

## Regional Mexican Cuisine

At times along this Amtrak route, the train comes very close to the border of Mexico. The influence of the Mexican culture is predominant along this route, and probably the biggest influence is in its regional foods. If you stepped off the train at any point between Houston and Los Angeles, you probably would not be very far from a Mexican style restaurant or taqueria, a taco shop or small restaurant. While all of this may be labeled generically as Mexican food, depending on where you stopped along the route, you might find a wide variety in Mexican cooking styles. Along the San Antonio River and in local neighborhoods, you might find what is called Tex-Mex. In New Mexico, you will find several regional Mexican styles from Santa Fe to Deming. In Arizona, you will find yet another cooking style and in California, you will find a fusion style of Mexican cuisine.

Each region has developed its own style of Mexican cooking with a wide array of herbs, spices and other ingredients. They may have similar names, but their preparation style will be different in Los Angeles, Tucson, Santa Fe, El Paso or San Antonio. Take for instance, a bowl of “chili”. Depending on where you are from, you are probably familiar with your own version of “authentic” chili. But if you had a bowl of “authentic” chili in Texas or New Mexico or Arizona or California, none of them would probably taste the same or be made up of the same ingredients, yet it would still be called authentic chili. An enchilada plate may be served rolled or stacked, made of white, yellow, red or blue corn and served with a meat based chili sauce or a sauce of pure green chiles or red chiles. While many of these dishes may be called Mexican, they are for the most part uniquely indigenous to particular areas of the American Southwest. They have developed and evolved here in the United States. One would rarely find any of the Southwestern styles of Mexican cuisine south of the border. The so-called Mexican cuisine has

evolved over the years, borrowing ingredients and cooking styles from neighboring States and now from other ethnic cooking styles. Anywhere you go, you will find an ever-changing and delicious Mexican style of cuisine along this route. Anyone for a sushi taco?

### **Source(s):**

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