

La Cocina De Doña Clara

An Unknown Excellent Authentic Mexican Restaurant...

August 23, 2010



Carnitas Taco

On Sunday after the Indian Market, we decided to have a late lunch/early dinner at the Horseman's Haven on the way back home. Rats, it closed at 2:00. Several attempts at the Garmin brought us to this location on Airport road, but the listing had a different name (old Garmin maps). We found La Cocina De Doña Clara at that address, and are we sure glad that we did. BTW, Google is unaware of its existence.

Inside, facing the front door, is a carry-out order window with the menu colorfully painted on the wall. To the right, just before entering the dining room, stands a glass-front refrigerated case containing gorgeous desserts, which our server identified in Spanish for me. When she got to the Tres Leches, I knew for sure that we were in the right place.

The dining room has two dozen or so nondescript tables, some with red-and-white-checked tablecloths, and the rest looking like '60s diner — bare Formica and chrome. The walls are painted white with yellow, green, and orange stripes girdling the waist, and there is a mute widescreen attached to the far wall. Not really a beautiful space, but the menu made us forget the surroundings with its promise of beautiful food, some of which is high on my all-time favorite Mexican dish list. Menudo Rojo, Chicharonnes, and the Tres Leches that I saw in the dessert case.



Menudo Rojo

The Menudo Rojo is an excellent rendition of a classic dish. The tripe is cooked to exactly the correct texture, and absorbed the taste of the chiles nicely. The hominy is perfectly done, and the rojo is just right — neither too picante nor uninteresting. Served with chopped onion and lime wedges, this version is the best that I've ever had. Mexican oregano and ground cayenne are on every table for patrons to fine tune to their individual taste. My Chicharones were excellent — not too fatty and not too crispy. Add a little salt and some pinches of cayenne to punch up the taste a bit. Be warned that these are *not* New Mexico style Chicharones.



Tres Leches

Then came the Tres Leches. This classic dessert served here is by far the best version I've had anywhere. And I've eaten it all over this country. The texture of the cake is not soggy even though it is saturated with sweet vanilla-almond-laced milk. Topped with a fresh strawberry, it is simply perfect. Wow! Elicited a Wow! from Jane, too.

Jane had Flautas (delicious) with rice and Frijoles Refritos. The texture and taste of the beans is exemplary (lard).

The restaurant was half full with families – from grandparents to grandchildren – enjoying their Sunday afternoon dinner. Not crowded, but there was a steady stream of patrons. We were the sole Anglos in the place, but don't let that discourage you. Brush up your Spanish. La Cocina De Doña Clara deserves to be on your must-try list. What a lovely by-chance find. We often get lucky this way.

La Cocina De Doña Clara

(505) 473-1081

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