

# Introduction to Mexican food

By Rick Rodriguez

Mexican food mirrors the culture of the country-it is colourful, rich, stimulating and festive. From the wild and barren north to the sultry heat of the south, this vast country offers the country's food lovers a feast of flavours. The waters of the Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific Ocean team with fish, whilst the sub-tropical regions that adjoin them yield abundant fruit including pineapples and papayas. From the gardens of the high central plateau come wonderful vegetables, whilst the north is cattle country, chillies of every shape, colour and size are everywhere, their flavours range from subtle to strident, providing the signature to one of the world's most exiting cuisines.

Mexican food was first influenced first by the pre-Columbians, with food like corn (maize), beans, chillies, avocados, sweet potatoes and tomatoes. Then the Aztecs added chocolate which they believed to be an "**aphrodisiac**". Spaniards then brought with them livestock like pigs which provided an abundance of meat and the opportunities of frying for the first time using the fat from the pigs. They also brought citrus fruits, wheat, rice, spices and onions to 'the colonies'.

The French also occupied Mexico for only three years but they left a lasting legacy of beautiful bread and pastries.

The Mexican classification of food hot or cold is not related to the temperature of the dish, but reflects instead to the effect that they produce on the body. Hot food is considered to be easily digested and warming where as foods designated as cold are held to be difficult to digest and likely to lower the body heat. Some examples of hot are: coffee, honey and rice. Whilst fish lime and boiled eggs are considered as cold. A proper balance between hot and cold food is believed to be vital for good health.

## Questions

### Question 1.

Which of these are the three main basic ingredients of Mexican food?

- A Tofu Beans Tortillas
- B Maize Tika masala Noodles
- C Beans Chillies Maize

### Question 2.

What is the national language of Mexico

- A French
- B German
- C Spanish

### Question 3.

Identify the name of the discoverer of America.

- A Thomas Cook
- B Christopher Columbus
- C Ray Mears