



Good Food in Mexico

Nicholas Gilman

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Some people relish the discovery of delicious regional cuisine when they travel. Tourists could ask hotel staff taxi drivers or shop owners for recommendations but having a food-loving local to show them around would be preferable. In countries where they don't speak the language more timid souls who worry about the cleanliness of food preparation might settle for safe restaurants that mimic their home culture.

Good Food in Mexico City was written to discourage that dull outcome. The book tells visitors much about what they should know to find the culinary treasures of this cosmopolitan city. After giving a brief history of indigenous cuisine Nicholas Gilman explains how to use the book. Chapters cover a variety of options from street food to expensive restaurants all listed alphabetically and divided into locales.

"In every neighborhood in the city are found mini-institutions the 'greats' that only the locals know about until word gets out" Gilman writes. A glossary at the end lists the meaning of Spanish words and culinary terms.

A New York City native and Mexican citizen Gilman works as a painter and teacher in Mexico City. He studied gastronomy at the National Autonomous University of Mexico. A founding member of the Mexican chapter of Slow Food International and a member of the International Association of Culinary Professionals he served as editor and photographer for *Mexico City: An Opinionated Guide for the Curious Traveler*.

Gilman advises discretion when choosing food from street carts and market stalls offering common-sense tips on how to recognize safe places: "Check out the stall and the cook for cleanliness. If it doesn't look clean forget it." The author likes to see the food being cooked and avoids seafood in hot weather and dishes that look greasy.

For readers who enjoy the ambience of earlier eras dates of origin mark the listings of restaurants that have operated for years in the same building. "In Mexico City many old places have been preserved simply because nobody ever thought to change them; they are authentically old" Gilman writes.

A chapter on international cuisine notes that the best of these restaurants are Spanish. Greek French Italian Korean Lebanese and Japanese establishments offer other choices for travelers seeking wider culinary experiences. Still hard to find in Mexico City are true ethnic restaurants operated and patronized by non-Mexicans but Gilman notes one exception. A sign in a Chinese restaurant warns that no Mexican food coffee or sweet rolls are served.

Upon finishing this engagingly written book readers will surely want to sample a plate of good Mexican food. The book fits easily into a backpack or travel purse for tourists setting out for a day of sightseeing and culinary exploration in Mexico City. Concise and easy to follow people who seek out excellent food as part of their travel experience will love *Good Food in Mexico City*.

MARGARET CULLISON (April 15, 2009)

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