

She Cooks!

The theme of our trip is “Tastes of Mexico” and taste we did. Some of our best food experiences include:



Fried Crickets! Considered an excellent source of protein, they are a popular snack throughout Mexico. And these crunchy crustaceans come in favors too: lemon, garlic, chili, bar-b-cue, salty, sweet and more. Yum!

We also experience “Hot Stone Soup” where vegetables and meat (our choice of chicken, fish, or beef) are placed in a bowl filled with broth, then stones red-hot from a fire are placed in each bowl. The broth immediately sizzles, cooking the veggies and the meat.

Our guide reminded us to remove the stones before tucking in!



It is hard to resist ice cream. While others are enjoying a mezcal tasting I spot an family-run ice cream stand nearby which offers hand-made ice-cream. How can you resist flavors like “Kisses from Angels,” tuna, cheese, chili, or burnt milk!





Those of us with a sweet tooth loved the aptly called Faty Sweet Shop in Puebla, its specialty being candy made from sweet potatoes. But you have to wonder about a popular confection called Nun's Farts. Passed on that one!

In Oaxaca, we enjoy a cooking class with Chef Gerardo. Our first stop is a local market to pick up the veggies, spices and meat needed for our cooking class. It is way more than a walk-thru as Gerardo explains every little thing and helps us select the freshest items for our meal.





I especially enjoy talking with this vendor, who sells ready-made mole. Mole is an incredibly difficult sauce to put together, as it has so many ingredients. You can make it easy on yourself by buying the spices already mixed and just add tomato sauce and simmer until the sauce is ready. Oaxaca is known for its chocolate mole. I bought some for a friend and my luggage smelled great for the rest of the trip.

The affable Chef Gerardo makes sure everyone has a task-- washing, chopping, peeling, mixing, slicing, pounding or making our own corn tortillas.



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Photo by Julie

The gorgeous colonial city Izamal which is not far from Merida, has everything: architecture, history, Mayan pyramids and one of the best restaurants in the Yucatan - Restaurante Kinich. We are treated to the “Kinich Experience,” a multi-course tasting menu of traditional Yucanateca cuisine. Some of our courses:



These are just some of the dishes in the “experience” and I wish I could remember what each one was. For sure each is distinctive and delicious.



Our chocolate “class” in San Cristobal de las Casas helps us understand why this is truly the “food of the gods.”

We stop in the lovely village of Pomuch to sample traditional bread from a bakery that has been in business for 130 years.



Even our simplest meals, made with fresh ingredients are a culinary delight.

Other foodies experiences included a tamale-making experience in San Cristobal de las Casas, trying corn fungus tacos (don't scoff until you try them) in Mexico City, a cactus-based meal at a farm in the shadow of the ancient Aztec archaeological site of Teotihuacan and a history of chocolate, complete with samples.



But the piece de resistance of the entire trip is the cerviche (fish “cooked” in lime juice) and seafood dinner in the fishing village of Champoton where each group of four persons shares a huge platter piled high with shrimp, octopus, mussels, calamari, fish, seafood empanadas and lobster. Thank goodness I thought to take a photo before it was decimated!

Food is to be enjoyed, not just be “food for fuel.” And it is doubly nice when you can share it with friends. The people on this trip were an absolute delight and the times I remember most are when we sat and enjoyed our wonderful meals together.