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The Chile Chronicles: Tales of a New Mexico Harvest

Carmella Padilla

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#4798827 in Books 1997-09 Original language: English PDF # 1 10.00 x 10.25 x .751, #File Name: 0890133131119 pages | File size: 79.Mb

Carmella Padilla : The Chile Chronicles: Tales of a New Mexico Harvest before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Chile Chronicles: Tales of a New Mexico Harvest:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I love chili and this is THE book By Hal Salwasser What can I say, I love chili and this is THE book!

The Chile Chronicles is a colorful visual and cultural tour through the fields, homes, and markets of New Mexico, exploring the lives and livelihoods that depend on this famous food. It documents twelve farms and farm families and the trials and triumphs of those who both depend upon and preserve this unique way of life. Just as the grape is central to the Napa and Loire Valleys, the chile is inseparable from the landscape of New Mexico. Long chile ristras, the smell of roasting chile, lush irrigated fields dotted with red, spicy hot posole, and green chile stew continue to attract newcomers and sustain a four-century tradition that is still going strong. New Mexico chile is enjoyed and savored nationally. It is a \$300-million industry that involves science, economics, and enterprise. It is this fascinating tension between culture and commerce, history and progress that nurtures the chile phenomenon. With over 175 color photographs, The Chile Chronicles takes the reader on a splendid tour along the Rio Grande Valley, from the vast pepper fields of the south to the boutique chile farms of the north, all the while tying the present chile boom to the traditions that root it to New Mexico's past.

Beginning with the role that chiles play in her own childhood, Carmella Padilla tells the surprisingly elaborate story of the chile, that irresistible and unforgettable flavor of the West. Originating in South America, this exotic plant gradually made its way to the New Mexican countryside, where it became an integral part of the culture. We meet the people who still depend on the chile for their livelihood, from the growers and harvesters who have pledged to keep their family heritage alive, to the scientists whose ongoing goal is to produce a richer color or easier-to-peel skin. Through vivid photographs and flowing text, we explore the life of a chile plant, finally understanding why it hurts when we bite into one, and of course, debate the age-old question: red or green? -- Anji Keating, *The Bloomsbury*, November/December 1997

There is no doubt that this is the best book ever written on chiles in New Mexico. Padilla, along with photographer Jack Parsons, have done a superb job of documenting the history, cultural heritage, and horticulture of chiles in the state, plus profiling the farmers who grow them. This is not only solid information; many of the stories in the book are moving as they recount the love and devotion engendered by New Mexico's most famous crop. But the photography is superb, documenting the varieties, growing methods, harvest scenes, and the countryside that adjoins the growing operations, including the spectacular scenes of the Rio Grande. There is only one recipe in the book -- the tongue-in-cheek Lytle's Green Chile and Span -- but that is no problem because of a plethora of cookbooks on the subject. . . I'm going to rate the book as highly recommended and urge every true lover of chile to buy a copy -- *Fierce Foods*, December 1997/January 1998, Dave DeWitt

From the Publisher

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About the Author

Carmella Padilla is an award-winning journalist and author of numerous books including *El Rancho de las Golondrinas: Living History in New Mexico's La Ciénega Valley* and *Low 'n Slow: Lowriding in New Mexico* (both published by Museum of New Mexico Press). Her articles have appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*, *Albuquerque Tribune*, *Albuquerque Journal*, *Dallas Morning News*, and other important publications. In addition to her writing skills, Ms. Padilla is also an accomplished public relations/marketing specialist. Jack Parsons is a photographer with a long career of documenting the cultures and landscapes of the Southwest. His photographs are included in numerous publications including *El Rancho de las Golondrinas: Living History in New Mexico's La Ciénega Valley*, *Low 'n Slow: Lowriding in New Mexico*, and *Spanish New Mexico: The Spanish Colonial Arts Society Collection* (all published by Museum of New Mexico Press).