

California and tacos

C: Hi Maria! Welcome back! How is your day?

M: Hi Carla! It's fine. How's your day going?

C: I'm good, I'm good. The weather could be better, but there is nothing we can do about that.

M: Indeed.

C: So sitting here in Norway in February and it's cold outside, I'm kind of maybe a little envious of you growing up in sunny California. Is it? Yeah, what you always see in the movies and in the series and yeah, is, you know, the beaches, the surfing, the sun, the everlasting summer. Is it is it the way and is California like that?

M: Only some parts of California. So the southern part and along the coast. I grew up in southern California but in the mountains where it was cold like Norway.

C: So you did go skiing and...?

M: It didn't have skiing but people do so there's Tahoe has a lot of skiing and then also in the south, we have Death Valley, which is a very famous desert. And then if you go further north in the middle is farm country, like Fresno and Bakersfield. It's all fields. And then north in San Francisco, it's quite cloudy and foggy. So it just depends on where in California. California is quite big. If you took the country of Greece, it fits in California three times. So it's quite a big state with very diverse environments.

C: Yeah. Oh, I understand. Then it's impossible to say California is like this

M: because it's very different. California is many ways.

C: So California is so varied. Are the people varied too?

M: Yes, yes. Again, every culture from the world just about you can find in California. So it's a very diverse state.

C: And I know some of the American states in the South belonged to Mexico. Was that the case with California as well?

M: Yep. In Colorado, in Nevada, Arizona, Texas, I believe, they were all part of Mexico. And then there was the Treaty de Guadalupe, if I have my history right, which I could not, but it was taken away. And so you have a lot of people from Mexican descent living in these states still. And then you have a lot, in the north of Colorado, you have a lot of people from Asian countries living up there.

C: California?

M: Sorry, yeah, north of California. So it just depends where in California you are. Lots of different cultures.

C: I understand.

M: Like the best taco trucks. Mexican taco trucks you're going to find in L.A. East L.A. It is food that you could not imagine. Very different from Norwegian tacos.

C: Definitely. I've heard about that.

M: Yeah, very different. Like you guys don't have beans here. How can you have a taco without pinto beans? Refried beans.

C: That's right. Yeah, I have no idea.

M: So you take beans, you boil them, pinto beans, and then you refry them in fat, pig fat, lard, with onions and flavoring and you smash them. Oh, so good.

C: And put that in tacos.

M: Yeah, you can, or on the side, but always there's beans somehow involved.

C: That actually sounds delicious.

M: It's so good. I miss the beans.

C: But I also heard that taco actually in Mexico is more like a leftover dinner where you kind of take your leftovers and wrap them or kind of put them together.

M: You can eat it all. Yeah, in a corn tortilla. So I've seen Norwegian tacos, they would be a burrito.

C: A burrito.

M: We use little corn tortillas.

M: I mean, you can have a taco of just potatoes.

C: Just potatoes?

M: Yeah.

C: Wow. That's funny. How does that work?

M: You put in mashed potatoes and fry it on both sides. It's really good.

C: Oh, and then you put it in the tortillas?

M: Mm-hmm.

C: Oh.

M: It's quite good.

C: That sounds fun.

M: But fresh corn tortillas are amazing. Yeah, so you can find stores where you walk in and they're making them right on the spot and you buy them warm. We also don't put cucumbers. No paprika.

C: Okay.

M: Not really corn. But different parts like tongue you will use or brains or... You know, pig, cow, duck even, you name it. And then very, very spicy salsas.

C: Yeah, but are there vegetables? Would you put vegetables?

M: But they're usually sauteed. Onion, pepper, sometimes fresh cilantro, fresh salsa.

C: So you would not take them fresh. You would, yeah, kind of warm them or fry them a bit or something.

C: Yeah, sounds completely different.

M: Completely different, so good. You know, I don't know if you've heard of the Michelin star, what that means. But there's a taco truck in Mexico that won a Michelin star.

C: Oh, wow. That's... I don't know if people who are listening to this heard about the Michelin stars.

M: So that's how you rate. It's very hard to get one. So, it's one, two or three. I think three is the top. I'm not sure.

C: I think so, too.

M: It's extremely difficult. Very stringent. You have to have amazing food. So for a taco truck.

C: It has to be amazing taco.

M: And that's the other thing at schools like high schools. Taco trucks will drive up at lunchtime and kids can go get tacos there.

C: Oh, wow.

M: And now in states like California, where it's such a mix of cultures, you'll have like, you know, Korean food mixed with Mexican food to make a new taco fusion. It's quite good.

C: It's kind of fun. I'm trying to imagine like taco trucks driving up to schools and, yeah, you just go and buy your lunch.

M: Right? Super cheap. Super delicious.

C: Is it healthy?

M: Well, it depends.

C: Depends on what you put in.

C: You know, I keep pestering you with these questions that, in a way, reduce people in being one certain way and I know it's not the case with people, people are really different. But in the end, when I want to ask you about something the same question pops up every time. It's like: What's California like? And the moment I say that I know you will tell me that California is diverse and yeah.

M: You are right. California is very diverse.

C: Thank you for reminding me of this! This was a really interesting conversation, thank you so much!

M: Yes, it was! Thank you, it was my pleasure.