

604 Foodtography

Food and photography in Vancouver, BC

On Conchas Negras and Street Food in Mazatlán, México

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With summer supposedly here, aside from the strange cold June days, I figured I'd share my little sliver of summer that I experienced in Mazatlan back in April. On the streets of Mazatlan, Mexico, many street carts exist. Forget the food carts that Vancouver is just discovering and enjoying currently, we're such a slow city when it comes to things like this. Asia, Central America and numerous USA cities already have this down pat, as street food carts are enjoyed, revered and almost essential.

For this particular cart, seafood was the theme, and blood clams was what I was after. Blood clams are also called **mangrove cockles**, **conchas negras**, **black clams** or **patas de mula** (mule's foot). Their blood contains

hemoglobin and myoglobin, red blood pigments found in our own human body system. This unique property allows them to filter oxygen better.

An order of **6 clams cost only 40 pesos**, or just under **\$3 CAD** (approximately 1 CAD = 14 Mexican Pesos).

That's it, simply prepared, simple food, and really the "essence" of the sea. Served with saladitas saltines, you can either crush them up and sprinkle on top, or use them as tiny "tacos". The clam themselves tasted a bit like geoduck, firm and quite chewy with a very muted salty briny taste.

My mom ordered **ceviche for just 12 pesos**, with a choice of fish or shrimp. Served on a tostado, a crispy hard taco, a heaping mound of onion and fish is topped off with chopped tomatoes and onions.

Curious as to what the other clams were like, I asked for **6 of them (40 pesos)** served on the half shell like oysters. Now these were clams I'm more accustomed to seeing, orange with "clear" blood. Saltier than the blood clams and much softer, it was great with a dash of tapatio hot sauce and lime juice.



All this talk of blood clam and ceviche has really got me craving for some. There's a place down in **LA, California** called **La Cevicheria** which I am just dying to try. With multiple styles of ceviche, such as Mexican, Guatemalan and Chilean, you're bound to try one you'll like.

After this, we headed to the nearby **Mercado Pino Suarez**. So far in my travels through Costa Rica and Mexico, I have found that all cities are built outwards from three central sites, a church, a park, and a market.

It makes sense, with a central area for people to hang out, to buy their groceries and to also attend church. It's always hustle and bustle in this area, and undoubtedly the best way to truly experience a city.



In the market, you can purchase fresh fruits and vegetables...cheese and spices.. ..or even pick up some meats, ranging from seafood, chicken, beef and pork! Not to be missed out however is the upstairs section of the market. Up here, there are multiple small restaurants from which food can be had for cheap.

The menu from all of them is basically the same, and they will try extremely hard to have you come patron their restaurant, shoving their menus into your hands.

Many of them will have balconies, which allows you to take in the sights and sounds below.



I was looking for some taquitos, but the **Tacos Dorados** were the only thing as close as they had.

My mom ordered the **Pescado Zarandeado** for my dad, just a simple grilled fish. I ordered the **Chile Relleno**, a favourite of mine for reasons I can't quite explain. It's a grilled poblano pepper with the charred skin removed, stuffed with cheese, covered in an egg batter and then fried. Served alongside frijoles y arroz, it makes for a very hearty vegetarian meal. That's just a small sampling of the kind of food that can be had in México, and I can't wait to learn more.



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