

Title: Cooking *Frijoles* is a Revolutionary Act

Photographer: Andrea Mercedes Garcia

Description:

A gentle simmering pot of *frijolitos*, wonderfully uncomplicated, reminiscent of my *abuelita's* cooking style. Our predecessors understood the importance of advocating for a return to fresh, wholesome foods. For Latinx and Indigenous communities, beans represent a culinary link to our ancestors. Embracing a decolonized diet means adopting the traditional food choices of our forebears for both our well-being and the health of our planet. In this image, *frijoles* are lovingly prepared by my children, following recipes handed down through generations, originating from my grandmother, passed to my mother, then to me, and now imparted to my offspring. I infused my *suegra's* style of making *frijoles* along with my mother's to give my children both sides of their lineage, *de Zacatecas y Nuevo Mexico*. My daughter carefully sifts through each *frijol* picking out the stones. Preparing a pot of *frijolitos* serves as an act of anti-colonial resistance within the food deserts of Los Angeles. Our family reclaims *frijoles* as a staple of our native diet, nourishing our bodies and contributing to our communal health. The choice of what, how, and where to eat becomes a revolutionary gesture as we stay connected to our Indigenous heritage. *Frijoles* can take on various forms—*charro*, refried, or cooked in the pot. I take pride in imparting this skill to my children, who will one day pass it on to their children, underscoring the significance of Indigenous food sovereignty.



Biography:

Andrea Mercedes Garcia is currently pursuing her Master's degree in Chicana Latinx studies at California State University, Los Angeles. Actively engaged in her community, she holds the esteemed roles of Social Services Commissioner and President of the Norwalk La Mirada School District PTA, all while proudly embracing her identity as a devoted mother. Additionally, Andrea runs her own small business, offering *pláticas* and spiritual cleansing services to her clientele. Beyond her professional and community endeavors, Andrea is deeply committed to reclaiming her proud Mescalero Apache roots, tracing her ancestry to New Mexico. In both her academic pursuits and social work, she remains steadfast in her mission to decolonize and honor her Indigenous heritage, forging a path of empowerment and cultural resurgence.