FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

Cooking

Mexican Modern: New Food from Mexico
Fiona Dunlop
photography by Jean-Blaise Hall, illustrator
Jean-Blaise Hall, photographer
Interlink Books
978-1-56656-744-2
(March 31, 2009)

Tierra de Maz. Perhaps no regional cuisine is more dependent on one indigenous ingredient than Mexico is to corn. Chiles matter greatly, of course, as Mexico cultivates around 150 types, but corn permeates the countrys cuisine due to its extraordinary versatility. *Masa harina* (corn flour), *elote* (cooked or barbecued sweetcorn), *huitlacoche* (corn truffle, a mushroom like fungus), as well as the corn husk used envelope-like in *tamales*-each plays a vital role in North and South Americas pre-eminent, favorite, most historic food type. Whereas steamed rice anchors a permanent position on the Asian plate, corn is nimbly involved in scores of creative Mexican dishes.

Mexican Modern: New Food from Mexico *(Interlink Books, 978-1-56656-744-2) carts us through the restaurants, markets, and street stalls of Mexicos six major regions-Mexico City, Veracruz, Puebla, Michoacan, Oaxaca, and Yucatan. We meet twelve of the countrys top chefs and their restaurants, many of which are housed in wonders of colonial architecture. The worldly sophistication of the recipes will surprise anyone who hasnt been keeping an eye on Mexicos haute cuisine scene. Yes, we find ample reference to the classic dishes-mole, ceviche, quesadillas-yet they receive contemporary uplifts resulting in dishes of remarkable lightness and appeal.*

The author of *New Tapas*, and *The North African Kitchen*, accomplished food and travel writer Fiona Dunlop, deserves high praise for recognizing the chef talent and core food sensibilities of Mexican cuisine. In the backmatter, she offers supplier lists, restaurant contact information, a pepper heat scale, and much-needed glossary to help us separate *antojitos* from *epazote*.