

## The International Cooking Demonstration Interest Group

Tuesday, March 12, 2019

Hola Mexico

Mexico is known throughout the world for its rich diversified regional cultures, preservation of historic landmarks, traditions, strong sense of community- spirit and food cuisine.

This was evident, as members of the Welcome to Taipei International Club (WTIC) gathered at the prestigious Taipei World Trade Center Club to enjoy an afternoon of learning about Mexico's history, distinct cultures, festivities, beautiful fashion wear, dances, lovely local traditional handicrafts and food cuisine.

Guest speaker Director Martin Torres Gutierrez Rubio of the Mexican Trade Services Documentation and Cultural Office presented a comprehensive overview about Mexico's history, shared border relations, famous destinations and natural scenic areas.

Mexico has 29 UNESCO World Heritage listings, which include prominent pre-Hispanic sites, pyramids and Maya architecture.

We learned that the world's second largest peninsula begins from the Mexican-US border and extends for 18,000 km. Ideal travel spots along the peninsula include such sights as colonial missions, magnificent deserts teeming with wildlife, pristine beaches and marine life.

It is said that Mexican cuisine represents 9,000 years of cultural infusion and history. The Aztec Empire created a multi-ethnic society where foods such as maize, beans, squash, peppers, tomatoes and avocados were popular. Later after the Spanish conquest of the Aztec Empire, a number of food items such as locally raised meat, dairy products and rice were included in local food preparations. African and Asian populations further added to the growing fusion and variety of Mexico's indigenous food cultures. These invaluable culinary legacies have earned traditional Mexican cuisine a listing by UNESCO in 2010, as a Human Intangible Cultural Heritage.

To give our WTIC members and guests an opportunity to experience traditional Mexican cuisine, Chairwomen Lily Chiu, Louise Bystrom and Angela Tan of WTIC's International Cooking Demonstration Interest Group invited Madame Celina Hoyos de Torres, wife of Director Martin Torres Gutierrez Rubio to create and oversee the preparation of a Mexican luncheon feast for us. She also graciously agreed to demonstrate how to prepare two favorite traditional Mexican dishes, Pico de Gallo and Guacamole.

Madame Celina Hoyos de Torres' selection of traditional Mexican food for our luncheon buffet was an immediate culinary success. I particularly enjoyed the flavored fish, shrimp, the guacamole-avocado based sauce, salsa, red beans, rice, flour tortillas and of course the wide selection of fresh fruit. This Mexican luncheon was a feast that will linger in our memories for a long time to come.

Mexican festivities are not complete unless they have dancers. Much to our delight, we had an opportunity to watch several folk dance selections performed by beautiful women dressed in professional hand embroidered traditional dress, accompanied by a handsome gentleman dancer wearing black pants and a black wide-brim hat.

In Mexico, like in Taiwan, social events are important occasions for bringing people together in friendship. This Mexican luncheon was such an event, where old and new cross-cultural friendships were joyfully celebrated.