

5.º Concurso Anual de Herencias Culinarias

Wednesday, April 23, 2025



Culinary Arts



WELCOME MESSAGE MUJERES EXTRAORDINARIAS

5° Concurso de Herencias Culinarias



Mujeres Extraordinarias Foundation (MEF) is a non-profit organization founded in 2016 in Norwalk, Los Angeles County, CA by a group of migrant women dedicated to community service. Its members come from different states of the Mexican Republic and include Mexican Americans and Latinas.

MEF is committed to education, leadership, and raising awareness about the challenges facing migrant women and their families. The organization provides tools and resources for a better future through information-focused programs aimed at improving families' daily lives by empowering migrant women with new opportunities through various initiatives.

One such program is Herencias Culinarias (Culinary Heritage), which encourages new generations of young chefs graduating from Cerritos College's Culinary Arts Program to pursue entrepreneurship. Through a competition, participants showcase their culinary knowledge, artistic creativity, and cultural heritage by merging their family's traditions with influences from their American upbringing. This fusion creates a unique culinary identity that celebrates both family and community pride.

The program operates with the support of Cerritos College through a goodwill agreement headed by Dr. José Fierro, President/Superintendent. On April 23, 2025, MEF will host its 5th Annual Herencias Culinarias event. All participating students receive recognition, with cash scholarships awarded to the first, second, and third place winners, plus participation bonuses for all contestants.



WELCOME TO THE HERENCIAS CULINARIAS COMPETITION!

Dear Culinary Arts Community,

Welcome to this year's Herencias Culinarias Competition at Cerritos College! We're delighted to see students, alumni, industry professionals, and aspiring chefs gathered here today to celebrate our rich culinary heritage.

Today we proudly partner with Mujeres Extraordinarias Organization, who have generously sponsored scholarship prize money for our talented participants. This competition is designed to honor our diverse culinary traditions while inspiring a new generation of cooks to preserve and reimagine these treasured recipes.

At Cerritos College, our journey has been focused on creating a vibrant learning environment where students develop skills that connect them to both their cultural roots and professional futures. Our state-of-the-art facility, with three dynamic venues, prepares students for success in top kitchens throughout Los Angeles and beyond.

Our comprehensive curriculum offers degrees in Professional Cooking, Professional Baking & Pastry, Culinary Arts Management, and our newest Associate of Transfer in Hospitality Management. These programs equip students with foundational skills whether they're entering the industry immediately or continuing their education at institutions like the Collins School of Hospitality at Cal Poly Pomona or California State University Long Beach.

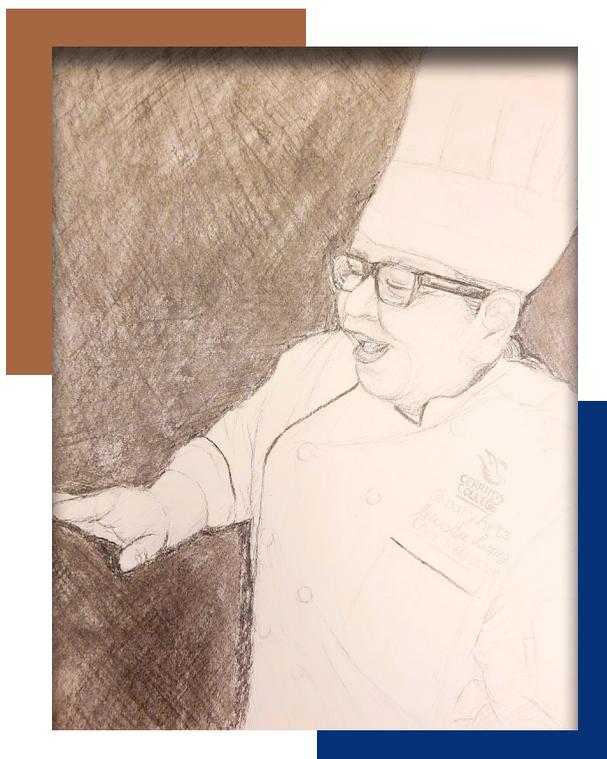
Today's Herencias Culinarias Competition represents more than culinary skill—it celebrates the stories, traditions, and cultural wisdom passed down through generations. As you prepare and present your dishes, remember that you're not just cooking food; you're preserving history and creating legacy.

Thank you for being here, and let's celebrate the beautiful intersection of heritage and innovation!

Warm Regards,

Jesusita Lopez, Chef, MA

Director/Department Chair



AGENDA

EMCEE: Chef Lopez and Mujeres Extraordinarias

EVENT TIMELINE

START	FINISH	
7:30 a.m.	8:00 a.m.	Competitors arrive and station assignments
8:00 a.m.	8:15 a.m.	Competitors meeting with kitchen judges
9:00 a.m.	12:10 p.m.	HERENCIAS COMPETITION (Kitchen Viewing)
9:00 a.m.	9:05 a.m.	Welcome Chef Jesusita Lopez, M.A. Director/Dept. Chair
9:05 a.m.	9:10 a.m.	Opening remarks from Mujeres Extraordinarias
9:10 a.m.	9:45 a.m.	Advisory Session - Chef Lopez
9:45 a.m.	10:00 a.m.	Judge Introductions / Bios / Competition Rules
10:00 a.m.	12:10 p.m.	OPEN JUDGING ON STAGE
12:10p.m.	1:00 p.m.	Private judging in CB 104: COMPETITORS ONLY
1:00 p.m.	2:00 p.m.	AWARD CEREMONY, Closing Remarks

DINING TIMELINE

8:45 a.m.	10:45 a.m.	Continental breakfast in FALCON ROOM RESTAURANT
12:00 p.m.	1:00 p.m.	Lunch in FALCON ROOM RESTAURANT

STUDENT COOKING COMPETITION TIMELINE

	START	FINISH	COMPETITOR	THEME
1	9:00 a.m.	10:00 a.m.	Kevin Diaz	Puebla
2	9:10 a.m.	10:10 a.m.	Phoenix Villegas	Mexico
3	9:20 a.m.	10:20 a.m.	Neusa Mohr	Brazil
4	9:30 a.m.	10:30 a.m.	Teresa Mejia	Modern Latin
5	9:40 a.m.	10:40 a.m.	Hassan Sims	Mexico
6	9:50 a.m.	10:50 a.m.	Aaron Kin	Oaxaca
7	10:00 a.m.	11:00 a.m.	Jonah Alagao	Yucatan
8	10:10 a.m.	11:10 a.m.	Jessica Garcia	Yucatan-Mexico City
9	10:20 a.m.	11:20 a.m.	Darla Becerril	Puebla
10	10:30 a.m.	11:30 a.m.	Harold Arevalo-Castro	Puebla
11	10:40 a.m.	11:40 a.m.	Sanjuana Avila	Guanajuato

HERENCIAS CULINARIAS COMPETITION

General Rules

1. The competition is open only to students currently enrolled in CA252 for Spring 2025.
2. Competitors will be selected by the CA252 instructor based on classroom assignments.
3. The competition will take place during regular class time in the CA main kitchen.
4. Each contestant must prepare three professionally plated main entrées, each including:
A protein, starch, vegetable, and sauce (or sauces).
5. Two plates will be presented to the judges for scoring; one plate will be used for display.
6. Each student will have 60 minutes to prepare all three dishes.
8. Food items that may be brought in pre-prepared include:
Stocks, oils, marinades, and fabricated proteins.
9. Any ingredients not included in the regular classroom inventory must be provided by the student.
No financial reimbursement will be given.

Kitchen Rules

1. All competitors must be available for the entire event, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
2. Competitors are responsible for cleaning their own kitchen stations.
3. No kitchen assistants or porters will be provided.
4. Timing will be monitored by the Sanitation/Kitchen Judge.
5. Points will be deducted for early or late plate submissions (-2 points per minute).
6. Plates that are 6 or more minutes late will be moved to the end of the judging order.
7. Theme: Modern Latin Cuisine
The theme is intended to showcase innovative, modern interpretations of traditional dishes from a variety of Latin American cultures around the world.
8. All recipes submitted will become the property of Mujeres Extraordinarias and may be used for promotional purposes.

POINT SYSTEM

100 total points possible

50 points for taste

25 points for presentation

25 points timing, sanitation and kitchen



AWARDS

Grand Prize: \$750

2nd Prize \$450

3rd Prize \$300

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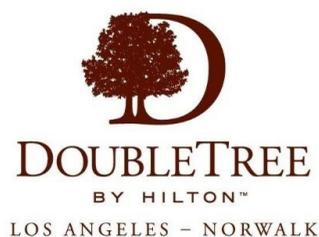
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JUDGES

MIEMBROS DEL JURADO DEL 5.º CONCURSO DE HERENCIAS CULINARIAS



CHEF ROCÍO CAMACHO

Rocío Camacho nació en la Mixteca, una de las ocho regiones de Oaxaca. Heredó la sazón de su madre, quien se dedicaba al arte culinario tradicional mexicano. En 1987 llegó a Los Ángeles, California, llena de sueños y buscando un mejor futuro para su familia. Aquí empezó a trabajar como cocinera para compañías restauranteras, pero en su corazón existía una enorme ilusión de que alguien creyera en ella y le diera la oportunidad de tomar la batuta para preparar lo que ella sabía es su mejor receta, que es el MOLE. Esta salsa bendita le abrió las puertas y por eso se ha destacado como la Diosa de los Moles, sobrenombre que le han otorgado los críticos internacionales. Eso la ha mantenido motivada a seguir creando sus propias recetas. También escribió su libro “La Diosa de los Moles, MI ORIGEN” en 2019. En 2020, su restaurante Rocío’s Mexican Kitchen fue reconocido por la guía Michelin por su excelencia culinaria a bajo precio.

Rocío Camacho was born in the Mixteca region, one of the eight regions of Oaxaca. She inherited her flavor from her mother, who was dedicated to traditional Mexican culinary arts. In 1987, she arrived in Los Angeles, California, full of dreams and seeking a better future for her family. Here, she began working as a cook for restaurant companies, but deep in her heart, she longed for someone to believe in her and give her the opportunity to take the lead in preparing what she knew to be her best recipe: MOLE. This blessed sauce opened doors for her, and for this reason, she has become known as the Goddess of Moles, a nickname bestowed upon her by international critics. This has kept her motivated to continue creating her own recipes. She also wrote her book “The Goddess of Moles,

My Origin” in 2019. In 2020, her restaurant, Rocío’s Mexican Kitchen, was recognized by the Michelin Guide for its culinary excellence at an affordable price.



CHEF SARA ARVIZU RICO

Sara Arvizu Rico, orgullosa cocinera tradicional, es oriunda de San José Iturbide en el estado de Guanajuato. Se graduó en 2014 como técnica en alimentos y bebidas por CEDVA Querétaro, marcando el inicio de una pasión que ha guiado su carrera desde entonces. Desde el 2016 hasta el 2023, ha participado de manera ininterrumpida en el Encuentro de Cocineras Tradicionales del Estado de Guanajuato. Su especialización se centra en la cocina tradicional mexicana, específicamente en la región noreste del estado de Guanajuato, donde su interés por el mestizaje gastronómico se convirtió en una apasionada investigación. En 2021 participó en el Mundial de Pinchos y Tapas celebrado en Valladolid, España. En 2022 colaboró con la Academia Mexicana de Investigación Turística en el libro “Turismo y Género: La Aportación de las Mujeres a la Actividad Turística”. Logró el registro de marca del Festival Gastronómico Mestizo.

Sara Arvizu Rico, a proud traditional cook, is originally from San José Iturbide in the state of Guanajuato. She graduated in 2014 with a degree in food and beverages from CEDVA Querétaro, marking the beginning of a passion that has guided her career ever since. From 2016 to 2023, she has participated continuously in the Meeting of Traditional Cooks of the State of Guanajuato. Her specialization focuses on traditional Mexican cuisine, specifically in the northeast region of the state of Guanajuato, where her interest in gastronomic fusion became a passionate pursuit. In 2021, she participated in the Pinchos and Tapas World Cup held in Valladolid, Spain. In 2022, she collaborated with the Mexican Academy of Tourism Research on the book “Tourism and Gender: The Contribution of Women to Tourism.” She obtained trademark registration for the Mestizo Gastronomic Festival.

JUDGES

MIEMBROS DEL JURADO DEL 5o CONCURSO DE HERENCIAS CULINARIAS



CHEF VICENTE ORTIZ

Vicente Ortiz, chef oriundo de Jalisco, llegó a Estados Unidos en 1974. Ha sido restaurantero por 33 años en el área del condado de Los Ángeles. En 1976, fundó su primer Restaurant El Pescador a los 21 años. Con la filosofía de buscar hacer el bien a la comunidad, ha realizado actividades filantrópicas y, como lleva a México en el corazón, su pasión es la comida mexicana. Tiene una maestría en Cocina Mexicana por la Secretaría de Educación Pública de México y es representante de California ante el Conservatorio Cultural de México, donde trabaja para salvaguardar la Cocina de México, reconocida como Patrimonio Cultural de la Humanidad. Ha sido reconocido con la Estrella Michelin.

Es propietario de los restaurantes El Pescador, Tacos Don Chente Y Don Chente Bar & Grill.

Vicente Ortiz, a chef from Jalisco, arrived in the United States in 1974. He has been a restaurateur for 33 years in the Los Angeles County area. In 1976, he founded his first restaurant, El Pescador, at the age of 21. With a philosophy of seeking to do good for the community, he has engaged in philanthropic activities, and, as Mexico is close to his heart, his passion is Mexican food. He holds a master's degree in Mexican Cuisine from the Mexican Ministry of Public Education and is the California representative to the Mexican Cultural Conservatory, where he works to safeguard Mexican cuisine, recognized as a World Cultural Heritage Site. He has been awarded a Michelin Star. He is the owner of the restaurants El Pescador, Tacos Don Chente, and Don Chente Bar & Grill.



CHEF MICHAEL PIERINI (Kitchen Judge)

Born into a large Italian family in Dos Palos, California, Chef Michael Pierini's culinary journey began in his grandfather's restaurant, Santi's. Surrounded by the rich traditions of northern Italian cuisine, he developed a passion for food that would shape his future. After moving to San Luis Obispo at 17, he rapidly advanced in the restaurant industry, becoming a general manager by 19. Recognizing the need for formal education, he enrolled at the California Culinary Academy in San Francisco in 1988, where he not only excelled academically, receiving the Founder's Award for Culinary Excellence, but also co-founded a successful catering business that supported his tuition.

Following his graduation, Chef Pierini joined Hyatt Hotels & Resorts, where he played a crucial role in opening three hotels, honing his management skills during pivotal moments, including the San Francisco Earthquake of 1989. However, his true calling emerged when he transitioned to education at Cerritos College in 1994. Starting as a part-time instructor, he revitalized the Baking and Pastry Program and later expanded his role to oversee the Cooking Program.

Chef Pierini's teaching philosophy blends vocational education with hands-on learning, ensuring that each student has the opportunity to thrive. His dedication to lifelong learning extends beyond the classroom, as he continues to mentor alumni and foster connections within the culinary community. Through competitions, curriculum development, and on-campus culinary operations, Chef Pierini remains committed to nurturing the next generation of culinary talent.

COMPETITORS



Jonah Alagao

Sunny Hills High School

Who or what inspired the dish you created?

As someone of Filipino descent with Southeast Asian influences in my cooking, I wanted to showcase a traditional Yucatecan dish—elevating it while honoring its roots and traditional cooking methods.

If you could share just one piece of kitchen wisdom with someone just starting their culinary journey, what would it be?

There's always a chance to learn, grow, improve, and create. The kitchen is your oyster—make the most of it!



Harold Arevalo-Castro

St. Pius X - St. Matthias Academy

Who or what inspired the dish you created?

This signature dish from my home state is a cherished family tradition—one of the few we always make. It was also one of the first dishes that sparked my passion for the culinary arts.

If you could share just one piece of kitchen wisdom with someone just starting their culinary journey, what would it be?

Don't forget why you started cooking—keep learning, growing, and pushing yourself to be better every day.



Sanjuana Avila

CONALEP

Who or what inspired the dish you created?

My mom inspired me to make mole—she made it for special occasions and passed the recipe to me. I've always looked up to her, and now I'll continue her tradition, cooking for her and our family with the same love she gave to us.

If you could share just one piece of kitchen wisdom with someone just starting their culinary journey, what would it be?

My advice to new cooks: be patient and determined. It can be frustrating at times, but always ask questions and lean on others for support. Chefs are there to guide you—use their knowledge to grow and prepare for the real world after graduation.

COMPETITORS



Darla Becerril

La Serna High School

Who or what inspired the dish you created?

My Nana inspired my dish—her chile rellenos are a family favorite. My parents share fond memories of it: Dad loves the cheese pull; Mom says the batter makes it. I want to honor those memories with a dish that brings their childhood love to life.

If you could share just one piece of kitchen wisdom with someone just starting their culinary journey, what would it be?

If you're new to the kitchen, my advice is to love what you do. I wasn't sure at first, but showing up and having fun changed everything. Cooking never felt like work—I found joy, friends, and passion. If you enjoy it, you'll grow. Keep it fun and stress-free.



Kevin Diaz

Somerset High School

Who or what inspired the dish you created?

My mom is the reason I chose to make mole. She made it for birthdays and holidays, so I grew up eating it. It's still one of my favorite meals today.

If you could share just one piece of kitchen wisdom with someone just starting their culinary journey, what would it be?

Mistakes happen—don't let them get to you. Keep trying and you'll get it. One failure shouldn't stop you from reaching your goals. As a cook, you're always learning. Don't be afraid to try new things, ask for help, and make mistakes—they help you grow.



Jessica Garcia

Bellflower High School

Who or what inspired the dish you created?

This dish is inspired by my family roots—a tribute to the flavors and people I grew up with. It honors tradition while embracing a fresh perspective.

If you could share just one piece of kitchen wisdom with someone just starting their culinary journey, what would it be?

“Don't listen to others—trust yourself and your chef.”

COMPETITORS



Aaron Kim

Lakewood High School

Who or what inspired the dish you created?

I've always enjoyed trying foods from different regions and wanted to learn about each dish—the history behind it and the unique blend of flavors and textures that make it special.

If you could share just one piece of kitchen wisdom with someone just starting their culinary journey, what would it be?

When you start your culinary journey, you'll meet people with more experience—don't be intimidated. You're just beginning, and with time, you'll grow stronger and better. Remember, every master was once a beginner.



Teresa Mejia

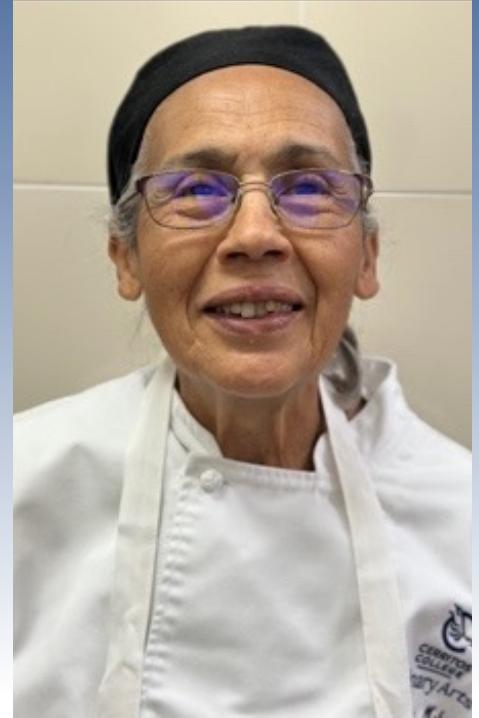
Lynwood High School

Who or what inspired the dish you created?

My culinary instructors.

If you could share just one piece of kitchen wisdom with someone just starting their culinary journey, what would it be?

Put your heart and soul.



Neusa Mohr

Colégio Maria Auxiliadora, Brasilia (Brazil)

Who or what inspired the dish you created?

My grandchildren started asking me to make what they call "Grandma's yellow chicken" every time they came to visit.

If you could share just one piece of kitchen wisdom with someone just starting their culinary journey, what would it be?

Learn from your mistakes, keep cooking, and don't give up. It's a noble profession and worth the effort. Going back to school in my seventies has been challenging, but with support from professors, family, and friends, I'm on track to graduate soon.

COMPETITORS



Hassan Sims

Bellflower High School

Who or what inspired the dish you created?

My girlfriend's mother has been my biggest supporter in this competition (besides my chef), and this dish came together with her help.

If you could share just one piece of kitchen wisdom with someone just starting their culinary journey, what would it be?

Always have a sense of urgency in the kitchen—every minute counts. Even a little dawdling can add up fast.



Phoenix Villegas

Pioneer High School

Who or what inspired the dish you created?

My mom inspired this dish. As we talked about our culture and family recipes, I pictured it in my mind—it came to life through that conversation.

If you could share just one piece of kitchen wisdom with someone just starting their culinary journey, what would it be?

The best kitchen advice I can give to someone starting out is to focus on your own task—don't worry about what anyone else is doing.

Semester: Fall 2025

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Courses:

Culinary Arts 120 Introduction to the Hospitality Industry
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English C1000 Freshman Composition Ticket # 32487 or
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Format:

Online with three in Person Field Trips (transportation provided)

Taste & Tour:

Meeting 1: Monday 9/8/25 | 1:30 - 3 p.m. | LC 155
First day of class with Culinary Arts Cookies/Pastries,
Franco's Closet visit and Culinary Arts Kitchen Tour.

Meeting 2: Day and time TBD

Cal Poly Pomona Campus & Restaurant Tour Experience

Meeting 3: Day and time TBD

Downtown LA Tour (Los Angeles Central Library, Grand
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Register for an Information Session:



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