

Name _____

Savoring the Flavors of Mexican Cuisine

Open-Ended Response Answer Key

1. Quesadillas are made by filling tortillas with cheese and often other ingredients like chicken or vegetables. They are typically folded in half and grilled or heated until the cheese melts. Nachos, on the other hand, involve tortilla chips that are loaded with melted cheese, beans, jalapeños, and sour cream. They are usually served as an appetizer and can be quite indulgent.
2. Avocados are a rich source of healthy fats, particularly monounsaturated fats, which are beneficial for heart health. They are also packed with vitamins and minerals, including potassium, vitamin K, and folate. In guacamole, avocados provide a creamy texture and a wealth of nutrients, making it not only delicious but also nutritious.
3. Spices and seasonings in Mexican cuisine enhance flavors by adding layers of taste and heat. For example, chili powder provides a spicy kick, while cumin adds earthiness. Many spices also have potential health benefits, as they can possess antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. However, their health benefits may vary, and consuming them in moderation is recommended.
4. Maintaining a balance of flavors in Mexican cuisine is important because it creates a harmonious and satisfying dining experience. For instance, in the dish "chiles en nogada," sweet and savory elements are perfectly balanced. It consists of poblano peppers stuffed with a mixture of ground meat, fruits, and spices, topped with a walnut cream sauce and garnished with pomegranate seeds. The sweetness of the fruits complements the savory meat, while the creamy walnut sauce adds richness, and the pomegranate seeds provide a burst of sourness and freshness, achieving a well-rounded flavor profile.

