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# From My Mexican Kitchen: Techniques And Ingredients



## Synopsis

Diana Kennedy has been called the "ultimate authority, the high priestess" of Mexican cooking, and with good reason. For more than forty years she has traveled through her beloved adoptive country, researching and recording its truly extraordinary cuisine. Now Diana turns her attention to the book she readily admits "should have been written years ago." Diana's objective in *From My Mexican Kitchen: Techniques and Ingredients* is simple: to provide a guide to better understanding the ingredients Mexico has to offer and how best to prepare them. Her execution is little short of brilliant. The book is invaluable to the novice eager for an introduction to Mexican cooking, but it is equally important for the aficionados interested in refining and expanding their knowledge and skills. *From My Mexican Kitchen* takes readers and cooks on a tour of the primary ingredients of the cuisine, from achiote and avocado leaves to hoja santa, huauzontle, and the sour tunas called xoconostles "which are increasingly available in the United States. Diana unravels the dizzying array of fresh and dried chiles, explaining their uses and preparation; vibrant color photographs at last take the guesswork out of identifying them! Step-by-step photographs and Diana's trademark instructions (peppered with her over-the-shoulder asides) lead us through the proper techniques for making moles, tamales, tortillas, and much more. Some highlights: chiles rellenos, frioles de olla, salsa de jitomate, fresh corn tamales from Michoacán, and bolillos (Mexican bread rolls). These recipes provide a solid grounding for the new Mexican cook, and Diana then sends readers to her earlier work for more advanced regional recipes. Brilliantly photographed, with a text at once lively and authoritative, Diana Kennedy's *From My Mexican Kitchen* is the one book anyone interested in this food cannot afford to be without.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Diana Kennedy's new book on Mexican cooking is the gold standard for books on country / regional cuisines. The credit to Ms. Kennedy is enhanced by the fact that the material in the book was quite plainly not written and produced by a team. The depth of the material is exceptional, considering the fact that Mexican cuisine is as broad and as regionally diverse as the more widely storied cuisines of Italy and France. The book is much more than a collection of recipes. In many ways, it is a Larousse Gastronomique for Mexico, with all of the weight of authority that name carries, including sections on: Menus - A small section, very informative for Mexican newbies, but not very deep. Ingredients - All sections are deep and rewarding. - Dairy- Fats- Chiles- Herbs- Vegetables and Fruits- Meats- Grains (Rice and Pasta)- Seasonings Techniques - Exceptional, doubly so because it includes both weights and metric units of measure. - Antojitos- Moles- Table Sauces- Tamales- Tortillas- Vinegar- Yeast Breads Utensils Native to Mexico - Some blemishes here. See below Mexican Food Terms - Some blemishes. Sources of Ingredients - By state in the US. Note that unlike the situation with French and Italian ingredients, Ms. Kennedy generally has a low opinion of the quality of Mexican ingredients available in the United States. This makes it doubly useful that she has provided the means of making several of these base ingredients in the home. As Diana points out in the introduction, she is both the food stylist and the hand model for all of the excellent photographs by Michael Calderwood. The photographs clearly enhance the value of the book.

Words cannot do justice to my high opinion of this outstanding cooking resource. Ms. Diana Kennedy (whom I already held in high esteem as the Julia Child of authentic Mexican cuisine) has outdone herself. She not only answered every unanswered question I had about ingredients and food preparation . . . she also taught me what I didn't know that I didn't know. Although my humble skills and impatience with scratch cooking will prohibit me from ever making more than a handful of these outstanding dishes in the proper manner, whatever I do make will be much better for what I learned From My Mexican Kitchen. I am especially indebted to the many photographs that portray the ingredients and the tricky steps of preparation. Although the book is encyclopedic in its coverage from my perspective, clearly Ms. Kennedy was just scratching the surface of her knowledge. I hope she will consider taking some of the sections here (such as Making Antojitos, Tamales and Utensils)

and making them into full length books. To appreciate how detailed her knowledge is, you need to realize that she tells you about how the same dish is prepared in every part of Mexico . . . and how those practices differ among younger and older chefs. So there's an element of cultural anthropology here, too. I was especially grateful for her help in straightening out the various names applied to ingredients and dishes (which vary a lot from area to area) because they often contradict one another in meaning. If you just buy the book and learn about what she has to say about preparing fresh and dried chiles, you will feel more than rewarded. That section was a masterpiece! She also explains the many mysteries of lard . . .

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