

# "Encuentro," Houston Food Event Offers Tickets Online for Panel with Scholars & Celebrity Chefs

*Celebrity Chefs cook 3 Culinary Showcases and dialog with renowned food scholars about rich history and delicious flavors. Tickets open online.*

HOUSTON, TX, US, April 12, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Ten Texas-based celebrity chefs and four notable food scholars will convene in Houston for the first-time culinary encounter,

["Encuentro,"](#) May 19-20 to explore the impact, native history, and unique flavor profile of Comida Casera, the home-style cooking of Mexican American families of South Texas and Northeastern Mexico.

“

We are deeply grateful for the support from our sponsors,”

*Christine Ortega, Executive Director of "Encuentro"*

The two-day event, created by The Texas Indigenous Food Project and co-sponsored by The Mayor's Office of Special events, features three invitation-only culinary showcases of contemporary Comida Casera.

Four chefs will present dinner on May 19th with dishes that express the theme: Nature/Nurture.

On May 20th, three chefs will present breakfast dishes around the theme: Tradition/Innovation. The culinary showcase finale is Lunch on May 20th, where three chefs will serve dishes that delve into the theme: Tradition/Identity.

Each culinary showcase will be accompanied by the stories that surround each dish in the community, accompanied by research and historical documentation provided by participating food scholars.

The public is invited to attend closing events that include entertainment by MECA starting at 5:30 p.m. followed by the panel discussions at 6 p.m. Scholars will screen, then review selected scenes from the award-winning documentary, ["Truly Texas Mexican."](#)

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

The panel discussion and short film screenings will take place at Talento Bilingüe de Houston Theatre & Meeting Center, 333 S. Jensen Dr, Houston, Texas 77003. Tickets for the public panel are free but registration is required, and will be available online starting April 15th on the "Encuentro" website.

Both the tasting event and the public film screening panel will tell a story that has not been told before, according to Adán Medrano, food author and Project Director of Encuentro. "It's about the Native American roots of Texas Mexican food." He says that "it's not from across the border, it's been here for over 10,000 years. It's the first food of Texas."

Medrano says that "Encuentro" addresses three issues. First, it highlights the overlooked indigenous stories maintained through food and cooking. Second, it celebrates the people—mostly women—who invented these techniques hundreds of years ago that have been mostly erased from history. And finally, it dispels misconceptions between [Tex-Mex and Texas Mexican food](#).

Encuentro is made possible with the generous support of Humanities Texas, the state affiliate of The National Endowment for the Humanities, the City of Houston Mayor's Office of Special Events; H-E-B; MECA (Multicultural Education Through Counseling and the Arts); BC Global Law; Texas Tech University Press; Soul Fit Grill; and the Texas Tribal Buffalo Project.

"We are deeply grateful for the support from our sponsors and for the strong support from the business and academic communities who have made it possible for these first time-ever conversations about the flavors and meaning of our native Texas food," said Christine Ortega, the Executive Director of Encuentro.

"We were quick to spot the importance of Encuentro. Knowing more about the food we love and share, exploring its origins and traditions is part of what H-E-B does every day," said Lisa Helfman, Senior Director of H-E-B Public Affairs, Houston. "Mi Tienda, a division of H-E-B,



Texas Mexican culinary region comprised of South Texas and Northeastern Mexico



"Encuentro" gathering to highlight the history and flavors of Texas Mexican food

designed specifically for traditional Latinos, offers authentic ingredients and products that are hard to find. And we gladly provide support and products that fit well with Encuentro's program," said Helfman.

The shared oral histories, chef culinary practices, and scholar research will be documented for sharing through publication, papers and social media. Documentation is yet another element taking place at the Encuentro where the ten renowned chefs will feature community through food presentations.

**CELEBRITY CHEFS:** The cohort of chefs represent recognitions from the James Beard Awards as well as acclaim for best chef and best restaurant from publications such as Eater, Southern Living Magazine, Bon Appetit and USA Today. The chefs are:

Chef Nadia Casaperalta, Elsa, Texas  
Chef Sylvia Casares, Houston, Texas  
Chef Victoria Elizondo, Houston, Texas  
Chef Andrés Garza, Austin, Texas  
Chef Joseph Gomez, Austin, Texas  
Chef Roberto (Bobby) Gonzalez, Laredo, Texas  
Chef Rebel Mariposa, San Antonio, Texas  
Chef Luis F. Olvera, Dallas Texas  
Chef Arlene Kay O'Neal, Fort Worth, Texas  
Chef Vianney Rodriguez, Aransas Pass, Texas

**FOOD SCHOLARS:** The scholars are recognized, published leaders in the fields of food studies, anthropology, botany, and Mexican American studies. The scholars are:

Dr. Leslie Bush, Paleoethnobotanist, Macrobotanical Analysis, Manchaca, Texas  
Adán Medrano, Food Author, Independent Researcher, Chef, JM Media, LLC, Houston, Texas  
Dr. Mario Montaña, Professor Emeritus, Anthropology, Colorado College, Colorado Springs, Colorado.  
Dr. Lilliana Patricia Saldaña, Associate Professor of Mexican American Studies, University of Texas at San Antonio.

For more event details, and to register for the public panel, visit the web site: "Encuentro".

The Texas Indigenous Food Project promotes the understanding of Texas native food history and culture, so that by recapturing ancestral knowledge, communities in Texas and throughout the Americas will be better grounded in solidarity and sustainability and will heighten their enjoyment of good food and good health.

The Texas Indigenous Food Project is a not-for-profit 501(c)3 corporation whose mission is to celebrate first foods of Texas and the Americas.

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