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Great authentic Mexican at Chilangos in Winter Springs (Orlando)!

Ever since I moved to Orlando three and 1/2 years ago, I've been on a hunt for really good, authentic Mexican food. As much as I enjoy the ubiquitous Chipotle, Tijuana Flats, Moe's, and the new Qdoba, I realize they aren't that much more authentic than Taco Bell (although they're all certainly good for what they are).

However, about six weeks ago a new Mexican place opened, just five minutes down the road from where I live on the edge of Casselberry, Longwood, and Winter Springs. It is called Chilangos, a tiny little storefront in a strip mall on 434 in Winter Springs (east of 17-92), and after finally trying them today, it is what I've been craving around here for the last few years. Check out their menu and prices online at <http://www.chilangosmexican.com> !

I got home from work depressed and hungry, so I decided to treat myself and try as many things as possible. Their prices are extremely reasonable, so you can stretch a budget, feed a large group, or just eat like a king the way I did tonight.

La Torta Loca (\$6): Toasted Mexican bun served with lettuce, tomato, mayonnaise, beans, onions, avocado, and asada (thin-sliced steak), carnitas (tender slow-cooked pork), ham, and chicken. This was a huge, hearty, and delicious sandwich, and the perfect method of sampling many different flavors at once. The bun is toasted so it is crispy, yet still soft and not too crusty. All the fillings were fresh and tasty, and a fork came in handy to pick up everything that fell out. I topped it off with a few sliced jalapenos and carrots from Chilangos' free salsa bar (which also contains four different salsas, two reds and two greens).

Taco de Chorizo (\$1.50): I love spicy sausages (okay, there's GOT to be a better way to say that!), and this simple taco with savory ground chorizo was perfect. Tacos at Chilangos are a simple affair: two soft corn tortillas, plenty of meat, diced onions, and cilantro. I was amused how they offer "American style" as an option for an additional 25 cents, adding on lettuce, tomatoes, cheese, and sour cream. I figured I'd go for authenticity, so I abstained from that extra stuff to better taste the chorizo and the tortilla. I chose wisely.

Taco de Lengua (\$1.50): Yes, lengua is beef tongue. A very common ingredient in Mexican taquerias, but not something you're likely to see offered at Moe's or Chipotle any time soon! It was not at all like the tongue I've had from Jewish delis -- in fact, if you didn't know better, you'd think it was just a tasty and tender cut of beef, nothing to arouse suspicion over. Again, I just went with the diced onions and cilantro on this to taste something that at one time could have tasted me back.

To make a long story short, this was a huge amount of food for a dinner for one, and so worth it! I cannot recommend this place enough, especially for Chowhounds looking to avoid the chains and try something locally-owned, unique, and GOOD. Try some traditional and out-of-the-ordinary Mexican specialties, and don't worry about everything coming drenched in sour cream and smothered in cheese, Tex-Mex style. There are a few tables, so you can hang out there and eat if you don't want to take it to go. They also offer Mexican Jarritos sodas (made with real cane sugar for extra awesomeness!) and Jumex canned juices, which are worth trying. Next time I'll probably try one of their burritos to see how it stacks up against the mega-monster burrito chains, and I'll eventually work my way through their menu. North Orlando 'hounds, check it out!

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 [Big_Bad_Voodoo_Lou](#) Apr 02, 2008 09:53PM

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This place sounds wonderful and we'll try it very soon....I love that we're getting so much authentic Mexican cuisine (and I've noticed the chains are dying out -- when I moved to FL 25 years ago, I thought "Mexican" was either Casa Gallardo or Chi Chi's!). Lou - Have you tried Chilaquiles Mexican Grill on 17-92 in Longwood? More good stuff in a strip mall setting in Seminole County....Barbara

 [bcodom](#) Apr 03, 2008 05:27AM

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re: bcodom

Never heard of Chilaquiles before. I might try if I happen to be driving by and I'm hungry and in the mood for Mexican, but I really really liked Chilangos and want to be a loyal customer for them. I may even stop back by tomorrow!

As for chains, I was surprised when Don Pablo's on 436 and Red Bug closed recently. I wasn't a huge fan, but it always seemed reasonably popular. I think the casual, "better-than-Taco Bell" burrito places are the next trend: Moe's, Chipotle, Qdoba, and Orlando's own Tijuana Flats. I like all of these for what they are -- fresh ingredients, huge portions -- but Chilangos just seems more "real" to me than any of them.

 [Big_Bad_Voodoo_Lou](#) Apr 03, 2008 10:28PM

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re: Big Bad Voodoo Lou

The entire Don Pablos chain must have collapsed, because the outlet on University Blvd closed and they always did a pretty good business - near to UCF, Siemens, etc. That said, I never thought they were "all that" and certainly not authentic Mexican, but it was decent Tex Mex.

 [GreenTeaLatte](#) Apr 06, 2008 03:11AM

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BBVL,

Made it up to Chilangos, great place. Food was tasty and the menu was varied.

Guacamole was chunky and flavorful, salsa bar was great. Chips are fresh and made in house. I enjoyed the Bean Huaraches while hubby enjoyed a variety of the tacos. He likes his toppings, so went American and hardshell and went through the salsa.

Flan was good, homemade and not too sweet like you get at most places. Great prices, quick service and nice people!

I'd be interested to hear if the Texans were happy with this type of Mexican cuisine. While you cannot wire money, the owners and the staff were as authentic as the food.

 [winechic](#) May 19, 2008 06:50PM

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re: winechic

So glad you went and liked it! I took my girlfriend one other time and met the very nice owner (who said she had read my review here). I need to go back, though. Maybe tomorrow after a day-long job interview. I figure I'll have earned a treat, and I have yet to try their guacamole.

 [Big_Bad_Voodoo_Lou](#) May 19, 2008 07:55PM

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