



AUTHENTIC MOLCAJETE



Like other heirloom cooking tools such as woks or cast iron pans, molcajetes benefit from an initial cure and seasoning before entering a lifetime of service.

Step #1: Initial Cure

1. Place the molcajete and tejolote in a sink and rinse thoroughly.
2. Put a few handfuls of raw white rice into the molcajete, add some cold water and grind the rice using the tejolote.
3. Repeat several times, making sure you have ground the entire interior surface of the bowl. Rotate the tejolote as you grind, so its surface is cleaned also.
4. The molcajete is cured when no loose bits of stone or grit are present in the rice and the water runs clear. Proceed to Step #2 and choose a seasoning method.

Normal Cleaning

Simply scrub the molcajete with a brush and warm water. If necessary, unscented detergent may be used, provided you rinse thoroughly.

About This Molcajete

This authentic 8.5" dia. *molcajete* is the traditional Mexican version of the mortar, with a rounded shape set on three short legs and carved of natural volcanic stone. The molcajete is used with the included *tejolote*, or pestle, which is carved from the same material. Together they are a must-have tool for rustic salsas, guacamole and mole.

History & Usage

Evidence of the molcajete goes back thousands of years and likely evolved from the *metate*, a primitive grinding slab. A ceramic version was used by pre-Hispanic Meso-american cultures. In Nahuatl, the language of the Aztecs, *molcajete* and *tejolote* literally translate as "sauce bowl" and "stone doll."

Molcajetes are used to crush and grind spices and herbs as well as blend salsas and pastes. The rough, porous volcanic stone offers a superb grinding surface that renews itself as the pores are ground down.

They also make attractive and practical serving vessels, for the volcanic stone helps to insulate hot or cold foods.

Step #2: Initial Seasoning

Choose Method A or B

Method A: Clean the molcajete with soap and water, rinsing thoroughly. Using the tejolote, create a paste in the molcajete with the cloves from 6-8 large heads of garlic. Spread the paste over the inside of the bowl, making sure the paste gets into the stone's pores. Let it sit overnight. The next day, rinse the paste off with water.

Method B: With the tejolote, create a paste in the molcajete with one chopped onion, the cloves from one head of garlic and 3-4 tbsp. cooking oil. Spread the paste over the inside of the bowl, making sure to cover all the pores. Bake in an 300°F oven for 30 minutes. Let cool, then rinse with water.

TIPS: The more you use your molcajete, the better it will grind and add favor to whatever is prepared in it. Best results are achieved by using short pounding and grinding motions, rather than long scraping motions.