**Traditional Meals in Mexico**

**T**he Mexican dishes are very diverse and extremely delicious. The influence of the Spanish and Indian cultures can be felt in them. The roots of the Mexican cuisine go right into the depth of the Indian Maya and Aztec cultures. It is the Mayas and the Aztecs who have made the Spanish conquistadors aware of tomatoes, avocados, peanuts, squash (vegetable marrows), sweet and white potatoes, pineapples, papaya, vanilla, cocoa, certain string bean and Chili pepper varieties.

**O**ne good turn deserves another: the Spaniards have brought cattle, sheep, chickens, wheat, rice, nuts, oil, garlic, cinnamon, some other spices and fruit to the Americas. The missioner nuns living in Mexico were entrusted the responsibility for the development and distribution of new dishes. For their cooking they used the ingredients typical of the Indian as well as Spanish cuisine.

**S**tep by step the Mexican cuisine was winning its ever increasing popularity, and the Latin American - Indian cooks were adapting their traditional meals to the European palate and the European-origin ingredients. The Mexican cuisine is characterized with the ingredients and dishes that have already become classics: Chili pepper, tortillas, tacos, rice and string beans. And it is undoubtedly tequila that rates first among the spirits!

**I**t goes without saying that the only word describing the Mexican Cuisine is chili, and especially chili peppers. It makes no difference are they either unbroken or cut into pieces, either pickled or fresh, either tinned or dried, chili peppers are integral part of the Mexican dishes.

**C**hili seasoning is a clue to understanding of unique taste of the Mexican cuisine.

**M**exican legend about chili says that it protects from cold and malaria, is good for digestion, cleanses blood and raises immunity.

**T**ortilla substitutes for bread in Mexico. It may be fried, baked, sauced or with different fillings (for example, with jelly). You may also eat it in itself. Tortilla is often used for tacos.

**T**aco is the most popular appetizer in Mexico. The principal ingredient is a crisp corn cake, fried in the form of U. Taco shells as a rule are filled with meat and seasoning or with string bean. Then it is topped with cut lettuce, onion, tomatoes and grated cheese. All this is enriched with red or green chili sauce. Variants of cooking taco sauce are endless. Taco sauce cooked of tomatoes, onion, chili pepper, garlic and other seasoning creates a unique taste of the Mexican cuisine.

**R**ice and string beans is considered to be the most traditional Mexican garnish.

**S**tring beans usually are kneaded or whipped to fill taco. As a garnish string beans may be served in whole. Fried string beans are a string beans mash, fried in oil.

**R**ice is another popular garnish for majority of the Mexican dishes. “Mexican rice” may be cooked by different ways. Every Mexican family has its own recipe, inherited from the ancestors.

**I**t goes without saying that Tequila is the most popular Mexican strong drink. A half of lemon segment and a saucer with salt is served for pure tequila. The lemon is put between thumb and forefinger. A pinch of salt is put on joint of thumb. At first you take a little salt, then you take a sip of tequila and in the end you take the lemon.

**O**ne of the favorite drinks made of tequila is Margarita, prepared on the basis of lemon. It is served in cold goblet. Brims of the goblet should be sprinkled with salt. Cocktail “Daiquiri” may be alternative of “Margarita”. This drink is usually served almost frozen.

**B**esides, liqueur with a smell of coffee is very spread in Mexico. It is also popular both in cocktails and in desserts.