

The Story of the Secrets of Salsa Cookbook

This salsa cookbook has had an intriguing life of its own. It began in the morning English classes at the Adult School in Anderson Valley. With the bounty of fall upon us, tomatoes, chilies, cilantro and onions found their way into our classroom as fresh salsas. The vibrant colors were as inspiring as the unique tastes. The secret of making great homemade salsa was at our fingertips!

The idea of a salsa cookbook was born when we decided that students would bring a favorite salsa to class each day. We translated the recipes into English and ate salsa with different Mexican dishes. What evolved was not just a lesson of how to make salsa, but of women sharing their stories through the common experience of food. We began to learn how to celebrate and value ourselves and each other as women, mothers, partners, cooks, housekeepers, workers, and as students of English.

For each woman, on her "salsa day," we would write a short story about her in English by having each class member contribute something positive about that person. Through this collective process we became excited about sharing stories and committed to the idea of producing the cookbook that we would share in our community.

At the end of the school year we hosted a bilingual salsa cookbook night with Anglos and Mexicans working together to test recipes and enjoy a Mexican dinner replete with live Mexican music. At the annual Mendocino County Fair, we had a salsa-tasting booth featuring samples of these unique and delectable salsas. It was an incredible event.

We hope you enjoy the 25 salsas in this cookbook. We share them with love and the hope that all people in our community continue to grow and share together. ¡Buen provecho!

It has been our good fortune to work with these exceptional women and to be a part of this project.

– *Kira Brennan and the Adult School teachers*