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So you've decided to eat Salvadorian . . .

by *Tim Bott and Sherry Telford*

Mexican eateries are no stranger to any city. Yet the food at most of these places is uncharacteristic and benign; the food is usually the same. I speak like a spokesman for heartburn medication when I say that most Mexican food is often overwhelming, too covered in beans, or otherwise overbearing to suit even my unsophisticated palate. So why did I fall in love with Los Jarritos? Because it is not a Mexican restaurant! Ah, no! It is a Mexican and Salvadorian restaurant!

Salvadorian food is focused more on simplicity and flavor than overall spiciness, which is all too common in Mexican food. At Los Jarritos, the two different Central American food styles blend well together, and the end result is a diverse menu that suits those on a caloric binge, or those looking for a simple flavorful meal that they won't regret eating in 24-36 hours.

The atmosphere at Los Jarritos is pleasant, albeit with the standard explosion of décor. The restaurant contains more than its share of party lights; a flamboyant display of hot pepper lights fills the ceiling, and the walls are adorned with random paintings and tapestries. The final touch is a smattering of tequila and cerveza promotional materials; signs, banners, table-toppers and other marketing goodies litter the restaurant in an array of advertising mayhem. With all of this, you would think that the atmosphere is invasive, yet the feel of the restaurant is very laid-back and pleasant.

The menu was descriptive and easy to understand. Chicken, beef, egg, pork, and vegetarian specialties provide for a very diverse selection. My companion, Sherry, ordered a combination platter - a true Mexican dish complete with a pork tamale, pollo relleno, and a cheese enchilada, plus a healthy amount of beans and rice to complement the main portions. I chose an egg and bacon burrito, complete with rice, cilantro, and beans. Prepared more in a Salvadorian style, my plate had a simple but appetizing presentation. To accompany this, I also ordered a spectacular Salvadorian specialty, a pasteles, which is a deep fried pastry filled with chicken, vegetables, and herbs. Nothing tasted heavy or deep fried about this; the fried shell was light and crispy.

Los Jarritos, located at 764 Blair in the Whiteaker neighborhood, would be a perfect place for lunch, dinner, or take-out (344-0650). Prices are typical for Mexican restaurants; there are inexpensive \$3-5 a la carte items, or \$8-15 combination platters that can easily feed more than one person, so there is something good in every price range. If you are in the mood for a light and flavorful Salvadorian meal, or if you fancy a Mexican meal of champions, Los Jarritos won't disappoint.

