

Indulging In Mexican Cuisine

If one is looking for a place with Mexican cuisine, a festive atmosphere, great music, cocktails, and a fun time. One should visit “Vida Verde” its location is 248 West 55th Street in Manhattan, NY. This establishment was opened in 2017 and the food is prepared by chef Hugo Orozco. The menu has a combination of traditional and contemporary Mexican cuisine. It is open from 4 pm to 2 am on weekdays and from 12 pm to 4 am on the weekends.

1. How were you addressed when you entered into the restaurant? Did you need to make reservations? How long was the wait before you were seated? How was this experience different due to COVID? Did you have to show your vaccinations card?

When entering the establishment, one would be greeted by a woman at the front desk. Reservations are required before visiting the restaurant and they would have to be made days in advance. One would be seated immediately once they present their vaccination cards and Excelsior Passes.

2. What are the cultural differences you notice? (Use class notes and cite in APA 8th ed) Using your five senses of taste, touch, sight, smell, & sound describe some of the cultural differences that you are not accustomed to in comparison to All-American restaurant or restaurant chains. For example, one can describe but not limited to the sights in the restaurant décor, odors from unusual foods, and sounds from music. One should use all five-senses in this cultural experience. Be sure to write in third person...one will or would see, smell, etc....

When visiting the restaurant, one would see vibrant colorful lights of colors such as blue, green, red, and purple. Those that visit would see a white and black herringbone pattern on the floors along with silver sparkling mirrors. They would also notice a beautiful floral painting with light and dark blue roses with a red background. One would also see beige tables with black stools along with booster seats on one side. They would also see the vivid colors from the plate of nachos. Those visiting would describe the ambiance as energizing because of the upbeat Latin

urban music that is played. Along with upbeat songs from the 1990s. One would also hear the sound of laughter and conversations being held. While seated one would smell the vibrant spices from the foods. Such as serrano peppers, jalapenos, Pico de Gallo, and the smell of the tacos. Those that order a watermelon margarita would smell watermelon and would taste pieces of watermelon, and spicy salt. When eating the food one would taste guacamole, the crunch from the taco, the cheese with pinto bean puree on the nachos, and Yucca fries. They would notice the interesting, sweet flavors from the beans with the rice, beans, and cheese meal. While there one would feel the glass from the cups, the hardness of the nachos, and the texture of soft tacos.

3. Look at the menu. What are the types of foods they offer? What are some unusual items? Do they describe the ingredients in the food? List various food items from the menu. What menu items did you order? Is there more than one language used to describe the foods on the menu? How does this relate to cultural geography? Be sure to use and cite lecture notes appropriately in APA 8th ed.

When viewing the menu, one would notice that it was more modern. A QR code was presented and had to be scanned to the phone to access the menu. The foods offered on the menu were Mexican cuisines. A good way for one to start the dinner off is to order appetizers. The appetizers consist of chips & salsa, guacamole & chips which have serrano peppers, tomatoes, onions, cilantro, queso fresco, and corn tortilla chips. Also, for appetizers, yucca fries would be offered and contains ingredients of mole, Aji Amarillo, Kalamata Olive, and chipotle Aiolis. Another item included for appetizers is nachos which incorporates ingredients of melted cheese, pinto bean puree, pickled onion, pickled jalapenos, Pico de Gallo, and jalapeno-cilantro crema. Then when moving on to entrees, one would see some unique food items on the menu consisting of “Huitlacoche” which is a quesadilla with ingredients such as Mexican truffle mushroom, Oaxaca cheese, Pico De Gallo, Avocado Salsa, Crema on a flour tortilla. Another exclusive item on the menu that one would notice is a crispy fish taco which has components of mahi-mahi northern style, pinto bean puree, cabbage, cilantro jalapeno salsa, and blue corn tortillas. If a person is unsure of what to order, one should try the nachos and the steak taco with rice & beans. On the menu, the language Spanish is used to describe some ingredients. The Spanish language is related to cultural geography because once one experiences this restaurant, they will understand the Mexican culture and their customs through their food, visuals, and language.

4. Is a traditional salad offered? If not, describe what is offered. What types of breads are offered (flat, pita, tortilla chips)? What type of desserts (cheesecake, fortune cookie, coffee)? What are they like? Describe the ingredients as well.

One would notice a regular salad does not appear on the menu. But there are other options such as the Mexican cobb salad which consists of romaine lettuce, chorizo, chicken, tomato, cucumber, grilled corn, crispy cheese, avocado, croutons, and

cumin-cilantro lime dressing. The second salad offered is called the “Vida Verde Salad” which includes quinoa, baby arugula frisee, roasted poblano pepper, avocado, watermelon radish, corn tortilla strips, and simple lemon vinaigrette. Although, there are not that many options of bread on the menu they typically serve corn tortilla chips. For desserts, one would see churros that consist of caramel stuffed, house-made white chocolate, vanilla sauce, and a caramel mezcal sauce. Those viewing the menu would notice an alcohol-infused Pina Colada Tres Leches cake that includes coconut, rum, and pineapple whipped cream. The last dessert one would see on the menu is Chocolate Mexican Flan which incorporates a mango-tequila sauce, with whipped cream and seasonal berries.

5. What types of beverages are offered? Do they have an alcohol menu? What is not typically offered in an American chain restaurant. Be sure to address what is different in the menu.

Those visiting would observe that most of the beverages offered on the menu are alcoholic. For the section of cocktails, one would see drinks that are named “Loma Love”, “Sweet Escape,” “Mango Michelada,” and “Burro Caliente.” Some of the drinks consist of either alcohol such as rum, tequila, and a spicy beer. In the section “Margarita market” different flavors of margaritas are offered like honeydew cayenne, blueberry coconut, watermelon, mango, cucumber, peach, and a frozen seasonal drink that has pomegranate and hibiscus. Wine and sangrias are also on the menu. Most of these beverages are not served in an American restaurant instead they serve beer and wine.

6. How is the food reflective of the cultural geography and the economic geography (Use class lecture notes)? (i.e., spices are abundant in India which is rich in spices & fish (sushi) is popular in Japan & it is part of the G8). Describe approximately where in the world (continent & location) and from the country, this culture’s food is best known. Be sure to relate the geography with the country’s food. Include a map. Be very detailed.

The food of this restaurant is a representation of Mexican culture. This includes cultural geography which is the daily life of people in various parts of the country. Economic geography is also included and is the supply of manufacture and abundance (Adomaitis, 2022). The country Mexico is located on the continent of North America and is between Belize and Guatemala. The climate in Mexico is best described as tropical in some spots and desert in other spots (Ips International, 2021). As far as the foods in Mexico, spices are prominent there. The central east of Mexico is where the chili pepper crop was grown (Bailey, 2020). Some other food crops that grow in Mexico are maize, wheat, rice, beans, and mango. These ingredients contribute to the flavorful unique tastes of Mexican food. A part of Mexico that is well known for their tasty meat dishes that consists of flour tortillas, and beef is El Norte which is located in the northern part of Mexico (Dwyer, 2021). A popular dish that embodies all of these components is Fajitas. They are served with ingredients such as guacamole, and Pico de Gallo.



7. Describe the dress? (Dress is inclusive of all five senses – you smell perfume, hear jewelry, see make-up, etc....) What are the employees, such as hostesses or wait staff wearing? Please use Eicher-Rocher-Higgins (1992) article to define dress and answer appropriately. Be sure to use all five senses in each description.

According to Eicher & Roach Higgins, dress is modifications that are added to enhance the body in some way. Dress includes “appearance, clothing, ornament, and cosmetics” (Roach-Higgins & Eicher, 1992). Dress correlates to the Mexican restaurant experience due to the appearance of the employees who work there. One would see the hostesses dressed in light blue shirts with white tropical trees which fits the aesthetic of the restaurant. At the front desk, those entering the restaurant would smell the fruity perfume that modified the scent of the lady behind the counter. The sound of the bracelets dangling from the lady at the front desk would be heard. One would also notice the soft silk material of the hostesses’ button-up tops. The way dress is represented fits the tropical theme of the establishment.

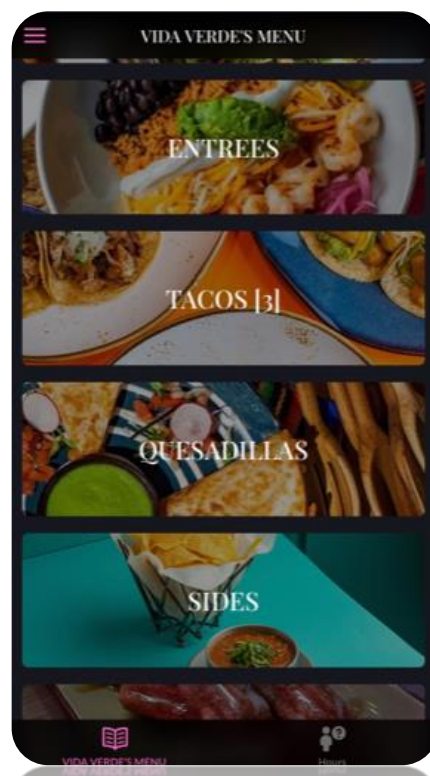
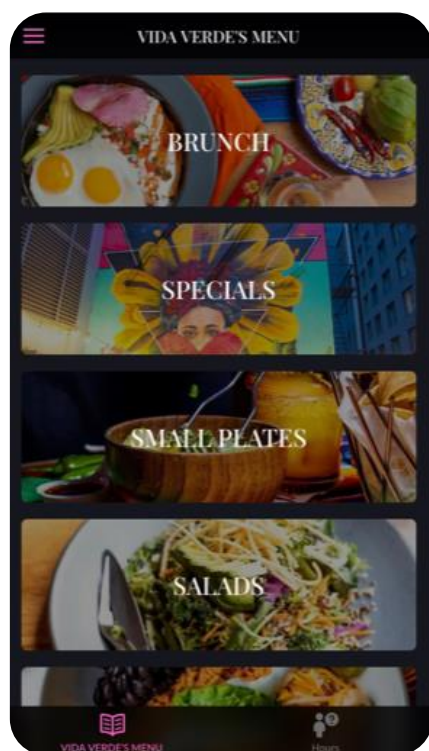
8. Rate your experience as a food critic (as in the LA Times or Houston Chronicle). Ratings should be dependent on taste, service, décor, cleanliness, authenticity, quality, and price and should range from A-F (“A” being the best). Explain why you chose this rating. Be thorough and detailed in your explanations.

The rating of the overall experience of this establishment would be an A. Although we were seated immediately, the hostess did not take orders right away. The service could use some improvements in that area. The taste of the food was good due to the spices and flavors that brought each dish together well. The restaurant was exceptionally clean, there was nothing on the floors, the tables were clear, and the seats were well taken care of. The décor was exceptional and festive due to the vibrant lights, the paintings, decorations, and the detail to patterns. Especially the beautiful mural painting on the rooftop of Frida Kahlo. When entering the restaurant there is a beautiful wall of different painted colors of roses. This establishment is very authentic from the décor, the upbeat Latin music, and the overall ambiance. It gives off a festive and exciting atmosphere. The quality of the food was above standards and the prices were reasonable. The dishes leave a person visiting wanting more.

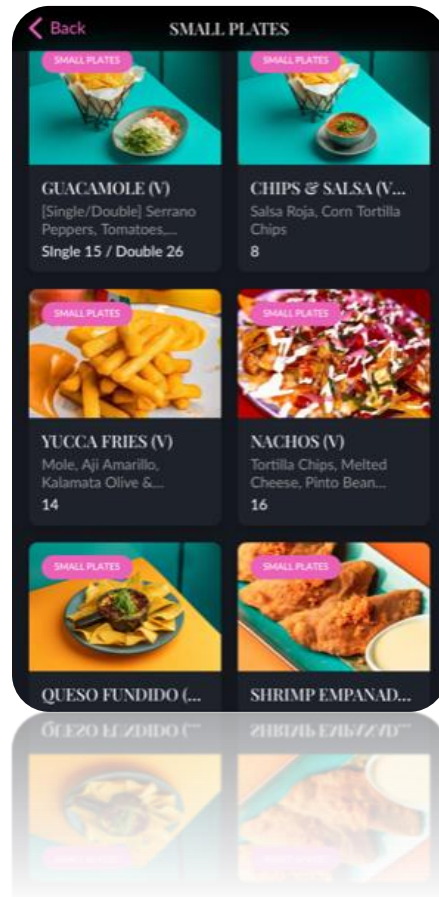
9. What did you learn from this experience that you could contribute to a multi-cultural experience in a class discussion?

After this experience of an ethnic restaurant, I learned a great amount about the culture of Mexico. From the different authentic foods with the ingredients that are used to execute a dish. It was interesting to learn that some of the well-known dishes such as quesadillas, or nachos contain unique ingredients like “Pico de Gallo.” Which are ingredients and flavors to which I was exposed. The flavorful taste of these dishes helped to educate myself on the culture behind these foods. Another aspect that I was educated on was how the language of Mexico correlates to the geography of the country. Overall, it was intriguing to see how the foods, culture, and language contribute to the aspects of Mexico.

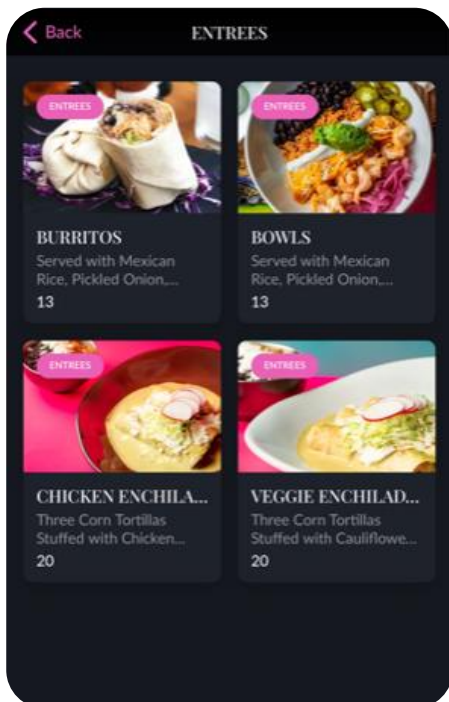
The Menu



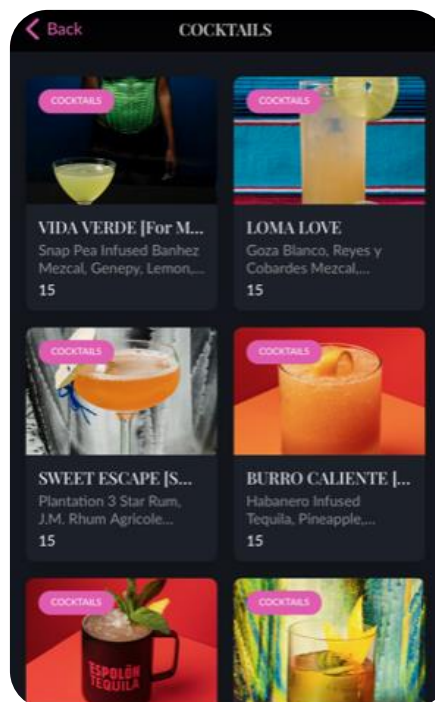
Appetizers



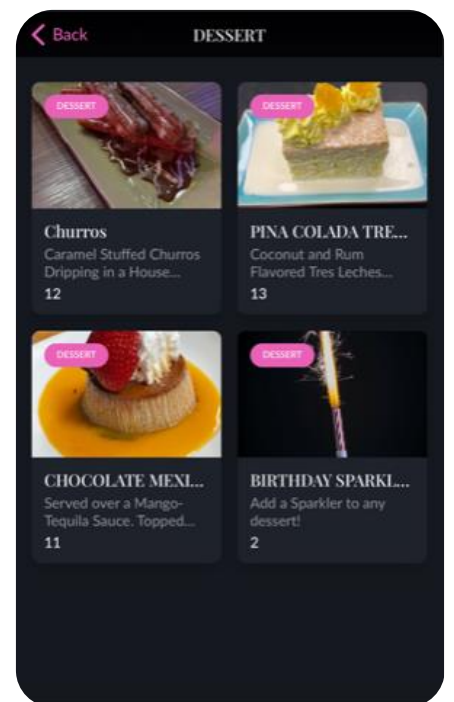
Entrees



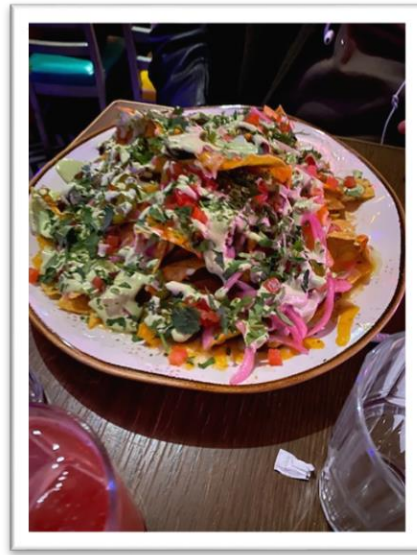
Drinks



Desserts



Enjoying The Food



Nachos

Steak Tacos (with Pico de Gallo)



Watermelon Drink

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