




iViva Mexico!

Highlights

-  Mexican cuisine growing in non-Mexican sectors due to increasing Mexican-American populations and growing number of Mexican restaurant options.
-  Mexican food ranks number one on the "eatability scale."
-  In order to remain viable, Mexican foods have to be flexible to fit within popular health trends.
-  Mexican food can easily be promoted as a menu item for many types of diets.

-  Authenticity of Mexican food is visible on the menu through the uses of regional claims, ingredients and dishes on the menu.
-  Popular mainstream items have flexibility to adopt authenticity through slight alterations in ingredient and flavors.
-  "Premiumization" of the Menu - Almost every dining category is competing to offer premium foods. Mexican food can enter the premium market through the use of high-quality, flavorful foods that are true to Mexican culinary traditions.

On the menu in the Marketplace...

Tampiquena

Tamayo: Tampiquena - sliced filet mignon, rajas potato gratin, mole cheese enchilada, guacamole.

Empanadas

Taco Bell: Caramel Apple Empanada - A crispy golden pastry pocket filled with chunks of warm apples in creamy caramel sauce.

Tamale

Border Grill: Green Corn Tamale - with sour cream and salsa fresca.

Chile Relleno

Fonda San Miguel: Ancho Relleno San Miguel - Chile Ancho stuffed with chicken, olives, raisins, capers and almonds in a light cilantro cream sauce

Mole

Qdoba: Warm Mole Sauce - Dreamed up in a convent in 1860, mole has a history as rich as its flavor. We stayed true to both with a heady fusion of dark semisweet chocolate, chili pepper and garlic.

Huarache

El Torito: Huarache - Masa tortilla is filled with steak al-pastor style, queso requeson grilled pineapples and frioles.

Jamaica

Norman's Miami: Warm Chocolate Mole and Cornbread Tamale - With Flor de Jamaica Sorbet.

Chiles

Z Pizza: Santa Fe Pizza - Chicken sausage, mozzarella, red onions, corn, serrano chilies, tomatoes, cilantro, Southwest chipotle pesto.

Border Grill: Morita Chicken Salad - Seared chicken breast with smoked chile and honey, roasted plantain, mango, and baby greens with red wine vinaigrette.

Cheese

Maya: Quesadillas Surtidas - Corn masa stuffed with oxaca cheese, rajas and zucchini blossom, with salsa raja, cream fresca, cotija cheese.

Coyote Creek Pizzeria: Chihuahua Pizza: Chorizo sausage, black olives, black beans, cheddar cheese and sour cream topped with our chilled salsa on an olive oil base.

Meats

Café Laredo: Brisket Barbacoa - Barbecued brisket Laredo style, rice, beans, or Mexican mashed potatoes, pico de gallo y tortillas.

Carnitas

Baja Fresh: Pork Carnitas Quesadilla

Carne Asada

Jimboy's Taco Express: Carne Asada Combination Plate - Marinated fajita steak strips grilled with onions.

Beverage

Tamayo: Margarita de Serrano - Serrano infused Torada Tequila, cranberry, lime.

The Cheesecake Factory: Ginger Margarita - Marvelously exotic twist on our classic margarita with fresh ginger and lime.

Chevy's Fresh Mex: Prickly Pear Margarita - Prickly pear juice, Sauza Hornitos Reposado and Tuaca.

Dave and Buster's: Fuzzy Orange Margarita - We picked a perfect pair and put them together straight from the orchard. It's 1800 Reposado with peach schnapps and blood orange syrup.

Food

Hard Rock Café: Margarita Popsicle - A Kids Classic... Adult Style 3 popsicles made with Sammy Hagar's Cabo tequila. Served with sugar dusted nacho chips.

Texas Steakhouse and Saloon: Margarita Cheesecake - Cheesecake with a delightful citrus flavor, topped with silky Lime Mousse and White Chocolate shavings in a Graham Shell.

Bahama Breeze: Margarita Chicken - Wood-grilled chicken breast marinated in fresh lemon, lime, honey and a splash of Jose Cuervo Tequila, served with fresh tomato and roasted corn salsa and Island rice.



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Varied Flavors, Lively Colors

Mexican cuisine is known for its deep and varied flavors, lively colors, and the variety of spices that can be found in dishes. Mexican food covers a broad range of menu and ingredient items, from Americanized Mexican, Southwestern to Tex-Mex. Mainstream foods include tacos and salsa and a wide range of authentic regional and local items.

Consumers are increasingly interested in the various flavors of Mexico. In 2005, the retail Mexican food market totaled \$5.2 billion. Overall, sales of Mexican food through retail channels increased 15 percent between 2000 and 2005.

The changing Hispanic demographic is certainly driving this food trend. Hispanics make up 14.4% of the total population in the U.S. in 2006. The growing presence of Hispanic consumers in the U.S. exposes all consumers to a wider assortment of authentic Mexican culture and cuisine—authenticity matters in this market.

The growing number of Mexican restaurant options also reflects the popularity of Mexican food. Of 2,066 Mintel survey respondents (aged 18+), 68 percent eat Mexican food at restaurants like Taco Bell and Baja Fresh and 52 percent eat Mexican food at other types of restaurants. The majority of consumers eat some variation of Mexican cuisine.

Increasingly, foodservice operators compete with Mexican food from supermarkets retail channels. However, one advantage operators have is in offering regionally authentic cuisine. These different Mexican cuisine sub-types cater to a broad spectrum of tastes.

Foods of Mexico

The Mexican diet is built on corn and a huge variety of chiles—some fresh, some dried, some smoked. Other key ingredients include: dried beans, onions, avocado, banana leaves, chorizo, lime, cilantro, corn, squash, tomatoes, cactus, chiles, lard, salsa, epazote, tomatillos.

Mexican tops “eatability” rating

Cuisine	Eatability
Mexican	68%
Italian	40%
Tex-Mex	39%
Chinese	34%
Thai	22%
Other regional American	21%
Japanese	20%
Other regional Asian	20%
French	15%
Other regional Latin America	14%
East Indian	13%
Middle Eastern	13%
Other regional European	13%
Other regional African	4%

Source: 2006 Prepared Foods R&D Trends Survey

Region: Major Cities/Geography	Indigenous Ingredients
Northern: Coastal Baja with its vineyards to Sonora’s high desert	Beef —skirt steak, grilled; dried beef (<i>carne seca</i>); Cheese is prominent— Chihuahua cheese is known throughout Mexico.
Central: Mexico City is in this region—very ethnically diverse; every region’s cuisine thrives here. Puebla is one of Mexico’s most important centers of cuisine.	Pipián (a savory condiment) is one of earliest recorded Mexican dishes. Puebla makes 2 versions: red from dried chiles or green from tomatillos—both are thickened with ground pumpkin seeds. Puebla also known for its sweets, especially fudge and shortbread.
West Central: Guadalajara and Michoacán	Guadalajara is famous for pozole (hardy thick soup made from hominy). Michoacán is carnitas country. The fresh green chile chilaca and its dried form, chile pasilla , are frequently used in this region.
Southern Mexico: Oaxaca (wuh-HAH-kuh); heavy Indian influences	Land of the seven moles —nut- and seed-thickened sauces with a small amount of Mexican chocolate. Also uses a lot of achiote (annatto) in rice, marinade and sauces.
Yucatàn: Southern tip (peninsula) of Mexico	Food is markedly different from other regions. Some foods influenced by Mayan Indians; others show Cuban and Caribbean influences. This region uses spice pastes called recados typically consisting of chiles and spices such as cumin, black pepper and allspice. Home of the habanero chile . Epazote is used here more than any other region; it is always added to their black beans —the bean of choice here.
The Gulf: Veracruz	Seafood dominates the coastal cooking of Veracruz. Influences coming from Spain include use of olives, capers, raisins and thyme . Also has African influences including use of cassava, plantains, sweet potatoes, winter squash and peanuts . Grows luscious tropical fruits, coffee and vanilla .



Source MINTEL Menu Insights



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