

Mexican from page 1B.

Spaniards had introduced cows to Central America.

Tomatoes seem to have made their first appearance as weeds in the maize fields. By the time the Spaniards arrived, cultivation had increased the yield and improved the varieties. Ripe fruits were often combined with chili peppers to make a tangy sauce (salsa).

It was estimated in the 17th century that there were at least 40 varieties of chilies. Then, as now, dried or fresh chilies were added to almost everything, even guacamole, another dietary staple.

The turkey, of course, did not come from Turkey, and nobody seems to know how it acquired the name. In India, the turkey is called the peru, which is closer to home, but not really accurate, either.

All of these foods, with the possible exception of chilies, have been commonplace in U.S. kitchens for centuries. But in the past decade or so, Mexican dishes have become more popular, and chilies are turning up in just about everything. It's a rare supermarket that doesn't have a section of Mexican foods -- tortillas, refried beans, black beans and the inevitable salsa.

Salsa has cornered the condiment market. In 1993, salsa sales surpassed catsup sales by \$40 million, and the flood of mild, hot, green, red, piquante, fruit, and vegetable salsa just keeps growing. H. J. Heinz has met the trend head-on with a 70-ounce tub of salsa, as well as a salsa-style catsup with vegetable chunks.

As authentic Mexican foods have entered the culinary mainstream, it was inevitable that Cinco de Mayo enter the popular realm also.

Tommy Salvati, owner of Don Pedro's, Redford, has seen a much more enthusiastic attitude toward Mexican food since he hired Mexican chefs and adopted a Mexican menu seven years ago.

"Some of our foods are spicy," said Salvati. "But three-quarters of our menu is normal salsa that we can 'hot up' on request."

For the Cinco de Mayo celebration, which lasts a week, the chefs at Don Pedro devised a Mexican platter for two people. The platter includes a fajata taco (charbroiled marinated beef, with tomato and mushrooms on a soft corn tortilla, with a hot relish on the side); shredded beef burritos; a ground beef and chicken taco; a platter of rice and beans, and either sour cream or guacamole. For dessert: sopapillas, a flour tortilla cut into strips and fried with honey and sugar topping.

"We know it's good, because we get customers from the Mexican community who come in and order it," said Salvati.

When Sandra Garcia of Farmington Hills taught cooking at a high school in Dearborn Heights, her students' favorite lesson was the Cinco de Mayo feast that she assigned each year.

"They learned cooking, culture, and history," said Garcia. "And they loved every minute of it. They went to the Mexican stores on Bagley, in Detroit, for authentic ingredients, such as spices and chorizo (sausage), and we made empanadas with a sweet or a meat filling, chicken with mole sauce, and tamales wrapped in corn husks. We played a tape of Mexican music, and had a wonderful time."

See recipes inside.

Flavorful dishes perfect for fiesta

See related story on Taste front.

STUFFED NACHOS CHIPS

1½ cups refried beans
6 dozen tortilla chips
½ cup Monterey Jack Cheese, shredded
1½ cups cheddar cheese, shredded
1 large ripe tomato, seeded and diced
½ cup thinly cut pickled jalapeno chilies

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Mash refried beans until smooth. Put 1 teaspoon of refried beans on each tortilla chip and arrange on baking sheet. Sprinkle tomato, chilies evenly over chips, and top with cheese. Bake 6-8 minutes until cheese is bubbly and melted. Serves 6.

Recipe from Plymouth Landing

POLLO REBOZADO

4 skinless chicken breasts (4-6 ounces each)
½ cup vegetable oil
½ medium onion, diced
½ cup tomatoes, diced
1 bay leaf
½ teaspoon marjoram
1 teaspoon salt
Mixture for coating chicken breasts
3 eggs, mixed with ½ cup milk
2 tablespoons yellow cornmeal, mixed with:
1 teaspoon salt and ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Dip chicken breasts in egg mix. Coat chicken with cornmeal mix. Saute chicken for approximately 6 minutes in vegetable oil (turn once).

Simmer remaining ingredients, and add to chicken, simmer for 5 more minutes. serve over rice.

Recipe from Plymouth Landing

STEAK FAJITAS TACOS

2-3 pounds flank steak, trimmed well
1 tablespoon pepper
1 tablespoon goya (Mexican spice)
16 ounces Sprite
½ lemon
1 pinch garlic salt (optional)
1 package corn tortillas

Put flank steak in pan and add pepper, spice, Sprite, lemon and salt. Marinate for 24 hours in refrigerator. Grill or broil steak. Cut into strips. Warm tortillas in pan on stove. Add strips of flank steak in warm tortillas and top with lettuce, salsa, sour cream and guacamole.

Recipe from Don Pedro's.

SONORESE CORN SOUP

2 tablespoons butter or margarine
1 teaspoon chili powder
2 cups seeded and diced

green bell pepper
2 (12 ounce) cans whole kernel corn with red and green sweet peppers, drained
1 small, dry, whole hot red pepper
6 cups chicken broth
salt to taste
¼ cup whipping cream
¼ teaspoon salt

Melt butter in pan and stir in chili powder and green pepper. Cook, uncovered, stirring, over medium heat for about 3 minutes. Add corn, red pepper and broth and bring to a boil, still uncovered. Reduce heat and simmer for about 3 minutes. Salt to taste, remove hot red pepper.

Whip cream with the ¼ teaspoon salt until stiff. Pour soup into tureen and pile whipped cream on top. Stir slightly and ladle mixture from bottom of dish (the corn settles) into individual bowls. Serves 8 to 10.

Recipe from Cecilia Hernandez.

Where to celebrate Cinco de Mayo

Celebrate Cinco de Mayo beginning with a parade 1 p.m. Sunday, May 1 at Scotten and West Vernor and ending with a celebration at St. Gabriel's Church Hall in Detroit.

Bring an amigu to the Cinco de Mayo outdoor street festival in Mexicantown (Bagley Ave, between 23rd and 24th streets, two blocks West of the Ambassador Bridge) on Thursday, May 5.

Events include pinata breaking, crafts, strolling mariachi players, and fireworks.

The Cinco de Mayo night of art will be at the Bowen Branch Library, 3648 West Vernor, 7 p.m., May 5. The event will feature the unveiling of three Diego Rivera photo murals to be presented to the library by the Detroit Institute of Arts.

At the Detroit Institute of Arts, Friday, May 6, a video of Diego Rivera working will be shown. Call 833-2323 for ticket information.

And, of course, all the great Mexican restaurants, tortilla factories, bakeries and food markets will be there for you to explore.

Local restaurants are also planning to celebrate with drink and menu specials, and special events on May 5. Here are a few.

- Plymouth Landing, 340 N. Main St. Plymouth, (313) 455-3700.
- Don Pedro's, 24366 Grand River, Detroit, (313) 637-1450.
- Rancho Grande, Middlebelt, south of Warren, Garden City (313) 427-1177. At 6 p.m. there will be a pinata for children to break.
- Old Mexico, 5566 Drake Road, (corner of Walnut Lake Road) West Bloomfield, 661-8088 and in Livonia, 28407 Five Mile Road, (313) 421-3310.

If your restaurant is planning a Cinco de Mayo event, and you're not listed, there's still time. Call Kery Wygonik, 953-2105.

Sample Mexican cuisine at Hudson's

Through May 8, Hudson's Marketplace customers will be able to sample Mexican delights prepared by chefs from area Mexican restaurants. Learn the chefs' cooking secrets for preparing their own Mexican feast, enjoy festive entertainment and take advantage of special promotions.

Here's the schedule of events:

- Join Marianne Moulson as she demonstrates south of the border recipes using Revue and Crown Corning cookware, 7-9 p.m. Thursday, April 28, at Hudson's Fairlane in Dearborn.
- Hudson's demonstrators will prepare Mexican recipes from Dayton's Hudson's and Marshall Field's "Peeluck for 33,000" cookbooks. Proceeds from cookbook sales benefit the United Way - Sunday May 1 to Sunday, May 8 at all Hudson's stores.
- Customers can bring in their old blenders, Thursday, May 5 to Sunday, May 8 at all Hudson's stores and receive \$10 off the purchase price of a new KitchenAid blender. All trade-ins will be donated to Good Will. From May 5 to 7, Hudson's demonstrators will be preparing margaritas with KitchenAid blenders.

Answers to nutrition questions

Call the toll-free Nutrition Hotline of the American Institute for Cancer Research 1-800-843-4114 for free, personalized answers to nutrition questions from a registered dietitian. The hotline operates weekdays 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. You can also call the hotline to request a list of free publications to help you eat for good health and lower cancer risk.

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stamped envelope to H.W. Publications, P.O. Box 9324, Livonia 48151-1324. Subscription price is \$12 a year.

Learn how to reduce the fat in your favorite recipe. Send recipes for consideration in Recipe Maker to Kery Wygonik, Taste editor, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, Inc. 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150. If your recipe is chosen for a makeover you'll receive an Observer & Eccentric canvas tote bag.

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Ground Hamburger	\$1.39 lb.
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Ground Round (No Limit)	\$2.39 lb.
SLAB BACON	\$1.69 lb.

U.S.D.A. CHOICE PORK	
Lean Pork Steaks	\$1.39 lb.
Center Cut Pork Chops	\$3.49 lb.
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Boneless Rolled Rump Roast	\$1.79 lb.
Hamburger SAUSAGE	99¢ lb.

U.S.D.A. 1st CHOICE WESTERN BEEF	
Round Steak Center Cut	\$1.89 lb.
Chuck Steaks	\$1.89 lb.
Porterhouse Steak	\$5.19 lb.
T-Bone	\$4.99 lb.
Cubed Steak	\$2.49 lb.
Rib Steak	\$2.79 lb.
Round Bone Arm Roast	\$1.79 lb.
English Cut Roast	\$1.89 lb.
Strip Steak	\$4.99 lb.
Top Family Steak	\$2.99 lb.
Lean Beef Stew Meat	\$2.69 lb.

Ocean Perch	\$2.99 lb.
Cat Fish	\$4.99 lb.
Shrimp	\$7.99 lb.
Alaskan King Crab Legs	\$8.99 lb.

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