

September Celebrates A Taste of Oaxaca in Toronto with Chef Pilar Cabrera Arroyo



The sun-drenched valley city of Oaxaca, in the Mexican state of the same name, is considered by many to be the country's culinary capital. Apart from being the land of seven moles (pron. moh-leh), Oaxaca also boasts an impressive gastronomic repertoire long admired by the rest of Mexico and gastronomes the world over. Working within the state's rich and proud culinary heritage is one of Oaxaca City's brightest lights in the food world, **Pilar Cabrera Arroyo** (in photo holding one of

her luscious flans). **This September 10-30, 2009, Pilar will be visiting Toronto, ON to share those well-preserved traditions using local, Ontario products to truly offer a taste of Oaxaca in Toronto!**

Pilar grew up in Oaxaca City surrounded by the state's vast food history and ingredients- including chile dusted fried grasshoppers (chapulines) and pre-Hispanic dishes that tell the tales of ancient, native peoples. After completing a food engineering and nutrition degree, she worked in research and development for the food giant Herdez-McCormick before returning to her true passion-cooking. In 1994, she opened her own restaurant, the award-winning **"La Olla"** (or the Pot), featuring the produce of regional (when possible, organic) farmers who help make her Oaxacan cuisine a living work of art.

Pilar has also found a growing fan-base of intrigued foodies around the globe through her **"Casa de los Sabores"** (House of Flavours) cooking school where banana leaf wrapped tamales, rose petal sorbet and Oaxacan yellow mole have become oft-requested recipes. Oaxacan cuisine is a labour of love that requires attention, a deft hand, fine-tuned taste buds and old-world knowledge. Pilar learned the basics and the cuisine's subtleties from her mother and grandmother. She's an excellent teacher and speaks English fluently.

Here's what celebrated Chef Rick Bayless (of Chicago's Frontera Grill and Topolobampo) has to say about Pilar: **"I would strongly urge anyone with an interest in Mexican food to take advantage of any opportunity to learn from and experience the Oaxacan cuisine of Pilar Cabrera. She is one of the greats!"** *The New York Times and Bon Appétit magazine have echoed similar sentiments.*

Pilar's Oaxacan Menus featuring Ontario's bounty can be savoured at the following Toronto locations:



Edward Country, ON.

- ❖ Wednesday, September 16: **Frida Restaurant & Bar** – dinner tasting menu with owner/Chef Jose Hadad - www.fridarestaurant.ca – featuring Ontario woodland mushrooms, onions, asparagus, local Roma tomatoes, Ontario berries and tomatillos from Haystrom Farms in Picton in various dishes.
- ❖ Monday, September 21st: Dinner at **FRANK at the Art Gallery of Ontario** with Executive Chef Anne Yarymowich - <http://www.ago.net/frank> - featuring local goat cheese and specialty Mexican produce including poblano chiles, dried chiles and tomatoes from farmer Jim Hayward of Prince Edward Country, ON.
- ❖ Tuesday, September 22: **Cooking class at Nella Cucina** Cooking School - <http://www.nellacucina.ca/cucina/event.html?Year=2009&Month=9> – using Ontario beef, lamb and chicken, Haystrom Farm's tomatillos and chiles, local, sustainable produce, and fish from Andrew Akiwenzie.
- ❖ Wednesday, September 23: Dinner at **Veritas Local Fare** with Food Network Celebrity Chef Brad Long – <http://www.veritaslocalfare.com> - featuring meats and fish, produce and artisanal products from Brad's chain of ethical, local, sustainable and talented purveyors.
- ❖ Monday, September 28: **Torito Tapas Bar**- Pilar prepares a menu of “Botanas”- Mexico's version of tapas- <http://www.toritorestaurant.com/> - Local, organic fish, meat and poultry including house-made chorizo and a variety of sustainable, local tomatoes, potatoes and fresh produce.
- ❖ Tuesday, September 29: Multi-course dinner menu at **The Chefs' House** operated by students of George Brown's Centre for Hospitality and Culinary Arts- www.thechefshouse.com- featuring Haystrom Farm's Mexican specialty chiles, tomatoes and tomatillos.

NOTE: To reserve your seat at any of the above-noted venues, please contact the location of your choice to make arrangements. As an added bonus, those who attend one of Pilar's events will be eligible to participate in a raffle for a complimentary week's accommodations in Oaxaca, to be awarded to two lucky couples.

For Pilar, sharing the food of Oaxaca with Torontonians is akin to giving them a glimpse into the place and the dishes that satisfy both body and soul. For the first time in the chef's illustrious career,

she'll finally have the opportunity to do just that this September using the bounty of Ontario products.

❖ **If you'd like more information on Chef Pilar's visit or would like to interview her, please contact:**

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