

Grandmas Ole Kitchen

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El Cafecito

In the heart of the kitchen, a little ole sixty-five-inch Mexican woman hovers over the sink,
Washing away any dust her olla and jarrito may have accumulated overnight.

In goes six cups of water into her bright baby blue clay olla,

A piloncillo, a delicate anise star, two cloves, and two well-rounded cinnamon sticks.

Filling the air with a sweet and spicy scent.

Stir, stir, stir, slowly breaking up the piloncillo.

A piloncillo, so sweet you can break off a piece and eat it like crystal candy.

As she opens her Country Crock butter tub from the pantry,

The sweet kiss of chocolate and bold coffee begins to fill the air.

You would never know it's where she stores her ground-up coffee, you'd think it's butter.

One scoop, two scoops, and now she has just dumped the whole container in, three.

Covering the ollita the sweet aroma fills the entire house with grandma's morning coffee.

A Sweet Tortilla

A sweet, breakable, and messy tortilla covered in sugar.
This is exactly what she wanted to pair her coffee with this morning.
Three and a half cups of flour, into a strainer to have the most delicate powder,
One and a half teaspoons of baking powder to give it that excentric rise,
A teaspoon of salt to balance out the sweetness you will face.
Double the amount of sugar because it is ABSOLUTELY never too sweet!
Mixing it in with her hand to get that even spread.
Half a cup of vegetable shortening, the stuff that is not frosting but tastes like butter,
Mixing it till it feels like warm sand at the beach.
Adding in the two tablespoons of Mexican Vanilla to give the dough its Mexican Culture,
Oh, no way you can forget about her favorite touch to this recipe!
In goes a Mexican Orange Fanta and a little ole egg.
We are a little old-fashioned with our eggs,
They come straight from our chickens outside, so they are room temperature.
Mix, mix, mix you cannot forget to multitask, mix, and pour everything in precisely.
It formed this beautiful orange dough ball.
She rolled out seven even orange dough balls,
Letting them just spend time together on the counter for 20 minutes to rest,
They have been through a journey with Grandma's hands.
Grabbing her pallote, she begins rolling them out like tortillas,
A nice thin even circle.
Deep frying it till a golden crispy brown on both sides,
Sprinkling on regular white sugar, brown sugar, and a pinch of sweet cinnamon,
There she has her crunchy, sweet, and sugary bunelos.

A Liquid Breakfast

Here comes her bright baby blue clay pot,
Some may say it looks like a Dutch oven.
Two and a half cups of the finest water from our kitchen sink,
We live in South Texas, of course, water is safe to drink.
In goes two strongly potent cinnamon sticks,
Two whole cloves to turn the water brown from the boiling water.
You must take out the cloves, they have already released their flavoring.
A pinch of salt to bring out the nuttiness of the oatmeal,
Only two cups of some old-fashioned oats from the Quaker man himself,
With a cup of raw sugar cane, giving it a hearty molasses flavoring.
Once it has thickened up and the oats are no longer swimming,
In goes in three cups of the thickest, whitest, and creamiest milk,
The whole milk type, not the skimpy two percent kind.
Some of that Mexican Vanilla,
Before you know it, the milk is thick and richened over the low heat setting.
Every morning before school this was our version of a drinkable breakfast.

A Mexican Starbucks Pink Drink

This is not your average Starbucks paying \$6 for a refreshing drink.
Into her quart-sized questionable blender, goes in a case of strawberries,
Save four beauties for the end you will need to garnish the drink.
So red, so crisp, so tempting to eat straight out of the carton.
As Grandma cannot help but eat one before throwing the rest into the blender,
Two cups of clean, crisp, cool water
Blended into a fine puree,
But not so fine, you still want to see the seeds poking through the blender.
In goes a can of sweetened condensed milk,
Do not forget to scrape the bottom of the can to get all that extra goodness out!
One can of evaporated milk, the one with a flower on the label,
You cannot forget a tall glass of thick whole milk to give it that extra flavor.
As for those four beauties, you will chop them up into fine little cubes.
Into a tall glass of ice, in goes the bright pink drink, and a couple of those beauties on top,
There you have a delicious bright pink drink that just hits the spot.

A Soft Gelatine-like Cake

A soft and creamy cake you would never realize does not require many ingredients,
Only time and patience.

Grandma is feeling a little under the weather for something lightly sweetened.

She grabs a shiny stainless-steel pan from the oven.

And removes all the other pans from inside of it, a classic Mexican grandma move.

She generously adds one cup of sugar to caramelize on medium heat,

After four minutes you can smell the sweetness in the air.

A fragrant sweet caramel the sugar has created throughout the kitchen,

All are to be poured at the bottom of the cake pan.

Five whole eggs remember room temperature ones, and you must BEAT them.

Some salt to balance the flavor, and lime juice so you do not taste the egg.

That Mexican vanilla for the culture and that evaporated milk with the flower on it.

A can of sweetened condensed milk to make the flan nice and thick,

Some heavy whipped cream to make it a gelatine-like cake with three kinds of milk.

Beat it, beat it, just beat it, and it will be fine, it's only milk.

Here comes her baby blue ollita filled with water for the double broiler method,

Do not forget to wrap the pan with foil and place it into the center of the olla.

One and a half hours later, nice, and jiggly,

She moves it into the fridge, and it should be done later tonight.

One, two, three, flip!

The caramel starts oozing out all over the flan leaving a nice glaze all around the edges,

Sweet and aesthetically pleasing like a drip cake with chocolate but instead, caramelo.

So smooth, so delicate, it cuts like warm butter that was left out for a couple of hours.

A simple flan.

A Cake Drowning in Milk

She could make the cake from scratch,

Or simply just buy one premade from the store

A box cake mix will do just fine with this recipe for my cousin's birthday party.

Following the recipe to a certain extent by substituting a couple of ingredients,

Four egg whites instead of three whole eggs,

Adding a cup of THICK milk instead of water,

Leaving the plain vegetable oil to do its thing.

Leaving the cake to bake in the oven, we are going to make the liquid for our cake.

A cup of THICK whole milk and again the evaporated milk with the flower on the label,

A whole cup of sweetened condensed milk to give the thickness to the mixture.

Mix, mix, mix she places the bowl of milk into the refrigerator to get nice and cold.

DING! The cake is nicely golden brown and has a clean center stab from the toothpick.

After 3 hours of cooling, she takes a wooden skewer to stab the cake with,

Poking evenly spaced holes all around the cake to absorb the delicious milk mixture.

Pouring slowly so the cake drinks up all the delicious milk.

She pulls the cool whip out of the freezer to frost the cake with the fluffy goodness.

Adding on some chopped-up strawberries for garnish, a singular maraschino cherry,

Boom! Que Rico!

A delicious homemade Tres Leches cake, a cake made with three types of milk.

A Twist on a Spanish Churro

When you hear the words Churro you think of a classic Mexican staple desert,
I am here to explain to you that it did not originate in Mexico, we only perfected it.
Grandma is in the mood, not for something cold but something nice, warm, and crunchy.
She chose a boring ole black pot from the oven, one deep enough to make the dough.
In goes a stick of salted butter, you know the good stuff.
A teaspoon of that Mexican vanilla for the culture,
One cup of water to combine well and two tablespoons of delicious sugar.
Once you have let the butter melt on a low heat setting and it looks like a yellow soup,
You know it is time to add the good ole thickening ingredient, flour,
One and a half cups to be exact.
A pinch of cinnamon to give it that golden color and now it is ready to mix into a dough.
Take it out of the pot and into a large mixing bowl to cool down.
She touches it with the back of her hand,
When it is cooled down, now it's ready to add the three eggs.
Only one at a time while mixing, so you do not lose its shape.
She's cleaned her pot and added plain ole vegetable oil to deep fry the dough.
Grabbing her star tip and a piping bag she began to add the doughy goodness.
Just a pinch to taste, mmmm salty
Watching her squeeze out the dough and cut it with scissors makes one realize something,
Why does it look like beige poop is coming out of a bag?
Plop, plop, plop. In goes a couple of dough segments into the piping hot oil.
Fry until golden brown, then gather them into their cinnamon sugar mixture.
A crunchy, sugary, golden-brown delicacy.