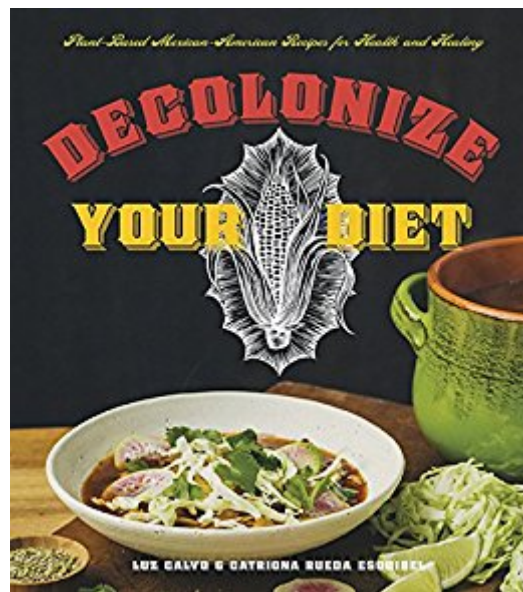




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# Decolonize Your Diet: Plant-Based Mexican-American Recipes For Health And Healing



## Synopsis

International Latino Book Award winner, Best Cookbook  
More than just a cookbook, *Decolonize Your Diet* redefines what is meant by "traditional" Mexican food by reaching back through hundreds of years of history to reclaim heritage crops as a source of protection from modern diseases of development. Authors Luz Calvo and Catriona Rueda Esquibel are life partners; when Luz was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2006, they both radically changed their diets and began seeking out recipes featuring healthy, vegetarian Mexican foods. They promote a diet that is rich in plants indigenous to the Americas (corn, beans, squash, greens, herbs, and seeds), and are passionate about the idea that Latinos in America, specifically Mexicans, need to ditch the fast food and return to their own culture's food roots for both physical health and spiritual fulfillment. This vegetarian cookbook features over 100 colorful, recipes based on Mesoamerican cuisine and also includes contributions from indigenous cultures throughout the Americas, such as Kabocha Squash in Green Pipian, Aguachile de Quinoa, Mesquite Corn Tortillas, Tepary Bean Salad, and Amaranth Chocolate Cake. Steeped in history but very much rooted in the contemporary world, *Decolonize Your Diet* will introduce readers to the energizing, healing properties of a plant-based Mexican American diet. Full-color throughout. Luz Calvo and Catriona Rueda Esquibel are professors at California State East Bay and San Francisco State University, respectively. They grow fruits, vegetables, and herbs on their small urban farm. This is their first book.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I was very excited to receive this book from a friend for Christmas. If you happen to be a vegan Xicanx, you are in luck! I compared recipes from the book with my Abuelita's recipes (she's from Chihuahua, but not familiar with all the recipes) and they were very close. Translating the recipes to my grandma brought back so many memories for her. She started to remember dishes and other plates that she grew up with. She would also recognize an herb and say what its medicinal uses were, which were then listed in the book. The book had notes and information that made me think of her voice. Therefore, I sincerely trust this cookbook's ethical stance and yumminess. I have made the pipian while my Abuelita was sick in bed (i.e., she couldn't help me much). Her response when tasting it? "¡Se aventajó!" Her approval is very hard to come by. I can't wait to try the rest of these recipes. Such rewarding cooking sharing in communal ethnic knowledge. Some of the recipes do include queso and they seem to taste fine without them. I also have heard good things about the alternative cashew queso so I will have to attempt that.

Every recipe I've made from this book has been absolutely delicious and surprising. I like to cook, but Decolonize Your Diet is really challenging me to break out of my comfort zone and try recipes with component parts and more effort. It's not like they're \*hard\* so much as they're just... not so easy. (I'm frequently a rice + beans or curry or one-pot meal kind of cook.) The recipes may take a little longer or require a couple ingredients that you have to go out of the way for, but even when I'm reading the recipe and feeling like, "???" in the end it's all worth it and everything I've made has been really good. I also love the philosophy behind this book and I think the authors did a really great job.

"Decolonize Your Diet" is a gem of a cook book. Given the glut of fancy, big name cook books released this fall, it would be all too easy to overlook it—but Luz Calvo and Catriona Rueda Esquibel succeed in laying a foundation for a whole system of healthy eating that can last throughout your lifetime (as opposed to big name trends and fads). Adding on the historical, spiritual

and cultural elements in the way they so eloquently do only adds to the total experience. This book will enrich your heart and your mind as well as your kitchen.

Delicious, healthy, plant based recipes, with a side of social justice! I have been wanting to make tortillas for a long time but was intimidated. I tried the recipe for corn tortillas in this book, and they are easy and fast to make and delicious!

Buying Experience: 1 Star. Book Itself: 4 Stars If you buy from check your copy carefully. I recommend buying in store somewhere. I received 3 copies in a row with a printing error. There was a large chunk of missing pages (p. 49 - 72) and instead there were duplicate pages (p. 73 - 96) from another chapter in their place. I wrote the author and they acknowledging some books in the second edition had a printing error. I wrote clearly explaining the problem, I was told they would check the book before sending it to me and still 3 times received misprinted copies. The last time they said they couldn't promise they wouldn't just send me another faulty printed book so they refunded instead of trying to send another replacement. I am surprised and disappointed to see they didn't pause sale of their inventory while they check for more faulty ones. I am now trying to track down a local copy I can check myself before buying The book itself has a lot of great recipes. I would prefer more photos of the prepared food. Some of the recipes have long ingredient lists and are lengthy to prepare, but that is also just the nature of those traditional recipes. Because much precolonial food was naturally vegan, most of these recipes are as well. The ones that aren't are still vegetarian and the non-vegan ingredients are not front and center in those recipes and appear to be easy to substitute. (e.g. a sprinkle of goat's cheese on top that can be omitted, or a little butter). While I would prefer it be completely vegan and that seems a little more authentic if it was, the animal products play a rather small part in the book. So far I've only tried making the cauliflower ceviche (missing from my copy but they posted on their facebook page) and not only was it simple to prepare, but delicious and healthy. I brought it to a summer potluck and it was very popular.

I ordered and cancelled (after reading the 1 star review about dairy and eggs) then put it in and out of my cart half a dozen times because of my vegan conflict. Then I ordered it again last week. I've had it for three days and have made three recipes: Urban Farmer Calabacitas, Black Velvet Beans, and Hibiscus Tacos. They were all outstanding. The second two seemed risky (beans with an anise-like flavor?)(tacos made with jamaica??).....but my entire family devoured them. It is true that this is not a purely vegan cookbook. But there isn't anything an experienced vegan cook can't easily

sub out. And, there is no cookbook of which I'm aware that makes the important socio-political cultural case so expertly made by these authors. This is a revolutionary and beautiful book in every sense of those words. A must have addition to any ethical vegan's library.

My copy arrived on Friday and was immediately put to use. I made and enjoyed Hibiscus Flower Tacos and Black Velvet Beans (which I'm sharing with a neighbor - they're so good). I love where Luz and Catriona are coming from in terms of preserving and honoring ancient recipes and relationships with plants, and presenting the recipes in a way that all can make and enjoy. Plus, the book is a visual feast.

I've only made a few recipes out of this book so far, but they have been amazing. The pumpkin mole is so delicious. I've also been learning a lot by reading the book.

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