

EL CENTRO'S GLOSSARY OF TERMS



824 9th Avenue @ 54th St
New York City, NY 10019
646-763-6585

Achiote

The slightly musky-flavored seed of the annatto tree is available whole or ground.

Ajo (Ajilo)

Garlic

Capirotada

Bread pudding made with raisins, fruit and cheese.

Ceviche

Raw fish or shellfish that has been “cooked” in lime juice, typically enhanced with chiles, cilantro and onion. Avocados are a good complement to ceviche.

Chalupa

Boat-shaped corn tortilla.

Chayote

A pear-shaped member of the gourd family that has a mild flavor and a moist texture reminiscent of cucumbers or zucchini.

Chile Rajas

A family style Mexican dish of fried corn tortillas simmered in a sauce of tomatoes, chiles, and garlic. This is a highly seasoned dish, often served as a brunch or lunch dish with eggs or meat.

Chilaquiles

Roasted chiles or peppers, with onion, lime and cilantro.

Chorizo

A highly seasoned pork sausage from all Hispanic countries, ranging in seasoning from mild and sweet to fiercely hot. It's widely used in both Mexican and Spanish cookery. Mexican chorizo is made with fresh

pork, while the Spanish version uses smoked pork.

Empanada

A small savory pie from Spain and South America stuffed with meat, seafood, or vegetables that can be seasoned in many ways. The fillings can be wrapped in masa dough or puff pastry and either baked or fried.

Enchilada

A corn tortilla dipped in chile sauce, wrapped around just about anything, then topped with sauce and cheese.

Flan

A Spanish baked custard coated with caramel.

Flauta

Means “flute”. Corn tortilla tightly rolled around a filling, then deep-fried.

Gordita

Small piece of masa dough stuffed with meat, cheese or vegetables and fried. Literally means “little fatty”.

Guacamole

A dip made of diced avocados seasoned with onions, tomatoes, chiles, and cilantro. This is mostly eaten as a dip for fried corn chips or soft corn tortillas.

Guajillo

One of many varieties of Chiles.

Haricot Verts

Baby green beans.

Huitlacoche

A Mexican truffle that grows on the ears of corn, it has a slight smoky, mushroom flavor. A popular delicacy.



824 9th Avenue @ 54th St
New York City, NY 10019
646-763-6585

Idiazabel Cheese

A rustic sheep's-milk cheese with a smoky flavor.

Masa Dough

Dough made with Maseca (a corn product).

Mole

A rich, dark, reddish-brown sauce. There are many variations of this spicy Mexican specialty. Generally, mole is a smooth, cooked blend of onion, garlic, several varieties of chiles, ground seeds (such as sesame seeds or pumpkin seeds — known as pepitas) and a small amount of Mexican chocolate, its best-known ingredient. The chocolate contributes richness to the sauce without adding overt sweetness.

Pico de Gallo

Literally meaning “rooster’s beak”, this is a spicy, raw salsa made of fresh tomatoes, serrano chiles, onions, cilantro and lime juice.

Queso Blanco

A white, slightly salty, fresh Mexican cheese.

Queso Oaxaca

A white cow's-milk cheese originating from Oaxaca, Mexico, with good melting properties, very similar to mozzarella.

Tamale

Tamale masa dough filled with savory or sweet ingredients wrapped in corn husk or banana leaf and steamed.

Tinga

Mix made of roasted pork or chicken with tomatoes, chiles, garlic, onion & cilantro.

Tostada

A fried flat corn tortilla.

Tres Leches

Pastel de Tres Leches is a butter cake soaked in a mixture of three different milk products. The three milks, when combined, create just the right sweetness, density and “mouth feel” for a rich cake, making it moist but not mushy.

Uchepo Tamale

A fresh sweet corn tamale.

Volovanes

Small savory pies with puff pastry crust that are filled with meat, seafood, or vegetables and seasoned in many ways then baked.

Yucca

(aka manioc or cassava). A white, starchy tropical root vegetable that was originally grown by the indigenous peoples who resided in the countries now known as Colombia, Venezuela, and Brazil. The vegetable is a nutritionally superior substitute for potatoes.