



**DECOLONIZE**  
**YOUR DIET**

*Plant-Based Mexican-American Recipes for Health and Healing*

**LUZ CALVO & CATRIONA RUEDA ESQUIBEL**



*Clockwise from top left: Amaranth Pancakes with Mushrooms & Rajas; Nopales “De Colores” Salad; Prickly Pear Chia Fresca; Cauliflower Ceviche; Red Pozole with Medicinal Mushrooms; Tonantzin Corn Cookies*

# INTRODUCTION

## *Recipes to Sustain Revolutionary Love*

Our project was born out of struggle and love, both personal and political. Decolonize Your Diet begins with the premise that we are living with the legacy of over 500 years of colonization. We recognize the importance of indigenous knowledge, cultures, and ways of being in the world and believe in the need to dismantle colonial systems of power. It is within these broader contexts that we issue the call to “decolonize your diet,” with full knowledge that what we need is a dismantling of our entire food-for-profit system.

Another mission of this book is to encourage individuals to use food to regain physical health and nurture a spiritual connection to themselves, each other, and Mother Earth. When we say food is medicine, it is not because we think food can necessarily replace conventional Western medical treatments, but because eating “real” food is essential to healing.

In general, our recipes highlight the immense diversity of healthy, native foods in dishes that are accessible yet satisfying. Reclaiming our vitality as a people means embracing a plant-based diet of whole foods. In our view, people can eat responsibly whether they are vegans, vegetarians, flexitarians, pescetarians, or

omnivores. In a decolonial framework, there is room for multiple ways of eating, so we don’t believe everyone needs to make the same food choices. While we are committed to reclaiming knowledge about our ancestral foods, we are not calling for a rejection of any food not native to the Americas, nor do we desire to recreate any one diet from a previous era. We understand that all cultures are living and evolving.

*Decolonize Your Diet* does not tout certain so-called “super foods”; instead, it is a whole food system of eating. Our abuelitas (grandmothers) prepared a simple diet that was as flavorful as it was nourishing. The staples of their diets were beans and tortillas, supplemented with many fruits and vegetables: avocado, corn, tomatoes, chiles, wild greens, squash, herbs, berries, pineapples, papayas, and more.

We invite readers from diverse backgrounds to take up our call to bring playfulness and creativity to cooking, to search for healthy alternatives in more than one direction, to resist the acculturation that tells us white bread is food, and to share this message with your communities: *La comida es medicina, food is medicine.*





## HUARACHES DE NOPAL

*Huaraches are traditionally made with corn masa formed into a thick oval that resembles a huarache or sandal. In our version, we use a roasted nopal paddle as the “sandal sole” that provides the base for beans, cheese, and salsa. This is a great meal for anyone struggling with diabetes, as the nopales are low-carb and provide blood sugar-balancing properties.*

.....

Bring a large pot of water to a boil on high heat and add paddles. Cook for about 5 minutes. Remove and rinse under cool water. Pat dry. Lightly score and smear coconut oil on each side of paddle. On a dry griddle on high heat, cook paddles in batches (don't overcrowd in pan). Cook each side for about 3–5 minutes or until paddles begin to blister slightly. Set aside.

In a frying pan on medium heat, mash beans and cook until consistency of a loose paste, about 5 minutes.

Place nopal paddles on a serving platter. Spread a layer of beans on each and serve topped with lettuce or slaw, salsa, and either cheese or Cashew Crema.



*makes 8 huaraches*

- 8 medium nopal paddles, cleaned and spines removed
- 1 tbsp extra virgin coconut oil
- 4 cups (1 L) cooked Black Velvet Beans
- 4 cups (1 L) shredded romaine lettuce or Red Cabbage Slaw
- Roasted Guajillo Sauce or store-bought sauce, to taste
- 6 oz (175 g) crumbled queso fresco or feta or ½ cup (125 mL) Cashew Crema



*makes 8 tacos*

- ½ cup (125 mL) dried hibiscus flowers
- 2 tsp raw local honey
- ½ white onion, diced
- 1 tbsp extra virgin coconut oil
- 2 large red potatoes, scrubbed and diced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tbsp minced chipotle in adobo (use canned)
- ¾ tsp sea salt
- ⅛ tsp white pepper
- ½ tsp lime juice
- 8 corn tortillas
- Chipotle Salsa (p. xx) or store-bought
- 1 large avocado, peeled, seeded, and cubed
- 8 cilantro sprigs
- 4 oz (115g) crumbled queso fresco or feta cheese (optional)

## HIBISCUS FLOWER POWER TACOS

*Believe it or not, the hibiscus flowers give a meaty texture to these tacos. The flowers are tart, which plays nicely with the potatoes, chipotle, and honey. Dried hibiscus flowers are widely available in Mexican markets and are an excellent food for heart health!*

In a small saucepan on medium-high heat, place flowers, honey, and 2 cups (500 mL) water and simmer for 25 minutes. Meanwhile, in a frying pan on medium heat, sauté onions in coconut oil until translucent, about 5 minutes. Strain flowers, reserving liquid for another use (see sidebar.) Chop flowers coarsely and add to onions. Stir in potatoes and garlic and sauté mixture for about 5 minutes, stirring often. Add minced chipotle, salt, pepper, and ½ cup (125 mL) water. Cover and cook for 15 minutes, or until potatoes are cooked through. Remove from heat, stir in lime juice, and adjust seasonings.

Preheat griddle on high for 5 minutes. Reduce heat to medium, and heat tortillas 1–2 minutes on each side. Divide potato mixture between 8 tortillas. Garnish each taco with a spoonful of salsa, several cubes of avocado, a sprig of cilantro, and a smattering of queso fresco or feta.

*After soaking flowers in water, save the bright red water. Taste and add more sugar, honey, or stevia to taste. It should still be tangy. Drink hot or cold. This beverage, also called jamaica, has been used medicinally to treat high cholesterol and hypertension.*





# DECOLONIZE YOUR DIET

*Luz Calvo & Catriona Rueda Esquibel*

ISBN 978-1-55152-592-1

\$26.95 USA & Canada (other territories TBA)

256 pp; 8" x 9"; full-color throughout

Trade paperback

Genre: COOKING (Mexican/  
Mexican-American)

## **PUBLICATION MONTH:**

Canada & USA: October 2015

UK/ Australia/New Zealand: November 2015

## **ARSENAL PULP PRESS**

[arsenalpulp.com](http://arsenalpulp.com)

Follow us on Facebook

@Arsenalpulp on Twitter

Distributed in the USA by Consortium

Distributed in Canada by University of

Toronto Press (sales by Ampersand, Inc.)

Distributed in the UK/Europe by

Turnaround

Distributed in Australia/New Zealand by

NewSouth Books

## **EXCLUSIVE EXCERPTS AVAILABLE**

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

#### **ALL TERRITORIES EXCEPT USA:**

Cynara Geissler, Marketing Manager

Arsenal Pulp Press

Tel: 604-687-4233

[cynara@arsenalpulp.com](mailto:cynara@arsenalpulp.com)

#### **USA:**

Chelsey Slattum, CLS Communications

1501 Pike Place #329

Seattle, WA 98101

Tel: 360-224-9897

[chelsey@clsbooks.com](mailto:chelsey@clsbooks.com)

More than just a cookbook, Decolonize Your Diet redefines what is meant by “traditional” Mexican food by reaching back through hundreds of years of history to reclaim heritage crops as a source of protection from modern diseases. Authors Luz Calvo and Catriona Rueda Esquibel are life partners; when Luz was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2006, they both radically changed their diets and began seeking out recipes featuring healthy, vegetarian Mexican foods (Luz’s cancer is now in remission). They promote a diet rich in plants indigenous to the Americas (corn, beans, squash, greens, herbs, and seeds), and are passionate about the idea that Latinos in America, specifically Mexicans, need to ditch the fast food and return to their own culture’s food roots for both physical health and spiritual fulfillment.

This vegetarian cookbook features over 100 colorful, delicious recipes based on Mexican-American cuisine that also includes contributions from other Latin American cultures, such as Guatemalan-Style Pepian Stew, Speckled Bean and Hominy Stew, Amaranth and Corn Tortillas with Chia Guacamole, and Aguachile de Quinoa. Steeped in history but very much rooted in the contemporary world, Decolonize Your Diet will introduce readers to the energizing, healing properties of a plant-based Mexican American diet.

Includes 120+ recipes; full-color throughout.

*Luz Calvo and Catriona Rueda Esquibel are professors at Cal State East Bay and San Francisco State University respectively. Their popular website and Facebook page for “Decolonize Your Diet” promote the health benefits of indigenous Mexican-American cooking. They raise chickens and grow fruits, vegetables, and herbs on their small urban farm, as they study traditional Mesoamerican cuisine and work to create sustainable relationships in their community. This is their first book. [decolonizeyourdiet.org](http://decolonizeyourdiet.org)*