

Food Scholars Will Engage Chefs at Texas Mexican Food "Encuentro"

Archaeology, Anthropology and Mexican American Studies Researchers will share meals with chefs to explore the Native American roots of Texas Mexican Food

HOUSTON, TX, US, December 8, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Organizers announced the four scholars who will meet and dine with chefs over two days at the the first-ever "Encuentro," a

gathering that explores the roots and flavors of Texas Mexican foodways. "Encuentro" will be held in Houston on May 19-20, 2023 to study and document the ancient roots and myriad flavors of the first food of Texas.

The logo for "Encuentro" features the word "Encuentro" in a large, bold, red, distressed font. Below it, the subtitle "The Native American Roots of Texas Mexican Food" is written in a smaller, red, cursive font. The entire logo is set against a light beige background.

Encuentro
The Native American Roots of Texas Mexican Food

The first-time-ever meeting of chefs and scholars will take place in Houston

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It's called Mexican food, but it's also Native American food”

Christine Ortega

Christine Ortega who is the Executive Director of the "Encuentro" says: "It's called Mexican food, but it's also Native American food, and this fact will become clearer as the chefs cook their dishes, and engage with the researchers." Ms. Ortega also serves as Vice President of The Texas Indigenous Food Project" which is the sponsor

of "Encuentro." The event is co-sponsored by the City of Houston, Mayor's Office of Special Events, and funded by Humanities Texas, the state affiliate of The National Endowment for the Humanities.

The four scholars represent the fields of archaeology, anthropology, botany and Mexican American Studies.

Dr. Lilliana Patricia Saldaña is Associate Professor of Mexican American Studies (MAS) at the University of Texas at San Antonio. Dr. Saldaña's research centers on Chicana and Chicano teacher identity and consciousness. She has published in nationally recognized journals, including *Latinos & Education*, and the *Association of Mexican American Educators Journal*. She served as Associate Editor of *Chicana/Latina Studies*, the premiere journal in the field of Chicana/Latina Studies. Dr. Saldaña researches and teaches about Mesoamerican gastronomy and indigenous foodways, with a focus on helping communities reclaim and sustain Indigenous foods for personal and collective well-being.

Dr. Leslie Bush is a paleoethnobotanist, an archaeologist with 20 years of experience identifying and analyzing plant macroremains from archaeological sites in the North American mid-continent, from West Virginia to Iowa to South Texas. Through her consulting practice, Macrobotanical Analysis, she has worked on sites in eighteen states including Maryland, Florida, Iowa, Montana, Indiana, and Texas. Specific research projects include the Texas Historical Commission's work on Fort St. Louis/Presidio La Bahia and Baylor University's work at rockshelters in central Texas.

[Adán Medrano](#) is a food writer and author researching the indigenous food and cooking of south Texas and northeastern Mexico. His research in this field has led to the publication of two history and cookbooks published by Texas Tech University Press as part of the "Grover E. Murray Studies in the American Southwest." The two books are: "Truly Texas Mexican: A Culinary Heritage In Recipes" and "Don't Count The Tortillas: The Art Of Texas Mexican Cooking." Medrano is the Executive Producer of the Amazon Prime documentary feature film, "Truly Texas Mexican," in which he presents his work about the Native American roots of Texas Mexican food. "Truly Texas Mexican" is endorsed by the [Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities](#) (HACU) and also by the Smithsonian, The Latino Center.

Dr. Mario Montaña is a cultural anthropologist and folklorist. His research focuses on the foodways of the Texas-Mexico border and the northern region of Mexico. His interests are on the anthropology of food: How do food-centered activities influence the construction of cultural and gender identity? How do food preparation, distribution, and consumption contribute to men and women's social position and power? How does food symbolically connote maleness and femaleness? In addition, Dr. Montaña developed a University-level course on the Rio Grande River, focusing on the different regional cultures living along the Rio Grande River.

Encuentro will culminate with a public media and panel presentation by the scholars and chefs.

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