

今天是星期三，市集日！一大堆顏色鮮艷的草織袋子，讓場內的金毛拉布拉多犬 Mojo 看得搖尾雀躍。

Today is Wednesday, market day. A pile of colourful straw bags has been set out, and Mojo looks at them with mounting excitement.



有些人放假是爲了逃離廚房。
亦有人千里迢迢，爲煮一道好菜式。

LA VILLA BONITA

SOME PEOPLE TAKE A VACATION TO GET OUT OF THE KITCHEN.
OTHERS TRAVEL LONG DISTANCES, JUST SO THEY CAN COOK.

text photo | Leslie Yip 葉子青

「同學們，起行吧！」大廚 Chef Ana Garcia 喊道。「汪！」隨著 Mojo 爽朗回應，同學們一個個走出房間，來到紅陶瓷陽台集。這些同學平均年齡也不小，許多都是來自美國的退休人士，越過南面國界，就是為了在斐聲國際的大師身上，學得貨真價實的墨西哥菜。

Ana Garcia 被艾美獎電視監製得主 Mark Wolper 稱為「墨西哥的 Rachel Ray」。她曾亮相於 Food Network、PBS、ABC 等電視台，亦被《Newsweek》及《Bon Appetit》等雜誌採訪。



Mojo

她的 La Villa Bonita 烹飪學校度假村，被列入 Food Network《全球五大最佳烹飪假期》、National Geographic《100個最能充實你生活的假期》及 Fodor's《十大令人垂涎烹飪遊》。雖然聲名顯赫，但 Chef Ana 並沒有像其他電視名廚般享受「Chef」這個稱呼，她寧願大家叫她作 jefe (念作 hey-fey) — 西班牙語「波士」(老闆)的意思。

「Mark，你可以幫忙買兩打雞蛋嗎？」

「知道了，波士！」Mark 就朝蛋檔去了。

Tepoztlan 市集上的小販都說不出半句英語，但 Chef Ana 教導有方。同學買雞蛋時，西班牙語說得字正腔圓，怎料蛋農的回應卻把他難到：「白的還是紅的？波士沒有指定吧？」我們不敢亂作主張，唯有聳聳肩道：「那就先買白的，如果買錯才回來退換吧。」

大廚 Chef Ana Garcia



在屋頂陽台享受製成品
Meal on the Terrace

“Okay, people, let’s go!” Chef Ana Garcia exclaims. The resident golden Lab responds with a hearty bark and, one by one, the students emerge from their rooms to the terracotta tiled veranda. They are mostly retirees from the United States, who have come here to learn authentic Mexican cooking from this world-renowned chef.



Garcia has been dubbed “Mexico’s Rachel Ray” by Mark Wolper, Emmy Award-winning reality-TV producer. She has appeared on the Food Network, PBS and ABC, and has been featured in such magazines as Newsweek and Bon Appetit, among others.

La Villa Bonita Culinary Vacation, her cooking school and resort, has been named one of the five Best Culinary Vacations Worldwide by the Food Network, one of the 100 Best Vacations to Enrich Your Life by National Geographic and to the Top 10 Mouth-Watering Culinary Tour by Fodor’s. But Chef Ana does not revere being called “chef” like so many other TV celebrity cooks. She prefers “jefe” (pronounced hey-fey), which means “boss” in Spanish.

“Mike, can you help get two dozen eggs?”

“Yes, jefe!” and off Mike goes to the egg stall.

Vendors in the central market of Tepoztlan speak virtually no English, but Chef Ana has taught her students well. Mike rolls off “dos docenas de huevos, por favor” like a native, yet the next part of the conversation stumps him. “Blanco o rojo (white or red)?” asks the egg farmer. “El jefe didn’t say, did she?” We all shrugged. “Blanco then. If she wants otherwise, I will just bring them back.”



廚房外觀 Kitchen Exterior

幸好波士對雞蛋顏色沒有特別要求，但對買肉的地點就十分講究了。我們要在市集由頭走到尾，為的就是這家豬肉店。

「這位Don Domingo是全市最老的屠夫，所以才可拿到首選的豬肉。」Chef Ana邊把半打豬腿和豬肋骨放進袋子，邊介紹道：「他們每天屠宰的數量，僅僅足夠當天能賣的。所以如果你要最好的肉，必定要一早來，要不然就前一天預訂。」

接著我們到了不同攤檔買了仙人掌葉、西葫蘆、乾蝦、芒果和橙子。期間Chef Ana不斷解說傳統墨西哥烹飪常用的材料。我好奇地問今天我們會炮製甚麼菜式，卻被老師笑我太心急，待回自有分曉。

烹飪班是在半露天的廚房上課，廚房建在半月形的游泳池上，居高臨下，還可俯瞰到桔園和長滿天堂鳥的花園，環境幽美悠閒。

Chef Ana提議我們先做甜品「粟米蛋糕」，再煮湯「辣椒蝦湯」，然後是「橙汁燴豬肉(carnitas)」及各種莎莎醬，最後才做薄粟米餅。她分配任務時，「波士」般的氣場表露無遺：「你！負責剝粟米皮」、「你！洗辣椒」、「你！榨橙汁」、「你！拌麵糰」；當然，還有很多斬斬切切的功夫。這個雖然是「烹飪班」，但其實一點都不像上課，沒有同學們排排坐看著老師講課的畫面，反而像個家庭派對，一家人齊齊落手準備大餐。

既然是派對，豈能沒雞尾酒？我們正忙著烹飪時，Chef Ana搖身一變成調酒師，為我們調配她的秘製的瑪格麗塔(margaritas)。雖然說了便不是秘密，但她還是願意公開秘方的：三指闊份量的鮮橙汁、三指杯酒及三指龍舌蘭酒。調出來的雞尾酒酒精含量如斯高，真幸虧沒有人喝後切傷指頭！

三個小時霎眼而過，太陽正要下山，我們的晚餐亦準備好了。登上屋頂的陽台，巨型的玻璃天窗，巧妙地變成餐桌。四面環繞的Tepozteco山脈張開懷抱，山下村莊街頭樂隊的演奏作為配樂，襯托出良辰美景，陪伴我們享受忙了一個下午的成果。

香噴噴的蝦湯，被乾辣椒染成驚人的艷紅，幸好味道沒有看

起來那麼辣，因為辣椒核和瓢都已經被仔細除掉。充滿橙味的豬肉絲入口溶化，連同黑豆醬、芒果莎莎醬和牛油果醬一起放在新鮮壓好、放在暖暖的薄粟米餅上吃，滋味無窮。到甜品出場時，我們已飽得不能動彈。

「怎麼喇？快來嚐嚐這些粟米蛋糕！」Chef Ana乍噎了。我們馬上抖擻起來，齊聲回答：「知道了，波士！」



大廚Ana帶學員到市集買材料
Chef Ana at the market

chefana.com

Turns out el jefe doesn't mind the colour of her eggs as much as where she buys her meat. We wandered the entire length of the market just to get to this particular pork stall.

"Don Domingo is the oldest butcher in town, so he gets the first choice of the pork," Chef Ana explains as she bags half a dozen pork legs and ribs. "They only butcher what they can sell each day, so if you want the best cut, you have to come either really early in the morning, or ask him the day before."

Next on the list are cactus leaves, courgettes, dried prawns, mangoes and oranges. We pick them up from stall to stall as Chef Ana gives a running commentary about typical ingredients in traditional Mexican cuisine. "So what are we going to make tonight?" I ventured. "Patience. You will know when we head back," she replies.

Cooking classes are held in an open-air kitchen set atop a half-moon-shaped swimming pool, overlooking a citrus orchard and a semi-wild garden where Birds of Paradise blooms.

Chef Ana says we should start making the dessert first (corn cake), and then soup (a chili and prawn broth), carnitas (pulled pork with orange juice), salsas and lastly, tortillas. Like a boss, she starts assigning tasks: shuck the corn, clean the pepper, juice the oranges, mix the dough and, of course, lots of chop-chop-chopping. Although I used the word "class," learning to cook with Chef Ana is not like a classroom lecture where you sit and watch her talk and demonstrate. Rather, it feels like a prep party for a family gathering, with everyone doing their part with the cooking.

And what's a party without drinks? As we prepare our meal, Chef Ana turns into a bartender and mixes us her signature margaritas. Her secret recipe? "Three fingers of freshly squeezed orange juice, three fingers of rum and three fingers of tequila." The resulting cocktail is so boozy, it's a miracle no one chopped off a finger.

Three hours whisk by and just as the sun is about to set, our meal is ready. We head up to the rooftop terrace, where an oversized glass top of the skylight ingeniously doubles as the dining table. With the surrounding Tepozteco mountain framing the view, and the sounds of a mariachi band wafting up from the village below, we begin to enjoy the fruits of our labour.

The aromatic prawn broth is alarmingly red from the pureed sun-dried chili peppers, but it does not taste as spicy as it looks, thanks to the meticulous removal of the seeds and pith. The orange-infused pulled pork is served with black bean mole, mango salsa and guacamole on freshly-pressed tortillas, still warm from the pan. By the time dessert is brought out, we are all stuffed..

"Oh, people, you must try the corn cake!" chided Chef Ana, to which we replied in unison, "Yes, jefe!"



廚房內部 Inside the kitchen



La Villa Bonita

這個特色的烹飪學校渡假村中心位於墨西哥城以南74公里的Tepoztlan。這兒是官方指定的pueblo magico 特色村鎮。共有六間客房，每間都備有私人浴室和食水龍頭。一般渡假套餐為期七天，其中四天為烹飪時間（雙人房每位\$1,550美元）。價錢包括從墨西哥城Benito Juarez機場接送、早餐及幾個包酒水的飯餐。附近小鎮觀光則另收費。詳情請上網瀏覽lavillabonita.com。

The cooking school and resort is located in Tepoztlan, a designated pueblo magico (magical village) 24 kilometres south of Mexico City. It offers six guest rooms, all with private baths and drinking water spigots. A typical stay at the resort is seven days, with four days of cooking (US\$1,550 double occupancy). Airport transportation from Mexico City's Benito Juarez airport, homecooked breakfast and a number of meals with beer and wine service is included. Guided tours to nearby towns are available at additional cost. For more details, visit lavillabonita.com

Tepoztlan

Tepoztlan 在哥倫布時期以前已經建立，歷史文化氣息濃厚。旅客可以在此安心體驗安全又地道的小鎮生活。逢星期三、六、日是市集日，可以買到手作的陶器器皿和木雕餐具。乾淨又整齊的食物市場是品嚐傳統街頭小吃的好地方。您可以舒服地坐在長凳上，看著小販即時烹煮，有點像大排檔的風味。Gordita 和taco這些墨西哥粟米薄餅小吃都是15到30披索一件（約\$1.30到\$2.60）。你亦可登上Tepozteco山到阿茲特克金字塔一遊，一覽壯觀的鄉村全景。登山徑免費；金字塔門票46披索（大概四美元）。更值一看的，是漂亮的16世紀建成的Dominico de la Navidad老修院裏面的美麗的壁畫。

The pre-Columbian village of Tepoztlan offers a safe and authentic experience for visitors. Market days (Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays) are great for scoring handmade fired-clay works and carved wood utensils. Try traditional Mexican street food without the hassles at the clean and orderly food market, where you can sit down on benches and watch your order prepared right in front of you. Gorditas and tacos range from 15 to 30 pesos each (about \$1.30 to \$2.60). Hike up the Tepozteco mountain to visit the Aztec pyramid and be treated to a majestic panoramic view of the village (hiking trail is free; admission to the pyramid is 46 pesos, about \$4.) Visit the beautiful former convent of Dominico de la Navidad and admire the beautiful mural art.