

Pambazos

By Amado Rosas

"Hola Mama, ya llegue," I said as I entered my beloved home in my natal town of Tlalnepantla in Mexico. Tired from a busy day and an exhausting P.E class, I opened the front door. As I stepped into the house, a cold chill ran through the living room. I became excited by an attractive fragrance that came from the kitchen. At the end of the hallway, I turned my body ninety degrees to observe the beautiful shape of my mom. My eyes wrinkled as I noticed her. I didn't know if it was my imagination, but I spotted a bright light surrounding her body.

I tiptoed silently into the kitchen, going around the central dinner table, and positioned myself around her. I curved my back and turned my head to reach her cheek. I gave her a kiss, and with a lovely voice she said, "Como te fue, hijo? *How was your day, son?*"

I felt like I was in another world, but then I responded, "Bien mama, pero que estas cocinando? *I did o.k. at school, but tell me, what are you cooking?*" As she moved her lips, I heard the word "Pambazos" come out of her mouth.

At that moment I thought that my life was starting. This special dish is my favorite Mexican food. It is similar to a torta, filled with potatoes, chorizo, lettuce, sour cream, Mexican queso fresco and hot sauce, all covered with a thin layer of red chile sauce. I studied how my mom prepared each delicacy with such agility that it seemed supersonic. Her hands were stretching and contracting in many different directions, catching a little of everything and then neatly organizing it to make the perfect piece. The love she put into her duty made me happy.

With her typical beauty, she turned her body, and with a sweet voice, she called everyone to come to the table. As the words traveled in the air and bounced against their ears, my dad and my two small brothers leapt from their seats and sprinted desperately to the kitchen. We all took a seat and waited impatiently for the food to be served. At last, my mom took a seat and whispered, "Hoy es el cumpleaños de Amado, y tenemos que dar gracias por estar aqui todos unidos. *Today is Amado's birthday, and we must say grace for being all united.*" We didn't like to say grace, but she forced us to do so by making her typical "mad" face. Her eyes were squinted and her lips drawn into a straight line. After a minute or two, my mom stood up and paced towards the stove. She took a plate and placed it in front of me.

It contained a pambazo. The red colored bolillo was bubbling. The blend of smells on the inside opened my appetite. The combination of potatoes and chorizo emitted a spicy scent that filled my body with happiness. The sour cream lay on top of the serpenty cut lettuce. It was just wonderful.

I turned my head to see how the excitement had taken over my family. I could see how my brothers were just desperate to get started. My dad was trying to convince my mom that we needed to start eating. Even with all this arguing and desperation, a feeling of togetherness surrounded the table. A warm sensation came from my brothers. They were very excited, like I had never seen them before. Their eyes sparkled in excitement. My parents were very happy to be right there, sharing that special moment with their children. They hugged me tightly, which made me the happiest person in the whole world.

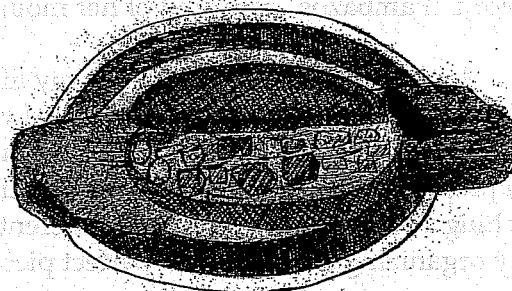
I decided to take the lead and started eating. The first bite was the best. The spicy flavor of the soft cover combined with the salty flavor of the potatoes was heavenly good. There were

all kind of textures blended together, from the crunchy texture of the green lettuce to the smooth texture of the white Mexican cheese. As I prolonged my eating, I saw my mom's eyes staring right at me, happy that I was enjoying my treat.

Every time I eat pambazos, I remember that one day, especially that moment where I felt that special connection with my family: all of us together as a family and enjoying our favorite food. Unfortunately, I can no longer experience this connection. Back in Mexico, my family and I enjoyed most of the time together everyday after school. We would always sit down at the table and eat while having an interesting conversation, and it was even better when we consumed this delicacy. Everyone spoke openly about their day, and laughter was always present. Now that we live here in the U.S, my family is separating in different ways. Our busy schedules do not allow us to enjoy a good time together. Not even pambazos bring our family together anymore, and I would do anything to bring us together again.

Ingredients

5 boiled potatoes, chopped
10 guajillo chiles
5 ounces chorizo
9 bolillo rolls, cut in half horizontally
½ a head of lettuce, shredded
white sour cream
Mexican queso fresco
hot sauce (if desired)



PAMBAZOS

Directions

Place the guajillo chiles in a small saucepan. Add enough water to cover the chiles. Cook them on medium heat for about 10 minutes or until the chiles are tender. Drain the chiles and put them in a blender. Add water to the blender, and blend until the sauce is smooth. Pour through a strainer and take out any solids, then set the sauce aside.

Next, cook the chorizo and the potatoes in a frying pan on medium heat for approximately 15 minutes or until the chorizo is cooked well and the potatoes are tender. Place a good amount of the chorizo with potatoes in the bottom half of the bolillos.

Carefully dip the filled bolillo into the guajillo sauce until it's thoroughly covered with sauce. Put the sandwiches in a frying pan. Cook for 3 minutes, and then turn them over. Continue to cook for 5 minutes until the sauce is absorbed and both sides are slightly toasted. Serve with lettuce, sour cream and Mexican queso fresco. Add hot sauce if desired.

Serves 9

Calories-350, Total fat-19g, Saturated fat-7g, Cholesterol-35mg,
Sodium-990mg, Carbohydrates-30g, Dietary fiber-2g, Sugars-5g, Protein-12g,
Vitamin A-16µg, Vitamin C-3.6mg, Calcium-80mg, Iron-1.2mg