

# Mexican food put to the test

Joanne Bergstrom  
Clackamas Print

There is a difference between cooking and restaurant dining, and when you stumble upon the real thing, it's magic. Mitzil Loncheria is a Mexican restaurant with a grandmotherly feel, cooking as if she really means it. Look for a bright building just two miles from Clackamas at 212 Molalla Avenue, Oregon City.

From the street, the building looked cozy, and I was curious. Inside, the bright colors and the hanging decorations around the customers, giving it the feel of a tropical country. The fresh fruit at the counter adds to the ambience.

Although there are daily specials, I ordered a roast pork taco for \$1.25, with a side of guacamole (\$2.50). The waiter warned me that there are no chips here, but I asked me how I would eat it. Chips weren't necessary. The burrito was as much of a fresh meal as anything, with real pieces of onions and tomatoes mixed into

the taco to get "regu-Mexican fare, but what I got was outstanding. I got a slow-cooked, heavenly tasting pork inside a tortilla. I felt like I was eating Sunday dinner. The burritos come with three on a plate for \$5.25. My daughter



Mitzil Loncheria, located two miles from the college at 212 Mollala Ave., is the best of the local Mexican restaurants reviewed. It features excellent food and a bright atmosphere.

ordered a child's plate for \$3.25, which was more than enough food. She also ordered the fresh fruit strawberry *Licudo*, or smoothie.

The menu is small, with the usual mix of tortillas, tacos, tostadas, and *sopes*; but each day there are two specials for lunch and two specials for dinner. Today's lunch specials were chicken tomato stew and beef strips with red chile sauce. Both came with handmade tortillas, rice and beans—for \$4.95.

They are open from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m., Monday through Saturday. Service is not the fastest, though, and if you don't have a full hour for lunch, it may be better to use the drive-through across the street at Los Tachitos.

Los Tachitos, located at 503 Molalla Avenue, serves the restaurant-type fast food that most people associate with Mexican restaurants. Still, it is very well spaced and quite tasty. Inside, they have a big machine

that makes homemade tortillas. They also serve Mexican pastries and have a salsa bar to supplement your order.

The best item that I tried there was the green chile and pork burrito for \$4.75. I could only eat half of it, but it was good enough to save. I also tried their tacos, which were pretty standard but very tasty—and, I might add, very reasonable at \$1.50.

They are open seven days a week from 6:30 a.m. to midnight.

Their menu was extensive, though they didn't have a copy of it for me to take home.

Either way, a special lunch can be had for just a five-minute drive from the school.

Cha Cha Cha, with many locations in the Portland area, seems to be the newest and latest fresh food chain to hit the area, and if I could have eaten the menu, it would have been delicious. Unfortunately, I had to eat the food.

Now I know this is subjective, and I also admit to only trying two items; but both the chile verde burrito and the wild salmon taco did not tempt me at all, the former being just too heavy and sort of sweet, and the latter being so sweet it bordered on disgusting.

The menu calls the food "Southern Mexican Cuisine" so maybe it's supposed to be different than Northern Mexican cuisine, though I've heard that burritos are an American invention which takes up half their menu.

They have 18 different burritos, including three vegetarian choices averaging \$3.95, two salads, 11 taco choices at \$1.50 each, two *tortas* (sandwiches), nachos, dinner plates and more. As I said, if I could eat the menu, this would be a wonderful place to eat.

Cha Cha Cha is open seven days a week from 10 a.m. – 10 p.m. and has five Portland locations: Downtown, Sellwood, Irvington, the Pearl, and Hawthorne. I wouldn't go to any of them.

## O. C. Farmers' Market supports local growers, economy

Anna Martinez  
Clackamas Print

Some people say farmers have an easy job. They just put a small seed into the ground and wait a few days to let it grow, then take it to the public and get rich. Some tell you that being a farmer is not an easy thing; it is more complicated than that. It looks like people get up very early in the

morning to irrigate their plants; they take good care of them and spend a lot of money on fertilizers to get beautiful flowers or fresh veggies at the end of the harvest.

To make this job harder, they have to find a fast way to sell their produce before it rots, but at the same time they have to start sowing more produce for the next sale. Most of the time they sell their produce to big

companies for a cheap price, due to these companies having more commercialization in their stores than farmers have in their greenhouses.

Can you imagine? That's how they make their money, and we don't appreciate their hard work. We just go to the store and buy fruits that later rot in our kitchens. It's not fair. That's why groups of farmers have created what they call "Farmers' Market," in which they get together one day every week to sell their produce directly to the public, "How it has to be."

This association is all over

Oregon, and it helps improve farmers' incomes and provides local people and businesses with fresh, high quality produce. Farmers' market reconnects over 90,000 Oregonians per week in the peak of the harvest season, and it has around 64 markets in which each farmers' market builds upon its farmers' and community's uniqueness. This direct relationship between the producer and the consumer contributes to strengthening our local economies.

We as a community should contribute to the growing of this association; we are going to get

fresh, cheap and good produce right from the farm. In addition, farmers are going to expand their produce and build a better economy for all of us. Some of the markets are located in Portland, Astoria, Newport, Salem, Tillamook, and now very close to us in Oregon City, next to the clinic, during the weekends. We should go and help our community farmers with their produce; not just buying it, but eating it.

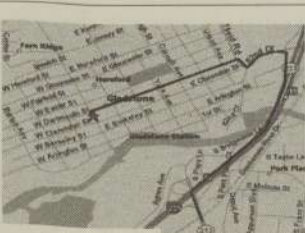
If you would like to know more about Farmers' Markets, visit [www.oregonfarmersmarkets.org](http://www.oregonfarmersmarkets.org) and be part of this new way to help our economy.



Photo courtesy of [ocean.washington.edu](http://ocean.washington.edu)

Oregon City Farmers' Market not only offers fresh produce, but stimulates the local economy as well.

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