

Mexican tradition

Family



Growing up in a Mexican household meant food, all the time. When I think back as far as I can remember, there isn't a moment I recall that my grandma was not steady stirring up something in the kitchen. Waking up at the crack of dawn to prepare breakfast was a breeze for her, and for a traditional Mexican household it is nothing out of the ordinary. Tortillas, the number one staple food in Mexico, were created daily, and usually the preparation for lunch or dinner continued as soon as breakfast had finished.

It is embedded in the Mexican culture for the women to be responsible in keeping a home together; with the preparation of fresh meals, and large meals at that, it allows families to come together each day and form a bond. Food was, and is, used as a means of non-verbal communication; and the dishes prepared are just as unique as the person preparing them. When guests came over to visit, that only meant more food to be cooked, and more delicious snacks to be enjoyed. Abuelas (grandmas) are notorious for cooking the best of the best when a visitor is present, even if that visitor is a five-year-old grandchild.

It's a way of conveying respect to that individual, in addition to ensuring they are not hungry, thirsty, or uncomfortable. For the Mexican wife of the household, every detail is important. The entire home is a symbol of what you represent: from the cleanliness of your home, to the delectable of your food, and even the obedience of your children. This is what I feel was important to the mothers, aunts, and grandmas I grew up around. At the end of the day, the woman was judged based on the complete infrastructure of her home. This all fits into the social structure that still exists in our society today.

With the exception of food selections, the American gender roles associated with females fit into the Mexican culture I am familiar with. It is easy to assume that the reason for the role of a woman being in charge of a household is based on the premise that women in a Mexican society, the more food you have the better; and nothing can be store bought. When my families got together for a fiesta, it was accustomed to bring a dish or two of food to share. I would always hear my grandmother pointing out foods that she was certain were not homemade.

The effort put into the process of a meal is important in my tradition, so making things from scratch and from home is highly looked upon. Someone who does not meet these criteria may be considered lazy, non-caring, and not capable of holding up their role to society. This ties back to the public versus private sphere example of lecture, in which the women are connected to the private spectrum of the household. In traditional Mexican culture, I feel that this analysis fit perfectly. I feel that DeVaults argument, as well as points made by Carrington, also are examples that can be explained by my family's traditional ways.

My grandmother would revolve her life around the household (cooking, cleaning), in addition to revolving around the specific times she needed to complete these tasks, babysitting the grandchildren, etc. They are self-less acts, but at the end of the day, it is clear that the roles society placed on genders, constrained women from separating themselves. The multiple tasks they conjure every day often went unnoticed, and though many women could enjoy doing all of these things, others may have simply felt pressured.

This largely resembles the social structure America has embedded in our heads.

From the moment we are born, every word that is directed towards you is depicted upon your gender. Little girls are described with words that are different than little boys, such as: cute, petite, strong, brave. And until recent years, since women have taken quite the leap into multiple career fields, women's role was the heart of the household. Women, usually staying home to cook and clean, while the husband, went to work his 9 to 5. With the increase in work force opportunities, and the tradition gap in generations, I feel the traditions I remember as a child are not as greatly practiced as before.

I salute my grandmother for every meal she accomplishes, because it is not an easy task. Being a college student, I cannot prepare fresh, grand meals when you come over to my place, but I do carry the values that go along with Mexican tradition. My motherly instincts kick in when my boyfriend is around, but we equally take turns in the kitchen, depending on our schedules with work and school. So if you come over to my place, I might not feed you fresh churro or a hot tortilla, as a guest in my home, but I will offer you a glass of wine and cookies, fresh from the package .

I think women will always over power the role in the kitchen, but due to social change, there is not as heavily a responsibility placed on home cooked meals (something I'm sure Ronald McDonald is very happy about.), and in the future, I think homes will become less and less traditional. In my perfect world, I hope to be able to instill the same cultural values I learned growing

up to my children, but raise them in a household where both husband and wife will take care of duties by working together, as a pair should.