

What is Modern Mexican Cuisine?

Richard Sandoval brings the vibrant flavors and ingredients of Mexico into the culinary spotlight.

Modern Mexican combines the bold flavors and ingredients of classic Mexican cuisine with European cooking techniques resulting in a vibrant approach which is lighter and ingredient driven; presents an upscale, sophisticated dining experience.

Richard Sandoval, “the father of Modern Mexican...”

In 1997, Richard Sandoval launched a revolution in America by reinterpreting Mexican cuisine in a contemporary, yet authentic way. Coupling indigenous Mexican ingredients with European technique and sensibility, Sandoval succeeds in elevating timeless recipes to new heights. The results have changed our perception of Mexican cuisine in this country.

His culinary mission is clear. “My goal is to share true Mexican cuisine with Americans; to showcase the diversity and breadth of Mexican ingredients and creativity,” he proudly proclaims. In 1997, he opened his first Modern Mexican restaurant, Maya, in New York City. Here, he translates classic dishes, and while preserving traditional flavors, gives his dishes a modern flair and an artistic presentation. He clearly had the right idea, and an appreciative audience followed including two stars from Ruth Reichl at *The New York Times* in July, 1997.

Thanks to classic culinary training at the CIA and respect for his heritage, Sandoval incited a transformation in the way Mexican cuisine is presented. Sandoval’s cuisine is “grounded in tradition, yet modern in spirit and presentation,” declared Jerry Shriver of *USA Today* in 1998. And seven years after his first opening (Maya in San Francisco, Tamayo in Denver, Pampano in New York City, Zengo in Denver, Isla in Las Vegas and two taquerias followed), Richard Sandoval was crowned the “father of Modern Mexican” by *The Financial Times*.

The ingredients. The techniques. The restaurants.

Huitlacoche, pomegranate, epazote and queso blanco have replaced yellow rice, refried beans and cheese-laden dishes in Sandoval’s Modern Mexican restaurants. European specialties such as sherry wine vinegar, honey and truffle oil have become staples of Sandoval’s kitchen. Whether by tempering a spicy chile with sweet honey and rich cream in a *Chile de Arbol Sauce*, or by pairing sour tamarind with honey in *Pechuga de Pato en Mole de Tamarindo*, Sandoval balances flavors with a unique approach. Sherry wine vinegar adds a robust and refined flavor to *Camarones Maya* and *Tartar de Atun*. Chile Rellenos, typically fried, are roasted until the natural sugars caramelize. They burst with seafood and manchego delivering a light and healthy experience. His unusual combination of Achiote and Truffle Oil creates a distinctive sauce that zings the palate. In the end, diners experience bold Mexican flavors seamlessly blended together.

Sandoval takes it one step further by modernizing the entire dining experience – from the cuisine and design, to the service and décor. At Tamayo, contemporary Mexican art adorns the walls. And to create the ideal setting for Zengo, Sandoval appointed the highly acclaimed international architect and designer Jeffery Beers. European service, elaborate tasting menus, Mexican wine, unique tequilas and sake pairings, all contribute to an enhanced dining experience.

Sandoval answered the call of modern diners, bringing to the US a cuisine of culture, finesse and sophistication. Richard Sandoval’s Modern Mexican presents the true beauty of Mexican cooking in an original and refreshing way.