies in her Sopa de Elote, for example, and instructs that they be charred). The sections on masa "fantasies" and tortillas bring together a wide range of these corn-based treats, including Garnachas Yucatecas (delicious filled masa tartlets). With a comprehensive glossary and essays such as "A Weekend Barbecue in Oaxaca," the book reminds us of Kennedy’s great contribution to our culinary pleasure, and the recipes that made it possible. --Arthur Boehm

HThe prolific Kennedy revisits her adopted homeland in The Essential Cuisines of Mexico, a compilation of her first three books (The Cuisines of Mexico, The Tortilla Book and Mexican Regional Cooking). From Nuevo Le"n to the Yucatan, Kennedy strives to retain the authenticity of regional recipes: "I have simplified the recipes when possible, bringing them up to date without losing the spirit of their generation." Chapters reflect an assemblage of courses, including appetizers, corn dough cakes, vegetables, meats, egg dishes, light meals, sauces and relishes, sweet pastries and drinks. The concluding "general information" section provides helpful tips on equipment, chiles, cheeses, spices, herbs and other ingredients indigenous to Mexican cookery. Chapter introductions and detailed anecdotes (e.g., "A Weekend and Barbecue in Oaxaca") offer engaging glimpses of local Mexican life. Recipes will beguile aficionados searching for the "real

Mexican deal," with a cornucopia of earthy ingredientsDlike calf's tongue, pig's feet, tripe "of different textures," pork lardDand exotic flavors, such as machaca (dried salted beef), nopoles (cactus paddles) and cuiclacoche (corn fungus). For novices, there are appealing, easy-to-make comfort foods, like Angel Hair Pasta in Tomato Broth and Chiles Con Queso (Chiles with Cheese), while seasoned cooks will appreciate challenging dishes such as Stuffed Chiles in Walnut Sauce and Turkey in Mole Poblana. Vivid prose chronicles the sojourns of Kennedy's curious palate, painting "word pictures" to describe "a Mexico of the past." Her efforts yield yet another classic, one that masterfully documents the rich diversity of Mexico's gastronomic heritage. (Sept.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

`The Essential Cuisines of Mexico' is Diana Kennedy's Mexican answer to Julia Child's `Mastering the Art of French Cooking'. It has a similar style and quality and, like Child's encounter with French cooking, it came about as a result of her marriage to a husband who was posted to Mexico by his newspaper, `The New York Times' as their Caribbean / Mexican correspondent. This, plus a little help from New York Times colleague and friend, Craig Claiborne lead Ms. Kennedy to start teaching Mexican cooking and prompting her to write a book on the subject.There are two big differences between this book and Ms. Child's `magnum opus'. The first is that this volume is an amalgam of three earlier books, while `...French Cooking' was a distillation from a manuscript at least twice the size of the final published volume. The second major difference is that while Ms. Child is documenting `cuisine bourgeois', Ms. Kennedy is looking at Mexico's `cuisine provincial'. This is highlighted by the fact that the geographical home of all recipes is cited, and the geographic specifics are given for all the major ingredients cited in the appendix.The three earlier books being combined here are `The Cuisines of Mexico', `The Tortilla Book', and `Mexican Regional Cooking'. The author also states that some new material has been added to the recipes from these three books. To my eye, the integration of the three volumes is seamless. The author and her editors have not simply pasted the three volumes together, they have merged all the material to create a single work easily superior to the original three.By the time this book was published, it should be evident to the English speaking world at large that Ms. Kennedy has some serious competition from Chicagoan, Rick Bayless in the world of Mexican culinary authorities. Just as Ms. Kennedy presents recipes very similar to fellow amateur Julia Child and fellow `culinary archeologist' Paula Wolfert, chef Bayless does a much more analytical approach to Mexican cuisine, deconstructing dishes into their component parts in `Rich Bayless' Mexican Kitchen' and giving us multiple versions of important dishes in `Mexico One Plate at a Time'.In spite of these differences, Ms. Kennedy and Mr.

Bayless agree on virtually everything important when they address the same subjects. The most important point on which they agree is the central place of Oaxaca as, to coin a phrase, the Provence of Mexican cuisine. On which author to prefer, if you are a fan of Mexican dishes, buy both authors, bypassing the earlier books which were folded into the current volume and also bypassing Mr. Bayless' `Salsas That Cook' as there is some overlap with `Rick Bayless's (sic) Mexican Kitchen'. If you are a culinary professional, Mr. Bayless may be just a bit more useful. If you simply want lots of good recipes, go with Ms. Kennedy. Also, Ms. Kennedy probably has the edge when it comes to giving recipes for Mexican baking, as that is one of her special interests. And, if that is where your strongest interest lies, go for her latest book, `From My Mexican Kitchen'. On which writer is more `authentic' I am taking it on faith that both authors are incredibly faithful to the tastes and the spirit of the Mexican originals while being very considerate of their gringo audience's kitchen equipment and skills.The one thing about which one may be disappointed in this book, based on the title, is that there is very little discussion of general regional differences. There is not even a dusty little map of Mexico and its regions. This is surprising in that, for example Penelope Casas includes a map of Spanish regions in all her major cookbooks and Diane Kochilas includes one in her excellent book on Greek cuisines. And, both authors give us recipes by region. Ms. Kennedy's omission is doubly puzzling as chef Bayless' first book, `Authentic Mexican' opens with a very good map of Mexican regions. This, of course, is only important if you are really interested in regionality, as when you plan to travel to Mexico. If all you want is recipes, this consideration is of no importance.Following the model of her spiritual mentor, Julia Child, Ms. Kennedy's recipes are exceptionally well written. To those of us for whom this is important, note that all volumetric measurements are given in both English and metric units. And, Ms. Kennedy's admonition on careful measurement, regardless of the unit, is well taken. In spite of the fact that these are interpretations of very provincial recipes, Ms. Kennedy goes to great lengths to add warnings and suggestions regarding what can be prepared in advance, what should be served immediately, and what can be refrigerated or frozen safely, without loosing flavor or texture.This book is not compulsively chatty, if that is something which annoys you. Many recipes have short headnotes, but not all recipes do. The overall book is organized by type of recipe, which makes it ideal for quick reference. In that regard, it is much better than Mr. Bayless PBS tie-in volumes. I went directly to the egg recipe chapter and was greeted immediately with the familiar `Huevos Rancheros', only to discover that Ms. Kennedy does anticipate Mr. Bayless a bit (and copies her Julia Child model as well) by separating the Salsa Ranchera recipe from the egg recipe with citations in the Salsa recipe for the dishes in which it is used.I do not miss pictures in cookbooks, but if you do, go for Bayless'

first book, `Authentic Mexican'. Otherwise, if you simply need Mexican recipes, pick this book first, especially as Ms. Kennedy is a better and more engaging writer than chef Bayless in his first book. My only real regret with this book is that there is no `analytical' listing of recipes by Mexican region. Otherwise, this is a real classic!

This is a very good update to Diana Kennedys Essential Cusines. It contains some new recipes and follows her pattern of giving the place or name of whoever contributed the recipe. It is very complete, authentic and reliable. She really knows her subject. The only complaint I have is that sometimes she lists ingredients that are impossible to find. The other problem is the size of the recipe, as sometimes it seems it for a bunch of people. However these are not that important and I highly recommend this cookbook.

I was looking for a gift for a friend that loves cooking and likes Mexican food. This book caught my attention while reading from the "look inside" option.I am from Mexico City and I have lived in the US for 10+ years. Fortunately there are amazing cookers in my family so I can always call someone back home whenever I am unsure about a recipe, or whenever I crave for something I haven't had in a looong time and just saw in a movie. Sometimes my relatives that live near me will correct me without me having to ask them for help because they saw I was about to make the awful mistake of not boiling the tomatoes first or because I was about to use the wrong pepper... 'Even when I can translate for my friends the recipes they ask me for, sometimes I just don't know how to explain certain details to them. It is even harder when some of those friends have never been anywhere in Mexico, because they don't have any reference point to compare good from not-so-good to bad Mexican food.What I am trying to say is that I know as a fact that it is not easy to find reliable books written in English for explaining Mexican food. And while I was reading through the selected pages in the "preview" of this book, I got a big smile on my face, and -to tell you the truth- I also felt very nostalgic. The author describes with such a good recollection of details places where I've been and food I've ate that I just started craving for all those places and foods out of sudden.I bought the book and when it got to my house I devoured it within days. I started making bookmarks, and to highlight information I found helpful. I did not know for example that "Cazuelas ... are not suitable for an electric burner" (page 460). That explained to me why I had ruined mine 10 years ago.Well, I like the book so much that I decided to keep it... I bought another copy for my friend (she loves it too!).This book has given me the ability to transport to so many different places without having to leave my own kitchen at home! I am planning on buying few more copies as I can, and give them as a

Christmas or birthday presents for some of my other friends that love cooking, and have a tooth for Mexican flavors. BTW, my husband (he is American) has been cooking some of the recipes in this book and he loves them! He has mentioned to me: this taste like that dish we ate when we were on so-and-so place in Oaxaca; these taste like the tacos we ate at the mercado near you mom's house!

Ms. Kennedy writes the recipes in her book clearly, and I have found them generally easy to follow. She does a good job of highlighting regional flavors in the book, and provides a broad scope of ingredients and dishes. I jump back to this book quite often in search of ideas for meal planning. For the most part, I'm an experimental cook, and The Essential Cuisines of Mexico provides a good framework to play around in.

I am truly in love with these cookbooks. This book is brand new. I am truly happy with my cookbook. I love Diana Kennedys adventures throughout Mexico acquiring authentic recipes some handed down for generations a true account of what Mexican food is truly all about. No Tex Mex recipes here just simple fresh ingredients, herbs, spices and easy to follow instructions on how to prepare these delicious and wonderful recipes. I wont stop until I have all of her cookbooks. Anyone who thinks that Mexican food is just tacos and salsa is in for an eye opening surprise. If you want authentic Mexican food from all over Mexico then these are the books you need to have. I will certainly order again. Julie Esquivel

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