Meatless Monday

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One of my healthy living goals for the new year is to cut down on meat, and eat more more fruits and vegetables.

A fun way to do this is to start a Meatless Monday tradition. So we agreed that we could try new recipes, and start the week off with a slightly healthier approach. Also, in these times of climate change, I am constantly worried about our poor little planet! Eating less meat is good for our bodies and good for the planet – a win-win!

I was remembering my life in Nogales and how we had Meatless Mondays at my Nana's house "across the line," on the Mexican side of border. And then I realized that it wasn't just Meatless Monday, but also Meatless Tuesday and Meatless Wednesday. And then, wait! Hold on. We pretty much went meatless every day except for maybe Carne Asada Sunday!

The reason wasn't that we were trying to save the planet, or lower our cholesterol. The reason was that my Nana and my aunts and uncles who lived in that old adobe house on the hill, didn't have the money to buy meat for a giant family.

We ate frijoles de la olla, frijoles refritos, sopa de frijoles, enfrijoladas, burritos de frijoles, frijoles con chorizo, tostadas with you guessed it, frijoles, and even a special trick I learned: Cave out a bolillo roll and fill it with frijoles and queso fresco! YUM! This all paired really well

with my Nana's killer salsa de chile verde. And ¿sabes qué? I never once felt deprived. I felt loved and satisfied and nurtured.

When we were on the Mexican side of the border, we were poor and we had a super healthy diet. We never ate large portions because there weren't that many portions to go around. But we never went hungry either, so we were lucky.

You've heard it here before and we will say it again: the traditional Mexican diet is a SUPER healthy diet! Our Mexican diet was pretty much dominated by protein from beans, eggs and queso fresco, and bolstered by corn, which is the grain of the gods. (No fooling.) Sure, we ate meat with our meals, but they weren't dominated by large portions of it. If we had meat, it was in very moderate to small amounts, and mostly for taste.

But here we are now, trying to adopt a healthier way of living. And all we Mexicans have to do is look back to the way of our Nanas and Tatas!

In doing research about Meatless Mondays, I found out that Meatless Monday started as a movement by our colegas at the Public Health School at Johns Hopkins University, back in 2003. Through research, they discovered that Monday was the ideal day to try to recover from the overindulgence of weekends. (Overeating, disrupted sleep patterns and possibly even drinking too much.)

Some of this research showed that people were motivated by making a small but significant change at the start of the work week. That is where the idea of Meatless Monday came from. As more and more people adopted the idea of not eating meat on Mondays, they became healthier, poco a poco, over time. Here is more evidence that small changes over time are the ones that last. It wasn't a drastic thing, but just one day a week. The idea is that we could become just a little healthier if we took this small step. We would become healthier and the planet would benefit too.

So Meatless Monday took off and other countries and organizations started getting on board. Australia tried it. Paul McCartney promoted it. Even beef-consuming Argentina got into the act in 2017 by declaring Vegan Mondays!

If you want to learn more about the history of Meatless Mondays, see the [Wikipedia article](#). It has a fascinating amount of information that will surely inspire you to try it!

So at De Las Mías we want to encourage you to give Meatless Monday a try. Here's another way to eat more veggies and fruits for your health and help Mother Earth carry the load.

Here are some of the benefits of Meatless Mondays:

- Lower your cholesterol and therefore, your risk of heart attack and stroke.
- Help you get to a healthier weight.
- Help lower your risk of high blood pressure.
- Increase your intake of fiber and its health benefits.
- Take a little stress off the planet (plant-based foods take less energy).
- Use less water to grow food (plant-based foods take less water than animal-based food).
- Plant-based foods pollute less than cows.

Try some meatless dishes from De Las Mías:

- [Black bean tostadas with Mexican squash](#)
- [Avocado taquitos](#)
- [Spanish tortilla omelette](#)
- [Spicy cauliflower](#)
- [Spinach scramble](#)

And we're curious…

- What's your favorite meatless dish?
- How would your family feel about starting a Meatless Monday tradition at your house? Would they be on board?
- What is the biggest barrier to going meatless on Mondays?

Sources:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meatless_Monday

https://www.economist.com/the-economist-explains/2017/10/19/argentinas-vegan-mondays