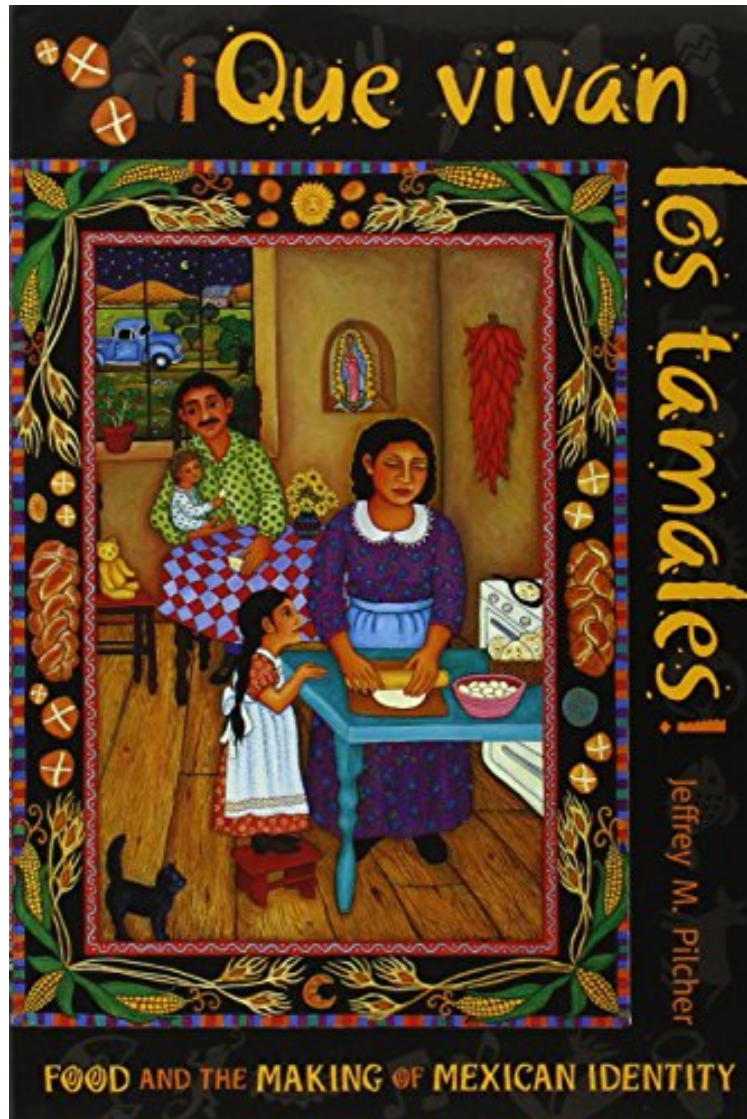


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Que vivan los tamales!: Food and the Making of Mexican Identity (Dialogos) (Dilogos)

Jeffrey M. Pilcher

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Connections between what people eat and who they are--between cuisine and identity--reach deep into Mexican history, beginning with pre-Columbian inhabitants offering sacrifices of human flesh to maize gods in hope of securing plentiful crops. This cultural history of food in Mexico traces the influence of gender, race, and class on food preferences from Aztec times to the present and relates cuisine to the formation of national identity. The metate and mano, used by women for grinding corn and chiles since pre-Columbian times, remained essential to preparing such Mexican foods as tamales, tortillas, and mole poblano well into the twentieth century. Part of the ongoing effort by intellectuals and political leaders to Europeanize Mexico was an attempt to replace corn with wheat. But native foods and flavors persisted and became an essential part of indigenista ideology and what it meant to be authentically Mexican after 1940, when a growing urban middle class appropriated the popular native foods of the lower class and proclaimed them as national cuisine.

From Library JournalThis delightful approach to the history of Mexico examines how food has affected and mirrored the development of nationalism in the country. Pilcher (history, *The Citadel*) describes the early colonial conflict between the Mexican natives' consumption of corn and the European use of wheat. Tracing this conflict through the colonial period into the 20th century, he shows periodic attempts by Mexican elites and governmental officials to define Mexican culture and identity through a Europeanization of foods. That process essentially ended in the 1940s when the popular foods of the country were proclaimed to be the Mexican cuisine, resulting in a fusion of the two traditions. This well-written book highlights the interaction of the regional and national and the role of women in developing a national identity. Of interest to most academic libraries, it belongs in many public libraries as well. ?Mark L. Grover, Brigham Young Univ., Provo, UT Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. "This fascinating and very readable account indicates how much we can learn about people from a study of the food they eat. Vivan los tamales!" "A delightful approach This well-written book highlights the interaction of the regional and national and the role of women in developing a national identity." "[A] delightful approach This well-written book highlights the interaction of the regional and national and the role of women in developing a national identity." "Que vivan los tamales!" provides the foodies with a great addition to their librar[ies]. . . . Politics, society, economy and food history converge like a grand stew with all the right fixings." From the Inside Flap This cultural history of food in Mexico traces the influence of gender, race, and class on food preferences from Aztec times to the present.