

Created by: Debra C. Argen

## Chef Alfonso V Corona Recipes - El Arrayan, Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco, Mexico



We took a wonderful cooking class at the restaurant, [El Arrayan](#), located in the downtown (Centro) section of [Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco, Mexico](#), where we learned to make traditional Mexican dishes. This pretty little restaurant owned by Carmen E. Porras, is warm and inviting with its colorful chairs, open courtyard where an arrayan tree grows, and sacred Huichol artwork grace the walls. Chef Alfonso V. Corona is the talent in the kitchen. The restaurant graciously shares a taste of El Arrayan with recipes for **Sopitos Villa de Álvarez**, **Cochinita Pibil (Pork in Achiote and Banana Leaf Stew)**, and **Flan de Cajeta**.

Taking a cooking class at the restaurant during our trip to Puerto Vallarta, Mexico in late April 2014, we had the opportunity to get to know owner Carmen E. Porras. Originally from Mexico City, she is someone who lives and breathes food; it is not only her profession, but her passion as well. A dedicated foodie, she collects modern cookbooks, as well as older cookbooks to learn traditional ways, and in her free time, little that there is as a restaurateur, she enjoys watching cooking shows on the television.



**Carmen E. Porras, Owner**

She opened her restaurant in November 2003 where the focus is on Mexican cuisine, and in a city that welcomes tourists, the restaurant is the real deal when it comes to their menu. The restaurant is open Wednesday through Monday, (closed on Tuesdays) for dinner only, and cooking classes are offered during the day.

During our 2.5 hour class, we learned to make, and then later enjoyed as our lunch, homemade Tortillas, Sopitos Villa de Álvarez, Cochinita Pibil, a typical dish from the Yucatan section of Mexico, which is a slow-cooked pulled pork and banana leaf stew, Fire Roasted Salsa Verde, and Flan de Cajeta for dessert. Over lunch, we celebrated our "graduation" with the restaurant's signature cocktail, Margarita Arrayan, made with the fruit of the arrayan tree, and toasted our "discovery" of El Arrayan.

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**Chef Alfonso V. Corona**

Carmen E. Porras and Chef Alfonso V. Corona graciously share a few of the recipes from El Arrayan cooking class to tempt your palate into taking a cooking class at El Arrayan on your next visit to Puerto Vallarta, or in having dinner at the restaurant. Buon Provecho!

**El Arrayan Menu**

**Sopitos Villa de Álvarez**

**Cochinita Pibil (Pork in Achiote and Banana Leaf Stew)**

**Flan de Cajeta**

**The Recipes**



**Sopitos Villa de Álvarez**

Ingredients:

500

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Grams (1 pound)

Corn Massa

200

Grams (7 oz)

Refried Black Beans

100

Grams (3.5 oz)

Queso Fresco or Cotija, or any Mexican grating cheese

100

Grams (3.5 oz)

White Onions

100

Grams (3.5 oz)

Lard

Method: Shape the massa into small balls, then press flat to create thick round "sopes." Cook in a skillet over medium heat until half cooked. Remove from the heat and using thumb and index finger, pinch all around the sope to create a flat bowl shape. Try to make the "wall" as smooth as possible. You will need to work quickly as once the sope is cool, you can no longer shape it.

Add a small amount of lard to a pan to pan fry the sopes on both sides until cooked. Fill with some refried beans, add some onions and cheese on top of the beans, and serve warm as appetizers with different salsas.



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**Cochinita Pibil (Pork in Achiote and Banana Leaf Stew)**

**Serves 10**

Cochinita Pibil is a regional dish from the Yucatan region of Mexico.

Ingredients:

2.2

Kg (4.8 pounds)

Pork leg, remove the fat and tissues

300

ML (10 oz)

Vegetable Oil

100

ML (3.4 oz)

Olive Oil

Salt, to taste

200

ML (6.7 oz)

White Vinegar

200

Grams (7 oz)

Achiote Paste (commercially sold, mixed spices, very concentrated)

200

Grams (7 oz)

White Onion

500

ML (16.9 oz)

Orange Juice (in the Yucatan, they use sour orange)

Lime juice, to taste

Cumin, to taste

Allspice, to taste (in Spanish, pimenta gorda)

Cloves, to taste

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Mexican Oregano, to taste

Garlic, to taste

Banana Leaf

Method: Blend all ingredients in a blender (except for the oil and banana leaf). When blended, slowly add the oil to create a thick consistency for the marinade.

Clean the pork of excess fat, and cut into 4-cm (1.5-inch) cubes. Marinate the pork in the marinade for at least 24 hours in the refrigerator.

Cover and cook the meat in the marinade, and simmer until tender. Remove from the heat and let cool. Refrigerate.

When the meat is cold, remove it from the marinade, and pull the meat with a fork into thin strings. Put the pulled pork back into the marinade and continue to cook to thicken the sauce. Lightly pass the banana grill over the burner or grill to make it soft and pliable. Add the banana leaf to the cooking liquid and let cook to add flavor to the meat and sauce.

To serve: Take the banana leaf out, and serve the meat with black refried beans and Xnipec (red onions and habanero pepper relish).



### **Flan de Cajeta (Goat Milk Caramel Flan)**

**Serves 8**

#### Ingredients:

750

ML (25 oz)

Whole Milk

250

ML (8.4 oz)

Carnation Evaporated Milk

4

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Whole Eggs

4

Egg Yolks

200

Grams (7 oz)

Sugar

125

ML (4 oz)

Water

300

ML (10 oz)

Cajeta, goat milk caramel spread

Method: Heat sugar and water to create the caramel. When it is golden in color it is done. Take care to not burn the caramel.

Pour the caramel into 8 molds or custard cups. Take care; the caramel will be very hot.

Mix 4 whole eggs and the 4 egg yolks in a separate bowl with the rest of the ingredients, and then pass through a strainer to make the mixture very smooth.

Place the 8 molds in a "bain-marie" (double-boiler), and cook for 10 minutes on top of the stove. Cover the bain-marie with aluminum foil and cook for 10 more minutes on the stove. Finish by baking in a 325° F (163° C) oven for 5-10 minutes until set. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

Presentation: Turn the mold over a plate to release the flan. Finish with a swirl of cajeta if desired.



**Carmen and Claudio**

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**El Arrayan** is open for dinner Wednesday through Monday from 5:30 pm until 11:00 pm. The restaurant is closed on Tuesdays.

There are two options for cooking classes which are taught in English, Option 1 begins at 9:30 am with breakfast, area tour, class, and lunch, or Option 2 which begins at 11:00 am with a cooking class and lunch.

Read about our experience at the cooking class at **El Arrayan** in the **Gastronomy** section.

**El Arrayan - la mera mera cocina mexicana**

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