

Josefina Velázquez de León, *Cocina Mexicana de Abolengo* (México, D.F.: Academia Cocina y Repostería, Velázquez de León, 1952), 111-112.

Pescado a la Veracruzana

- 1 kilo de pescado huachinango o robalo en trozo
- 750 gramos de jitomate
- 2 cebollas
- 3 dientes de ajo
- 1 raja de canela
- 2 clavos de especial
- 3 pimientas gruesas
- 2 chiles anchos
- 75 gramos de aceitunas
- 50 gramos de alcaparras
- 8 chiles jalapeños en vinagre.
- Orégano, perejil
- Sal y pimienta

Yield: ~6 servings Preparation time: 20 min Cooking Time: 30 min
Nutritional Content per serving: Calories: 226.8 Fat 5.8 g (saturated: 1.2; Trans: 0.0) Protein: 30.2 g Carbohydrates: 15.3 g Sugars: 6.2 g Dietary Fiber: 4.8 g. Cholesterol: 62.0 mg Sodium: 772.8 mg

Manera de Hacerse:

Los jitomates se asan, se muelen con las cebollas, los dientes de ajo, unas hojas de perejil, las especias y los chiles anchos asados, desvenados y remojados; se les agregan las aceitunas picadas, las alcaparras, los chiles jalapeños cortados en tiritas, el jerez, el aceite, el vinagre, sal y pimienta.

En una cazuela extendida, untada de aceite se colocan los trozos de pescado, se pone encima la salsa y se tapa la cazuela; se pone a fuego fuerte durante 20 minutos teniendo cuidado de agitarle seguido para que no se pegue. Se sirve muy caliente.

Veracruz-style Fish

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| • 2 pounds of red snapper or sea bass in pieces (substitute any firm white fish, such as cod or pollock) | • 2 onions | • 3 tablespoons capers |
| • 1 2/3 pounds tomatoes | • 3 cloves of garlic | • 8 jalapeno chiles in vinegar |
| • Salt and pepper | • 1 cinnamon stick | • 1 tablespoon sherry (or water) |
| | • 2 cloves | • Oregano, parsley |
| | • 3 large peppercorns | |
| | • 2 ancho chiles | |
| | • 28 green olives | |

Method of Preparation:

- 1) Toast the ancho chiles in a dry skillet, then de-seed and re-hydrate in hot water for 10 minutes.
- 2) Roast the tomatoes. Grind with onions, garlic, parsley leaves, spices, and ancho chiles.
- 3) Add chopped olives, capers, jalapeño chiles cut into strips, sherry, oil, vinegar, salt and pepper.
- 4) In a large saucepan, heat some oil. Place pieces of fish in the pan, add the sauce, and cover the pan.
- 5) Cook over a medium-high heat for 20 minutes, taking care to stir periodically to avoid sticking. Serve while very hot.

Baked Variant: Veracruz-style Fish

- 2 pounds of red snapper or sea bass in pieces (substitute any firm white fish, such as cod or pollock)
- 3 Tablespoons lime juice
- 2 Tablespoons olive oil.
- 1 2/3 pounds tomatoes
- Salt and pepper
- 2 onions
- 3 cloves of garlic
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 2 cloves
- 3 large peppercorns
- 2 ancho chiles
- 28 green olives
- 3 tablespoons capers
- 8 jalapeno chiles in vinegar
- 1 tablespoon sherry (or water)
- Oregano, parsley

Method of Preparation:

- 6) Prick the fish with a fork and sprinkle with lime juice. Refrigerate in a single layer in a casserole dish for about 2 hours.
- 7) Meanwhile, toast the ancho chiles in a dry skillet, then de-seed and re-hydrate in hot water for 10 minutes.
- 8) Roast the tomatoes. Grind with onions, garlic, parsley leaves, spices, and ancho chiles.
- 9) Add chopped olives, capers, jalapeño chiles cut into strips, sherry, oil, vinegar, salt and pepper.
- 10) Remove the fish from the refrigerator. Sprinkle with 2 Tablespoons olive oil. Pour the tomato sauce over the fish and bake at 350°F or until the fish flakes with a fork. Avoid overcooking or the fish will become tough and dry.

Historical and Culinary Notes:

The state of Veracruz is located on in eastern Mexico on the Gulf Coast. It is Mexico's largest producer of cattle and contains significant oil reserves, but perhaps more significantly for its culinary history, it also contains Mexico's most important commercial port.¹ The original landing spot of Hernán Cortés, Veracruz has long had strong ties to Spain's settlements in the Caribbean, and thereby to both Europe and Africa. Its cuisine developed in the context of both temperate and tropical imported crops: almonds, grapes, cilantro, limes, chard, cabbage, sugar cane and plantains.²

Seafood plays a particularly important part in Veracruz food, and cookbook author Zarela Martínez calls Huachinango a la Veracruzana (Red Snapper Veracruz Style) "Veracruz's most celebrated contribution to world cuisine,"³ while culinary maven Diana Kennedy notes that it is "the best known and favorite Mexican fish dish."⁴ Its unique mix of olives, capers, and pickled chiles complements the delicate texture of red snapper or any white fish.

The specific recipe we're preparing tonight is from *Cocina Mexicana de Abolengo* (1952) by Josefina Velázquez de León. Josefina Velázquez de León was something like the Diana Kennedy and Julia Child of mid-century Mexico City. The daughter of a wealthy family who lost much of their property during the Mexican Revolution, Velázquez de León supported herself by opening a cooking academy. While her initial success stemmed from her mastery of classical European cuisine and sugar sculpture, she later became known for introducing and popularizing regional cuisines to Mexico City's middle and upper classes. She published her first cookbook, *Manual Práctico de Cocina y Repostería* in the late 1930s, and from there went on to build a publishing empire. Ediciones J. Velázquez de León ultimately offered more than 140 distinct titles.⁵ In the 1940s and '50s, Velázquez de León expanded her repertoire to include radio broadcasts and even a television show: *El Menu de la Semana*. In 1946, she published *Platillos Regionales de la República Mexicana*, collecting the diverse regional cuisines into one volume for the first time.⁶ Many of her later cookbooks, including *Cocina Mexicana de Abolengo*, also encourage readers to enjoy regional recipes from throughout Mexico.

¹ Don M. Coerver, Suzanne B. Pasztor, and Robert Buffington, 2004, *Mexico: An Encyclopedia of Contemporary Culture and History*. (ABC-CLIO, 2004. eBook Collection (EBSCOhost)), accessed November 6, 2012.

² Zarela Martínez, Anne Mendelson, *Zarela's Veracruz* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 2001), 3-4.

³ *Ibid.*, 182.

⁴ Diana Kennedy, *The Essential Cuisines of Mexico* (New York: Clarkson Potter, 2000), 368.

⁵ Jeffrey Pilcher, "Josefina Velázquez de León: Apostle of the Enchilada," *The Human Tradition in Mexico*, (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 2003), 202.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 206.